

2021

An Examination of Counselors' and Therapists' Attitudes Toward Marriage

Alicia Moore
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Counselor Education & Supervision

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Alicia Carlette Moore

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

An Examination of Emerging Counselors' and Therapists' Attitudes Toward Marriage

by

Alicia Carlette Moore

MS, Mississippi State University, 2012

BA, Delta State University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education and Supervision

Walden University

December 2020

Abstract

Previous studies have shown many aspects of the serious social concerns of attitudes regarding marriage and how an attitude toward marriage may directly be linked to declining birth rates, delayed marriages, and increasing divorce rates. However, previous studies have not shown emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage in the Western culture. Based on the social learning theory, the purpose of this study investigates the relationship between emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage and their (a) gender, (b) parental conflict, and (c) family structure. A quantitative research design was employed with a non-probability convenience sample of 81 emerging counselors or therapists 30 years of age or younger completing a survey. The emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage were examined using the Marital Attitude Scale, Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale, and a demographic questionnaire. Multiple linear regression results indicated a significant negative association between attitudes toward marriage and parental marital conflict. Results did not indicate collective significant effect between gender, family structure, parental conflict, and attitudes toward marriage. The findings of this study may help emerging mental health practitioners heighten their self-awareness which could help enable them to make ethical decisions during the counseling sessions and to maintain professional boundaries despite their previous history or experience surrounding marriage and family.

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Dedication

First, I want to thank God for giving me the knowledge, strength, and faith to finish this doctoral program along with providing me with such a great support system. I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special dedication and gratitude to my God-fearing parents, Drs. Billy and Deborah Moore whose words of encouragement and many prayers resonated with me when I felt I couldn't go any further. To my sister, Dr. Andrea Moore who never left my side and has been my rock since the beginning of it all. You three are my biggest cheerleaders. I also dedicate this dissertation to my church family who has also supported me throughout this process. I could feel all the prayers being prayed for me. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my paternal and maternal grandparents, the late James and Eva Mae Hallmon, the late Fred and Alice (my namesake) Green, and my great-grandmother, Melissa Warren, who paved the way for my family and me. All accomplishments I will achieve in my life will forever be indebted to my beautiful grandparents and great-grandmother. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my committee members who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time throughout this entire process. A special thanks to Dr. Geneva Gray, my committee chairman for her coaching, mentoring, feedback, encouraging words, and most of all patience throughout the entire process. Thank you, Dr. Deborah Nichols, for agreeing to serve on my committee and providing me with feedback and encouragement. Many thanks to Dr. Melinda Haley for her continued support while serving as my original second committee member. I also would like to acknowledge my parents, Drs. Billy and Deborah Moore and my sister, Dr. Andrea Moore for their countless hours of reflecting, reading, and editing my many papers throughout my program and my dissertation. To Dr. Sondra Collins and Dr. Wendy Wells, thank you for contributing your knowledge and expertise in my dissertation phase. A special thanks to all the participants who took their time to complete the surveys needed for my research. I would like to acknowledge and thank my program for allowing me to conduct my research and providing any assistance requested. Finally, I would like to thank the mentor-teachers throughout my program who willingly provided feedback that has made the completion of this research an enjoyable experience.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

Introduction

Serious social concerns exist regarding attitudes toward marriage that may directly decrease birth and marriage rates and increase divorce rates (Huang & Lin, 2014). An increased need exists for researchers to better understand how counselors' marital beliefs or attitudes are shaped and to develop active strategies for prevention of increasing marital problems in existing marriages (Huang & Lin, 2014). According to Miles and Servaty-Seib (2010), many factors are associated with an individual's attitude toward marriage. Research indicates that a significant part of someone's attitude toward marriage correlates with the family structure such as the parents' marital conflict history (Huang & Lin, 2014). Various researchers identified many factors associated with an individual's attitude toward marriage including parental conflict and gender (Algasha & Alkandari, 2010; Huang & Lin, 2014; Larson, Benson, Wilson, & Medora, 1998; Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010).

Huang and Lin (2014) examined the status and relationships between family structure, gender, parental conflict and students' attitudes toward marriage among Taiwanese undergraduate college students. In this study, I examined the relationships between family structure, gender, and parental conflict of emerging counselors' and therapists' and their attitudes toward marriage. The attitudes of emerging counselors and therapists toward marriage are important as these individuals will provide counseling services to married couples and individuals who might be considering marriage or divorce. Recommendations from this study can be used by emerging counselors and

therapists to help them understand their own attitudes toward marriage and might limit any biases that could exist when counseling clients. My study will add to the body of research regarding emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage because they are the mental health providers who will counsel married couples and those who intend to marry in the future. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) has many requirements for emerging counselors and therapists including acknowledging any biases that could hurt or harm the client. According to Whitehead and Popenoe (2006), U.S. society today indicates a decline in marriage rates, an increase in nonmarital cohabitation, an increase in the number of births to unmarried women, and an increase in single-parent households. According to Amato (2012), a large body of research and literature exists finding mental and physical health problems associated with children of divorced parents.

Increasing divorce rates have become commonplace in most developed societies (Amato, 2012). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), a 2.2% U.S. divorce rate in 1960 rose to 5.2% in 1980 before declining to 3.5% in 2008. Since then, the divorce rate has increased significantly. Although marriage continues to be a popular option for most people, currently 50% of U.S. marriages end in divorce, which indicates that couples continue to struggle with successfully maintaining lifelong commitments (Jackl, 2013).

Because of this rise, the U.S. court system refers parents to classes offering divorce education and court- or community-based education programs before granting a divorce (Criddle, Allgood, & Perry, 2003). These programs are designed to help parents develop strategies to minimize the negative effects on the children involved. Criddle et al.

(2003) found that individuals who attended such programs reported fewer incidents of returning to court to resolve disagreements with former spouses.

Lewis (2011) found that as counselors begin to look at life as a human right, they start focusing on environmental change as a professional responsibility. The professional responsibility helps counselors to address inequitable social, political, and economic conditions that negatively affect the individual's academic, career, and social development in their community (Lewis, 2011). Counselors who believe in a better world have a responsibility to want social change and should be committed to the ideal of wanting to make a positive change in the world (Lee, 1998). Counselors who are social change agents have the knowledge, awareness, and skills to challenge the cultural, social, historical, or economic barriers that suppress mental health and human development (Lee, 1998).

In this chapter, I present background information related to the necessity for more quantitative research about emerging counselors' and therapists' self-awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the importance of knowing self-biases when observing the situation of marriage. I addressed the importance of emerging counselors and therapists recognizing countertransference. The current body of literature is lacking information about emerging counselors' and therapists' self-awareness when counseling individuals in marriage. I use the terms *counselors* and *therapists* interchangeably when discussing my participant population which will include emerging counselors who are actively working in the mental health field. I also use the word *their* to refer to single

persons instead of the gender-bound pronouns *he* and *she*, with the intent to be gender neutral when discussing counselors and therapists.

I describe the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, theoretical framework, and the nature of this quantitative study. I also define related key terms and concepts, highlight assumptions connected to the nature of this study, offer the scope and delimitations of the study, and provide limitations based on the research design and methodology. Last, I hypothesize the significance of how this research study will advance the profession of counseling and counselor education.

Background

Researchers (Huang & Lin, 2014; Russell, Dupree, Beggs, Peterson, & Anderson, 2007; Tse et al., 2010) have conducted a number of studies related to the perceptions and attitudes toward marriage; however, after an exhaustive literature review, I could not find any studies published within the last 5 years focusing on the emerging counselors' attitudes toward marital counseling. The counseling field continues to progress and therefore emerging counselors are imperative to the growth of the profession. It is important to identify the importance of emerging counselors' awareness of their own biases related to counseling married and unmarried couples and the effect it can have on the clients. According to research, for the majority of Americans, marriage has become a life goal; however, it has been considered a difficult progression for many couples (Koerner, 2008). Research has indicated that young adults today are making the decision to delay marrying due to negative attitudes that have developed about marriage that, in turn, have now promoted premarital cohabitation (Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010).

Marriage is a tradition and major life event in Western culture; however, through the years, values and attitudes about marriage have shifted (Cherlin, 2004; Huang & Lin, 2014). Serious social concerns exist regarding attitudes toward marriage that may directly decrease birth and marriage rates (Cherlin, 2004; Huang & Lin, 2014). A large body of research and literature found mental and physical health problems associated with children of divorced parents (Amato, 2012). Research has indicated that in the near future it is projected for divorce rates to be as high as 64% (Amato, 2012). Based on marital expectations individuals have set for themselves, research indicates these expectations have contributed to marital dissatisfaction, which has led to high divorce rates in the United States (Amato, 2012).

Family and cultural factors associated with the development of the marital attitudes, beliefs, and intentions have been heavily considered in research (Amato, 2004). Attitudes that are strongly and consistently reinforced through time may become firmly held values. For example, Chan and Lo (2014) focused on the relationship of the families of hidden youth or youth who seclude themselves and withdraw from social activities. The study results demonstrated the important role of the family and how essential the family relationship is to the youth. Sternberg and Weis (2006) indicated that an individual's environment, family of origin, and upbringing can influence an individual's perceptions of a relationship. After being exposed to the influences listed, individuals will grow into adults and will form their own perceptions within their mental schema and will review the relationship as positive or negative based on their own past experiences. For example, research has indicated that if an individual views their relationship as perfect

based on their family of origin, the individual will become easily frustrated after several attempts to perform the functions of a perfect relationship and can view oneself as inadequate if unable to fulfill the expectations (Sternberg & Weis, 2006).

Eldar-Avidan, Haj-Yahia, and Greenbaum (2009) discussed understanding the way young adults whose parents divorced experience the parental divorce as well as their perception during childhood. Research has indicated that the rise of divorce rates can be contributed to the dissatisfaction of the marriage as a result of the individual's expectations not being met within the marriage (Eldar-Avidan et al., 2009). Children whose parents are divorcing as well as the increase in the divorce rates were the focal areas for full understanding (Eldar-Avidan et al., 2009). Divorce rates in the United States have been increasing since the 1920s. The rates continue to increase with many first and second marriages ending in divorce. Weigel, Bennett, and Ballard-Reisch (2006) explored couples who have divorced have a greater discrepancy toward marriage than couples who have remained married. The divorced couples' negative attitude toward marriage can be passed on to their children and can have a significant effect on how the children will view marriages.

Jeynes (2006) indicated the need for an understanding of the thoughts and feelings of children who come from remarried families versus intact families as well as those of children from remarried and divorced or widowed single parent homes. The phases of the marriage that may be influenced by the parents' model of marriage are, for example, how to raise children, physical intimacy, and communication styles. Couples who are guided by their own rules and expectations of marriage and are independent from their parents'

model of marriage are more likely to have a realistic and satisfying marriage whereas couples who use their parents' marriage as a guide may possibly have a dissatisfying marriage (Bhatti & Juvva, 2006). The academic level of the student is lower when coming from a remarried or single parent home according to the study (Jeynes, 2006).

Canham, Mahmood, Stott, Sixsmith, and O'Rourke (2014) analyzed the understanding of gray divorce experiences in adults who have recently divorced after being married for more than 20 years. *Gray divorce* can be defined as a couple who has been married for more than 20 years and then decides to divorce (Canham et al., 2014). Research has indicated that possible variables could have affected a person's expectations and perceptions about what marriage looks like. For instance, an individual's upbringing, parents' model of marriage, and the individual's past experiences can play a major role in how one views marriage as well as causing conflict within their marriage. Many factors including physical and emotional abuse, poor communication, imbalanced household responsibilities, change in behavior, and life circumstances led participants to divorce according to the study (Canham et al., 2014).

Improbable expectations about marriage, especially of individuals whose parents have divorced, can influence the quality of the individual's marriage as well, which can cause many marriages to end in divorce (Wright, Simmons, & Campbell, 2007). These findings reveal significant evidence for the benefits of emerging counselors and therapists providing counseling to married couples; however, it also highlights areas in which emerging counselors and therapists may be lacking in developing a deeper understanding of their own self-awareness when counseling married couples. Researchers (Huang &

Lin, 2014; Russell et al., 2007, Tse et al., 2010) have conducted several studies related to the perceptions and attitudes toward marriage; however, after an exhaustive literature review, I could not find any studies in Western culture that have been conducted with emerging counselors or therapists regarding their attitudes toward marriage. Therefore, this current study is needed to help establish self-awareness in emerging counselors and therapists regarding the importance of ensuring these mental health providers offer effective counseling services to both married and unmarried couples and that they are not imposing their own biases about marriage onto their clients.

Problem Statement

Marriage appears to be a topic of interest to counselors, and many aspects of marriage have been examined (Bassett, Braaten, & Rosen, 1999; Huang & Lin, 2014). According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 61.24 million marriages exist in the United States (U.S.; FastStats, n.d.). As the U.S. marriage rate has declined, divorce rates have increased (FastStats, n.d.). The American Psychological Association (APA) indicated that in Western cultures, more than 90% of individuals marry by the age of 50 years; however approximately 40% to 50% of married couples in the United States divorce (APA, n.d.). It is likely that many clients will engage in counseling to address marital and family issues prior to considering divorce (Huang & Lin, 2014). According to Kanewischer and Harris (2015), many clients who will seek professional help are in the process of considering divorce or have been affected by divorce.

The primary focus of the counselor during the clinical intervention is to help assist the client in diminishing distressing symptoms (Linn-Walton & Pardasani, 2014).

According to Linn-Walton and Pardasani (2014), many clients may believe divorce is the only way to help diminish distressing symptoms in their life. The quality of the counselor-client relationship is partially determined by the personal qualities of the counselor, which have been shown to be more important to clients than particular techniques or interventions (Tse et al., 2010). During a counseling session with the client, counselors have the opportunity to share their own past experiences with clients.

According to Russell et al. (2007), counselors are likely to approach marriage and family counseling based on their own personal perceptions of marital relationships. When counselors project their own personal feelings and attitudes about marriage onto their clients, countertransference often occurs and can, in turn, cause harm to the client (Hayes, Nelson, & Fauth, 2015). Research has shown a number of issues that have caused counselors to experience countertransference. These have included but are not limited to: parents divorcing, absence of a parent, mortality, cancer, motherhood, and sexual molestation (Murphy, 2013). For example, Murphy (2013) indicated that one of the counselors interviewed in his study discussed how working with students who were having issues with their parents' expectations can trigger countertransference for him because his parents divorced as he began high school. Countertransference can lead therapists to view the session inaccurately and behave in a way that will unconsciously meet their own needs at the cost of the client (Hayes et al., 2015). The ACA's (2014) *Code of Ethics* requires counselors to avoid harming the client and to minimize unavoidable or unanticipated harm. A counselor's inability to examine their values,

attitudes, and beliefs about marriage and countertransference experiences can pose a problem as harm can be done to the client who is seeking counseling for marriage issues.

Researchers have conducted several studies related to the perceptions and attitudes toward marriage; however, after an exhaustive literature review, I could not find any studies in Western culture that have been conducted with emerging counselors or therapists regarding their attitudes toward marriage. Existing literature related to counselors and marriage is dated, and scant current literature exists on counselors' attitudes toward marriage. This gap in the literature poses a problem because without such information, emerging counselors may not be aware of their own biases to help clients who are seeking counseling for marital issues. Creating awareness and providing continuing education to counselors regarding their attitudes toward marriage will be important to the counseling profession and to the clients being served.

Purpose of the Study

To address this gap in the literature, I conducted a quantitative survey study to examine emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. Specifically, I conducted my research to determine whether a relationship exists between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013), their gender and family structure as measured by a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix A), and their parental conflict as measured by the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict (CPIC) scale (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). In addition, I examined whether the variables of gender, parental conflict, and family structure predict participants' scores on the MAS (Braaten & Rosen,

1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). Gender is an important factor in shaping attitudes toward marriage and divorce as it has been found females have more positive attitudes toward marriage than males (Huang & Lin, 2014). Parental conflict is also a factor because of the possible influence of conflict and inter-parental hostility on young adults' expectations of marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014). Family structure is a factor as research exists suggesting that there is a relationship between the individual's family structure and his/her attitudes toward marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Participants for the study were emerging counselors or therapists who will provide counseling to married and unmarried couples. For this study, the age of the population is capped at 30 years because the CPIC scale instrument used in my study has been validated for emerging adults; however, it has not been validated for older adults (Fincham, 2013). I selected emerging counselors and therapists younger than 30 years based on the emerging counselors who have completed a master's degree in the counseling profession and are currently working in the mental health field with the possibility of collecting hours to become a fully licensed professional counselor (LPC) or Licensed Marital and Family Therapist (LMFT). I publicized the study in groups for professional mental health counselors, and aspiring marriage and family therapists and via platforms associated with American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and the ACA, and the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET).

Research Questions and Hypothesis

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant negative correlation between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013)?

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a statistically significant negative correlation in emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

Null hypothesis (H_1): There is not a statistically significant negative correlation in emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

RQ2: Does gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013)?

Alternative hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), will predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

Null hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), will not predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Various theories exist in the literature related to individuals' attitudes toward marriage (Huang and Lin, 2014; Willoughby, 2010). When defining attitudes toward marriage, the counselors must consider their meaning of marriage, expectations of marriage, as well as expectations of their own future and current marital relationship (Willoughby, 2010). Parental relationship is one factor identified as affecting individual marital attitudes (Huang & Lin, 2014). Specifically, when an individual observes an agreeable and intimate quality of the parental relationship, he or she is more likely to develop a positive attitude toward marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014). This is a part of social learning as evidenced by the behavior that can be learned through observing and imitating others. Bandura's social learning theory (SLT, 1977) purports that individuals learn through observing their environment. Learning of attitudes and behaviors takes place through imitation, modeling, observation, and experience. For the purpose of this study the following keywords have been operationally defined:

- *Imitation*: Observing and reenacting what one observed.
- *Modeling*: When an individual is shown a behavior.
- *Observation*: The individual viewing what is being shown.
- *Experience*: Lived situations.

Roberts et al. (2015) indicated that through an individual observing a behavior, the individual will begin to model and imitate what one is seeing. According to the social learning theory, a child will observe and model behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses of others which can lead to the individual adopting the development of traditions learned from parents (Bandura, 1977). An individual's observing, imitating, and modeling parents' behavior can shape the individual's attitude toward marriage based on lived experiences (Bandura, 1977). According to Amato and Booth (2001) and Gabardi and Rosen (1992), an individual's home is where he or she begins to learn about marriage and where an early impression begins, meaning the quality of the parents' relationship and the level of conflict in the parents' relationship affect a child's attitude. Research suggests that there is a relationship between an individual's family structure and his or her attitude toward marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014). Bandura's SLT relates to counselors' attitudes by predicting that the influence of parents' marital history will affect the counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward what they believe regarding marriage and divorce (Amato & Booth, 2001). SLT focuses on how the individual's past can have an effect on the individual's thought process. SLT will drive my study with understanding how an individual's environment can shape the individual to think and behave in a certain way. In this study, I examined factors (gender, family structure, and parental marital conflict) influencing the attitudes of counselors toward marriage.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a quantitative multiple regression research design. The quantitative multiple regression research design allowed me to determine whether a

relationship exists between family structure, parental conflict, and gender of counselors and their attitudes toward marriage. In addition, a multiple regression allowed me to determine if the variables of family structure, parental conflict, and gender predict emerging counselors' scores on the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). I posted a survey online through SurveyMonkey for emerging counselors to complete if they are working with any clients in the mental health profession. I promoted the survey on Facebook in the Counselor Education and Supervision group, as well as promoted the survey on the American School Counselor Association group, and mental health professional groups for professional mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists and via platforms associated with American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the ACA, and the CESNET.

Definitions

1. *Attitude towards marriage* is defined as the outlook an individual has toward marriage in general and expectations toward their own future marital relationship (Wiloughby, 2010).
2. *Emerging counselors* is defined as students who have completed a master's degree within the mental health profession and are currently in the process of collecting hours toward a mental health license (Burck, Bruneau, Baker, & Ellison, 2014). For the participants to be an emerging counselor, the participant will have completed a master's level counseling or marriage and family program and are currently or aspiring to complete requirements, per the state in which the participants are living, for full licensure as an LPC or LMFT.
3. *Family structure* is defined as intact or divorced (nonintact). Intact families are families which the individual is married and living together (Miles & Servvaty-Scib, 2010).

Nonintact families are individuals who are divorced and remained unmarried to anyone (Amato, 2003; Kinnaird & Gerard, 1986).

4. *Gender* is not based on sex or biological differences however it can be defined as the social roles men and women play and is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments (Gender, n.d.).
5. *Interparental marital conflict* is also considered a serious factor that influences individual marital attitudes. Kalter (1987) defined *interparental conflict* as conflict or inter-parental hostility.

Assumptions

Several assumptions helped to guide the developing of my research, design, and purpose. I designed this study with hope that participants would be open and honest about their attitudes toward marriage for the authenticity of the data collection. My second assumption was my intention to have enough participants to complete the full survey in a reasonable amount of time. Another assumption was that the nature of the study would be of interest to not only emerging counselors, but also licensed counselors, students, faculty, graduate programs, and the entire mental health profession. The increase in the interest of this study aided in my ability to have individuals complete the full survey, collect the data, and publish the research study in that emerging counselors who counsel regarding marriage helped provide the most accuracy in the results.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this research study was to help the counseling profession understand whether a relationship exists between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage

based on their family structure and if gender and parental conflict predicted emerging counselors' attitude toward marriage. To gain the type of data needed for this study, I used surveys for collecting the data. I advertised via Facebook and ACA websites so all emerging counselors can participate in my study if they are currently working in the mental health field. I made the decision not to include the sexual orientation of the participants' parents which can possibly restrict the study and the findings.

Participants in this study were required to be 30 years or older who identified as an emerging counselor throughout the United States. Participants must be 30 years old or younger because the CPIC scale has not been used with participants older than 30 years. I cannot determine whether the scale would maintain its reliability and validity with older participants without conducting a pilot study.

The emerging counselor is actively working in the mental health field completing licensure hours and are actively working with individuals and couples seeking marriage and couples' therapy. Participants who did not meet these criteria were excluded from the study. The emerging counselors are actively working in the mental health profession; however, they were not required to have a set length of time to have practiced counseling within the field to help maximize generalizability.

Limitations

Potential barriers included finding participants who were willing to set aside 15 to 20 minutes to complete the online survey. I used the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013). An extensive search of the literature did not reveal a study that examined the attitudes toward marriage among counselors and

in Western culture; therefore, no comparative data are available. Because this study was limited to emerging counselors and therapists who will be providing counseling in the mental health field, generalizations to all counselors and therapists is limited. Another limitation was the data collection method of surveys. Technology has been proven to be the most used item today; however, it can be unreliable. In addition, I assumed the accuracy of responses from the participants considering research has indicated that self-report studies may have validity problems due to participants possibly not understanding the question or even having the memory to answer the questions accurately (Peng, Zhang, & Zhang, 2017).

Significance

Social justice and change are important in the counseling profession because of the focus on helping clients regardless of their makeup/background. Ivey, D'Andrea, and Ivey (2012) explained that counselors should focus on the wellness of clients rather than focusing on the problems. Motulsky, Gere, Saleem, and Trantham (2014) described *social justice* as counselors being social change agents to help change societal views, structures, practices, and policies that serve as a disadvantage and unfairness to individuals. Collins, Arthur, Brown, and Kennedy (2015) discussed that in the counseling field, social justice helps practitioners understand the clients' worldviews and their reason for wanting to receive help. Not knowing clients' identity, whether it is cultural, religious, sexuality, or socioeconomic status can be harmful to the client versus helpful (Collins et al., 2015). Collins et al. (2015) argued that a counselor's worldview can influence the relationship between a client and the counseling process. Schlossberg and

Pietrofesa (1973) examined how the counselor's bias, or opinion about appropriate behavior for a particular group, can negatively affect the counseling process and ultimately the client. The counselor education program now helps students to think about personal culture, biases, privileges, and gaining awareness of how this affects the client (Collins et al., 2015).

A social change implication related to my study is helping individuals who are aspiring to be mental health professionals in the counseling field to acknowledge their own values and beliefs prior to working with clients. The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) in Section A.4.b. requires counselors to be aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior to avoid imposing these on their clients, trainees, and research participants. Past experiences may have affected how one may think today when it comes to the subject of marriage and the goal of my research study to is to help individuals see this. Huang and Lin (2014) made a helpful suggestion for institutions to add counseling courses to help counseling students understand the deterioration of marital relations. Through this research study, I hoped to see the increase in individuals recognizing their values, attitudes, and beliefs while in the counseling programs. Recognizing these factors will allow counselors to become more effective in the counseling profession according to research (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Having a better understanding of why divorce rates are increasing is another social change implication related to my study. Understanding this matter will depend on understanding the importance of marriage and family. My goal was that this study would add to the body of research and provide experts in the counseling profession support for

their counseling sessions with the marriage and family community. Recommendations and strategies are included in the results of my study to help educate counseling educators on understanding their own attitudes about marriage and addressing their own biases without allowing their biases to interfere with their clients.

This research fills a gap in the existing literature by focusing on emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage. This study helps the counseling profession understand whether family structure, gender, and parental marital conflict are related to emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage, and if those variables are predictive of those attitudes. The results of this study could also help emerging counselors build awareness regarding the importance of their attitudes and beliefs toward marriage so that these attitudes are not inadvertently imposed on their clients through countertransference. After an exhaustive search, I could not identify any current studies regarding counselors' attitudes toward marriage. Outcomes from this study will increase awareness of potential biases counselors and therapists may have when focusing on marriage and couples. This study can contribute to social change by helping to build counselor awareness regarding how the counselors' own attitudes toward marriage could affect their counseling sessions related to marriage and couples issues. Based on the results of this study, emerging counselors can improve their clinical skills and develop self-awareness about how their attitudes toward marriage might impact their ability to conduct marriage and couples' therapy by becoming aware of their own biases and working to limit any biases that could negatively affect their client.

Summary

A study to research emerging counselors and their attitudes toward marriage might play a vital role in the counseling session and could serve as informational and educational. The findings from this study could potentially help emerging counselors build self-awareness as to how the variables of parental marital conflict, family structure, and gender are related to their marital attitudes. This heightened awareness could then enable them to make ethical decisions during the session and maintain professional boundaries despite their previous history surrounding marriage and family.

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the interest, background of the study, and literature supporting why this study is needed in the counseling profession. The problem and purpose of the study provide information to the reader about the rationale behind choosing the approach for this study from a quantitative multiple regression approach. In this chapter, I have provided a deeper understanding of the background, choice for the study, delimitations, limitations, and significance. In the next chapter, I provided a complete review of the current literature concerning the need for emerging counselors to develop self-awareness when counseling individuals with marital issues.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to Literature Review

According to current research, individuals seek counseling for marital issues for several reasons, including fulfilling personal goals for their marriage and family, increasing communication, building empathy, and learning effective problem solving and conflict resolution skills (Tse et al., 2010). Of the individuals seeking marital counseling, many search for counselors and therapists who have positive personal qualities (Tse et al., 2010). A lack of current research exists on emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage, and even less literature in Western culture about emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014). The majority of published research articles on counselors and therapists include information about attitudes toward marriage; however, limited information exists on how emerging counselors who have a focal area for working with individuals in marriage counseling may also struggle with various issues covered in marriage therapy, which can cause countertransference within the sessions (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Countertransference can be defined as the therapist's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to clients who are in therapy and the resulting potential problems associated with these responses (Gelso & Hayes, 2007). Countertransference has a rich psychoanalytic history with Sigmund Freud being the first to write about the countertransference experience. Freud defines *countertransference* as the therapist's unconscious reactions to the client based on the therapist's own unresolved conflict (Gelso & Hayes, 2007). According to Freud countertransference can be managed if the

therapist undergoes extensive personal analysis to recognize the origin of the issue and not interfere with the patient's treatment (Gelso & Hayes, 2007).

Continuing education and trainings should be priority for emerging counselors to help increase personal analysis, especially when counseling the marriage population to help reduce countertransference. According to section A.4.b of the *American Counseling Association Code of Ethics* (2014), counselors must remain aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior to avoid imposing these on their clients, trainees, and research participants. Emerging therapists in marriage training can face problems as they develop clinical skills while engaging in personal growth (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Russell et al., 2007). Concerns about performance of the emerging therapist in marriage training can originate from limited self-awareness and significant life stressors (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Russel et al., 2007).

Furthermore, competency concerns compounded by limited self-awareness and significant life stressors can result in the increased likelihood of lack of attentiveness, difficulties communicating empathy, and challenges with interpersonal behaviors (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Russel et al., 2007). Research findings on the limited self-awareness in counselors indicates the importance of continuing education and trainings to help reduce countertransference in the counselor client relationship as well as throughout the sessions. The purpose of this quantitative survey study is to examine emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. Specifically, my research examined the relationship between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage based on their gender, family structure, and their parental marital conflict history.

The literature review consists of the introduction and the theoretical framework chosen. In the next section, the literature review consist of literature supporting the need for emerging counselors to develop self-awareness of his or her view of marriage and environmental factors that will lead to a review of how one's parents' marital conflict history may influence one's attitude about marriage. Behavioral risk factors are then outlined followed by a review of the methodology and various statistical data analyses in the current literature. I then focused on gaps in the literature by looking at the background of challenges and barriers to the research on counselors and therapists. I conclude the literature review with research findings on the benefits of having a deeper focus on marriage and divorce as well as continuing education focused on self-awareness.

In this chapter, I also describe the literature search strategies that I utilized to conduct a thorough review of the existing literature related to my topic of interest. Next, I explain my theoretical framework that guides my study's research decisions. I provide the reader with a comprehensive review of the most current literature available related to types of marriages, countertransference, counselors responding to the need of marital issues, counselor self-awareness, and counselors' and therapists' preparedness for marriage therapy. I also provide an overview of the ACA Code of Ethics, marriage and family therapy history, ACA's implications in the decision-making process for counseling individuals, and the need for greater self-awareness in counselors and therapists when following the ACA Code of Ethics. Finally, I address how the increased continuing education and trainings can increase self-awareness in counselors and

therapists and decrease countertransference when counseling the marriage and family population.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a scholarly review of the literature through electronic database searches in PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Gale PowerSearch. I selected articles based on their content in addressing the current study's research questions, hypotheses, and contribution toward filling the gap in the existing literature. The key terms that I used included *marriage, counselor, family, attitude, divorce, children, teenagers, mental health, marital status, cohabitation, countertransference, and psychosocial*. I also used Google Scholar as an additional database to search specific terms that were an interest for my study.

With PsycARTICLES, I used the following search terms: *marriage, family, and divorce*. The second group of key search terms were designated for my independent variables and included *gender, family structure, and marital conflict*. When using EBSCOhost, I conducted searches with the terms *social learning, children, and teenagers*. The next group of key search terms were designated for my dependent variable and included *attitude towards marriage, attitude towards divorce, and marital status*. When using ProQuest and Gale PowerSearch, I searched the terms *marriage, divorce, cohabitation, marital conflict, marriage and couples counseling, and countertransference*. Last, in the Google Scholar search, I used the search terms *marriage and couple counseling, countertransference, marriage and divorce, and social learning*. The review included research published within the last 15 years such as peer-reviewed

articles and full-text studies to help provide an accurate statement of the problem and research current needs. Through this method, it was apparent that there was substantial research concerning marriage and divorce, whereas research on emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage was limited.

Social Learning Theory: Theoretical Foundation

Many behavioral theories were developed to discuss why people behave in a certain way. Human behavior has been a focal area for researchers focusing on the emotional or physical response an individual will give to internal or external factors (Holdershaw & Gendall, 2008). Behaviors exhibited by humans can range from and is influenced by an individual's attitude, emotions, ethics, culture, rapport, genetics, authority, or persuasion and is experience throughout the individual's lifetime (Holdershaw & Gendall, 2008). According to Holdershaw and Gendall (2008), behavior can fall within a range of being common, acceptable, or also unusual. Behavior of the human is studied by individuals who are in psychiatry, social work, sociology, psychology, and counseling.

For many years, theories with a focus on social learning were criticized theoretically and empirically (Bandura, 1997). According to the social learning system, behaviors can be developed based on direct experience and through the observed behaviors of others. SLT is the theoretical foundation for this study. According to SLT, people learn from one another and human behavior is a collection of continuous reciprocal interactions between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1997). SLT is concerned with the responses and acquired by the child through

learning. It is an individual becoming the product of what is learned from their environment. In addition, SLT also includes the development of a child, and how the individual is shaped based on experiences of childhood. Major tenets of SLT offer explanations for how development impacts the social expectations of the child (Grusec, 1992; Kretchmar, 2008). As a child continues to develop, there is a social expectation that the child will be able to adapt and respond to social situations based on what one has been taught (Kretchmar, 2008). SLT is grounded in the elements from the behavioral and cognitive learning theories.

In the 1940s, Robert Sears initially introduced the SLT and focused on the psychoanalytic foundation with the belief that the external world influences the individual and vice versa (Grusec, 1992; Kretchmar, 2008). Albert Bandura further developed the SLT based on agreement with the behaviorist theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning (Bandura, 1997). Bandura's SLT was based on the work of Sears' and is highly recognized in current research and practice (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura worked at Stanford University alongside Sears and developed his belief that learned behavior is developed based on observational learning as well as operant conditioning. Although Bandura rejected the psychoanalytic theory, he was influenced by the concept of operant conditioning. Bandura's approach for social learning derived from cognition. Bandura believed that reinforcement and modeling were the important factors in the SLT (Grusec, 1992; Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura focused on exploring how adults and children operated cognitively based on their experiences and how their experiences influenced their behaviors (Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura's basis for

his SLT derived from his belief that learning occurs at the time the individual begins to observe a behavior and occurs with or without reinforcement/punishment (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura also suggested that individuals can possibly imitate and exhibit behaviors themselves in situations in which they watch the behaviors of others be reinforced or punished.

Bandura became the leading researcher in the SLT field. His primary focus was the development of a framework capable of describing how behavior is learned from the environment, and mediating process that occurs between stimuli and responses (Bandura, 1997). Bandura therefore identified four components to observational learning that helped identify the development of SLT. He suggested attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are the four elements needed for learning to take place (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). According to Kretchmar (2008), attention refers to the individual attending to and accurately being able to model the behavior being shown, while retention refers to the cognitive component of learning and the individual being able to remember what one observed. Reproduction is the individual being able to replicate the behavior observed and being able to perform the behavior and motivation implies that the individual will imitate all behaviors learned and possibly receive a reward for imitating the behavior correctly (Harinie, 2017; Kretchmar, 2008). It is recommended for all these components to be completed for future behavior to be observed and imitated.

As a result, Bandura also suggested individuals will imitate the observed behavior if it is more aligned to the individual's characteristics. Bandura explored the importance of recognizing that characteristics and consequences play a vital role with individuals

imitating and modeling a behavior and recognizing both the cognitive and environmental variables that play a part (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). As time passes, individuals will learn behaviors that are appropriate versus inappropriate and will begin to internalize and process their own standards based on reinforcement and punishment given to the behavior displayed (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura discussed that brief exposure to any behavior will have a lasting impact on a child's ability to engage in different behaviors.

Rationale for Social Learning Theory

After reviewing the behavioral theorists, their theories, and examining the potential influence on this study, Bandura's SLT approach appeared to be the best fit for my study (Bandura, 1997; Kretchmar, 2008). Bandura's SLT will demonstrate the relevance of my research topic and add to the reader's understanding of how an individual's environment can shape the individual to think and behave in a certain way. SLT is an optimal model for this study because of its focus on how an individual's past can have an effect on an individual's thought process of any given situation. For example, an individual who views negative or dysfunctional behaviors in the home will tend to ignore the positive behaviors and only focus on the negative which can cause an individual's perception of marriage to be conflicting (Kretchmar, 2008). SLT helps explain and treat identifiable causes of certain behaviors as well as help to understand how behaviors can be reciprocated based on cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Kretchmar, 2008).

The ideals of Bandura's SLT are the framework's foundation for emerging counselors and therapists developing self-awareness pertaining to marriage and couples prior to providing counseling. Kretchmar (2008) indicated SLT is characterized by the belief individuals learn from their environment. From the family context aspect, the interactions among family members can shape both the positive and negative behavior patterns of the youth. The youth then take the learned behaviors into their interactions with others outside of their family (Kretchmar, 2008). For example, if a child is living in a home where the child witnesses conflict, the child is more likely to have a negative behavior outside the home. The child of course does not understand that their negative behavior is not an appropriate behavior to have and is merely practicing what is exhibited in their home such as the behavior their parents are engaging in at the time (Harinie, 2017; Kretchmar, 2008). One aspect of developing self-awareness trainings and continuing education specifically geared towards marriage and couple counseling is an attempt to help emerging counselors and therapists develop self-awareness as well as develop interventions to decrease any biases toward marriage and couples.

Bandura's social learning framework is one that thoroughly describes the human behavior and is easy to understand when describing how environment can shape the individual's thoughts and behaviors. SLT holds the notion that individuals learn from the environment, mental processes, and the interaction between the two (Harinie, 2017; Kretchmar, 2008). This quantitative study is embedded in Bandura's social learning theory, and Bandura's social learning approach serves as the guide for my research study because it best fits my research proposal and purpose by allowing me to explore

emerging counselor's self-awareness and how it can help to reduce countertransference in marriage and family counseling.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

In this section, I discussed a comprehensive literature review that establishes the need for emerging counselors to develop self-awareness of his or her view of marriage prior to providing marriage and couple counseling. To begin my literature review, I explored marriage, concentrated on searching for historical changes in the prevalence of marriage and divorce, and cultural understandings of divorce while pointing out the political benefits of marriage therapy. I followed with an explanation of how individuals who begin to have marital issues may possibly seek marriage therapy. The literature review also covers a discussion of countertransference, common symptoms, ramifications of countertransference, and counselors responding to the needs of marital issues. I also covered the developmental importance of the emerging counselors' self-awareness and preparedness for marriage therapy with a focus on gender, family structure and marital conflict. Finally, I concluded with a discussion of the apparent gap in the current literature and limited research in the Western culture on emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage.

Marriage

The first predictor variable of this study is family structure, which is illustrated by the marital status. Marriage was originally viewed as a bond between a man and a woman for purpose of mating and reproduction. The institution of marriage is a tradition that continues to thrive in many cultures. Universally, marriage has been defined as a social

and legal union between a man and a woman although in certain cultures individuals of the same sex have been allowed to marry (Wimalasena, 2016; Coontz, 2005). As culture has developed, the definition has evolved and is now inclusive of religious, social, and economic factors (Ozyigit, 2017; Wimalasena, 2016). In the United States there are approximately 6.9 marriages per 1,000 people and 3.2 divorces per 1,000 people (CDC, 2017). According to Coontz (2005), the majority of marriages are based on monogamy consisting of one man and one woman.

Male and female will be defined based on the participant's self-identity. I have included transgender on the survey if the participant identifies as one. The meaning of marriage may also vary from person-to-person. The view of marriage will influence whether individuals will choose to enter and remain in the marital relationship. Per current research, close to 90% of Americans will choose to marry at some point during their lifetime (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, & Mosher, 2012). Exchanging vows is a part of the marriage ceremony. To become married, sacred vows are formulated and viewed as a permanent sacrifice to some while others may only see sacred vows as an agreement (Jackl, 2013). The view of the permanence of the vows may impact the decision to remain in the marriage. Marriage is seen as a popular endeavor; however, the survival rate for marriages is difficult to ascertain. Projections have indicated that 50% of U.S. marriages will end in divorce which can indicate a struggle with maintaining lifelong commitments successfully (Jackl, 2013). In fact, Amato (2004) states "traditional" marital values such as commitment, responsibility, and sacrifice held by American mainstream have been switched to focus on beliefs and behaviors that will challenge the

“traditional” marital convention (Jackl, 2013). Report divorce rates are inconsistent. Divorce rates appear to be impacted by the group being analyzed and their marriage rates. For example, Claire Cain Miller for the *New York Times* said that researchers have it all wrong about divorce. Divorce is on the decline; however, divorce is on the decline due to millennials resistance to get married (DePaulo, 2017). For example, research has revealed that young adults are increasingly choosing to delay marriage because of a negative attitude toward marriage, increase in premarital cohabitation, and placing a greater importance on being independent (Dennison & Koerner, 2008).

Amato (2004) further discusses the impact of the increase in single parent households and its effect on young adults’ marital attitude, beliefs, and intentions. The term marital attitude noted by Willoughby (2014) focuses on an individual’s perception of marriage as a social institution and expectation regarding marital happiness. For the purpose of this paper, marital attitude will refer to the positive or negative evaluation about the general concept of marriage (Willoughby, 2014).

Marriage was enforced in Western societies by the influence of Christianity and the law (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2006). In addition, Christianity helped foster monogamy and a careful view of marriage (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2006). Marriage was allowed and commonly viewed as a union created as the result of premarital sex. Over the years the law and the church imitated efforts to regulate marriage making it the core of families (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2006). People often rejected the idea of religious and legal control over marriage and ignored many of the rules of licenses and ceremonies which in turn made it difficult for individuals to benefit from being married (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2006).

Over the years, religion has supported monogamy and marital loyalty, which was seen as strengthening the family (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2006).

Marriage is significant in society according to Ozyigit (2017) because of the individual's need for love and being loved, and his or her social, psychological, and motivational needs which can be related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith, and Huang (2018), Maslow's hierarchy of needs founded by Abraham Maslow is a five-tier model focusing on human needs based on psychological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow's motivational theory discussed how the bottom of the hierarchy (psychological) must be satisfied before the individual can attend to the needs higher up (Hale et al., 2018). Researchers have also found Americans value marriage on the institutional and personal level (Jensen, Shafer, Guo, & Larson, 2016). Feeling safe and protected, having confidence about the future, and having a healthy sexual life are other factors contributing to the significance of marriage (Ozyigit, 2017). The concept of love has been a forever intangible subject. It is a definition and meaning that philosophers, psychologists, and biologists have been seeking since the beginning of time (Chapman, 2011). Biology, psychology, and philosophy are all important factors in analyzing love (Chapman, 2011).

Jensen, Shafer, Guo, and Larson (2016) outlined and compared first marriages and remarriages among divorce rates integrated with the family process and perspectives. Jensen et al.'s (2016) research demonstrates that marital instability is higher among the remarried. Many of the empirical work on this topic has used multiple regression and covariate control methods without focusing on the influence of the selection bias.

Because marriage, remarriage, and divorce focus on the individual perception, election bias should be considered in this area of research (Jensen, Shafer, Guo, & Larson, 2016). Jensen et al. (2016) considered the influence of one's perception when examining the relationship between marriages and relationship stability.

In their study Robertson and Ehrenberg (2015) focused on the perception of individuals who have been remarried and their concept of marriage currently and previously. The authors used a mixed method approach to gain insight on marital commitment on remarriage-related experiences to help develop clinical practice and future research. The *Multiple Determinants of Relationship Commitment Inventory (MDRCI)* was conducted by the authors to quantitatively measure participants' level of marital commitment and semi-structured in-person interviews asking five open-ended questions focusing on marital commitment. The study determined that remarried individuals have a positive outlook on their current marriage and devoted more to their current marital views than their previous marriage.

Social and Psychological Aspects of Marriage

Perceptions and behaviors in personal relationships are important based on the attitudes and expectations about relationships (Riggio & Weiser, 2008). Personal experiences with a partner, observing one's parents, and watching others' process of courtship and marriage forms one's attitude and expectations about marriage. Positive marriage attitudes as well as negative marriage attitudes may affect an individual's beliefs about marriage (Riggio & Weiser, 2008). For example, an individual who has a positive attitude about marriage views their own marriage as well as other marriages as

happy and successful, whereas an individual with a negative attitude towards marriage may have a less positive expectation (Riggio & Weiser, 2008).

A healthy, trusting, and supportive marriage contributes to positive psychological and physical adjustment for spouses and children (Kicol-Glaser & Newton, 2001). Benefits of marriage include protection against depression, lower substance use, and promotion of healthy eating according to Kicol-Glaser and Newton (2001). Individuals who are married enjoy greater physical and psychological health and reports a greater level of happiness than those who are not married (Wilson & Oswald, 2005).

Wilson and Oswald (2005) focused on adding to the literature by exploring beliefs about marriage and the connection with the mental wellbeing gained from being married. Individuals who appeared to and demonstrated valuing the importance of marriage have a smaller rate of depression yet suffer more from a marriage ending in divorce (Wilson & Oswald, 2005). Gender, age, finances, children, health, education, divorce rates, and religion are all factors to consider when looking at an individual's perception of why marriage is important (Wilson & Oswald, 2005). According to Wilson and Oswald (2005) finances play a vital role in the happiness of marriage followed by health. Comparisons have shown transitioning to being married versus never being married increases psychological wellbeing and transitioning from marriage to separation or divorce increases depression and unhappiness (Wilson & Oswald, 2005). Researchers are now examining more the quality of the marriage and how couples can recover after some time from marital dissolution and individuals who have lower mental well-being typically will divorce.

Stages of Development. While emotional development and intimacy play a vital role in marriage, there are also many other factors to consider. Over time, individuals become older, and with that comes different needs, changes in interests and motivations, which support the importance of family formation. Ben-David, Jonson-Reid, Bright, and Drake (2016) indicated the period between late adolescent and late 20s have been identified as a distinctive developmental stage forming intimate partnerships. In the United States typically marriage is associated with positive outcomes and occurs during this age period (Ben-David et al., 2016).

According to research most individuals have the desire and expectation to get married (Popenoe & Whitehead, 2002; Willoughby & Carroll, 2010). Life events and age have been shown to influence the individual in the choice to get married. Many adolescents expect to marry in their future and age appears to have a significant influence on the expectation to marry (Willoughby & Carroll, 2010). As adolescents continue to increase in age, older adolescents have an increased desire to marry (Gassanov, Nicholson, & Koche Turner, 2008). Willoughby and Carroll (2010) indicated as young adults emerge into adulthood, they form new standards regarding coupling behavior. An anticipated life goal of emerging adults is being married which is viewed by the emerging adult as highly valued (Kaufman, 2005). Wright et al. (2007) gave an example of a group of young adults with the average age range of 20 who had a more perfect idea and expectation of marriage than adults who were averaging around the age range of 32.

Factors of Effective Counseling. While many of the factors above have an influence on licensed counselors (LPCs) and therapists, it is important for emerging

counselors and the counseling profession to be knowledgeable about the factors that are most influential to effective counseling with marriage and couple. Kitano and Lewis (2005) conducted a study, which focused on the risk factors of physical/substance abuse, loss of a parent, poverty, and illness as factors that can increase prevalence of problem behaviors. The presence of the aforementioned stressors within a family can disrupt the healthy adjustment of an adolescent (Kitano & Lewis, 2005). This can continue to be a problem as the individual develops into an adult. Emerging counselors with a family background of this nature may be susceptible to the same disruption of healthy development and is also likely that this history may impact the emerging counselors' attitudes about marriage and couples.

Ribar (2015) conducted a study concerning marriage enhancing children's wellbeing using a rational-choice model. His findings suggest a positive association between marriages can help produce a positive well-being in a child. Ribar (2015) indicated marriages should help produce advantages that can improve a child's behavior with a better coordination between parents and children. Additional research inquiries revealed establishing identity is imperative when transitioning into marriage because a lack of identity may cause a stressful transition. Soulsby and Bennett (2017) conducted semi-structure interviews to gather information about individuals' experience with marital status change. Evidence suggests the bond of marriage can provide a strong positive sense of identity or self-worth (Soulsby & Bennett, 2017). A determining factor is the individual being aware that reconstruction of identity is prevalent when entering a marital relationship and must be done by both parties for positive results.

Chan and Lo (2014) focused on the relationship of the families of hidden youth or youth who seclude themselves and withdraw from social activities. The study results demonstrated the important role of the family and how essential the family relationship is to youth. The study also illustrated the hidden youth's relationship with parents is mostly related to the impact of power effort (Chan & Lo, 2014). Discovering interventions can allow youth to develop a prevention of maladjustment which can continue to form into later adulthood. Research is consistent in demonstrating therapy can enhance an individual by focusing on developing social support, interpersonal skills, empathy, and coping strategies (Kitano & Lewis, 2005). By acknowledging these factors emerging counselors can increase their own understanding of how their parental conflict could have possibly caused psychological distress that have now carried on into their adulthood.

Divorce

The second predictor variable of this study is marital conflict. Factors such as finances, lack of communication, and lack of intimacy have been identified as conflict issues that lead to divorce (Chapman, 2011). With the divorce rates increasing, and the idea of marriage changing in today's society, the importance of studying the concept of love cannot be overlooked (Chapman, 2011). Communication can determine the success or failure of marriages according to Uwon-Ajaebu, Ajike, Fadolapo, and Ajaegbu (2015). Communication can be defined as verbal or non-verbal process of sharing information. Verbal constitutes of speaking while non-verbal consists of facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Uwon-Ajaebu et al. (2015) state marriage depends on different factors such as trust, understanding, honesty, loyalty, and above all effective

communication. Being able to communicate effectively will allow the couple to negotiate problem areas, avoid misunderstandings, fulfil needs, and develop or increase intimacy. With divorce rates increasing, Uwon-Ajaebu et al. (2015) found the starting point of most of the problems in marriage is ineffective communication. Lack of communication was ranked in the higher percentage for causes of divorce according to Uwon-Ajaebu et al. (2015). Poor communication in a marriage can lead to lack of intimacy, conflict, and divorce which in turn can cause a strain on the couple as well as the children.

There were evident changes within values, beliefs, and the matrimonial institutions in the United States. Marriages typically terminate because of conflict within the marital relationship, which is also known as divorce. According to Miles and Servaty-Seib (2010) the United States has some of the highest divorce rates with 40 to 50% of first marriages resulting in divorce. Miles and Servaty-Seib (2010) indicated how the exposure to divorce in one's family of origin could possibly influence the individual's desire to one day get married. Adults whose parents have divorced demonstrate a lower desire to marry and have a greater likelihood to divorce than the adults who parents remained married (Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010). Individuals who come from divorced parents may find cohabitation as the best fit for their life (Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010).

Research indicates that individuals prefer cohabitation over marriage because of the negative effect marriage has had on their parents (Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2007). These individuals are more likely to say no to marriage. Many adolescents believe that cohabitation is a part of their life, but not a substitute for marriage (Manning et al., 2007). Cohabiting individuals may become highly concerned with the stability of their

relationship with their partner, which can have the individual with a lower level of confidence to marry their partner (Manning et al., 2007). Manning et al., (2007) and Perelli-Harris, Berrington, Gassen, Galezewska, and Holland (2017) have also concluded that cohabitation is associated with a higher risk for divorce because the individuals have more of an unstable relationship with their partner, which can cause the individual to have a negative attitude towards marriage (Manning et al., 2007).

Killewald (2016) discussed social and economic changes have occurred in the U.S. family over the past half century. An important factor that is leading couples to divorce is finances. The financial strain perspective argues that limited financial resources stress the marriage and increase the risk of divorce (Killewald, 2016). However, given the development of women's employment, education, labor time, and marriage timing, the circumstances that hold marriages together or pull them apart no longer depends on the woman's lack of finances. The economic independence of a woman can increase the divorce rates when the woman is depending less on financial stability (Killewald, 2016).

Johnston and Thomas (1996) and Willoughby and Dworkin (2009) suggest that a child who has experienced their parents' divorce has interpersonal issues such as trust, control, and submission. Additionally, Willoughby and Dworkin (2009) noted an association between negative attitudes toward marriage and individuals developing risk-taking behaviors, which can include sexual activity and substance use. Studies have demonstrated that individuals who come from a divorced family have higher number of sexual partners and a higher propensity to divorce when conflicts arise (Willoughby &

Dworkin, 2009). Marital conflict and divorce according to Scott, Rhoades, Stanley, Allen, and Markman (2013) are associated with negative child outcomes including lower academic success, and increased depression and anxiety. Thus, it is important for the emerging counselor and therapist to understand certain life events of others and help individuals develop intervention who have been negatively affected by divorce. It is also important for the emerging counselor or therapist to be self-aware if one has also experienced the negative life event of divorce.

Factors of Divorce. Children from divorced families have been proven to score lower on emotional, behavior, social, academic, and health outcomes than their peers who come from unbroken families (Petren, Ferraro, Davis, & Pasley, 2017; Turner & Kopiec, 2006). Teachers of the children with divorced parents' report an increase in conduct problems with lower self-esteem than children who have not experienced divorce in their family (Peten et al., 2017; Turner & Kopiec, 2006). According to Frisco, Muller, and Frank (2007) and Mahl (2018) children from divorced parents often struggle with intimate relationships and have a negative attitude toward marriage with lower intents to marry as young adults. Research indicates that college students from divorced parents are likely to have a more positive attitude toward divorce and will more than likely divorce in the future rather than the college students who have not experienced divorce in their household (Mahl, 2018). Research indicates that adults with divorced parents demonstrate reduced levels of psychological well-being, use substances, an increase in financial issues, and problems within their own marriage (Mahl, 2018; Turner & Kopiec, 2006). These observations noted can be compared with studies that fail to show the

current association between divorce and the effect on children, younger adults, and adults.

History of Marriage and Family Counseling

Each year millions of individuals seek therapy from a family therapist (Lebow & Sexton, 2015). The counseling profession has evolved to addressing client mental health issues, advocacy, and social change, which occurred through the mental health movement during World War I and II, and the Great Depression (Lebow & Sexton, 2015). Family therapy did not actually emerge until the early 1960s, however the clinical influences that helped develop family therapy can be traced prior to the early 1960s. The start of the Great Depression known as the Progressive Era marked a wide range of social and political reform movements (Gurman, & Kniskern, 1991). During this period, there was a shift in the United States' families, which caused many families to have an array of issues such as poverty, social dislocation, immigration, and diseases to name a few factors. During the Progressive Era two organizations, The Charity Organization Society and the Settlement House Movement, formed to help respond to the needs of the troubled families who were experiencing a negative effect to the rapid social changes (Gurman, & Kniskern, 1991).

During the marriage counseling movement in the 1920s, special emphasis was placed on support, counseling, and guidance for couples who reported having troubles within their relationship. There were no individuals who were trained as marriage counselors and the support consisted of clergy, lawyers, gynecologists, and college professors who would assist and support the troubled families (Gurman, & Kniskern,

1991). Many couples seeking counseling during this period, sought assistance for “everyday” problems of marriage and family instead of looking for solutions to help with relationship issues. For example, individuals would seek marital counseling for financial stressors, lack of communication, and being unable to agree due to different values and beliefs (Gurman & Kniskern, 1991).

As marriage counseling became more open to the public, two physicians, Abraham and Hannah Stone, opened a marriage consultation center in 1929 and offered professional marriage counseling in New York City (Gurman, & Kniskern, 1991). The average family income decreased 40 percent with unemployment and lowered living standards. Over 1.5 million married women were living apart from their husbands and the number of marriages dropped precipitously which called for the need of a marriage consultation center (Gurman & Kniskern, 1991). In the 1930s the next efforts were made with the formation of the American Institute of Family Relations, the Marriage Counsel of Philadelphia, the Groves Conference on Marriage and Family, and the National Council on Family Relations. In 1942, leaders from the latter two organizations formed the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Gurman, & Kniskern, 1991). As a result, the profession of marriage counseling has undergone professional development into what is now known as marriage or couples’ therapy.

Today the field of marriage and family counseling encompasses the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and The International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (IAMFC). AAMFT is a professional association founded in 1942 for the field of marriage and family therapy and represents

more than 50,000 marriage and family therapists in the United States and Canada (Advanced Solutions International, Inc, n.d.). IAMFC is a division of ACA and was chartered in 1989 with a multicultural approach. IAMFC is comprised of counselors, mental health counselors, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and marriage and family counselors (IAMFCOnline, n.d.). AAMFT has the vision to increase understanding, education, and research in the field of marriage and family therapy (Advanced Solutions International, Inc, n.d.) while IAMFC has the vision to advocate for the family as a whole system, understand each family presents diverse cultural backgrounds, promote multicultural inclusion, and facilitate problem-solving skills to prevent future problems in the family (Hendricks, Bradley, Ballard, Peluso, & Southern, 2018).

Counselors Responding to the Needs of Marriage and Family Issues

Trends in American society indicate a decline in marriage rates, an increase in non-marital cohabitation, an increase in the number of births to unmarried women, and an increase in single-parent households (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2006). According to Amato (2012), a large body of research and literature exist that focus on finding mental and physical health problems associated with children of divorced parents. A change in attitude is one reason for conflicts in marriage (Jian, 1996). Increasing divorce rates have become commonplace in most developed societies (Amato, 2012). Because of this rise, the American court system refers parents to classes offering divorce education and court or community-based education programs (Criddle et al., 2003). These programs are designed to help parents develop strategies to minimize the negative effects on the

children involved. Criddle et al. (2003) found that individuals who attended such programs reported fewer incidents of returning to court to resolve disagreements with former spouses.

Dutch and Ratanasiripong (2016) state little is known about the effect of marriage and family therapists utilizing and implementing evidence-based therapy. The authors conducted t- tests, correlation analyses, and multiple regression analysis to determine that education, gender, and previous trainings are all associated with positive attitudes toward implementing evidence-based treatment. The Affordable Care Act (2014) required that all health care professions provide mental health treatment to all insured individuals. Health care professions are required to meet state and federal requirements for mental health treatment. Dutch and Ratanasiripong (2016) were able to determine the limitation among marriage and family therapists when providing mental health treatment due to their education and training being based on newly emerged theories at the time. The results of the study indicated the need for marriage and family therapists to have more trainings and education for clinical treatment. In addition to the available literature, when licensed counselors and therapists are seeking a valuable, quality, reputable counseling training that translates well into providing counseling services for marriage and family, self-identity must be a consideration as self-identity can help eliminate countertransference.

Self-Awareness

An important factor that influences the counseling process is the therapeutic relationship with the counselor serving as the most important instrument for change

(Merrell-James, Douglass, & Shupp, 2019). The engagement of the therapeutic relationship between the client and the counselor requires the counselor to pay attention to their inner selves and come to recognize their own personal experiences, feelings, thinking, and biases will influence their clinical work and judgment (Merrell-James et al., 2019). Self-awareness can be the foundation for avoiding unintentional behaviors toward the client (Gehlert, Pinke, & Segal, 2013). Understanding one's own self and greater knowledge on emotions can enhance the therapeutic relationship (Merrell-James et al., 2019). For instance, while a counselor is in training it is imperative to uncover and recognize psychological, relational, spiritual, and cultural issues that one may bring to the work with clients.

Countertransference. When considering countertransference, counselors are likely to over or under emphasize personal emotions based on their own attitudes or needs as well as the avoidance of certain responses (Mohr, Gelso, & Hill, 2005). Graduate schools are designed to help prepare counselors in training to be aware of aspects of self that could possibly cause problematic interactions with the client in the future (Gehlert et al., 2013). The ultimate goal is for counselors in training to use self-awareness in a positive way that enhances his or her clinical skills. According to Gehlert et al. (2013) self-awareness becomes a key component for counselors in training development as self-awareness may potentially alert the counselor in training of countertransference. Most research focuses on multicultural competency in regard to the counselor in training increasing his or her self-awareness (Gehlert et al., 2013; Merrell-James et al., 2019). For instance, an agnostic counselor in training will explore his or her possible reactions to

clients who have a strong belief and the counselor in training's self-awareness will help him or her remain alert to potential countertransference (Gehlert et al., 2013). These observations noted can be compared with studies that fail to show the association between self-awareness and emerging counselors when specifically, counseling marriage and couples.

Huang and Lin's (2014) study, *Attitudes of Taiwanese College Students toward Marriage: A Comparative Study of Different Family Types and Gender* examined the status and relationships between family structure, gender, parental conflict and students' attitudes toward marriage among Taiwanese undergraduate college students. According to Huang and Lin (2014), there are serious social concerns regarding attitudes toward marriage that may directly impact birth, marriages, and divorce rates. Huang and Lin (2014) noted various researchers identified many factors associated with an individual's attitude towards marriage, including family structure, parental conflict, and gender (Algasha & Alkandari, 2010; Larson et al., 1998; Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010). Huang and Lin (2014) emphasized the attitudes of young counselors in training toward marriage are important as these individuals will become counselors or therapists and provide counseling services to married couples, families, and individuals who might be considering marriage. Huang and Lin (2014) only focused on the Eastern culture master-level counseling students and not the Western culture emerging counselors that will be providing the counseling for marriage and couples. The knowledge, awareness, and understanding of marriage are vital factors and a professional standard in the counseling

profession when initially looking at how self-awareness is prevalent in the counseling profession.

There is a demand for education in the coming years for counseling professionals especially with developing trainings and continuing education. Counseling graduate students are to be educated about making fully informed decisions in regard to searching and selecting a counseling graduate program to help in gaining all clinical skills needed (Woo, Lu, Henfield, & Bang, 2017). Further, counseling graduate students need training in the areas of counseling program's mission statements, vision, and training standards. Woo et al. (2017) concluded that many counseling graduate students enter graduate school with the intention of professorship with positive expectations from their program to aid them on the journey towards academics as well as providing effective counseling. This is vital to my study because emerging counselors develop self-awareness to help limit countertransference when providing marriage and couples therapy.

The literature review provides many factors that can lead to stress for individuals who have experienced marital conflict or divorce in the home. Research notes the negative consequences or behaviors associated with divorce for children, young adults, and adults (Scott et al., 2013). Furthermore, researchers state that these factors can have an influence on how one views marriage or divorce (Turner & Kopiec, 2006). Researchers on countertransference note the prevalence and risk factors for these occurrences in the counseling setting, however the attitude of emerging counselors toward marriage is an area for further research (Dutch & Ratanasiripong, 2016). Some researchers have focused on the benefits of graduate schools increasing self-awareness

for counselors in training, however there is no specific research that focuses on emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage based on their family structure (Merrell-James et al., 2019). Day et al. (2011) noted differences between female and male perceptions of marriage. Marriage has exhibited specific roles related to gender-related differences, and the impact of divorce can have significant consequences based on the gender (Day et al., 2011).

Gender

The third predictor variable of this study is gender. Brown, Manning, and Payne (2015) support the findings that marriage in the United States has undergone a rapid transformation with Americans delaying marriage. Although Americans continue to value marriage, there has been a rapid family change in the family structure of marriage. Researchers have not accurately examined the marriage patterns and the spatial differences in marriage are overlooked (Brown, Manning, & Payne, 2015). The traditional gender roles of men and women play a large part in marriage and family dynamics. Gender roles are set forth by society, but they can change as the times change. In the United States, the gender roles of both men and women in marriage have changed greatly over the centuries. As the world continues to change, gender roles of women at home versus the labor market has translated into a decline and withdrawal from marriage, with 60% of women being active in the labor market in the early 2010s compared to 33.9% of women in the late 1960s (Pessin, 2017).

Research has documented gender differences related to expectation and intention to marry (Day, Kay, Holmes, & Napier, 2011). Women report greater intentions to marry,

have a more positive attitude toward marriage, childrearing, and marrying younger than men according to Day et al., (2011). Some researchers will argue that the meaning and practice of marriage have changed more specifically for women. According to Campbell, Wright, and Flores (2012) since the 1960s women have enhanced their decision making by changes in divorce laws, improvement of birth control, and becoming independent in the labor force. Being able to delay childbearing provided women the opportunity to pursue higher education and increase occupational opportunities.

During the 1980s and 90s women became more financially independent which marked a gender shift in the meaning of marriage, and marriage became more of a personal choice rather than an obligation for women (Rogers, 2004). For example, a study by Kanewischer and Harris (2015) focused on how women in marital therapy make their decision of divorcing or staying married based on their therapy. The authors used a phenomenological approach guided by the limited research of women who will pursue marital therapy to help make decisions of staying married or ending their marriage in a divorce. Kanewischer and Harris (2015) used individual semi-structured interviews on heterosexual women over the age of 40 who went to marital therapy for at least five sessions with one therapist and their husband due to considering divorce. Results of the study indicate that therapy is helpful for providing a conversation space for the wife and husband.

Over the previous years, research has documented the presence of equal gender roles among younger adults that constitutes dual-earner households, and deviation from the traditional marital values (Day et al., 2011). This overall trend reflects a generational

attitude shift among marriage and supports equal gender roles within the context of marital responsibilities in the household. While there tends to be equal gender roles within the current generation, women still tend to have a more liberal orientation toward gender roles than men (Day et al., 2011). According to Day et al. (2011) women are more likely to support same-sex marriage, single-parenthood, and cohabitation than men, whereas men are more defenders of traditional marriage values because of the economic and social advantages that favors men. With the findings of the Day et al. (2001) research study, the recent challenges to the definition of marriage presents more of a threat for men as men stand to lose more power and privilege. Another factor to consider with gender is transgender and non-binary gender. Although most individuals including transgender identify as male or female, some individuals do not identify as male or female which is in term identified as non-binary gender (Webb, Matsuno, Budge, Krishnan, & Balsam, 2015). Non-binary gender is not a new term, and the individuals who identify as this are not confused about their identity according to (Webb et al., 2015). Over the past several decades, the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/ questioning), feminist, and other social movements have challenged binary gender and more recently, there has been increasing recognition and visibility of people who do not identify exclusively as either male or female (Webb et al., 2015).

Researchers have suggested that gender may play a significant role in determining the influence of parental divorce on one's attitude (Day et al., 2011). In fact, Amato and DeBoer (2001) found that parental divorce affects the psychosocial wellbeing of women in negative ways while men show no signs of this negative impact. According to Whiton,

Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2008) unmarried women who have divorced parents report lower relationship commitment, less confidence in the longevity of marriage, and lower expectation to marital commitments; however, they have an increase in depression and marital disruption. These observations can be compared with studies that fail to show the association between parental divorce and relationship commitment and any mental health symptoms in men (Whitton et al., 2008).

Marriage and Family Therapy Perceived Benefits

After a thorough and inclusive review of counselor and therapist related literature, it remains that the attitude of the counselor or therapist plays a vital role in the counseling session when focusing on marriage and family therapy. For instance, Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) generally provide marriage and couple counseling and assist individuals to bring about positive change that may not be produced independently (Platt & Scheitle, 2017). LPCs establish a safe and supportive environment for individuals to communicate and identify any issues, behaviors, or feelings that have caused a problem within the marriage or family (Platt & Scheitle, 2017). Counselors who plan to seek licensure, must have the ethical and professional background in counseling. It is also imperative that the individual has developed clear self-awareness not to inflict their own beliefs and values onto their clients. These facts demonstrate that counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage can influence the client-counselor relationship. However, it is the professional's duty to continue developing their own self-awareness about marriage and family, which is a notable component for professionalism and ethics in the counseling profession.

In addition to the benefits of effective marriage and couples counseling by a competent counselor, researchers suggest individuals tend to be able to work through the issues in their marriage instead of filing for divorce (Britzman & Sauerheber, 2014). The quality of the counselor-client relationship is partially determined by the personal qualities of the counselor, which have been shown to be more important to clients than particular techniques or interventions (Tse, Wantz, & Firmin, 2010). It is not easy to always find a competent and qualified marriage and couples therapist because not all states require licensure or certifications that insure the minimum training and experience needed for counselors and therapists to provide effective therapy for marriage and family (Britzman & Sauerheber, 2014). Another benefit that has attributed to marriage and couple therapy is individuals knowing they have a problem, which they will need assistance with resolving for a successful outcome. The emerging counselor can help the individuals with marriage or family issues communicate and work together to become solution focused and improve family functioning (Britzman & Sauerheber, 2014).

When a married couple begins to search for a counselor or therapist for intervention, Sori and Hecker (2015) explained the counselor or therapist should meet the standards of academic and clinical training. The counselor or therapist should have a completed master's or doctoral degree from an accredited educational institution (Britzman & Sauerheber, 2014). D'Andrea and Liu (2009) indicated CACREP-accreditation includes an increased opportunity, a more defined professional identity, and higher ethical standards. A final benefit of effective marriage and couples counseling is that it focuses on brief, solution-focus, and attainable therapeutic goals were in some cases viewed as

the most effective type of treatment for mental health issues such as marital distress, conflict, and issues within the family.

Counselors' and Therapists' Perceived Challenges

While existing literature demonstrated that additional training in ethics might increase self-awareness in counselors there are some perceived and observed challenges that need highlighting as it can directly or indirectly impact clients if the counselor or therapist has not properly identified their attitude toward marriage and couples (Caldwell & Woolley, 2008). Some of the benefits could even be considered a challenge or limitation to prospective and current counselors or therapists. For example, Caldwell and Woolley (2008) discussed how marital therapists who may have the conceived notion that divorce has a highly adverse effect on children are expected to use statements discouraging divorce whereas marital therapists who do not have the same belief will use more positive beliefs about divorce. Caldwell and Wooley (2008) discussed how the role of the marital therapist is to have a neutral role during the counseling session without influencing any of the decisions made by the individuals in counseling.

The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) is concise in its requirements of all licensed counseling professions however, it can be misunderstood because it lacks specific requirements with examples. The ACA (2014) in section A.4.b. requires counselors to be aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior to avoid imposing these on their clients, trainees, and research participants. This is a concise requirement and can be more detailed to discuss the negative effects of not following this requirement can have on the clients. Branson, Cardona, and Thomas (2015) indicated the couples, marriage,

and family therapists in training's struggles with competency or ineffective counseling skills can be addressed through educational interventions. Limited self-awareness in the counselor or therapist can increase problems within the individual's professional and personal growth with clients and self (Branson, Cardona, & Thomas, 2015).

Dahl et al. (2016) explains the examination of the patient–therapist relationship is considered a core element in psychotherapy. The patient's relationship to the therapist is influenced by the transference given during the session. Dahl et al. (2016) conducted self-reports and interviews of 100 outpatients seeking treatment for depression, anxiety, and personality disorders. Countertransference appears to have a significant impact on the treatment process and outcome of psychotherapy. The counselor's disengaged feelings may negatively influence the therapeutic development since discussing feelings are prevalent during the counseling session. Dahl et al. (2016) indicated countertransference is strongly related to poor relationships and personality in the counselor or therapist. The counselor's disengaged feelings in the sessions have been shown to have an adverse impact on the effect of transference work for all the patients receiving counseling, especially for complicated relationships (Dahl et al., 2016).

When reflecting on the current counseling literature, the need to increase prospective and current counselors' and therapists' knowledge, awareness and understanding of reducing countertransference is imperative, but it has not yet been addressed in the counseling literature. Training and supervision should be implemented to focus directly on the therapist's internal thought processes and emotional reactions with providing feedback to the counselor or therapist (ACA, 2014). As the counseling

profession continues to evolve, needs such as strengthening the counseling profession self-awareness must merge with the profession's most significant membership organization, the ACA, and work together to encourage and implement the importance of reducing countertransference.

Need for Further Investigation into Counselors' Attitude Toward Marriage

Branson, Cardona, and Thomas (2015) stated couples, marriage, and family therapists face dilemmas as they are developing their clinical skills while also trying to engage in their personal growth. Sori and Hecker (2015) discuss numerous legal and ethical concerns counselors and therapists should consider when counseling marriage and couples, yet this is not typically covered during ethics courses in graduate counseling programs. The lack of education on legal and ethical concerns illustrates how little attention is focused on counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage. While there appears to be a gap in the current counseling literature about emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage based on their family structures, other helping professions are conducting research on increasing ethical awareness in the counseling profession.

Huang and Lin (2014) even discussed the need for research to better understand the shaping of marital beliefs or attitudes and to develop active strategies for prevention of increasing marital problems. Huang and Lin (2014) suggest that there are many factors associated with an individual's attitude towards marriage. Researchers determined a significant determinate in someone's attitude toward marriage correlates with the family structure such as the parent's marital history (Huang & Lin, 2014). The increasingly

obvious gap in the literature is not the only reason for this quantitative research study but helps prospective and current counselors make fully informed ethical decisions when providing counseling regarding marriage and couples directly and indirectly that can have an impact on that counselor or therapist's professional future.

Summary

Counseling regarding marriage and family can be a difficult task, however counseling in this area is much needed to help emerging counselors evolve and identify self-awareness and biases in the counseling profession. There are many factors that play a role in the counselor developing their attitude towards marriage and couples' therapy and self-awareness is needed for an increase in the counseling profession when it comes to licensure and the ACA Code of Ethics. As evidenced by the existing literature, counselor education and trainings are a vital component to an individual's professional identity, competency, and future in the counseling profession. In the next chapter, I describe in detail how I plan to use the multiple regression approach to explore emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. The goal is to determine if an increase in awareness, knowledge, and self-identity is needed to reduce countertransference in counseling sessions focused on marriage and couples' therapy.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to examine emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. Specifically, my research determined whether a relationship exists between counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013), their gender and family structure as measured by a demographic questionnaire, and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013). In addition, I examined whether the variables of gender, parental conflict, and family structure predict participants' scores on the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). Potential participants for the study were emerging counselors and therapists who are providing counseling to individuals in the mental health field.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this study regarding the examination of emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. In addition, I give the characteristics and size of the sample chosen. This approach will allow for a deeper understanding and determining whether a relationship exists between counselors' attitudes toward marriage based on gender, family structure, and parental marital conflict. I discuss the applicability of multiple regression for this study in-depth in this chapter.

This chapter includes a description of the design for this study, sample population, instruments I used, and the data analysis for the study. I discuss the threat to validity,

ethical procedures, and purpose of the study. I also include the rationale for the study and the specific design selected.

Research Design and Rationale

I completed this study by collecting data from emerging counselors and therapists who provide counseling to clients in the mental health field. I selected emerging counselors and therapists to capture counselors who have obtained a master's degree in the counseling profession and who are currently working in the mental health field with the possibility of collecting hours to become a fully licensed professional counselor (LPC) or Licensed Marital and Family Therapist (LMFT). The dependent variable in this study was the emerging counselors' or therapists' attitudes toward marriage. The variables of gender, parental marital conflict, and family structure were the independent variables, and I used these variables to predict the emerging counselors' scores on the MAS.

I used a multiple regression to analyze the data collected in this study. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero (2015), multiple regression is a continuance of the bivariate regression and allows researchers to determine the relationship of two or more independent variables to the dependent variable. The first research question focused on the presence of a negative correlation between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (CPIC; Fincham, 2013).

The second research question investigated whether gender, family structure, and parental marital conflict will predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage. The

independent variables were gender and family structure as measured by a demographic questionnaire and parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013). The dependent variable consisted of the emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). This type of data provided support for also using a multiple regression analysis. I performed a multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between the variables of gender, family structure, and parental marital conflict and whether gender, parental marital conflict, and family structure predict participants' attitude toward marriage scores.

Quantitative research is a way to quantify a problem by generating numerical data that the researcher transforms to usable statistics. It can be used to quantify attitudes, such as my study, and results can be generalized to a larger population (Creswell, 2009). After review of earlier research and considering the questions that I examined for this research, a quantitative research design was the best option to answer my research questions.

The research design, I chose for this study is also consistent with what other researchers have used when conducting research with multiple independent variables. Huang and Lin (2014) used a regression analysis to further examine the association of family structure, gender, and parental conflict with attitudes toward marriage of Taiwanese college students. Huang and Lin determined whether family types influenced the attitude of students toward marriage as well as if family structure, gender, and parental conflict had a significant relationship to the students' attitudes. This is similar to the data points that are available for the present study.

Huang and Lin (2014) used surveys to assess the students who were enrolled in a general education course from 26 regular education classrooms within four universities in Taiwan. I used many of the variables previously explored by other researchers that have been found to be related to the attitudes of marriage based on individuals' gender, and family structure. In this study, I added an additional variable to determine whether emerging counselors' parental conflict also has a significant relationship to their attitudes toward marriage. I did not have any time constraints for my data collection period.

Methodology

In this section, I discuss my population, sampling method and sampling procedure, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, instrumentation and operationalization of construct, and data analysis plan.

Population

The population for this study consisted of emerging counselors who have a history of working in the mental health profession. My participant population included males and females 30 years of age or younger who have completed a master's degree in counseling or mental health. For this study the age of the population was capped at age 30 years because the CPIC scale instrument used in my study has been validated for emerging adults; however, it has not been validated for older adults (Fincham, 2013). I focused on emerging counselors for this study to help emerging counselors become aware of any biases toward marriage prior to providing any marriage therapy. More than 50,000 marriage and family therapists provide therapy to individuals and couples nationwide (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, n.d.). Regarding LPCs, more

than 120,000 LPCs are under licensure laws enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (ACA, n.d.). It is difficult to approximate how many LPCs provide marriage counseling.

With emerging counselors who have completed a master's degree and currently collecting hours for full licensure, being able to develop self-awareness about marital therapy will be vital in the future counseling professionals. For the participants to be an emerging counselor, the participant will have completed a master's level counseling or marriage and family program and is currently or is currently aspiring to complete requirements, for full licensure as an LPC or LMFT as per the state in which the participant resides. For example, in the state of Texas, mental health professionals providing clinical mental health after completion of the graduate program, must take the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and complete a minimum of 3,000 hours of clinical supervision prior to being licensed in the state of Texas (TCA, 2017).

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

I used a nonprobability convenience sampling because it relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Groves et al., 2009; Toddle & Yu, 2007). Using survey sampling to collect data is common when conducting research (Rhiel & Markowski, 2017). The sample size is important to determine before conducting the survey (Rhiel & Markowski, 2017). Survey researchers help to explain, explore, and describe the phenomenon of attitudes of large populations (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016; Chao, 2012; Groves et al., 2009).

I used the MAS and CPIC scale as the surveys for my study. I created and delivered a demographic survey along with the instruments through Survey Monkey. The website link to the survey was provided to all participants via social networking websites and professional counseling Listservs. Only emerging counselors who have completed a master's degree in the mental health and are 30 years of age or younger were eligible for this study. Emerging counselors over the age of 30 were not be able to participate in this particular study. If the counselor has already completed requirements for licensure, the counselor was also not able to participate in this study.

I calculated my sample size using the G*Power Calculator. The G*Power Calculator allows researchers to select the statistical test they will be using, choose the power analysis, and provide the input parameters required for the analysis (G*Power, n.d.). The effect size specifies the size of the observed effect or relationship between variables (Maher, Markey, & Ebert-May, 2013). For example, I used the F test as my test family, then chose the linear multiple regression: Fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero as my statistical test. The effect size at .5 which is the medium effect size is used to effectively compare the results of the study as well as facilitate the interpretation of the significance of the results. The effect size is the magnitude of the difference between groups. I used the .5 medium effect size because this means that if the two groups' means do not differ by 0.2 standard deviations or more, the difference is insignificant, even if it is statistically significant (Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015). With the error probability of .05, power at .80 and degrees of freedom at 3, I calculated that I would need a minimum of 65 participants for my multiple linear regression using the G*Power

Calculator (G*Power, n.d.). Although the minimum for the survey responses is 66, I attempted to gather more responses to strengthen the results of my study. Power at .80 is used for my study to help determine the smallest sample size needed to detect if there will be a relationship between the variables of interest (Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I posted a survey online through SurveyMonkey for emerging counselors to complete if they are currently working in the mental health field. I advertised the survey on Facebook in groups for professional mental health counselors, and aspiring marriage and family therapists and via platforms associated with American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and ACA. The survey was available until I reached my minimum sample size. Reminders were sent once per week via advertisement on Facebook and through the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, ACA, and the CESNET.

The survey included demographic questions such as age (Are you 30 years of age or younger), origin (Are you a person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin), race (Black or African American, White, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian Indian, and Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, Other Asian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Samoan, Guamanian or Chamorro, or other), gender (male, female, transgender, other, or prefer not to answer), and marital status (married, single, divorced, widowed, separated, never married), and sexual orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight/heterosexual, queer, questioning, prefer not to answer). I used the demographic

information in the data analysis. All participants were required to be 30 or younger in age.

The survey was given online therefore all participants were anonymous, and I did not collect any identifiable data such as their names. The first page of the survey consisted of the informed consent. The informed consent introduced me as the researcher, explained the purpose of the research, and explained the approximate time it would take to complete the survey. The informed consent also ensured anonymous protocol would be taken, explained the risk, and ensured confidentiality. Once the participant clicked on the “I Consent” button, the participant was linked to the brief screening questionnaire. A brief screening questionnaire regarding the criteria of: “Are you an emerging counselor or therapist who is currently or has a history of working in the mental health field?” I provided the definition of an emerging counselor to help participants fully understand if they are qualified to participate in the study in the informed consent. If the participant answered “no” to the question, they were taken to a thank you page whereby they exited the survey. If the participant answered “yes” to the question, the participant was taken to the next question of “Are you 30 years of age or younger?” If the participant answered “no” to the question, the participant was taken to a thank you page whereby they exited the survey. If the participant answered “yes” to the question the participant was taken to the survey and demographic questionnaire.

The participants received a thank you at the end of completing the survey via SurveyMonkey. There was no need for additional follow-up with participants once the surveys were completed. I retrieved the data from SurveyMonkey, by going to the

Analyze Results selection of the survey, clicked save, and then exported the file under “all individual responses” where the data was stored for up to 14 days under EXPORTS (SurveyMonkey, n.d.) The data I collected was downloaded from SurveyMonkey into an Excel spreadsheet and then transferred to be compiled and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0 for Windows software.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

I used two instruments in my study to answer the two research questions. I received permission from both developers via e-mail to use the scales and the scoring for my study. I used the MAS developed by Braaten and Rosen in 1998 and revised by Park and Rosen in 2013 to assess emerging counselors’ attitudes toward marriage (Appendix B). The MAS was developed to overcome shortcomings found in earlier MASs. The MAS aligns with my study as the MAS allowed me as the researcher to see how one perceives marriage based on their family structure which aligns with my theoretical framework of SLT. The MAS consists of a 7-point Likert scale (36 items) ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) that measures various ways an individual might perceive the institution of marriage (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). The MAS showed good discriminant validity as it was able to show that students who had less favorable attitudes toward marriage came from divorced homes (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park and Rosen, 2013).

Park and Rosen (2013) conducted a test and retest of the validity of previous MASs. The results indicate that the MAS has high internal consistency. Park and Rosen (2013) indicated an internal reliability of $r = .82$. Park and Rosen (2013) reported a test

retest reliability of $r = .85$ and subscale reliability alphas were 0.80 (IMS), 0.84 (GAMS), and 0.88 (AMS). According to Park and Rosen (2013), social desirability correlated significantly with nearly all the measures and indicated that it has a significant role related to how persons answer questions regarding marriage and relationships. The study demonstrated that the MAS has favorable psychometric properties and can be a useful tool in marriage and relationship research (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

A few of the sample questions for this measure is “Commitment is valuable for a successful marriage.” “Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage.” “Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a good marriage.” The populations provided with the MAS have been college students of all ethnicities, ranging from the age of 17-41. From the current research by Park and Rosen (2013) it appears that the MAS is a well-constructed and reliable scale for assessment of attitudes regarding marriage.

I also used the CPIC scale developed by Francis Fincham and John Grych (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990) to assess emerging counselors’ perceptions of parental conflict (Appendix C). Participants indicated their perspectives on a 48-item true or false scale with responses ranging from true, sort of true, and false that measure the degree of parental conflict with participants’ perception growing up as a child (Fincham, 2013). Higher scores indicate there is a stronger degree of parental conflict based on the participants’ perspective. For example, researchers investigate how often the child experiences a conflict and if hostility and aggression resulted (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). The researchers conducted this study on how the child was able to adjust

when conflict occurred in the marriage of their parents (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). The CPIC scale aligns with my study as the CPIC scale allowed me as the researcher to see if conflict in the home shaped one's perception toward marriage and divorce. The CPIC scale allowed me as the researcher to take a closer look into the participant's perception of parental conflict in their home that has now possibly shaped their attitude especially while providing counseling to married couples.

Research was also conducted to see how often there was conflict and how much the child blamed themselves for the conflict (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). The CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013) has been found to have an internal consistency reliability of $r = .80$ on all three subscales (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). The three subscales include conflict properties, threat, and self-blame which have been able to prove acceptable levels of test-retest reliability and internal consistency. The validity of the conflict properties subscale is supported with parent reports of conflict and guides child adjustment. The threat and self-blame subscale correlate with the child's response to the vignettes given. The test/retest reliability following a 2-week period revealed stability of $r = .70$ for conflict properties, $r = .68$ for threat, and $r = .76$ for blame (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990). When compared with established measures of parent and spousal ratings on marital conflict, the conflict properties scale correlated to the O'Leary Porter Scale (OPS) (Porter & O'Leary, 1980) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979). The results from these respective scales were also found to be correlated to verbal self-reports from parents and teachers (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Some sample questions are: “I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing.” I get scared when my parents argue.” The reasons my parents argue never change.” The populations given the CPIC scale have been adolescents and emerging adults ranging to up to age 30 with ethnic variation, being 75% Caucasian (Fincham, 2013). Therefore, the CPIC scale appears to be a valid and reliable instrument for assessing perceived marital conflict.

Operationalization

For purposes of this study, I used the following operational definitions:

1. Attitude toward marriage is defined as the outlook an individual has toward marriage in general and expectations toward their own future marital relationship (Wiloughby, 2010). I measured this variable using the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). The MAS measures both married and unmarried individuals ‘attitudes and opinions toward heterosexual marriage. The MAS is scored by summing all individual item scores, with nine items requiring reverse codes. The total MAS score can range from 120 to 250, with higher scores indicating a more positive attitude toward marriage (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).
2. Emerging counselors is defined as students who have completed a master’s degree within the mental health profession and is currently in the process of collecting hours toward a mental health license (Burck, Bruneau, Baker, & Ellison, 2014). For the participants to be an emerging counselor, the participant will have completed a master’s level counseling or marriage and family program

and is currently or aspiring to complete requirements, for full licensure as a LPC or LMFT as per the state in which the participant is living.

3. Family structure is defined as intact or divorced (nonintact) families. Intact families are families which individuals are married and living together (Miles & Servvaty-Scib, 2010). Nonintact families are individuals who are divorced and remained unmarried to anyone (Amato, 2003; Kinnaird & Gerard, 1986). I measured this variable by asking participants to identify their marital status on a demographic questionnaire.
4. Gender is not based on sex or biological differences; however, it can be defined as the social roles men and women play and is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments (Gender, n.d.). I measured this variable by asking participants to identify their gender identity on a demographic questionnaire.
5. Interparental marital conflict is also considered a serious factor that influences individual marital attitudes. Kalter (1987) defined interparental conflict as conflict or inter-parental hostility. I measured this variable using the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013). The CPIC scale assesses an individual's views of several aspects of marital conflict. The three subscales include conflict properties, threat, and self-blame. For each subscale, a higher score reflects a more negative form of appraisal or conflict (Fincham, 2013; Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Data Analysis Plan

I used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25 to perform the statistical analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences software has been

used by researchers to perform quantitative analysis since the 1960s (SPSS Statistics Help, n.d.). The SPSS software can read and write data from other statistical packages, databases, and spreadsheets (SPSS Statistics Help, n.d.). I collected data from the target population utilizing the online survey service called SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey allowed me to have close monitoring of online responses to the survey. I stored the data on my computer hard drive to which only I have access and on an external drive that is kept locked in my safety deposit box when not in use.

My decision to administer an online survey is supported by Dillman et al. (2009) who identified populations likely to respond to Internet surveys as employees of organizations, university students, members of professional associations, purchasers of products and services, and similar populations. Dillman et al. (2009) also argued that Internet surveys for these populations could be reported faster and often at lower costs than traditional survey modes.

After I received IRB approval and collected my data, I used a tutor to audit the complete set of raw data for accuracy and completeness (Walden University Guidebook, 2016). I also used a tutor to verify data and ensure accuracy and correctness before data analysis. I collected the data using SurveyMonkey and downloaded the data to an Excel spreadsheet for screening and cleaning.

The accuracy of data collection is very important and is essential to ensure my study is conducted with fidelity. Data cleaning involved me as the researcher by, reviewing the data to determine if there are any errors (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Spot-checking was the initial method of the data cleaning which involved me

looking for any missing data points. I then ensured the results to confirm the correct codes are used for the responses given. Then I confirmed that the participants provided answers to all the questions given. I used the SPSS program to identify outliers electronically by running the analyses using scatterplots and boxplots. I removed any incomplete surveys or non-rational responses. Field (2013) indicated SPSS will provide information on outliers while also representing the data set via plots and graphs. Any outliers that could cause incorrect measures I removed from the data set.

The research questions for this study are:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant negative correlation between counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013)?

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a statistically significant negative correlation in counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

Null Hypothesis (H_1): There is not a statistically significant negative correlation in counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

RQ2: Does gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013)

predict counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013)?

Alternative Hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013) does predict counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

Null Hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013) does not predict counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

To analyze my research questions, I ran a multiple regression analysis with my predictor and outcome variables (Huang & Lin, 2014). The results provided a correlation table that answered research question number one and the regression statistic answered the prediction in question number two. I displayed the demographic data, the MAS, and the CPIC scale utilizing descriptive statistics.

Threats to Validity

Buckholder et al. (2016) discuss that the desired outcome of the study can be judged by assessing various threats to internal validity. A threat can be defined as a form of alternative explanations other than treatment. Threats to internal validity include: history, which is the possibility that other events could have occurred during the experiment. Another threat includes maturation, which is the possibility that participants could change over time. Testing, which is the possibility that repeated exposure to the

measurement instrument could affect the results. Instrumentation, which means a testing instrument could change that does not correctly measure the treatment. Statistical regression to the mean, which is when extreme scores are bias, which means based on the researcher's subjective views, changes are made in the research design. Selection which means the researchers not knowing the differences between two groups, and overall mortality which is the loss of participants from the sample (Buckholder et al., 2016).

Babbie and Rubin (2007) indicate that internal validity can be determined by controlling any extraneous variables. The threat of history and maturation will not apply to my study because I collected all the data at one point of time. The threat of testing, regression to the mean, and instrumentation did not apply to my study because I collected data in one moment in of time. I did not retest my participants. Also, the MAS and CPIC scale have been proven to provide good reliability and validity.

Babbie and Rubin (2007) indicated that external validity addresses the ability for the study to represent the desired population and situation. In order to have a strong external validity it is critical for me as the researcher to clearly define my population and situation. In this study my population was emerging counselors and therapists working in the mental health field who are 30 years of age or younger. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) asserted that the main threats to external validity were time, location, and individuals. My study employed an online survey which required participants to have access to the Internet. Location is not a threat to external validity as the individuals will be located throughout the United States. However, a potential threat to the external validity of this study is the age limit of the participants. I was not be able to generalize to

anyone outside of the age range of 30 years or younger when looking at mental health professions.

Ethical Procedures

According to my university's Dissertation Guidebook (2016), Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all research is required of all students, faculty members, and staff members who undertake research studies. The purpose of the IRB review is to minimize risk and protect participants' and stakeholders' welfare. I received approval from the IRB before any collecting of data occurred or any contacting of participants. For this study, the research participants were not identified to ensure confidentiality of participants.

Screening questions were at the beginning of the survey and determined if the participants meet the qualifications to participate in the survey. The *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014) requires researchers to be held responsible for conducting ethical, confidential, research practices that follow all institutional, federal, or state procedures. Participants have the right to participate or refuse as well as discontinue the survey at any point if one decides not to continue according to the ethical standards. Participants are obligated to complete an informed consent to ensure that all their information is confidential including answers given on the demographic questionnaire (ACA, 2014). I followed the *ACA (2014) Code of Ethics* to protect and keep all participants' information confidential. I did not collect any identifiable information and I kept all data locked in a filing cabinet within a locked room when not in use. I also set an additional password on my computer

to protect all data entered into SPSS. I will keep all data for five years and then I will destroy it afterwards by shredding any paperwork and delete all data from my hard drive.

Research is considered a vital role in the counseling profession according to the *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014). Section G in the *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014) discusses the ethical considerations when conducting research. The counselor researcher is required to plan, design, conduct, and report research in an ethical manner. Confidentiality and privacy must be maintained during research and publications to avoid any type of risk to the participant.

I used SurveyMonkey that delivered a secure user login with a sign on to confirm my identity. SurveyMonkey includes account verification to ensure I have the only access to the right survey data. SurveyMonkey secured all personal information and data collected from my participants in an account that will belong to me. At the end of the survey I had a thank you page and distributed the survey via Facebook on the counseling pages, ACA, AMFT, and CSNET.

“Managing and Maintaining Boundaries” (ACA, 2014) are important for all research studies. I am a doctoral student in counselor education as well as an LPC, so I am aware that it is possible for my colleagues, as well as coworkers, to participate in my study due to my data responses being anonymous. It was vital for me to remember the *ACA Code of Ethics* so I took all necessary steps to avoid creating any unethical situations for my research study. My survey clearly stated that this is a voluntary study. I ensured again that all information is confidential and protect my participants’ identities. I downloaded the data collected from SurveyMonkey into an Excel spreadsheet and then

transferred to be compiled and statistically analyzed using SPSS 25.0 for Windows software. I stored the data on my computer hard drive to which I only have access and on an external drive that is kept locked in my safety deposit box when not in use.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the research design and rationale, methodology, the instrumentation, and validity, and ethical considerations. I also discussed the importance of confidentiality and following the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) when conducting research. Having the completed surveys from my participants will better assist me in providing feedback and promote the understanding of emerging counselors having self-awareness prior to providing marriage and couples' counseling. The goal was for this research to determine the benefit for social change in counselors and therapists developing a deeper self-awareness as a result of my study. In the next chapter, I will discuss the data collection per completed surveys and findings from the data analysis provided.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Miles and Servaty-Seib (2010) found that many factors are associated with an individual's attitude toward marriage. According to researchers, a significant part of someone's attitude toward marriage correlates with the family structure such as the parents' relational history (Huang & Lin, 2014). Gender and parental conflict have been identified by various researchers as factors associated with an individual's attitude toward marriage (Algasha & Alkandari, 2010; Huang & Lin, 2014; Larson et al., 1998; Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010). Studies have focused on an individual's attitude toward marriage and many scales have been developed to explore these attitudes.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine whether a relationship exists between emerging counselors' and therapists' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS, and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale based on gender and family structure. There were two research questions identified in this quantitative survey research study:

Research Question 1

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant negative correlation between emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013)?

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a statistically significant negative correlation in emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten &

Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

Null hypothesis (H_1): There is not a statistically significant negative correlation in emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013) and their parental marital conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013).

Research Question 2

RQ2: Does gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013)?

Alternative hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), will predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

Null hypothesis 2 (H_2): Gender and family structure as measured by the demographic questionnaire, and parental conflict as measured by the CPIC scale (Fincham, 2013), will not predict emerging counselors' attitudes toward marriage as measured by the MAS (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

In this chapter, I will review the data collection, participant demographics, study analysis techniques and variables, descriptive statistics, and resulting data interpretation.

Data Collection

I received Walden's IRB approval on July 17, 2020 (IRB# 07-17-20-0660381). I began the research study with the distribution of the survey on July 17, 2020, through Facebook counseling groups, ACA, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and the CESNET to recruit participants based on my plan. The questionnaires in this study were available online to participants during a 1-month period and included a description of the survey purpose, two screening questions to meet eligibility criteria, IRB approval number, and the link to the survey which included the informed consent. I used SurveyMonkey to create and organize the survey with the link to the survey embedded in all invites to participate in the study.

I also completed the necessary documents for the Walden Participation Pool on July 17, 2020, and awaited approval for my study to be posted. I was granted approval on July 20, 2020, with the understanding my study survey would stay visible for participants until August 7, 2020.

On July 27, 2020, I sent out my second participation request on the CESNET-Listserv, ACA, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. I continued to post my survey request on Facebook in the counseling groups. August 3, 2020, I sent out my third and final participant request on the ACA, CESNET-Listserv, and American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. On August 4, 2020, I met my targeted sample size of 66 participants. Because I aimed to collect data at least until August 7, I continued to publicize my research study in the Facebook counseling groups with the

hopes of collecting more participants and to also account for any responses that would possibly be ineligible.

On August 10, 2020, with permission from my dissertation committee, I closed the SurveyMonkey survey for participation, with a total of 154 recorded responses, 81 of which were eligible to use for data analysis. I am unable to determine the number of potential participants reached due to my request for participation being distributed via social media website Facebook and counseling associations. Although it is estimated that the request for participation reached several thousand counselors, with 5,276 from the CESNET-Listserv, I am not aware of the number of persons who read my dissertation participation request or met the criteria to participate in the study. However, I was able to determine the completion rate of those individuals who started the survey on SurveyMonkey.

One hundred and fifty-four participants responded to the survey. Due to eligibility requirements of age being 30 years of age or younger and completion of master's degree in a counseling related field, 100 participants were eligible to participate in the survey. Of the 100 participants, 81 completed the survey in its entirety. Because only 66 participants were needed to meet my study's requirement for the Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis, this is a high response rate. It is possible there were many prospective participants who were eligible but chose not to participate. I ran the frequencies for each demographic item requested. I ran descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, range) for each scale item, the separate subscales, and for the entire scale.

Results

Demographics

In this survey and research study, I used nonprobability convenience sampling to obtain participants who identified as an emerging counselor or therapist 30 years of age or younger in the United States. Personal demographics collected included gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and marital status. Eligibility questions used for this quantitative survey research study included identifying having completed a master's degree and working toward licensure, as well as being 30 years of age or younger. Participants who were older than 30 years, fully licensed, or not yet completed a master's degree in counseling or a related field were not eligible to participate in this research study.

The majority of the participants were female ($n = 63, 77.8\%$), then male ($n = 17, 21.0\%$), and one participant identified as other (1.2%) (Table 1). All 81 participants identified as 30 years of age or younger. Participants were also asked about their marital status, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation. Tables 2 and 3 display detailed specifics of the individuals' marital status. Table 4 displays details specifics of the individual's sexual orientation. Tables 5 and 6 display details specifics of the individual's ethnicity and race.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Gender)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Female	63	77.8	77.8	77.8
	Male	17	21.0	21.0	98.8
	Other	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Eighty-one of the participants answered the question regarding marital statuses displayed in Table 2. The majority of the participants ($n = 58$; 71.6%) reported their marital status as single. Only 11 (13.6%) of the participants reported their marital status as married. Five (6.2%) of participants reported never being married. Four (4.9%) reported being separated and three (3.7%) reported being divorced.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Marital Status)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Divorce	3	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Married	11	13.6	13.6	17.3
	Never married	5	6.2	6.2	23.5
	Separated	4	4.9	4.9	28.4
	Single	58	71.6	71.6	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Based on the participants' answer to the marital status, the answers were grouped into categories of intact and nonintact for family structure. Intact were the individuals who identified as married (Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010). Nonintact were the individuals who identified as single, divorced, separated, widowed, or never married (Amato, 2003; Kinnaird & Gerard, 1986). Based on Table 3, the majority of the participants' family structure is nonintact ($n=70$; 86.4%) with a small percentage ($n =11$; 13.6%) being intact.

Table 3

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Nonintact vs. Intact)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Nonintact	70	86.4	86.4	86.4
	Intact	11	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Eighty-one (81) of the participants answered the question regarding sexual orientation displayed in Table 4. The majority of the participants ($n = 66$; 81.5%) reported their sexual orientation as straight/heterosexual. Only six (7.4%) of the participants reported their sexual orientation as bisexual. Three (3.7%) of participants reported being gay and another three (3.7%) participants reported being lesbian. One participant (1.2%) reported being queer, one participant (1.2%) reported questioning, and another one participant (1.2%) preferred not to respond to the question.

Table 4

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Sexual Orientation)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bisexual	6	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Gay	3	3.7	3.7	11.1
	Lesbian	3	3.7	3.7	14.8
	Prefer not to respond	1	1.2	1.2	16.0
	Queer	1	1.2	1.2	17.3
	Questioning	1	1.2	1.2	18.5
	Straight/Heterosexual	66	81.5	81.5	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Eighty-one (81) of the participants responded to the question regarding ethnicity displayed in Table 5. The majority of the participants ($n = 74$; 91.4%) reported their ethnicity as not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Only three (3.7%) of the participants reported their ethnicity as Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano. One participant (1.2%) reported being Asian or Asian American, one participant (1.22%) reported yes to another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin and two participants (2.5%) preferred not to respond to the question.

Table 5

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Ethnicity)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian or Asian American	1	1.2	1.2	1.2
	No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	74	91.4	91.4	92.6
	Prefer not to respond	2	2.5	2.5	95.1
	Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (Print origin for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard)	1	1.2	1.2	96.3
	Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am, Chicano	3	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Eighty-one (81) of the participants responded to the question regarding race displayed in Table 6. Majority of the participants ($n = 62$; 76.5%) reported their race as Black or African American. Fifteen (18.5%) of the participants reported their race as White or Caucasian. One participant (1.2%) reported being Vietnamese, and three participants (3.7%) reported other and did not specify their race.

Table 6

Participant Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (Race)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black or African American	62	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Other (please specify)	3	3.7	3.7	80.2
	Vietnamese	1	1.2	1.2	81.5
	White or Caucasian	15	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

In reviewing the demographics of the current sample, the study indicates the current sample is mostly a representative of straight/heterosexual, African American females who reported a marital status as single and are not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish descent. The results also indicate that the females more than likely come from mostly of a nonintact family structure. With these findings, there is a small range of difference when examining the factors of marital status, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

I designed this study to examine the effects gender, interparental conflict, and family structure have on emerging counselors and therapists' attitudes toward marriage. I asked participants to complete the MAS, CPIC scale, and demographic questionnaire after consenting to participate and answering eligibility questions. I generated a survey flow in SurveyMonkey to complete the MAS, CPIC scale, and demographic questionnaire. Participants were asked to indicate their level of intent to marry, general attitudes toward marriage, and aspects of marriage, as administered by the MAS, using

Likert-type scale questions ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. I asked participants to indicate their level of interparent conflict in the home at a younger age, as administered by the CPIC scale, using Likert-type scale questions ranging from true, sort of true, and false. Participants were also asked to indicate their marital status using the demographic questionnaire ranging from single to married.

I analyzed the collected data from the 81 participants using IBM SPSS Version 25. I then extracted the data from the Survey Monkey system and downloaded the data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The original file consisted of 154 responses, including incomplete responses. I filtered only for completed responses (those who responded to each of the scale items and each of the demographic variables) and created a new spreadsheet with 81 complete responses. I recoded all scale items as numeric fields. I then color-coded the items with reverse coding and re-coded these to be interpreted as intended in the scale documentation. There were ten reverse-coded items in the MAS scale and 14 reverse-coded items on the CPIC scale. I calculated the scores for each individual sub-scale and the total scales for MAS and CPIC.

Marital Attitude Scale

When using the assessments, it is important to notice the differences in scoring for each of the assessments. For the MAS, participants who received higher scores were presumed to have more positive attitudes toward marriage (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). For example, higher scores in aspect of marriage indicate a better attitude toward getting marriage and lower scores in general attitude of marriage indicate a less likelihood to want to get married. Therefore, lower scores on the MAS indicated

that the individual may have a more negative attitude toward getting married (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013).

Table 7 displays the means and standard deviations of the three MAS subscales among the participants. The first subscale, Intent to Marry Scale (IMS), is a three-item scale designed to measure an individual's intentions of getting married in the future (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). Summed scores range from 0 to 18 with higher scores indicating a more positive intent toward getting married. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score (Table 7) was ($M=16$; $SD=3.1$) indicating majority of the participants intended to marry. A strong positive relationship was found between the Intent to Marry, the General Attitude Toward Marriage, and the Aspect of Marry with the strongest relationship being between Intent to Marry and the General Attitude Towards Marriage ($r(80)=.786$; $p=.000$). The relationship between Intent to Marry and Aspect of Marriage was weak though positive ($r(80)=.273$; $p=.014$). A strong, linear, statistically significant relationship was found between Intent to Marry and the total score on the MAS ($r(80)=.775$; $p=.000$).

The second subscale, General Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale (GAMS), is a 10-item subscale designed to assess individuals' general opinions toward marriage by examining the three factors of positive attitudes, negative attitudes, and fears or doubts (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). Summed scores range from 0 to 94 with higher scores indicating a more positive attitude toward marriage. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score was ($M=71.06$; $SD=13.7$) indicating participants have a more positive attitude toward marriage.

The third subscale, Aspects of Marriage Scale (AMS), is a 23-item scale designed to measure an individual's expectations for what certain aspects of marriage will include (Braaten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). Summed scores range from 0 to 138 with higher scores indicating a more positive expectations for the important six factors of romance, respect, trust, finances, meaning, and physical intimacy. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score for AMS was ($M=126.79$; $SD=11.4$) indicating participants have a more positive outlook and expectation for romance, respect, trust, finances, meaning and physical intimacy.

The highest score a participant could make on the MAS was 250 and of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the total mean for the MAS was ($M=213.85$; $SD=21.9$). A strong, linear, statistically significant relationship was found between intent to marry (IMS), general attitude toward marriage (GAMS), aspect of marriage (AMS) and the MAS (Marital Attitude Scale) with the intent to marry (IMS) and general attitude toward marriage (GAMS) having a slightly stronger influence on the MAS (Marital Attitude Scale) than the aspect of marriage (AMS) which includes the value of respect, financial stability, trust, meaning, and physical intimacy (Bratten & Rosen, 1998; Park & Rosen, 2013). The participants' intention of getting married in the future and their general opinions about marriage had more of an impact on their overall attitude about marriage than their assumptions of what marriage will be like.

Table 7
Means and (Standard Deviations) of the Marital Attitude Subscales Across Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total IMS	81	6	18	16.00	3.110
Total GAMS	81	31	94	71.06	13.604
Total AMS	81	69	138	126.79	11.413
Total MAS	81	120	250	213.85	21.826
Valid N (listwise)	81				

CPIC Scale

Table 8 displays the means and standard deviations of the eight CPIC subscales among the participants. The CPIC scale is composed of eight subscales; however, the subscales also can be combined into 3 scales: Conflict Properties (Frequency, Intensity, Resolution, Triangulation), Threat (Threat, Coping Efficacy), and Self-Blame (Content, Self-Blame) (Fincham, 2013). Higher scores indicate increasingly negative forms of conflict or appraisal (Fincham, 2013). The questionnaire is used to view the child's perception about interparental conflict in their own family (Fincham, 2013).

The first subscale, Conflict Properties (27 items) reflects conflict that occurs regularly and involves higher level of hostility that is poorly resolved (Fincham, 2013). Summed scores range from 0 to 51 with higher scores indicating higher conflict and hostility in the home. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score was ($M=17.7$; $SD=14.57$) for the Conflict Properties scale indicating a lower level of conflict and or hostility in the home.

The second subscale, Threat (12 items) measures the degree to which children felt threatened by and can cope with interparental conflict when it occurs (Fincham, 2013).

Summed scores range from 0 to 24 with higher scores indicating children being able to cope with the interparental conflict. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score was ($M=7.56$; $SD=6.39$) indicating that there was a lower level of the participants being able to cope with the interparental conflict as a child.

The third subscale, Self-Blame (9 items) assesses the frequency of child-related conflict and the degree to which children blame themselves for the interparental conflict in their home (Fincham, 2013). Summed scores range from 0 to 16 with higher scores indicating the child blamed themselves for the interparental conflict. Of the 81 participants who completed the survey, the mean score was ($M=2.12$; $SD=3.49$) indicating the participant as a child had lower levels of blaming themselves for the interparental conflict.

Table 8

Means and (Standard Deviations) of the Children's' Perception of Interparental Conflict Subscales Across Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Freq CPIC	81	0	12	4.59	3.376
Intensity CPIC	81	0	14	5.40	4.274
Resolution CPIC	81	0	12	4.31	3.663
Content CPIC	81	0	7	.84	1.553
Threat CPIC	81	0	12	2.88	3.508
Coping CPIC	81	0	12	4.68	2.885
Blame CPIC	81	0	9	1.28	1.938
Triangulation CPIC	81	0	13	3.42	3.248
Total CPIC	81	0	74	29.09	19.741
Valid N (listwise)	81				

Blame CPIC	Pearson	.222	.170	.181	.746	.321	.240	1	.481	.459
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.128	.105	.000	.003	.031		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
Trinagul CPIC	Pearson	.506	.377	.500	.393	.443	.280	.481	1	.672
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.011	.000		.000
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
Total CPIC	Pearson	.856	.840	.830	.352	.817	.716	.459	.672	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81

Pearson Correlation

I calculated the correlation coefficients for the total score on the scales to determine if there was a relationship between the MAS and CPIC scale. I ran a Pearson correlation to determine if the participants' experience with parental conflict in the home would influence their attitude toward marriage. The Pearson correlation measures the degree of the linear relationship between two variables. Correlation ranges from -1.0 to 1.0. To determine if the results would be significant, the significance level would need to be less than .05. Based on the data collected for this study, I was able to reject the null hypothesis for research question #1. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between the respondents' scores on the CPIC scale and the MAS. A negative relationship can be defined as higher scores on X (CPIC) are associated with lower scores on Y (MAS). Results of this study indicated the higher the participant scored on the CPIC the lower their score was on the MAS, ($r(80) = -.273, p = .014$). This means the more the participant experienced parental conflict in the home, the less the participant had a positive attitude toward marriage.

The Total CPIC has a statistically significant and negative relationship on the MAS. As expected, as the level of exposure to interparental conflict increased there was a decrease in the overall positive feelings and expectations about their marriage. The Frequency CPIC ($r(80)=.856$; $p=.000$), Resolution CPIC ($r(80)=.830$; $p=.000$), Blame CPIC ($r(80)=.459$; $p=.000$), and Triangular CPIC ($r(80)=.672$; $p=.000$) were found to be significant in determining the participant's overall attitude toward marriage. The frequency with which they saw their parents arguing, whether their parents were still angry with each other after the arguments, the degree to which they felt it was their fault for their parent's argument and the extent to which the participant felt like they had to take sides impacted their overall attitudes toward marriage (Fincham, 2013). The Total Children Perception of Interparental Conflict (CPIC) and all of its subscales were found to be insignificant on the participants' intention to marry (IMS) ($r(80)=-.149$; $p=.185$).

Alternatively, The Total Children Perception of Interparental Conflict (CPIC) was found to be statistically significant with the general attitude toward marriage (GAMS) ($r(80)=-.232$; $p=.038$). The more often the participants' observed their parents' arguing, the longer the anger lasted after the argument, and the extent to which they felt they were called upon to take sides negatively impacted their opinion of marriage. There was not a statistically significant relationship between Total Children Perception of Interparental Conflict (CPIC) and Aspects of Marriage (AMS) ($r(80)=-.206$; $p=.065$). The extent to which participants felt it was their fault their parents argued, and they had to take sides in the argument was statistically significant to their expectations about marriage. This result is aligned with Moura, Santos, Rocha, and Matos (2010) findings that adolescents and

emerging adults who perceived triangulated in their parents' conflict tended to blame themselves.

Table 10

Correlations of the Children's' Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale and MAS

		Total MS	Total CPIC
Total MAS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.273*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014
	N	81	81
Total CPIC	Pearson Correlation	-.273*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	
	N	81	81

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to assess interparental conflict, gender, and family structure to predict attitudes toward marriage scores (See Table 10-11 for detailed results.) Based on the data collected for this study I was unable to reject the null hypothesis for research question #2. The results indicated that there was not a collective significant effect between gender, family structure, parental conflict, and attitudes toward marriage ($F(3, 77) = 2.465, p = .069, R^2 = .088$). Of the three variables, interparental conflict ($\beta = -.301; p = .015$) made the only significant unique contribution. Neither family structure ($\beta = 7.2; p = .300$) nor gender ($\beta = .422; p = .936$) made a significant contribution to the model, suggesting that interparental conflict is the best predictor of negative attitudes toward marriage.

Table 11

Summary of the CPIC Scale, Gender, and Family Structure in Relation to the MAS

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.296 ^a	.088	.052	21.250

a. Predictors: (Constant), What is your Marital Status-Recode, Total

CPIC, Gender: What is your gender?

b. Dependent Variable: Total MAS

Table 12

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Perception of Interparental Conflict, Gender, Family Structure, and the Participants' Scores on the Scale Measuring Attitudes Toward Marriage

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3338.767	3	1112.922	2.465	.069 ^b
	Residual	34769.455	77	451.551		
	Total	38108.222	80			

a. Dependent Variable: Total MS

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your Marital Status-Recode, Total CPIC, Gender: What is your gender?

Table 13

Coefficients of the CPIC Scale, Gender, and Family Structure in Relation to the MAS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	221.104	7.882		28.052	.000
	Total CPIC	-.301	.120	-.272	-2.499	.015
	Gender: What is your gender?	.422	5.232	.009	.081	.936
	What is your Marital Status- Recode	7.194	6.900	.114	1.043	.300

a. Dependent Variable: Total MS

Summary

In this chapter, I summarized the results from the participants who were eligible to take part in the survey research study. Results of this study indicate that there was a significant negative association between attitudes toward marriage and parental marital conflict meaning the higher the participant scored on the CPIC scale the lower their score was on the MAS. Results of this study also indicated that there was not a collective significant effect between gender, family structure, parental conflict, and attitudes toward marriage. In the following chapter, I will interpret these findings with some possible explanations and rationales for these results. I will also discuss the limitations of the study, social justice implications, and recommendations for future research studies from this survey research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Part of identity exploration in emerging adulthood is forming attitudes toward long-term relationships and toward marriage (Willoughby, 2010). Researchers who have studied marriage, have stated that beliefs and attitudes toward marriage often affect as well as predict the behavior surrounding marriage. For example, attitudes toward marriage include beliefs on the benefits and costs of marriage, level of importance of marriage, desire to marry, and factors involved in being ready for marriage (Plotnick, 2007; Steinberg, Davila, & Fincham, 2006; & Willoughby, 2010).

The purpose of this quantitative survey research study was to explore the interparental conflict with the individuals' attitude toward marriage and the individuals' attitude toward marriage based on their family structure, gender, and interparental conflict. The main findings of this study indicated (a) emerging counselors or therapists who have experienced a high or moderate amount of parental conflict in the home had more of a negative attitude toward marriage than the emerging counselors or therapists who had little to no parental conflict in the home; and (b) gender, family structure, and parental conflict combined did not necessarily have an impact on the emerging counselor or therapist attitudes toward marriage.

Interpretation of the Findings

I designed this study to examine the effects of gender, interparental conflict, and family structure on emerging counselors and therapists' attitudes toward marriage. In reviewing the findings for this survey, there were several results that appeared. First, a

strong negative correlation was found between the participants' interparental conflict in the home and their attitude toward marriage, indicating that negative attitudes toward marriage in general is associated with having interparental conflict in the home at a younger age.

The results also indicated that the participants who reported witnessing higher levels of interparental conflict as children were more likely to hold a more negative attitude toward marriage than those whose parents had lower levels of conflict in the home. The results also highlight that moderate or high parental conflict have the same negative effect on the participant suggesting that moderate parental conflict is enough to affect one's attitude toward marriage. Results denoted that the majority of the participants have more of a positive attitude toward marriage with the intent to one day be married. This is important as this has the potential of spilling over into the counseling session with their clients if the counselor or therapist is not aware of their own biases with marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Despite the negative relationship between interparental conflict and attitude toward marriage, majority of the participants have the intent to one day be married. This finding does not support my original hypothesis and differs from previous research indicating that females have a greater intent to marry than males (Willoughby, 2010). Additionally, women did not differ from men in the number of doubts or marital fears. Willoughby (2010) suggested that women tend to hold more positive views toward marriage; however, the subscale results of the MAS did not differ between men and women.

In this study, I found a significant negative association between males and interparental conflict in the home. Males tended to have a lower score on the total MAS if reported higher interparental conflict in the home. The data collected for the purpose of this study exploring gender, family structure, and parental conflict collectively did not predict the individuals' marital attitude. It is possible that men may hold more negative views toward marriage in general due to social, political, and cultural changes that have shifted the way younger generations possibly relate to marriage. Day et al. (2011) suggested for example cohabitation and destigmatization of divorce have contributed to men's attitude toward marriage.

Many researchers have found evidence suggesting that younger adults who come from nonintact homes are more likely to express a more negative attitude toward marriage with lower intentions to marry (Garbardi & Rosen, 1992; Thornton & Young, 2001). The results revealed a significant relationship between interparental conflict and reported levels of negative attitudes about marriage, suggesting that individuals who perceived their parents to be engaged in frequent unresolved conflict are likely to harbor more negative attitudes about marriage. Additionally, the CPIC scale scores indicated that individuals who experienced moderate to high levels of conflict in their home did not have the coping skills needed to cope with the conflict of their parents. This result is further supported by the literature on the SLT indicating an individual's observance, imitation, and model of parents' behavior can shape the individual's attitude toward marriage based on lived experiences (Bandura, 1977). This finding is supported in the

literature, as parental conflict is often associated with increased negative attitudes toward marriage (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Another result of the study suggests that the emerging counselors' or therapists' family structure does not particularly influence the individual's attitude toward marriage. Although the demographic questionnaire shows majority of the participants come from a nonintact household, this did not influence their attitudes toward marriage when looking collectively with gender and interparental conflict. Per the social learning theory, an individual's home is where he or she begins to learn about marriage and where an early impression begins, meaning the level of conflict in the parents' relationship affect a child's attitude (Amato & Booth, 2001; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992). Research suggests that there is a relationship between an individual's family structure and his or her attitude toward marriage; however, per my results I could not reject the null hypothesis.

Last, the results suggest that emerging counselors or therapists who have a positive attitude toward marriage did not have higher scores when assessing interparental conflict at a younger age. Emerging counselors or therapists who expressed the intent to marry and had a positive general attitude of marriage had higher coping skills with less self-blame if parental conflict occurred. Participants who had low levels of parental conflict on all 3 subscales of the CPIC scale also had higher levels of a positive attitude toward marriage. It would be important to determine how an individual would cope when faced with interparental conflict at a younger age. Future research is needed to determine if the parent's marital status persuades the individual's attitude toward marriage. A larger

sample size would be necessary to increase statistical power and contribute to more generalizability amongst emerging counselors and therapists.

Limitations of the Study

It is imperative to review the limitations of the generalizability of the results of this study. One of the limitations of this survey research study is that the MAS and CPIC scale are all self-reported measures, increasing the chances of poor response rates and making it difficult for researchers to generalize findings to the population being studied. Potential participants may have not seen, disregarded, erased, or did not complete the survey in its entirety which is a common limitation of all online survey research (Park, Park, Heo, & Gustafson, 2018). Response rates continue to fall despite the increase in demand for survey research in the United States which makes it more difficult to generalize findings for research studies (Coughlan, Cronin, & Ryan, 2009). Because I was unable to identify the response rate of the potential individuals who could have completed the survey, I am unable to determine if these results are generalizable to the counseling population.

Another limitation might be if the participants had any difficulties comprehending the questions or reporting an answer (Bautista, 2012). Other limitations include lack of participant completion of the survey or participant's need for help to complete the survey (Coughlan et al., 2009). Bautista (2012) indicated that participants may also interpret the question a certain way that is not intended which creates error. Participants could have had a different understanding of marital attitude or interparental conflict in the home than the instruments intended to measure. Although it is understood that emerging counselors

and therapists understand the meaning of marital attitude and interparental conflict, this is a limitation that must be considered. Another limitation consists of the participants possibly exaggerating the answers to imply a positive outlook with the hope of being a part of normative social behavior (Bautista, 2012). I purposefully included eligibility questions to obtain access to the two assessments and made each question a requirement to help avoid participants not answering questions or just failing to respond (Bautista, 2012). Another limitation are the factors such as environment, time constraint, personal beliefs, or values that may have also impacted the participant's responses and possibly affected the results of the study. Participants may not have been in an environment that allowed them to focus on the understanding of the questions as well as possibly not having enough spare time to truly focus on each question (Stopher, 2012). Several studies demonstrated that individuals' values and beliefs about marital roles, conflict, and happiness in the marriage will shape their perception about marital satisfaction (Pollard & Harris, 2013). Therefore, an individual's belief and personal value could determine how an individual would answer a question focused on their perception of marriage.

The following are limitations of the assessments used in this survey research study. For the MAS, a limitation includes the perception that all participants are considering marriage and are all single individuals. For the CPIC scale, a limitation includes the notion that all participants experienced interparental conflict in the home at a younger age. Because 11 participants (13.6%) were married (intact family structure), it is possible that the results of the MAS are not generalizable to the emerging counselors or therapists' attitude toward marriage.

The following are limitations according to the sample size for this survey research study. The sample does not have gender skewness and may not be generalizable to male or transgender emerging counselors or therapists due to the majority of the sample size identifying as female ($n = 63$, 77.8%). This sample also may not be generalizable to emerging counselors or therapists who identify as queer, bisexual, lesbian, gay, questioning, as majority of the participants in this sample identified as straight/heterosexual ($n = 66$; 81.5%). The results of this study also may not be generalizable to the entire emerging counselors or therapist's population due to the high percentage of the participants identifying as Black or African American ($n = 62$; 76.5%). Differences in the family structure as majority of the participants identified coming from a nonintact structure ($n = 70$; 86.4%) also pose another limitation to generalizability of the results of this survey research study.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research studies include the use of a wider range of sample size as it relates to race and sexual orientation. It is recommended that research be conducted to study whether race and sexual orientation differences exist between the individuals' attitude toward marriage and any parental conflict in their home. All the participants had graduated with a master's in counseling or related field. A study should be developed to examine licensed professional counselors' understanding of how interparental conflict in their home contribute to their attitude toward marriage. An additional recommendation is to study how counseling styles may differ when a counselor has not yet developed self-awareness when it pertains to marital attitudes. It is

also recommended to examine if there is a relationship between the subscales of the MAS and the subscales of the CPIC scale.

I further recommend identifying ways to reach emerging counselors or therapists who did not participate, as these individuals may currently not be aware of their own attitude toward marriage prior to providing therapy and this could possibly lead to harming the client. This study can also be replicated with the intent to follow emerging counselors or therapists who have recently completed a masters to explore the effects of increasing self-awareness on their counseling skills. I recommend that research be conducted to study the adverse effects of countertransference on clients who seek premarital counseling. I also recommend that research be conducted to study the awareness and action taken by emerging counselors once self-biases have been recognized. This study can be the incentive to develop trainings for counselors to learn how to develop self-awareness with couples and marital counseling to help prevent countertransference in the counseling sessions. Last, I recommend for a research study to be conducted to better understand the marital attitudes in emerging and professional counselors as well as examine if the parents' marital status makes a difference in the individual's attitude toward marriage. I also recommend that students take the MAS and CPIC scale while in graduate school to increase their self-awareness. This may be helpful in gaining a better understanding of how counselors' or therapists' home environment as a child may have affected their view on marriage and even divorce.

Implications

A high need exists for the counseling profession to identify how to prevent countertransference in the counselor-client relationship as it relates to premarital and marital counseling. With this being a high need, it is clear there are implications of this research study. The desired results of this survey research study were to contribute to the knowledge of the counseling field in regard to exploring the relationship between interparental conflict, family structure, gender, and marital attitudes in emerging counselors or therapists in the United States. By exploring these factors in emerging counselors or therapists, this study could provide clarity, positive social change, and even advocacy to improve the counselors' or therapists' self-awareness when it relates to their own biases surrounding marriage (Huang and Lin, 2014).

Although future studies are needed to determine how interparental conflict contribute to negative marital attitudes of counselors or therapists, the field of counseling also needs to support counselors or therapists in increasing their self-awareness and creating boundaries within the counseling session to decrease harm to clients served. The counseling profession will need to advocate for training to assist in this area of helping counselors to increase their self-awareness based on the American Counseling Association *Code of Ethics* implementing that no harm be caused to the client (ACA, 2014).

Social Change

The social change prospective of this survey research study is to improve the overall self-awareness of emerging counselors or therapists as well as to advocate for

trainings to assist the counselor or therapist to achieve this goal. Walden University (2016) indicates social change efforts can impact individuals and communities on an individual, organization, or global scale. According to Del la Sablonniere (2017), all research should include its capacity to impact society as the results of the research should implement efforts toward social change. The goal of this survey research study was to contribute to social change by increasing self-awareness in emerging counselors' or therapists' marital attitude and decrease any harm to clients receiving premarital or marital counseling. Below I will discuss individual, organizational, and global social change implications.

Individual social change implications The social change potential of this survey research study is to improve the quality of care provided to the clients being offered premarital and marital counseling as the *ACA Code of Ethics* requires counselors to avoid harming the client and to minimize unavoidable or unanticipated harm (ACA, 2014). The counseling profession's mission to increase client outcomes in mental health treatment and decrease harm to the client is based on the strength of the counselor (ACA, 2014). De la Sablonniere (2017) indicated the importance for the counseling profession to focus on the counselors' or therapists' self-awareness through increasing knowledge on being aware of self-biases and creating boundaries to create social change. It is important to review the organizational social change of the survey research study.

Organizational social change implications. According to De la Sablonniere (2017), in order for this research study to impact individuals, organizations, and the larger society itself, individuals in authority must share the same long-term goals put forth in

this current study. As previously mentioned in chapter one, Collins et al. (2015) discussed in the counseling field, social justice helps practitioners understand the clients' worldviews and their reason for wanting to get help. Therefore, decreasing experiences of countertransference in the counseling sessions and decreasing harm to clients, may improve the quality of care provided to clients, contributing to social change in the United States. There could be a desire to increase positive social change, but lack of training often makes it difficult for the counselor or therapist to create. It may be helpful to advocate for the counseling profession at different mental health organizations, to develop and implement self-awareness trainings to increase the well-being of the counselor and the clients being served. The potential for the increase in social change begins with the mental health organizations being on board. Global social change must be discussed to have an even larger social change impact in the world.

Global social change implications. Social change can have a global impact; however, it is necessary to understand how social change efforts can impact a society on a global level. In this research study, social change implications are geared toward improving the counselors or therapist's self-awareness on marital attitudes in order to provide better premarital and marital counseling to clients who are seeking help. There is a need for more members of society across the different regions of the world to acknowledge and support the social change potential of decreasing harm provided to clients by counselors who have not identified their own biases when it relates to marital attitudes. With the acknowledgement and support of this research study, this may help to impact social change on a global level (De la Sablonneire, 2017). This research study

provides possible paths for social change that may improve the quality of the counselor or therapists' counseling skills and society as a whole. The goal is to be able to share this research with the counseling professions who have the tools needed to make a larger impact on an individual, organizational, and global level.

Conclusion

The results of this study add to the literature on emerging counselors and therapists' marital attitudes by helping to further understand the important relationship between early childhood experiences with parental conflict and its impact on marital attitudes. The results suggest that childhood interparental conflict is more strongly associated with negative attitudes toward marriage in emerging counselors and therapists. These results have several important implications for emerging counselors and therapists particularly those who have the desire to provide couples or marital counseling. The ACA seeks to prevent any ethical violations of counselors projecting any biases they may have onto their clients (ACA, 2014). Countertransference is a significant problem in the counseling field. These results support the need for emerging counselors and therapists to spend adequate time thoroughly assessing the level of interparental conflict experienced in their lives and its effects on their intentions and attitudes toward marriage prior to providing any counseling.

As demonstrated by the findings of this quantitative survey research study, emerging counselors and therapists who experience parental conflict in the home have a greater negative attitude toward marriage without being self-aware of their biases. Additionally, counselors who have developed a self-awareness are less likely to have

countertransference within the counselor-client relationship. My hope is to see the future of the counseling profession focused on supporting emerging counselors or therapists with the first step being to develop trainings to help increase self-awareness and decrease countertransference in the counseling profession.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age: Are you 30 years of age or younger?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. Are you a person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - a. No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 - b. Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am, Chicano
 - c. Yes, Puerto Rican
 - d. Yes, Cuban
 - e. Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (Print origin for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard)

3. Please identify your race:
 - a. White
 - b. Black, African Am, or Negro
 - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - d. Asian Indian
 - e. Chinese
 - f. Japanese
 - g. Korean
 - h. Vietnamese
 - i. Native Hawaiian
 - j. Guamanian or Chamorro
 - k. Samoan
 - l. Other Pacific Islander (Print race for example: Fijian, Tongan)
 - m. Other Asian (Print race for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian)
 - n. Some other race (Print race)

4. Gender: What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Other
 - e. Prefer not to respond

5. Sexual Orientation:
 - a. Bisexual
 - b. Gay
 - c. Lesbian

- d. Straight/Heterosexual
 - e. Queer
 - f. Questioning
 - g. Prefer not to respond
6. Marital Status: What is your Marital Status?
- a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorce
 - d. Widowed
 - e. Separated
 - f. Never Married
7. Have you completed a Masters' Degree in a mental health counseling program or marriage and family program and currently working toward licensure?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Appendix B: Marital Attitude Scale

The Marital Scales

Park and Rosen, 2013

The Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) is a self-report measure of both married and unmarried individuals' attitudes and opinions toward marriage. The Marital Scales applies to individuals of any age, ethnicity, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation and is comprised of three different scales that measure overall attitudes toward marriage, expectations to get married, and assumptions of what marriage will be like. I would like you to tell what your thoughts on the intent, attitude, and aspect of marriage are by answering the below questions.

Intent to Marry Scale

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.

* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. I intend to get married someday.
2. I want to marry.
3. I do not hope to marry.*

General Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.

* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. Marriage is beneficial.
2. I am fearful of marriage.*
3. People should not marry.*

4. I have doubts about marriage.*
5. Marriage is a "good idea".
6. I do not have fears of marriage.
7. Marriage makes people happy.
8. Most marriages are unhappy situations.*
9. Marriage is important.
10. Marriage makes people unhappy.*

For researchers, factors and items are as follows:

Positive Attitudes: 1, 5, 7, 9

Negative Attitudes: 3, 8, 10

Fears/Doubts: 2, 4, 6

Aspects of Marriage Scale

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree
3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.

* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a good marriage.
2. Romance is important for a successful marriage.
3. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a good marriage.
4. Trust is important for a good marriage.
5. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a good marriage.
6. Commitment is valuable for a successful marriage.
7. Financial stability is important for a good marriage.
8. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a healthy marriage.
9. Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage.
10. Shared values between partners are valuable for a good marriage.
11. Communication is important for a good marriage.
12. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a healthy marriage.
13. Financial stability is not valuable for a successful marriage.*
14. Emotional support is important for a healthy marriage.
15. Romance is not valuable for a good marriage.*
16. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is valuable for a successful marriage.
17. Commitment is not valuable for a healthy marriage.*
18. Communication is valuable for a successful marriage.
19. Financial stability is important for a healthy marriage.

20. Trust is valuable for a successful marriage.
21. Respect between partners is important for a successful marriage.
22. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a healthy marriage.
23. Sexual intimacy is not valuable for a successful marriage.*

Factors and items are as

follows: Romance: 2, 9, 15

Respect: 3, 11, 18, 21, 22

Trust: 4, 6, 14, 17, 20

Finances: 7, 13, 19

Meaning: 1, 8, 10, 16,

Physical Intimacy: 5, 12, 23

Re: Marital Attitude Scale

Rosen, Lee <Lee.Rosen@ColoState.EDU>

Thu 8/8/2019 11:04 AM

To: Alicia Moore <alicia.moore4@waldenu.edu>

■ 5 attachments (428 KB)

Marital Attitude Scale - The Marital Scales Published Version.pdf; Final Marital Scales Measures - For Distribution.pdf; The Marital Scales - Published Version.pdf; Mas.pdf; Test Retest MAS.pdf;

Hi Alicia,

Thank you for your interest in our work. I have attached the MAS as well as more recent work we have done on a newer scale or marital attitudes. You have our permission to use any of our measures in your work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lee Rosen

Lee A. Rosén, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Director - Clinical/Counseling Concentration
Department of Psychology
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1876
Phone: 970/491-5925
Fax: 970/491-1032

From: Alicia Moore <alicia.moore4@waldenu.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2019 9:12 PM

To: Rosen, Lee <Lee.Rosen@ColoState.EDU>

Subject: Marital Attitude Scale

Hello,

My name is Alicia Moore, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University studying Counselor Education and Supervision. I am currently in the phase of completing my dissertation on "The Examination of Licensed Counselors and Therapists Attitude Towards Marriage". I have read your article on the *Development and validation of the marital attitude scale* and would love if you share any information with me that you have as well as if I have permission to use the scale for my dissertation.

Appendix C: The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale

Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale

In every family there are times when the parents don't get along. Below are some things that kids sometimes think or feel when their parents have arguments or disagreements. Thinking back to when you were a child (between the ages of 8-12), I would like to know what kinds of feelings you had when your parents had arguments or disagreements. I would like you to tell your thoughts or feelings when your parents argued or disagreed by answering each of the sentences below.

T=TRUE
ST=SORT OF TRUE
F=FALSE

1. T ST F I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing
2. T ST F When my parents have an argument they usually work it out
3. T ST F My parents often get into arguments about things I do at school
4. T ST F When my parents argue I end up getting involved somehow
5. T ST F My parents get really mad when they argue
6. T ST F When my parents argue I can do something to make myself feel better
7. T ST F I get scared when my parents argue
8. T ST F I feel caught in the middle when my parents argue
9. T ST F I'm not to blame when my parents have arguments
10. T ST F They may not think I know it, but my parents argue or disagree a lot
11. T ST F Even after my parents stop arguing they stay mad at each other
12. T ST F When my parents argue I try to do something to stop them

13. T ST F When my parents have a disagreement they discuss it quietly
14. T ST F I don't know what to do when my parents have arguments
15. T ST F My parents are often mean to each other even when I'm around
16. T ST F When my parents argue I worry about what will happen to me
17. T ST F I don't feel like I have to take sides when my parents have a disagreement
18. T ST F It's usually my fault when my parents argue
19. T ST F I often see or hear my parents arguing
20. T ST F When my parents disagree about something, they usually come up with a solution
21. T ST F My parents' arguments are usually about me
22. T ST F When my parents have an argument they say mean things to each other
23. T ST F When my parents argue or disagree I can usually help make things better
24. T ST F When my parents argue I'm afraid that something bad will happen.
25. T ST F My mom wants me to be on her side when she and my dad argue
26. T ST F Even if they don't say it, I know I'm to blame when my parents argue
27. T ST F My parents hardly ever argue
28. T ST F When my parents argue they usually make up right away
29. T ST F My parents usually argue or disagree because of things that I do
30. T ST F I don't get involved when my parents argue
31. T ST F When my parents have an argument they yell at each other
32. T ST F When my parents argue there's nothing I can do to stop them
33. T ST F When my parents argue I worry that one of them will get hurt

34. T ST F I feel like I have to take sides when my parents have a disagreement
35. T ST F My parents often nag and complain about each other around the house
36. T ST F My parents hardly ever yell when they have a disagreement
37. T ST F My parents often get into arguments when I do something wrong
38. T ST F My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument
39. T ST F After my parents stop arguing, they are friendly towards each other
40. T ST F When my parents argue I'm afraid that they will yell at me too
41. T ST F My parents blame me when they have arguments
42. T ST F My dad wants me to be on his side when he and my mom argue
43. T ST F My parents have pushed or shoved each other during an argument
44. T ST F When my parents argue or disagree there's nothing I can do to make myself feel better
45. T ST F When my parents argue I worry that they might get divorced
46. T ST F My parents still act mean after they have had an argument
47. T ST F Usually it's not my fault when my parents have arguments
48. T ST F When my parents argue they don't listen to anything I say

Scoring Instructions: Items are scored 0,1, or 2 and summed to create nine subscales (see variables listed above). Several items are reverse keyed. The subscales also can be combined into 3 scales: Conflict Properties (Frequency, Intensity, Resolution), Threat (Threat, Coping Efficacy) and Self-Blame (Content, Self-Blame). Because of their superior psychometric properties, it is recommended that the 3 superordinate scales be used.

RE: CPIC Scale

Francis Fincham <ffincham@fsu.edu>

Tue 10/1/2019 8:19 AM

To: Alicia Moore <alicia.moore4@waldenu.edu>

Permission granted

From: Alicia Moore [<mailto:alicia.moore4@waldenu.edu>]

Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 11:10 PM

To: Francis Fincham <ffincham@fsu.edu>

Subject: CPIC Scale

Hello Dr. Fincham,

After extensive review of your CPIC scale, I am asking permission to use the scale for my dissertation. This will be greatly appreciated. Thank you again for taking the time to read this email.

Alicia Moore