MEASURING DYADIC ADJUSTMENT:

DEVELOPMENT OF A PRELIMINARY VALIDATION SCALE

TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF MARRIAGE AND OTHER DYADS IN BLENDED FAMILIES

by

MARIANNA ODINS TERAUDS
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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr. Geoffrey Hett

[redacted]

Dr. Donald Knowles

[redacted]

Dr. John Anderson

[redacted]

Dr. Marcia Hills

[redacted]

Dr. Jean Veevers

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University of Victoria

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ABSTRACT

A revision of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale was developed to assess the quality of marriage and other similar dyads in blended families. The 50-item revised scale was based on, and compared to, the Scale developed by Spanier (1976), with its four subscales (Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Consensus, and Affectional Expression). The revisions were directed to the special concerns of blended families, in order to facilitate research of blended families. Cross-sectional data were gathered from a purposive sample of 107 individuals in simple and complex blended and intact family dyads. High scale reliability is reported. Evidence of content related and concurrent validity of the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is presented. Significant differences were found in comparisons of these groups on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, $F(2,104) = 9.58$, $p < .001$; the Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale, $F(2,104) = 12.75$, $p < .001$; and Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, $F(2,104) = 8.9$, $p < .001$. It is concluded that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale represents a more appropriate instrument for use with blended families.

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Dr. Geoffrey Hett

[redacted]

Dr. Donald Knowles

[redacted]

Dr. John Anderson

[redacted]

Dr. Marcia Hills

[redacted]

Dr. Jean Veevers

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Dedicated to those people

in my life who have helped me come

to the threshold of my own learning.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Annual increases in rates of divorce and remarriage in the last few decades have prompted the observation that the blended family is now a prominent family structure in North America (Duberman, 1975; Glick, 1980; Visher & Visher, 1979). Not only has there been a growing recognition of the blended family as a widespread phenomenon, but also an increasing awareness and acknowledgement exist that blended family members face unique problems in family living (Visher & Visher, 1979). However, research of blended families is presently in a formative stage of development (Esses & Campbell, 1984). Reliable and valid measurement instruments of family functioning and adjustment have not been developed to reflect the special circumstances of blended families, nor have previously established instruments been validated using members of blended families as respondents (Clingempeel, 1981; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984).

A general definition of blended families is that offered by Visher and Visher (1979). A blended family is one in which at least one of the couple is a stepparent. Furthermore, the stepchildren need not be living in the household. The Vishers' definition also includes families in which the couple lives together, but is not legally married.

There is currently no widely accepted structural model of a blended family unit (Esses & Campbell, 1985). Although there is a diversity of structural subtypes of blended families, two predominant

sub-types exist: the simple and the complex blended family (Clingempeel, 1981; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). A "simple" blended family refers to one set of children and one stepparent, whereas a "complex" blended family refers to two sets of children with two stepparents (Spanier & Furstenberg, 1982). Such a distinction is worthy of consideration, as these are very different from each other on a number of characteristics which may have significant impact on overall family adjustment (Esses & Campbell, 1984).

Most blended families, and many professionals, such as family therapists, doctors, and teachers, base their notions of family life on models of the biologically intact family (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Spanier & Lewis, 1980; Visher & Visher, 1979). Given the differences between the biologically intact families and blended families, the usefulness of continuing to compare these two very different family forms can be seriously questioned (Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984). It appears to be more useful to compare different structural types of blended families in order to begin to examine distinctions between blended families who are functioning well and those who are not.

Most family theories assume the centrality of the marital relationship in healthy family functioning (Crosbie-Burnett, 1984; Duberman, 1975; Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982; Visher & Visher, 1979). The concept of marital adjustment has been the most frequently studied variable in the study of marriage and family relationships (Spanier, 1976). The centrality of the marital relationship in blended families is also acknowledged (Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979), and thus, the concept of marital adjustment can be

reasonably assumed by researchers to be a key component in blended families as well.

Few clear-cut conclusions exist in areas of research involving the many aspects of blended family life (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984). As the number of blended families continues to increase, it seems important that empirical studies of these various aspects of blended family life be carried out in both clinical and nonclinical settings to better understand their particular concerns. Thus, it seems vital that, in the study of this recently increasing family phenomenon, validation studies of measurement instruments should be done to support the use of these instruments as appropriate and specific to blended families.

The purposes of this study, therefore, were (a) to examine one self-report instrument for which validity and reliability as a measure of current marital adjustment for biologically intact families has been supported in the literature (Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale, 1976), (b) to adapt this instrument so that it serves as an appropriate measure of dyadic adjustment in blended families, and (c) to collect some initial validation support for the adapted instrument in order to use it to better understand aspects of the adjustment process for blended families.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

This review has been organized in the following manner. First there is a brief section on demography. This is followed by a literature review of blended family formation, including a section on (a) blended family structure, (b) adjustment to blended family life, and (c) sources of stress or concern during blended family formation. Next is an overview of the development of marital adjustment instruments with a particular focus on the measurement of the adjustment process to blended family life.

Demography

The definition of a blended family was given as a family with at least one parent being a stepparent, and the children not necessarily residing with the stepparents. With this definition, the number of blended families is unknown and likely much larger than is generally reported, as the definition utilized by the Statistics Canada (1985) includes only married couples and only the family with whom the children reside. Slightly over half (52%) of all divorces include couples with children. According to Statistics Canada (1985) 30% of marriages were remarriages for at least one partner, and 92% of remarriages are following a divorce for at least one partner. The three most common combinations of a remarriage or cohabitation occurring are: divorced woman and single man; divorced man and single woman; and both woman and man divorced (Schlesinger, 1983; Statistics Canada, 1985).

Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) found the median time between divorce and remarriage was 3 years. One half of remarriages end in divorce in comparison to one third of first marriages ending in divorce (Clingempeel, 1981), and approximately 40% of these remarriages end within the first four years (Visher & Visher, 1979).

Blended Family Formation

It has been noted that the prefix "step" is derived from the Middle and Old English steop, which means bereaved or orphaned (Visher & Visher, 1979). Bohannan (1971) suggested that the kinship terms employing the prefix "step" are inadequate in this day and age, as the terms "stepmother" and "stepfather" once referred to replacement parents, but today refer to "additional parents".

The difficulty with terminology is compounded by the stereotypical connotations. Stepparents, particularly stepmothers, have cruel reputations. Many fairy tales, such as "Cinderella" and "Hansel and Gretel", are filled with the myths of the wicked stepparent.

As a result of the difficulties inherent in the term "step", people working with these families have sought new terms. These families have been referred to in many terms, such as remarried families, reconstituted families, blended families, instant families, and binuclear families. Schlesinger (1983), identified 23 such names. The preferred term for the present study is "blended family". However, there were no equivalent single-word terms for the members of blended families. For the most part, the terms biological parent and biological child were utilized. There was no similar term for the

nonbiological parent and child and, for the ease of discussion, the terms stepparent, stepchild, and stepsibling were used. Other terms, in keeping with ones used by the researchers cited, were occasionally utilized when discussing their respective research.

Cherlin (1978) argued that the unresolved issue of terminology is the reflection of remarriage being an "incomplete institution". He attributed the relative instability of remarried families to the lack of institutionalized patterns of behaviour that ordinarily guide family life in first marriages. In addition, children from a previous union link people and roles from first and second unions. Bohannan (1971) coined the phrase "quasi-kin" to describe the resulting relationships with, for example, former spouses, the kin of former spouses, and people former spouses remarry, and so on. The level of complexity varies from one biological parent with one child marrying or cohabiting with a previously unmarried, childless person, to four divorced individuals all of whom have children from the previous union, all trying to form new households.

The complexity in social relationships was argued to be related to an increase in ambiguous roles for members of blended families (Cherlin, 1978). According to Cherlin, this ensuing complexity and ambiguity of social relationships result in role strain within blended families, increasing the probability of conjugal (dyadic) disruption. He hypothesized that the lack of institutional support for these families contributes to their higher divorce rate. He offered the following prediction:

> It follows from the argument advanced here that the more complex the family's situation--the more quasi-kin who live nearby, the more frequently adults and children interact with quasi-kin, the more likely each remarried spouse is to have children from a previous marriage--the more serious becomes the lack of institutional guidelines. Thus, adults in remarriage with a more complex structure should be more likely to divorce or separate in the future, other things being equal. (p. 647)

In his study on quasi-kin relationships, Clingempeel (1981) differentiated between simple and complex blended families. He found that complex stepfamilies exhibited lower marital quality than persons in simple stepfamilies. Clingempeel's findings were based on a multimethod assessment of marital quality. The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale is an instrument designed for use with intact married dyads, and was indeed reliability and validity tested with intact samples (Spanier, 1976). Clingempeel did not first adapt his measures to include specific aspects pertinent to stepfamily adjustment. One method of measurement was the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (cited in Clingempeel, 1981) and the other method was a trained observer coding of marital interaction during a discussion task. Complex blended families scored significantly lower on the two positive dimensions of marital quality. Complex blended families also scored higher on one of the two negative dimensions (rate of negative exchanges). In support of Cherlin's hypothesis, persons from complex stepfamilies registered lower marital quality than persons from simple stepfamilies. However, his finding that remarried persons who maintained a moderate level of contact exhibited better marital quality than remarrieds who maintained either a high or low level of contact, is inconsistent with Cherlin's incomplete institution hypothesis. To date Clingempeel's study has not been replicated. He

called for a need for further research on aspects of quasi-kin relationships and their influences on adjustment in stepfamilies, through use of structurally different types of stepfamilies as subjects.

Structure of Blended Families

Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) made the distinction between the two subtypes of blended families studied in the present research, the simple and the complex blended family. Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman (1982) identified eight different subtypes. Structure of blended families varies according to many different factors, including the cohabitation or marriage history of the natural parent, the sex of the stepparent, the previous marital status of the stepparent, the age and number of children, and the presence or absence of mutual children. Some studies (Duberman, 1975; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984; Mills, 1984; Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982; Walker & Messinger, 1979; Westoff, 1975) indicated that blended family functioning may be influenced by any or all of these variables. Esses and Campbell (1984) suggested a need for research studies that controlled for variations in structural subtypes of blended families in the research design.

Although the structure of the blended family is different from that of the biologically intact family since its inception (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982; Pink & Wampler, 1985; Spanier & Furstenberg, 1982), blended families have been compared to intact families in a variety of ways (DeMaris, 1984; Sager, Brown, Crohn, Engel, Rodstein & Walker, 1983; Visher & Visher, 1979). The purpose of these

comparisons, generally, has been to better understand the process of stepfamily formation and functioning. Walker and Messinger (1979) found that intact and blended families differed with regard to the degree of clarity about appropriate behaviours for specific roles. They suggested that it is probably better to allow roles in blended families to be gradually achieved. Mills (1984) suggested, for example, that before taking on the role of a disciplinarian of stepchildren, a stepparent should first establish a friendship relationship with the stepchild. Stern (1978) found, in her study on stepfather families, that stepfathers who assumed the role of disciplinarian before establishing a friendship bond were not integrated into the family.

Keshet (1980) suggested that, although it is important for subsystem boundaries to open if there is to be growth in family formation, it is likely that the blended family will always maintain strongly bounded subsystems to which members remain loyal (Filinson, 1986). The role expectations of children in a nuclear family have been created over the child's entire lifetime (Walker & Messinger, 1979). As well, there is another biological parent living in another household and the child's relationship to this parent predates the relationship of the new couple. Anderson (1983) found that, in terms of interactions and relationship patterns (a) intact and blended families, and (b) functional and dysfunctional blended families differed from each other. She found that functional blended families were characterized by strong marital bonds and strong biological parent-child bonds, whereas functional intact families had strong

marital bonds, but did not have parent-child coalitions. Dysfunctional blended families were characterized by extremely strong parent-child coalitions and a weak marital bond.

Couples in intact families usually have some time together to develop a subsystem before children are added to the system. The addition of children, typically one at a time, allows the couple to slowly adapt and evolve a cooperative parenting style (Barnhill, 1979; Papernow, 1984). In contrast, the blended family begins with the stepparent as an outsider to the biological parent-child subsystem which has a shared history, rules, rhythms, and methods of functioning (Pink & Wampler, 1985). These particular ways of operating have often intensified during the single-parent stage. The stress and anxiety that these single-parent families went through during the divorce and early stages of being alone can bring parents and children very close together based on their mutual interdependency (Filinson, 1986; Keshet, 1980). As well, the biological subsystem includes an ex-spouse exerting overt or covert influences (Bohannan, 1971; Clingempeel, 1981; Fast & Cain, 1966; Visher & Visher, 1979).

This blended family structure--a possibly weak couple subsystem (Lewis, 1985; Whiteside, 1981), a strong biological parent-child alliance, and potential or real "interference" in family functioning from an "outsider"--would signal dysfunction in a biologically intact family (Filinson, 1986; Keshet, 1980; Minuchin, 1974). That this is the usual starting point for blended family development suggests adjustment pressures may be intensified for these units.

Adjustment of Blended Families

Developmental tasks. There is some consensus of what the usual developmental tasks are for blended family formation (Crohn, Sager, Rodstein, Brown, Walker, & Beir, 1981; Goetting, 1982; McGoldrick & Carter, 1980; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1983; Visher & Visher, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Some tasks must usually be resolved or focussed on before others (Messinger & Walker, 1981). During blended family development most of the following tasks must be worked on, although the priority may differ among families. A first task must be grieving for previous losses. Another task is the formation of new relationships while at the same time preserving those that are still functional or important. Creating and maintaining a strong marital bond are crucial. New adult-child relationships must be forged as well as new sibling relationships. In addition, new extended family must be integrated. New family traditions need to be established. These are all components of the overall task confronting family members during the formation or integration of the new blended family (Zimmerman-Slovak, 1985).

Period of adjustment. Researchers of blended families have indicated that there is an initial adjustment period in the formation of a blended family (Brand & Clingempeel, 1987; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979). Estimations of the duration of this adjustment have varied, ranging from 1 1/2 to 2 years (Visher & Visher, 1979), 3 to 5 years (Mills, 1984), and as long as 4 to 12 years (Papernow, 1984).

Papernow called this period of adjustment the Stepfamily Development Cycle, and differentiated it into seven stages of stepparent development: (1) Fantasy, (2) Assimilation, (3) Awareness, (4) Mobilization, (5) Action, (6) Contact, and (7) Resolution. She has found in her research that "fast" families completed the cycle in about four years, "average" families in about seven years, and some "slower" families took as long as 12 years or indeed did not complete the cycle but rather, divorced.

Sources of Concern During Blended Family Formation

Blended families are subject to similar stresses experienced by intact families, plus stresses or concerns generated by the coming together of two families or households (Mills, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979; Westoff, 1975; White & Booth, 1985). The findings have been fairly consistent in the research that the most frequent concerns in blended family formation are (a) children and the disciplining of them, and (b) family finances.

Messinger (1976) found that parents in blended families were surprised at the upheaval and upset experienced by children involved in blended family formation and that children's difficulties tended to reflect on the couples' adjustment, creating greater stress within the dyadic relationship. In most cases the presence of stepsiblings was found to make the blended family adjustment more complicated (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980) and the better the relationships between stepsiblings, the better the overall integration or adjustment of the blended family. Duberman (1973) found that stepsibling relationships were crucial to the "success" of blended families. According to

adolescents, discipline and divided loyalties were the most stressful aspects of blended family life (Visher & Visher, 1979). When remarried or cohabiting couples had a mutual child, the children from the previous unions usually had more harmonious relationships with each other (Ambert, 1986; Brooks, 1981; Duberman, 1973; Visher & Visher, 1979).

Financial matters have been found to be the second most common source of stress in blended families (Messinger, 1976). One or both partners may have obligations in the form of child support or alimony. There may be concern over wills and distribution of property to stepchildren and biological children (Sager et al., 1983; Visher & Visher, 1979). According to Fishman (1983) the arrangement of finances may reflect each partner's commitment to the other and to the other's children. Her coining the terms "one pot" and "two pot" families reflected the way in which she found blended family members to have arranged their finances. She suggested that the task of the blended family is to develop economic values or compromises that take into account the needs of the blended family development as well as the needs of the individual.

Additional areas of concern regarding blended family adjustment exist. Cherlin's (1978) ideas regarding the lack of institutionalized roles in blended families apply not only to "institutions" outside of the blended family unit; but also, within the blended family itself. The lack of institutionalized guidelines relating to blended families--in particular disciplining stepchildren--causes role

uncertainty and stress in the family (Fast & Cain, 1966; Messinger, 1976).

Family life, in general, includes some negative thoughts and feelings (Skeen, Covi, & Robinson, 1985). However, biological parents are bound to their children in ways that stepparents are not. With the possible exacerbation of feelings during the adjustment time in blended family formation, there may be differences in approval of "acceptable" behaviour. What may be acceptable within the biological subsystem may be unacceptable in the new steprelationships, again causing tension between stepfamily members. Furthermore, when the ex-spouses are in conflict, tensions between the blended family couple were found to escalate (Duberman, 1975). According to Coleman and Ganong (1985) there are myths, attitudes, and expectations around remarriage and blended family formation that add adjustment pressures to this process. For example, one of the most common remarriage myths is the expectation of "instant love" or "if you love me you will love my children". This can cause a great deal of tension, misunderstanding, and grief in the family. Another myth is that "marriage makes people significantly happier". Related to this is the expectation that if the individuals in the couple are happy and love each other enough, then everyone else will be happy, including children, grandparents, and ex-spouses. Another myth that can add a note of desperation to the relationship is that "things must work out". These are only a few examples of the myths which Coleman and Ganong (1985) discuss. They argue that these myths create tension with family relationships, particularly because these myths are

supported by individuals, organizations, and institutions in our society (Cherlin, 1978).

Measures of Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment has been claimed to be the most frequently studied dependent variable in the study of marital and family relationships (Sharpley & Cross, 1982; Spanier, 1976). Since Hamilton's 1929 study (cited in Spanier, 1976), many measures have been developed to assess the quality of marital relationships. Spanier (1976) cited 17 such measures, created between 1933 and 1968. Many do not have a clear conceptual plan behind the scale development. Few have reported measures of validity and reliability (Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Thompson, 1982). Approximately one third of the instruments have mention of any reliability measures. Only one half have more than one type of evidence of validity reported.

The better known and most widely utilized scales according to Spanier (1976) are: Bernard's "Success in Marriage Instrument" created in 1933; Locke's "Marital Adjustment Test" created in 1951; Bowerman's "Bowerman Marriage Adjustment Scales" created in 1957; and Locke and Wallace's "Short Marital Adjustment Test" created in 1959. All of these scales were designed for use with married dyads. Subsequent to this, Spanier developed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in 1976. It is based in part on the scales noted above. Spanier argues that it goes beyond the scope of the previous instruments to better conceptualize the components and process of dyadic adjustment. Spanier's scale has been cited in over 275 publications, hundreds of

doctoral dissertations, and has become the most widely used measure in the study of marital quality (Spanier, 1986). Spanier's scale and its psychometric properties are described in detail in the Method chapter.

For the purpose of this study, marital adjustment was defined as the process of adjusting, harmonizing, or settling by the marriage partners. Spanier (1976) further described dyadic adjustment as "a process of movement along a continuum which can be evaluated in terms of proximity to good or poor adjustment" (p. 17). This process, according to Spanier, consisted of those circumstances, events, and interactions which move a dyad back and forth along this continuum.

Spanier found the outcome of this process of adjustment is determined by the following four factors:

1. Dyadic satisfaction was described as the contentment felt by each individual in the relationship.

2. Dyadic cohesion referred to becoming or being harmoniously united by common interests and/or emotional ties and is particularly characterised by the cooperative downplaying of any individual differences or disagreements.

3. Dyadic consensus described the harmony and cooperation of the partners when forming or sharing a collective opinion on matters of importance to dyadic functioning.

4. Affectional expression referred to the act or process of conveying love and goodwill to the partner within the relationship. These were the meaningful components which Spanier related conceptually and empirically to dyadic adjustment in biologically intact families.

One of Spanier's (1976) concerns in his study was whether his scale, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, could be considered a measure of individual adjustment to the relationship rather than adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group. Most of the items attempt to access the respondent's perception of the adjustment of the dyad as a well or poorly functioning group. The differences in partner responses to the particular items may largely reflect differing perceptions of the functioning of the relationship. Spanier and Thompson (1982) did a confirmatory study of the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale suggesting that confidence in the scale was warranted for subsequent users, and that "users can be reasonably sure that the overall scale and to a lesser but adequate degree, the subscales--continues to be appropriate for the evaluation of dyadic adjustment" (p. 737). Sharpley and Cross (1982) examined the psychometric properties of the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale in Australia. Applying a factor analysis to the scores on the scale items, they found that there was only one underlying "adjustment" dimension with this sample, and not the four found by Spanier in his original study and confirmed in his study with Thompson in 1982. These differences in results indicate that the findings of factor loadings may not be replicable and that national variations in adjustment may exist.

Instrument Revisions for Blended Families

Spanier developed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for use with marital and other dyads. He reliability and validity tested it with members of intact and divorced families. Given the development of the Scale, it is not surprising that it showed a lack of items pertaining

to a number of critical issues affecting dyadic adjustment in blended families. For example, disciplining stepchildren, financial obligations (support and maintenance payments), stepparent expectations, influence by ex-spouse and family, and decisions about family holidays were not included. As these are often critical areas for blended family members (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979), the omission of these areas from the scale would suggest that items should be included for these dimensions in order to better represent salient aspects of the adjustment process for blended families. In addition, as Spanier (1976) used only intact families in his study, it may be that a different blended family perspective must be represented in a dyadic adjustment scale to enable appropriate research with blended families.

Measures in Blended Family Research

Blended family research has been largely descriptive in design (Esses & Campbell, 1984). Studies involving blended families with problems have primarily been based on case studies and clinical observations (Fast & Cain, 1966; McGoldrick & Carter, 1980). In studies including nonclinical subjects data have been collected through the use of interviews and questionnaires of questionable evidence of validity and reliability for use with blended family respondents (Bernard, 1956; Bowerman & Irish, 1962; Duberman, 1975; Messinger, 1976).

There is a need by all family researchers for valid and reliable measuring instruments for various purposes. In the study of blended

families, this need also exists for purposes such as (a) distinguishing among family subtypes, and (b) diagnosing areas of concern in blended family functioning (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Furstenberg, 1979; Ganong & Coleman, 1986; Sharpley & Cross, 1982; Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Thompson, 1982). Esses and Campbell stated:

> Stepfamily researchers may be able to make use of some of the more reliable and valid self-report instruments available for studying dyadic and family adjustment, such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) . . . by providing new norms based on stepfamily populations. (p. 419)

Pertinent Blended Family Research

DeMaris (1984) found no significant differences when he compared remarriages with first marriages on satisfaction in marriage and the relationship of satisfaction to prior cohabitation. He utilized only the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976).

Pasley, Ihinger-Tallman and Coleman's (1984) study utilized part of Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Consensus Subscale, with additional items to reflect their perception of concerns of blended families. Reliability, evidence of validity, and other instrumentation techniques were not reported. They found that "happy" and "unhappy" remarried couples differed significantly on 16 of 19 topics, in their perceptions of frequency of agreement or disagreement in their dyadic relationship. They also found that "unhappy" remarried couples either shared similar perceptions or held dissimilar perceptions regarding frequency of agreement or disagreement, whereas "happy" remarried couples more often shared the same perceptions regarding agreement or disagreement.

In testing Cherlin's (1978) hypothesis of incomplete institutionalization, Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) found that second marriages with children did not have a particularly great risk of dissolution. They suggested instead, that certain characteristics of the remarrieds and the remarriage process account for the higher rate of divorce. They argued that persons who have already divorced once may be less committed to staying in an unhappy marriage than people still in first marriages.

It has been suggested by Spanier and Furstenberg (1982) that some cross-sectional studies have reported remarried persons as having greater well-being than divorced persons because many unsuccessful remarriages have already ended and are not reflected in data on remarrieds. A similar suggestion has been made in studies of first-married and remarried persons (Glenn & Weaver, 1977). It has been argued that, because many unsuccessful remarriages have ended, the findings on the well-being of remarried persons may well be inflated. In summary, research findings have been conflicting in the comparison of intact and blended families (Coleman & Ganong, 1986).

Summary of Literature Reviewed

It has been acknowledged by researchers and clinicians that blended families have a period of adjustment during formation of the blended family. It has also been argued that blended families are structurally different from intact families from the outset of their formation.

Marital adjustment has been claimed to be the most frequently

studied dependent variable in the study of marital and family relationships. Instruments have been developed over the years to measure the various aspects of adjustment in marriage. Many of these instruments were lacking in adequate evidence of reliability and validity and did not have an adequate conceptual framework.

Spanier (1976) developed an instrument, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, with high reliability and validity, and with clearly conceptualized and empirically verified components. Psychometric qualities of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale were established with intact married and divorced respondents. Psychometric qualities of a well-accepted instrument measuring marital adjustment such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale have not been established with blended families as subjects.

There have been conflicting findings in studies comparing intact and blended families. Some researchers found significant differences between these two family types, and others have not found differences to exist. Similar conflicting results were found to exist when researchers compared different structural subtypes of blended families. Thus far, researchers have not utilized an instrument which has been validated and reliability tested using blended family members as subjects.

A clear need seemed evident in the research (a) to revise a currently well-accepted instrument measuring dyadic adjustment, such as the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale (1976), (b) to adapt it to include specific adjustment concerns of blended families, and (c) to reliability and validity test it using members of blended family dyads

as subjects. It seemed crucial that, with such an appropriate instrument, it would be possible to compare structural subtypes of blended families rather than to continue to compare blended to intact families. In particular, this study addressed the following questions:

1. Can the adapted instrument be supported as a valid and reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families?

2. What distinctions, if any, are there on aspects of dyadic adjustment and sociodemographic and historical information, when comparing intact, simple blended, and complex blended family subtypes?

CHAPTER 3

Method

Subjects

Participants in this study represented three categories of family structure. One category, the biologically intact family group (n = 31) consisted of parents in first marriages. The other two groups were parents of blended families. One group consisted of parents (n = 39) who were part of a simple blended family (one set of children, one stepparent), and the other group consisted of parents (n = 37) who were part of a complex blended family (two sets of children, two stepparents).

As indicated in Table 1 the number of males and females were almost identical in each group, with a slightly higher percentage of female (55%) to male (45%) subjects. The mean age (39.0 years) of the simple blended group was similar to that of the complex blended group (39.1 years). The mean age (34.5 years) of the intact family was somewhat lower. The number of years each subject knew their mate varied (Table 2). The means for the two blended family groups were again similar, with the simple blended family group having known their mate for the shortest length of time and the complex group for slightly longer. The intact family group had known their mates the longest before cohabiting. The mean length of time present mates had been cohabiting varied with intact families having cohabited for the longest time and complex blended families the shortest length of time. The complex blended family subjects had lived with their previous mates for longer than had the simple blended family subjects (Table 3).

Table 1

Frequencies of Participants in Each Family Subtype on the Basis of Sex, Marital Status, and Both Partners as Respondents

Demographic variable	Family comparison		
	Intact family	Simple blended family	Complex blended family
Number of participants	31	39	37
Participants - male	13	18	17
- female	18	21	20
Participants - married	31	28	16
- not married	0	11	21
Cohabiting partners as respondents - both	24	32	30
- only one	7	7	7

Table 2

History of Present Relationship in Each Family Subtype

	Family comparison					
	Intact family		Simple blended family		Complex blended family	
Demographic variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Years present mate known prior to cohabitation	2.3	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.8	1.3
Years cohabiting with present mate	12.0	4.3	8.0	4.0	4.4	3.0

Table 3

History of Cohabitation in the Blended Family Subtypes

	Family comparison					
	Simple blended family			Complex blended family		
Demographic variable	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Years previously married or cohabiting	31	7.7	4.6	37	9.1	4.8
Years between previous and present cohabitation	31	4.1	4.2	37	2.6	2.0

However, the complex blended family subjects reported that a shorter period of time had elapsed between cohabiting with the previous and present mates.

There were variations in the level of education across the three groups (Table 4). The largest percentage of intact family subjects in any one level had university degrees (52%), in comparison to only 23% of simple and 22% of complex blended family subjects at the same level. The largest percentage of simple blended family subjects in any single level had two to three years of college or technical training (41%), while only 13% of the intact and 24% of the complex blended family group had similar training. The greatest percentage of complex blended family subjects in any one level had only a high school education (30%) while the corresponding percentages for the intact family group was 10% and for the simple blended family group was 15%.

A variety of means of recruiting subjects was employed. The subjects were recruited through information (Appendix A) given to four family service agencies and four pre-schools and by word of mouth. This obviously was a non-random sample. A total of 126 individuals volunteered to participate. Data from 107 of these volunteers were utilized in this study. From this total group eight questionnaires were not returned. Of these, two were not completed because of subjects' busy schedules, one subject "lost" his questionnaire, and five were not returned by mail as previously arranged. Of completed questionnaires, three were not included in data tabulation, because the one subject did not fill in any demographic information and

Table 4

Level of Education, by Family Subtype

	Family comparison					
	Intact family		Simple blended family		Complex blended family	
Level of education	n	%	n	%	n	%
Did not complete high school	0	0	1	3	0	0
High school graduate	3	10	6	15	11	30
2-3 years college or university	4	13	16	41	9	24
University degree	16	52	9	23	8	22
Graduate studies	6	19	7	18	9	24
Missing	2	6	0	0	0	0
Total	31	100	39	100	37	100

two had grown children who had not lived with them for a number of years.

Instrumentation

Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The instrument upon which this study is based is the Dyadic Adjustment Scale developed by Spanier (1976) to assess the quality of marriage and similar dyads.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a questionnaire with 32 items, accompanied by predominantly six-point Likert-type response categories. Of the 32 items, 26 are six-point Likert-type responses, two are five-point Likert-type responses, two are two-point "yes/no" responses, one is a seven-point choice of an appropriate description, and one is a six-point choice of an appropriate description. In general, the higher scale scores represent better dyadic adjustment.

Spanier's work with this scale suggests the existence within the scale of four empirically verified components of dyadic adjustment which can be used as subscales. The subscales are identified as dyadic satisfaction (10 items), dyadic cohesion (5 items), dyadic consensus (13 items), and affectional expression (4 items), which relate to Spanier's (1976) theory of the components of dyadic adjustment. Most of the items attempt to assess the subject's perception of the quality of the adjustment of the relationship. The maximal adjustment scores for the Scale and each of its subscales are presented in Table 8 in Chapter 4.

The validity of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for biologically

intact families was supported by Spanier in a variety of procedures. The scale was evaluated by three judges who supported its content related evidence of validity. The criterion-related validity of the scale was demonstrated by means of administering the scale to a married sample and a divorced sample to test the discriminative value of the 32 items of the scale with the external criterion of marital status. For each item and scale, scores for the divorced sample differed significantly from scores for the married sample ($p < .001$). Construct related evidence of validity was demonstrated by correlating the instrument with another well accepted scale, the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The correlation between these scales was .86 among married subjects and .88 among divorced subjects ($p < .001$).

Reliability was determined for each of the component scales of the original adjustment battery as well as the total scale. Cronbach's (1951) Coefficient Alpha yielded a total scale reliability of .96. Subscale coefficients were also given: Dyadic Consensus Subscale (.90), Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale (.94), Dyadic Cohesion Subscale (.86), and Affectional Expression Subscale (.73). The data indicated that the total scale and its components subscales had sufficiently high reliability to justify their use.

Item Development

The procedure utilized in the modification of a Dyadic Adjustment Scale appropriate for blended families was similar to that used by Spanier (1976). In the present study, 26 additional items were developed for Spanier's scale to better reflect particular concerns

and stresses that stem from the developmental tasks and the adjustment process of blended families. As mentioned earlier, some of these concerns were regarding (a) dealing with discipline of stepchildren, (b) financial obligations such as support and maintenance payments, (c) stepparent expectations, and (d) influence by ex-spouse and family. A more detailed identification of items included is marked with asterisks in Appendix E. Items which were developed but were not included in the final revised list are outlined and discussed in detail in the section on Item Verification.

Item Verification

Criteria were established for inclusion of new items in the revised instrument. New items had to be either equally or more applicable to blended families than to biologically intact families. Eight judges, consisting of one professor of social work, one professor of counselling psychology, two family counsellors presently working with blended families, and four parents in blended families familiar with self-report instruments, examined the items for their appropriateness as measures of adjustment for blended families. Items were deemed acceptable if a consensus existed among the judges that an item met content related validity criteria. As a result, two items were dropped from the instrument. Wording was altered on items where judges suggested changes were appropriate. The judges were unanimous in selecting 23 of the 26 new items according to the established criteria. All judges indicated that each of these 23 variables had impact for blended families; consequently all 23 of these items were retained for the final instrument.

The new items dropped from the instrument referred to "recreation activities of children", and "social activities of children". Both of these were believed to be addressed by other items in the instrument. Two items, "receiving child support" and "making child support payments", were combined to read "child support".

Instrument Modification

The 23 blended family items were interspersed with Spanier's (1976) original 32 items to form the 55 item Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale given in Appendix E. For scoring purposes the 23 items were considered to be within the Dyadic Consensus Subscale since they dealt with areas concerning agreement or disagreement by participants on specific pertinent topics. The 55 items were logically grouped into Spanier's four meaningful components of Dyadic Consensus (CON), Dyadic Satisfaction (S), Dyadic Cohesion (COH), and Affectional Expression (AE). The assignment of each item to a particular cluster is shown in Appendix E.

Procedure

After the initial information had been sent to the four family service agencies and four preschools, a follow-up letter was sent to each agency or preschool, confirming recruitment for the study (Appendix B). Prospective subjects either phoned the researcher or left names and phone numbers and were subsequently contacted by the researcher, at which time appropriate information regarding the questionnaire was shared. They were informed that this paper and pencil questionnaire would require approximately 30 minutes to

complete and that it was part of a research study for a Master of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology. Individuals were assured that they could terminate their involvement in the research at any time, that all information would be strictly confidential, and that anonymity would be maintained. Questions that the prospective subjects had were answered by the researcher. Once the subjects indicated a willingness to participate, a time convenient for each subject was arranged for them to receive and fill out the consent form (Appendix C) and the questionnaires. The 55-item Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale for Blended Families (Appendix E) and the Family Background questionnaire (Appendix F) were administered. Questionnaires were either delivered to the subjects or they were left at locations convenient to the them such as preschools and agency offices. Subjects completed the measures at home. The instructions for the family groups (Appendix D) were brief as the directions in the questionnaires were self-explanatory. All subjects were asked not to discuss the questionnaire with their partner prior to or while responding to it. They were informed of the code they could utilize to ensure anonymity. This code enabled the researcher to match cohabiting partners. The additional instructions given to subjects in the intact family group were to print "N/A" beside items that did not directly apply to the structure of their family (for example, items regarding ex-spouse, and support payments). In total, 5 of the 23 new items were not applicable to intact family subjects. The subjects returned the questionnaires to the researcher in sealed envelopes.

Design

The study was one of instrument development. Descriptive statistics were used to estimate the reliability and validity of the instrument and to determine whether it was making appropriate discriminations among the family subtypes.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed in two stages. In the first stage, the focus was on answering the first research question, which is whether the adapted instrument can be supported as a valid and reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families.

Reliability was determined for each of the component scales as well as for the total scale. The most appropriate measure of internal consistency was Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (1951), a coefficient considered to be the most appropriate measure when a questionnaire is administered once in a single form. It was used then as a reliability estimate for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and each of its four subscales.

To provide concurrent-related evidence of validity, the 23 new items were correlated with Spanier's Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale and its four subscales. If the correlations were generally positive, the new items were considered to be valid. If the correlations were of moderate magnitude, the items were considered to be non-redundant. Pearson's r was used as the correlation measure.

The second stage of the analysis of data addressed the second research question of what distinctions, if any, there were on aspects of dyadic adjustment, when comparing intact, simple blended, and

complex blended family subtypes. These comparisons were made by one-way Analysis of Variance. Main effects for family structure (intact, simple blended and complex blended family groups) were examined for the Original and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scales, as well as for the four subscales (Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, and Affectional Expression). Because a number of analyses were conducted, a stringent alpha level was set ($p < .01$) for the Analysis of Variance. To further ascertain the contribution of each mean score from the three family groups, Scheffé's test was administered as a post hoc analysis. Since the Scheffé analysis was performed only on significant results, from the analysis of variance of the three family groups, an alpha level of .05 was considered to be adequate.

A concern to this study was whether the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale would be considered a measure of individual adjustment to the relationship versus adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group. This was addressed by comparing the scores of individuals in a dyad and investigating the difference scores (t test). Correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) were also calculated for scores of individuals in a dyad for all three family subtypes.

Subsequent to this, sociodemographic and historical information were examined. Chi square analyses were utilized to examine associations among the three groups regarding length of cohabitation, and between blended family groups regarding marital status and mutual children.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

The results of this study support the conclusion that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a valid and reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families. The instrument does discriminate between simple and complex blended and intact families on most of the aspects pertinent to blended families.

Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency for the Revised and Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale and its four subscales was assessed using only the scores of those respondents who answered all questions on the questionnaire (N = 54). Because of the presence of some items for blended families only, coefficient alpha was based on a sample size made up of all of the complex blended family group and some of the simple blended family group.

As reported in Table 5, the 23 new consensus items added to reflect particular concerns of blended families exhibited greater interitem consistency (0.95) than the 13 original consensus items (0.87). Furthermore, the addition of these 23 new items to the original 13 items enhanced the measure of interitem consistency, as indicated by an increase of .08 in the alpha coefficient. It can also be seen that the addition of these 23 new items, creating the revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale increased the alpha coefficient by .03 (.93-.96). However, caution is warranted in interpreting these data as some of the increase in the alpha coefficient can also be a

Table 5

Reliability Analysis of the Original and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and its Subscales

Scale	Number of items	Cronbachs coefficient alpha
Dyadic Consensus Subscale		
Original	13	0.87
New items	23	0.95
Revised	36	0.95
Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale	10	0.91
Dyadic Cohesion Subscale	5	0.76
Affectional Expression Subscale	4	0.60
Dyadic Adjustment Scale		
Original	32	0.93
Revised	55	0.96

Note. Based on responses by, N = 54 members of blended families.

function of test length, rather than simply increased quality. Nonetheless, the increase in the measure of interitem consistency with the addition of the new items helps confirm that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families.

In addition Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was computed for Spanier's original subscales (Table 6), utilizing data from all of the respondents ($\underline{N}$ = 107). As can be seen in column 2 of Table 5 and column 2 of Table 6, values for coefficient alpha are similar, indicating consistency of results on these scales whether using the total sample ($\underline{N}$ = 107) or a portion of the blended family respondents ($\underline{N}$ = 54).

A comparison of coefficient alphas between Spanier's (1976) study ($\underline{N}$ = 312) and the present study ($\underline{N}$ = 107) was made (Table 6). Difference scores between the two studies were in the range of .02 to .11. These small differences indicate that the reliability findings of this study are similar to Spanier's findings. Coefficient values were found to be lower in the present study. Some of these differences can be attributed to a larger sample size in Spanier's study. In addition, it is suggested that Spanier's original scale and subscale are more appropriate for use with intact and divorced family respondents and less appropriate for use with blended family respondents. In summary, these findings indicate that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families.

In order to assess concurrent validity the 23 new items were

Table 6

Reliability Estimates of Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale and Subscales for Spanier's (1976) Study and the Present Study

Scale	Number of items	Study: Spanier[a]	Study: present[b]
Dyadic Consensus Subscale	13	.90	.84
Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale	10	.94	.90
Dyadic Cohesion Subscale	5	.86	.75
Affectional Expression Subscale	4	.73	.64
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	32	.96	.92

Note: Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used as the reliability measure.

[a] $N = 312$

[b] $N = 107$

correlated to the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale and to each of its four subscales. As described above the Dyadic Adjustment Scale is widely accepted and is assumed to be a reliable and valid measure of the quality of adjustment in a dyad (Sharpley & Cross, 1982; Spanier, 1976, 1982). It was selected to assess whether the 23 items created to reflect the particular concerns of dyadic adjustment in blended families, measure the same general construct as this well-accepted Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The scores of all the blended family participants (N = 76) on the 23 new items were correlated with the scores on the original 32 items of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and with each of its four subscales.

Among blended family respondents (N = 76), the correlations were significant between the new and original items of the Dyadic Consensus Subscale, $r(76) = .65$, $p < .001$, and between the new Dyadic Consensus items and the total Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale, $r(76) = .75$, $p < .001$, (Table 7). These moderately positive correlations suggest that the 23 new items are similar to the items from the original established scale and its Dyadic Consensus Subscale and they are measuring the same construct. Higher correlation coefficents would have indicated that little new information is added to the previously existing scale. It is suggested that the new items show an optimal correlation, confirming that the new items are measuring a similar construct yet adding desired new information to the original scale and subscale.

A lower correlation was found between the new items added to the Dyadic Consensus Subscale and the subscales of Dyadic Cohesion, and

Table 7

Intercorrelations Between Revised and Original Dyadic Adjustment Scales and Subscales

Scale	Original Subscale				
	Dyadic Consensus Scale	Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale	Dyadic Cohesion Subscale	Affectional Expression Subscale	Dyadic Adjustment Scale
Dyadic Consensus Subscale--New Items	.65	.77	.39	.26*	.75
Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale	.81	.78	.42	.32**	.84
Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale	.79	.85	.59	.44	.92
Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale	.84	.89	.72	.53	1.00

Note. Based on data from 76 subjects. All are coefficients with $p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Affectional Expression, suggesting that these scales are conceptually independent. However, a moderate correlation was found between the new items in the dyadic consensus subscale and the dyadic satisfaction subscale, indicating that the variables in these two subscales are convergent in nature rather than conceptually independent. Spanier has maintained that his 32 items can be grouped into four meaningful components (Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, and Affectional Expression) which are conceptually and empirically related to dyadic adjustment (Spanier, 1976, 1982). Yet for this sample of blended family subjects, Spanier's Original Consensus Subscale correlates moderately with his Original Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, $\underline{r}(76) = .60$, $\underline{p} < .001$, again indicating the lack of independence of the behavior domains sampled by these two subscales.

As mentioned earlier, a concern of this study was whether the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale could be considered a measure of individual adjustment to the relationship versus adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group. The difference scores of individuals in a dyad were investigated for each family subtype. There were no significant differences in difference scores, with $\underline{t}$-values ranging from a low of $\underline{t}(15) = 0.14$, $\underline{p} > .05$, for simple blended family dyads, to $\underline{t}(11) = 0.18$, $\underline{p} > .05$ for intact family dyads, and $\underline{t}(13) = 0.19$, $\underline{p} > .05$ for complex blended family dyads. These findings suggest that the perceptions of the individuals in dyads are very similar indicating that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale could be considered a measure of adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group.

A further investigation was made of Original and Revised Dyadic

Adjustment Scale scores between individuals in dyads in the different family groups. A weak correlation of scores was found to exist between individuals in the simple blended family dyads, $r(15) = .33$, $p < .05$; a moderate correlation between individuals in the intact family dyads, $r(11) = .57$, $p < .05$; and a strong correlation between individuals in the complex blended family dyads, $r(14) = .90$, $p < .001$. Correlation coefficients for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale were slightly lower than coefficients for the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale for both the intact family and simple blended family dyads. However, the trend was reversed in the complex blended family dyads. This seems to indicate that in complex blended families, although adjustment scores are lower than in the other two family subtypes, the perceptions of both individuals in the dyad are similar. As mentioned previously, it may be that life in a complex blended family generates a greater number of areas upon which individuals in the dyad disagree.

In summary, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale was found to have (a) good scale reliability, (b) correlation coefficients of magnitudes that support the inclusion of the new items, and (c) psychometric qualities comparable to Spanier's Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale. These findings support the conclusion that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a reliable and valid measure of dyadic adjustment for use with blended families.

Comparison of Family Subtypes

Table 8 presents the summary scores and proportions for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and each of its subscales, as well as

Analysis of Variance results when comparing the mean scores of the three family groups on these scales. Where appropriate, a proportion was calculated for each subject, based on the total amount possible for her or him to acquire on the Revised Dyadic Consensus Scale and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. This procedure accommodated the fact that some of the new items added to specifically reflect the particular aspects important for blended families are not applicable to intact families. For example, Item 2 deals with child support and Items 9, 15, and 16 with interactions with the ex-spouse, family of the ex-spouse, and mutual friends with the ex-spouse. In total there were five items which were inappropriate for intact families. The other 18 new items were applicable to the intact as well as the blended family groups for which they were designed. The maximal score by intact respondents on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale was 241 in comparison to 266 for blended family respondents. This transformation to proportions was not necessary for the other subscales, since no items were added to these areas (Appendix E).

It was evident that there was a decrease in mean proportion in ordering the groups from the highest adjustment score for intact families, then simple and finally the lowest adjustment scores for complex blended families on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. As indicated by the analysis of variance, the adjustment scale scores for the three family subgroups were significantly different, $\underline{F}(2,104) = 9.58$, $\underline{p} < .001$.

The scores on the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale were also statistically significant, ($\underline{F}(2,104) = 5.39$, $\underline{p} < .01$) for the three

Table 8

Comparison of Adjustment Scores/Proportions for Original and Revised Adjustment Scales and Subscales, by Family Structure

	Group						ANOVA
	Intact family (n = 31)		Simple blended family (n = 39)		Complex blended family (n = 37)		Intact/Simple blended/complex blended family (n = 107)
Scale	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
Dyadic Consensus Subscale							
Original (65)	49.5	5.0	48.8	5.6	46.2	6.2	3.36*
New Items (115)	0.83[a]	0.12	0.76	0.1	0.67	0.15	12.75***
Revised (180)	0.80	0.12	0.75	0.09	0.69	0.15	10.1***
Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale (50)	40.7	3.7	39.2	4.5	35.1	7.8	8.9***
Dyadic Cohesion Subscale (24)	16.6	3.0	15.5	3.5	15.6	3.5	1.1
Affectional Expression Subscale (12)	9.1	1.7	8.5	2.0	8.7	1.8	0.8
Dyadic Adjustment Scale							
Original (151)	115.8	9.9	112.00	12.5	105.6	15.6	5.4**
Revised (266)	0.79	0.08	0.75	0.08	0.69	0.11	9.58***

Note. [a]Proportion for each subject calculated as obtained score divided by possible score, where a ratio of 0.0 represents lowest adjustment and 1.00 represents maximal positive adjustment. Other scores are obtained raw scores, with bracketed numbers denoting the maximal adjustment score for each subscale.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

family subtypes. These results also indicate that Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale discriminated between intact and blended families, even though it does not contain what would seem to be items unique to blended families. Scheffé's post hoc procedure applied to the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale indicated that the mean score for complex blended families was significantly different ($p < .05$), from mean scores for both the intact family and simple blended family subgroups. Applying Scheffé's analysis to the means of the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale indicated that the complex blended family was significantly different only from the intact family group and not the simple blended family group. These findings suggest the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale was a more sensitive discriminator than the original Spanier scale between the two types of blended families. The revised scale identifies the differences between intact families and the two structural subtypes of blended families, as well as between the two subtypes of simple and complex blended families.

On the Original Consensus Subscale intact families scored highest ($M = 49.5$), and complex blended families scored lowest ($M = 46.2$), but these differences did not reach the established level of significance, $F(2,104) = 3.36$, $p = .04$. On the 23 new consensus items differences in scores of these three family groups were statistically significant, $F(2,104) = 12.75$, $p < .001$. The Scheffé procedure further indicated that the main source contributing to this difference was the complex blended family mean which was significantly lower ($p < .05$), than either the intact or simple blended family groups. With the addition of these new items to make the Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale, a

significant difference was again noted, $F(2,104) = 10.1$, $p < .001$, when comparing the mean proportions for the intact, simple blended, and complex blended family subtypes. These findings confirm that the addition of the new items to the Original Consensus Subscale and to the Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale enhances their ability to articulate differences not only between the intact and blended family groups, but also between the simple blended and complex blended family subtypes.

Perhaps the key to these differences lies in the potential for blended family life itself to generate more areas of which to be aware and to be resolved (Pink & Wampler, 1985). A number of studies have included concerns such as added financial burden (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979), problems with ex-spouses who may exert overt or covert influence on the family (Fast & Cain, 1966; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979), or difficulties in adjusting to the role of stepparent (Esses & Campbell, 1984; Fishman, 1984; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979). However, if the inclusion of the new items does cause an identification of a significant difference between the groups, when it did not previously, then there is more information that can be brought to a fuller consideration of the components of dyadic adjustment in these types of family structures. These were not considered by Spanier (1976) in his original scale.

This same pattern of adjustment scores is evident in comparing scores on the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale. On the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, differences in scores of the three family

groups were statistically significant, $F(2,104) = 8.9$, $p < .001$. Applying the Scheffé procedure to the dyadic satisfaction means, again singled out the complex blended family group as being significantly different from each of the other two groups. Along with the findings of the moderately high correlation between the new consensus items and the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, the similarity in pattern of consensus and satisfaction scores for the three groups seems to confirm that the two subscales may indeed be measuring a similar behaviour domain or construct.

DeMaris' (1984) research comparing remarriages with first marriages on satisfaction in marriage, utilizing the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, found no significant difference between groups. In contrast, the present study utilized the comprehensive measure including all four subscales (Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, and Affectional Expression), thus perhaps enabling individuals to respond to a broader range and depth of components. DeMaris also neglected to differentiate his blended family sample into any structural subtypes. Comparisons of family types on the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, itself, in the present study showed pronounced differences among both the complex blended and the simple blended and intact family groups.

One apparent difference between DeMaris (1984) study and the present one seems to be the length of time the partners were cohabiting. In the study by DeMaris, the majority had been married for at least one year, but not more than two years, whereas in the present study there was a greater variation in the length of

cohabitation. The intact family group had the longest average length of cohabitation and the complex blended family group had the shortest length of cohabitation (Table 2). As can be seen in more detail in Table 9, the majority of intact family participants had been married for more than 6 years (90%), with only 3 (10%) cohabiting for 3-5 years, and no respondents cohabiting for fewer than 3 years. In the simple blended family group the corresponding percentages were 62%, 28%, and 5%, and in the complex blended family group 27%, 30%, and 35%, respectively. In addition a chi square analysis was performed, (Appendix G) indicating that a significant difference did exist in the number of participants in each group when comparing the length of marriage or cohabitation, $\chi^2(4,103) = 38.34$, $p < .005$. Looking at mean adjustment proportions (Table 9) for the three groups, it can be seen that a trend is noticeable with the intact family group having the highest mean adjustment scores in all three scales reported, followed by the simple blended and finally the complex blended family groups. In addition, the complex blended family proportions seem lower across the number of years cohabiting, and appear slower to increase in adjustment proportions. These findings suggest an interesting implication. In complex blended families, when both partners have past parenting values that have translated into patterns of parenting, differences may be more pronounced from the outset of blended family life or perhaps exacerbated throughout the adjustment period (Ambert, 1986; Burchinal, 1964; Clingempeel, 1981; Clingempeel, Brand, & Ievoli, 1984; Duberman, 1973; Pink & Wampler, 1985).

Table 9

Comparison of Adjustment Scores/Proportions for Revised Adjustment Scales, by Family Structure and Years Cohabiting

	Years cohabiting					
	2 or fewer		3-5		6 or more	
Family group	n	M	n	M	n	M
Revised Consensus Subscale						
Intact	0	0	3	0.74	28	0.80
Simple blended	2	0.71	11	0.79	24	0.74
Complex blended	13	0.67	12	0.68	10	0.69
Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale						
Intact	0	0	3	0.76	28	0.79
Simple blended	2	0.69	11	0.77	24	0.74
Complex blended	13	0.67	12	0.68	10	0.70
Dyadic Satisfaction Scale						
Intact	0	0	3	41.7	28	40.6
Simple blended	2	36.0	11	39.3	24	39.3
Complex blended	13	34.2	12	33.5	10	37.3

This notion is partially supported by Papernow's findings (1984) in what she calls the Stepfamily Development Cycle. Looking at the findings in the present study through the lens of Papernow's Stepfamily Development Cycle, the complex blended family group, with a mean length of cohabitation of 4 years, could well have been in the middle stages of adjustment to blended family life and not have reached resolution. The average simple blended family member, with a mean of 8 years of cohabitation, could have completed the Stepparent Development Cycle.

However, the Stepfamily Development Cycle does not fully explain that, regardless of length of cohabitation, the complex blended group has a substantially lower mean Dyadic Consensus proportion, Revised Dyadic Adjustment proportion and Dyadic Satisfaction score compared to the intact or simple blended family groups (Table 9). Papernow (1984) neglected to differentiate her participants into any structural subtypes of blended families. The complex blended family group, with its more pronounced differences from the other two family subtypes, may take longer to complete what Papernow calls the Stepfamily Development Cycle, or in the present study is termed the process of dyadic adjustment, than the simple blended family group. Perhaps distinctions between the complex blended and the intact and simple blended family groups, on various aspects of family life, become more apparent after they have been cohabiting for several years, particularly in the case of the complex blended family (Clingempeel, 1981; Clingempeel et al., 1984; Duberman, 1973). It is possible that, with time, the differences between simple blended and intact families

will become less discernible. The differences were found not to be significant on the overall Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale or its subscales when comparing these two groups, utilizing Scheffé's post hoc analysis, whereas the differences between complex blended and intact groups may become greater, (Scheffé), as might the differences between simple and complex blended families, (Scheffé). The major difference in the comparison of the family groups was found between the complex blended group and the intact and simple blended groups. Considering this finding, the author concurs with Esses and Campbell (1984) that researchers need to control for variations in structural subtypes in their research design and be aware of the possible confounding of results that can occur as a result of mixing or combining subtypes.

In summary, these findings do confirm one of the research questions. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale does discriminate between simple blended, complex blended and intact families on aspects of dyadic adjustment.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

A two-way Analysis of Variance was applied to compare scores or proportions on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and each of the subscales by structural family subtype and sex. The results did not approach significance on any comparison and are therefore not presented herein. This lack of difference between groups seems to indicate that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and its subscales are free of gender bias.

The greatest percentage of participants in each family group had attained at least a level of education of 2-3 years of college or university training, with the intact family group having the highest with 84%, next the simple blended with 82% and the complex blended family group with only 70%. It is interesting to note that the sequence of largest percentages for each family group from largest to smallest is similar in order to that of the mean scores and proportions of the family group scores (Table 8) on the Original and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scales, the Original and Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscales, and the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale.

A possible confounding variable among the groups might have been the effect of differences in level of education on the adjustment scores. On one hand, the study employed a purposive sample of predominantly middle class respondents and the influence of level of education is fairly similar across the three family groups. It could be that, for this type of sample, family life imposes a less severe economic strain. On the other hand, with the slight differences in the level of education between each family group, it may be that level of education goes hand in hand with better coping knowledge, skills, and support in dealing with the usual sources of concern. The level of education, then, could possibly have contributed to the significant differences obtained when comparing the three family groups on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Revised Consensus Subscale, and the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, since the complex family group does have participants with slightly lower levels of education in comparison to the intact and simple blended family

groups.

An interesting variation existed in comparing the marital status of participants in the three groups (Table 1). All of the intact family respondents were married. In the simple blended family group, 72% were married, whereas in the complex blended family only 43% were married. An Analysis of Variance was not appropriate because in the intact group, there were no respondents in the "not married" category. A chi square analysis revealed that the simple and complex blended families differed significantly on marital status, $\chi^2(1, N = 76) = 6.3, p < .05$. It is suggested that deciding to marry in blended families may go hand in hand with the degree of dyadic adjustment experienced within the family. This is supported by the findings regarding adjustment, with there being a significant difference between the simple and complex blended families indicated (ANOVA & Scheffé) on the Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale, the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, and well as the overall Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

It became apparent in the simple and complex blended family group that a difference existed in numbers of mutual children. Since the intact family group did not have a category with "no mutual children", a chi square comparison was again made using only the blended family sample ($N = 76$). In the simple blended group, 72% of the group had mutual children in comparison to 14% in the complex blended group. On the basis of a chi square analysis, a statistically significant association was found between numbers of mutual children and type of

blended family, $\chi^2(1, N = 76) = 26.42, p < .005$. This association seems to suggest that a similar trend may exist as the one with marital status. It seems that far fewer complex than simple blended families are married and far fewer complex than simple blended families have mutual children. In addition, since the complex blended family group was indicated as the main contributor to the significant differences in the Analysis of Variance measure on the Revised Dyadic Consensus Subscale, the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Scheffé), it is speculated that all of these characteristics may go hand in hand. In other words, perhaps lower and longer adjustment to blended family life, both parents bringing previous biological children into the blended family, cohabiting rather than marrying, and no mutual children are characteristics of one structural subtype of blended family. Greater adjustment to blended family life in a shorter period of time, only one parent bringing a biological child from a previous union, a decision to marry, and mutual children describe another structural subtype of blended family.

Summary of Results

To briefly reiterate, this study supports the conclusion that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a valid and reliable measure of dyadic adjustment within blended families. The instrument does discriminate between biologically intact, simple blended, and complex blended families in most aspects pertaining to blended families. Various sociodemographic and historical differences and trends were noted among the three different structural family subtypes.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to develop a scale that could be used with some measure of confidence to assess the quality of marriage in blended families. The findings discussed herein contribute to a clearer picture of blended family life with the focus being on two different structural subtypes of blended families. Although there are methodological concerns inherent in this study, the author believes that the process and findings which have resulted represent an orientation or move in the desired direction.

The findings in this study support the use of the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale for research with blended families. Instrumentation techniques were utilized to revise Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale, with its (a) high reliability and validity, and (b) clearly conceptualized and empirically verified components.

Inclusion of the 23 new items added to reflect specific adjustment concerns of blended families was supported by eight judges who were knowledgeable and experienced with blended family life. The new items showed optimal correlation confirming that the new items were measuring a similar construct as Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Consensus Subscale and Dyadic Adjustment Scale, yet adding desired new information to the original scale and subscales.

Including items which more fully reflect the unique lifestyle of the blended family seems to enhance blended family members' sense of self-expression. In this way the questionnaire can be perceived as a

more valid instrument for measuring the expression of personal dyadic adjustment in a blended family. From the clinician's point of view, items which are phenomenologically relevant to this sample of blended families are very likely to be discerned as adding to the face validity of the instrument. From the researcher's point of view, it is more useful to distinguish structural subtypes of blended families in research on blended families than it is to compare blended to intact families (Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984). For both clinicians and researchers, the addition of these new items increases the diagnostic utility of the instrument. It seems integral, then, to have an instrument such as the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale that is able to pick up the more obvious as well as the nuances in adjustment patterns of these blended families.

The increase of interitem consistency, as measured by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, was clear evidence of good scale reliability. In general the psychometric qualities of the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale were comparable to Spanier's Original Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

One of Spanier's concerns has been whether the Dyadic Adjustment Scale was a measure of individual adjustment to the relationship versus adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group. Findings in this study indicated that the perceptions of the individuals in dyads were very similar. Positive correlations of scores in dyads were found. However, only the correlation coefficients for the two blended family groups were significant, with the complex blended dyads demonstrating particularly high correlations, $\underline{r}(14) = .90$, $\underline{p} < .001$. Two implications seem evident from these findings. First, the

inclusion of items specific to adjustment concerns of blended families seem to discriminate the blended from the intact family respondents. Secondly, in spite of lower adjustment scores, dyads in blended families were found to have similar perceptions of the relationships.

The results indicated that the complex blended family showed lower adjustment than the intact family group or simple blended family group on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Cherlin's (1978) hypothesis of incomplete institutionalization was supported by findings from the present and Clingempeel's (1981) study that persons from complex blended families registered lower marital (dyadic) quality than persons from simple blended families.

There were a number of interesting trends regarding sociodemographic variables. Length of cohabitation varied significantly amongst the three groups with the complex blended group cohabiting for the shortest period of time. With the lack of conclusive evidence regarding the length of time it takes to adjust to blended family life, it seemed evident that (a) the complex blended family group may require a greater length of time than the simple blended family group to adjust to blended family life than was previously thought (Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1979), and (b) when both partners have children with the accompanying past parental history, differences may be more pronounced from the outset of blended family life and may well remain lower throughout the adjustment phase.

The level of education of the three family groups was found to be similar, although the complex blended group showed a slightly lower

level. All of the intact dyads and a large proportion (72%) of the simple blended family dyads were married, in comparison to the complex blended family dyads (43%). A similar trend was apparent regarding mutual children. All of the intact dyads and a large proportion (72%) of the simple blended dyads had mutual children, in comparison to only 14% of the complex blended dyads.

In summary, a survey of the literature indicated a need for development of a measure of dyadic adjustment which had been validity and reliability tested with members of blended families. The psychometric qualities reported and the data gathered on three different structural subtypes of families clearly indicated that the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a valid and reliable measure of dyadic adjustment for use with blended families.

Limitations of the Study

Although the research hypotheses are supported in this study, a number of methodological issues indicate that caution is needed in generalizing the results. To be taken into consideration is the fact that a select group of subjects represented a moderately sized, non-random sample of fairly sophisticated middle class subjects may be represented here, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings (Census of Canada, 1981). In 80% of the sample, both partners took part in the study. Social desirability may have encouraged some of these individuals to report more agreement on family matters than actually occurred. To admit to disagreement, especially in the case of the blended families, might cause disharmony or even anxiety over another potential separation or divorce (Cherlin,

1978; Clingempeel, 1981; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984; Glick, 1980).

Data were collected from only one family member in approximately one fifth of the sample (Table 7). It is suggested that having both partners in the dyad take part in the study could increase the validity and improve diagnostic utility of the data collected.

A variety of means of recruiting the subjects were utilized. A more uniform method of recruitment would decrease the possible biases. The questionnaire on sociodemographic information could have been more extensive and detailed, allowing for further analyses of possible trends.

To test the adequacy of the definitions or concepts of dyadic adjustment, dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and affectional expression, results from a factor analysis could have been reported. This could have further confirmed whether or not the hypothesized components of adjustment could be empirically verified.

Implications

The results from this study have implications for both future research and for professionals working with blended families.

Future research. Perhaps a replication study ensuring a larger random sample utilizing factor-analytic techniques, in addition to the instrumentation techniques utilized by the present study, could increase the generalizability of the findings. This would enable researchers to study different structural subtypes of blended families who are functioning well and those who are not, rather than, continuing to compare blended and intact families.

To better discern between various levels of functioning in blended family dyads, possibly a greater variety of items could be included in the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. This process would involve operationalizing the concept of not only marital adjustment but also characteristics or qualities such as adaptability, communication, and intrapersonal and interpersonal tensions.

Perhaps future research could include longitudinal studies of the adjustment process of blended families. This could (a) ascertain whether there is an average length of adjustment for the different structural subtypes, and (b) yield more information on the details of this process in the various subtypes of blended families. Further investigations of the influence of the length of cohabitation on dyadic adjustment of various structural subtypes of blended families may lead to a clearer understanding of the possible variety in the process of adjustment of these groups. In addition, research of the relationship of marital status to mutual children deserves further study.

Qualitative research of a longitudinal nature could produce a clearer understanding of the perceptions of blended family members regarding aspects that are pertinent to the blended family. This could yield insights into their coping strategies.

The level of education of the members of the dyad in blended families deserves further investigation. Such research could utilize multi-method data collection techniques. A questionnaire such as the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale could be used to ascertain details of level of education and dyadic adjustment of the dyads. Interview and

observation techniques could be utilized to collect information on general issues and skills found to be effective by different dyads.

Professionals working with blended families. The findings from the present study have implications for family therapists, educators and other professionals working with blended families. Utilizing the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale as a diagnostic tool could enable family therapists counselling blended families to help these families to better understand and cope with (a) initial adjustment during blended family formation, and (b) the various aspects of blended family life in general.

It is suggested that a need exists for all professionals (Coleman, Ganong & Henry, 1984; Crohn, et al., 1981; Garland, 1981; Miller, 1985) to share pertinent information with blended family members to help them with the process of adjustment to blended family life. Some of the coping strategies shared with blended family members could include areas such as (a) information about blended family formation and life, (b) communication skills, (c) support group formation, (d) problem solving skills, (e) decision making skills, (f) values clarification, and (g) parenting skills.

A further implication for professionals working with blended families is to overcome what Cherlin (1978) called "incomplete institutionalization" regarding blended families. One method of doing this would be to help increase the awareness of the public and various institutions about the many aspects particular to blended family life, thereby increasing the acceptance and acknowledgement of the blended family as a normal family type rather than as a variation of the

intact family.

A number of implications for further research and for professionals working with blended families have been suggested. These added dimensions to existing knowledge of blended family life could have great impact on the quality of their experience. It may be that the adjustment process of blended family members could be better acknowledged phenomenologically and thus give greater credence to their particular life-style.

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Appendix A

Notice to Prospective Participants

AN INVITATION TO:

PARENT(S) IN INTACT OR BLENDED FAMILIES

I would be very appreciative of your willingness to participate in my thesis research. I am working on my Master of Arts degree at the University of Victoria.

My research involves the experience of the parent(s) in intact and blended (step) families. The time required to complete the paper and pencil questionnaires will be approximately 30 minutes. Participants may terminate their involvement in the research at any time. All information will be strictly confidential and anonymity is assured.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please leave your name and phone number with the designated person listed below, OR, call me, Marianna O. Terauds, at 721-7833 (Victoria) or 748-3710 (Duncan). I will share further information at that time. If you decide to participate, arrangements convenient to you will be made to meet in person to discuss any further questions you may have, to obtain consent from you, and to respond to the questionnaires.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Marianna O. Terauds

Designated person: _____

Appendix B

Letter Confirming Recruitment for the Study

University of Victoria
Faculty of Education
P.O. Box 1700
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2

[Name and address of
agency or preschool]

I am really very appreciative of your willingness to assist me in my thesis research. As I mentioned on the telephone, I am working on my Master of Arts degree in Counselling in the Department of Psychological Foundations, at the University of Victoria.

My research involves the experience of the parent(s) in intact and blended (step) families. I am looking at examining one self-report instrument whose validity and reliability as a measure of current marital adjustment for biologically intact families has been supported in the literature (Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale, 1976), to adapt this instrument so that it serves as an appropriate measure of dyadic adjustment in blended families, and to collect some initial validation support for the adapted instrument in order to use it to better understand aspects of the adjustment process for blended families.

Subjects for my study will be individuals, who are parents in each of the three types of families; that is, biologically intact, simple blended and complex blended families. The time required to complete the paper and pencil questionnaire will be approximately 30 minutes. All participants will be guaranteed complete confidentiality.

If you would like to discuss any of this or if you have any questions, please feel free to call. I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon. My telephone number is 721-7833 (Victoria) or 748-3710 (Duncan). Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Marianna O. Terauds

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM TO ACT AS PARTICIPANT IN INTACT/BLENDED FAMILY STUDY

CONSENT FORM TO ACT AS PARTICIPANT IN INTACT/BLENDED FAMILY STUDY

I herby authorize Marianna O. Terauds of the University of Victoria to gather information regarding my family. My decision to participate in the study was made freely without any means of coercion.

My participation involves answering the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Family Background questionnaire. I understand that I may terminate as a participant at any time.

I understand that all information is strictly confidential and anonymous.

It has been explained that Marianna O. Terauds will be available for discussion or consultation on completion of the questionnaires if as a result of the study there are any questions or concerns.

The above procedures have been explained to me by Marianna O. Terauds.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

Appendix D

DIRECTIONS FOR DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE--BLENDED FAMILY EDITION

DIRECTIONS FOR DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE--BLENDED FAMILY EDITION:-

The written directions on this questionnaire are brief and clear. In addition, I would like to add that it is important for you not to talk to your partner regarding the items on the questionnaire before or during the time that you are filling in your responses. It is YOUR CHOICE whether you do so afterward.

For people who are in biologically intact families, please place an "N/A" response beside those questions which are not pertinent to you; but, ONLY beside those questions. For example, you would place, "N/A" beside item #15 which reads, "Ways of dealing with ex-spouse", and so on.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE FAMILY BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE:-

For this second part of the questionnaire, you are welcome to discuss your responses with your partner. I realize that it may seem redundant for both of you to respond in this section. I would still ask each of you to respond, as this will make it easier for me to work with the data. For questions 7 - 13 inclusive please fill in the appropriate column for yourself only.

The coding in this section is necessary for data analysis. It is coded in this manner so that the questionnaires remain anonymous to everyone except you. Please remember, that although you are free to share and discuss this section on "Family Background" with your partner, it is entirely your choice whether you do so.

Again, please place an "N/A" response beside questions that do not apply to you.

PLEASE PLACE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND RETURN TO DESIGNATED PERSON/PLACE.

Appendix E

Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Blended Family Edition

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

BLENDED FAMILY EDITION

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list (1-38 inclusive).

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa-sionally Disagree	Fre-quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances (CON)[a]	5	4	3	2	1	0
*2. Child support (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of recreation (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Religious matters (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Demonstrations of affection (AE)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*6. Demonstrations of affection for children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Friends (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*8. Friends of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*9. Mutual friends with ex-spouse/partner (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Sex relations (AE)	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior) (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*12. Correct or proper behavior of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Philosophy of life (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. Ways of dealing with parents (or in-laws) (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*15. Ways of dealing with ex-spouse (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*16. Ways of dealing with family of ex-spouse (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
17. Aims, goals, & things believed important (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*18. Aims, goals, & things believed important for children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
19. Amount of time spent together as a couple (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*20. Amount of time spent with children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0

(Appendix continues)

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa-sionally Disagree	Fre-quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
21. Making major decisions (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*22. Making major decisions about children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
23. Household tasks (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*24. Household tasks of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
25. Leisure time interests and activities (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*26. Leisure time interests and activities of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
27. Career decisions (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*28. Holidays (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*29. Holidays of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*30. Family traditions (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*31. Discipline of children (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*32. Family rules (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*33. Achievement (or school performance by children) (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*34. Expectations about blended family life (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*35. Length of time to adjust to family life (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*36. Seeing a personal counsellor (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*37. Seeing a relationship counsellor (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0
*38. Seeing a family counsellor (CON)	5	4	3	2	1	0

(Appendix continues)

	All of the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
39. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship? (S)	0	1	2	3	4	5
40. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight? (S)	0	1	2	3	4	5
41. In general, how often do you think that things between you & your partner are going well? (S)	5	4	3	2	1	0
42. Do you confide in your mate? (S)	5	4	3	2	1	0
43. Do you ever regret that you married/lived together? (S)	0	1	2	3	4	5
44. How often do you and your partner quarrel? (S)	0	1	2	3	4	5
45. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"? (S)	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
46. Do you kiss your mate? (S)	4	3	2	1	0
47. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? (COH)	4	3	2	1	0

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More Often
48. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas (COH)	0	1	2	3	4	5
49. Laugh together (COH)	0	1	2	3	4	5
50. Calmly discuss something (COH)	0	1	2	3	4	5
51. Work together on a project (COH)	0	1	2	3	4	5

(Appendix continues)

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check YES or NO.)

		YES	NO
52.	Being too tired for sex (AE)	0	1
53.	Not showing love (AE)	0	1

54. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship. (S)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Extremely unhappy	Fairly unhappy	A little unhappy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	Perfect

55. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (S)

5 I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.

4 I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.

3 I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.

2 It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.

1 It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

0 My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Notes. Items without asterisks are taken from the "Dyadic Adjustment Scale" by G. B. Spanier, 1976, Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38, 27-28. Copyright 1984 by the National Council on Family Relations. Used by permission of the author. Items with asterisks were developed for the current blended families study. Numbers refer to series given to each response.

[a]Subscale assignments: CON = dyadic consensus, S = dyadic satisfaction, AE = affectional expression, and COH = dyadic cohesion.

Appendix F

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY BACKGROUND

To assure anonymity, please do not include your name. Any code you wish to utilize is acceptable as long as both you and your partner use the same one. Here is an example of one that has been devised for correlating information:-

Initial of woman's mother's first name _____

Date of birth of the woman partner _____

Initial of the women's father's first name _____

e.g. Susan's mother's name is Joyce J

Susan's birth date is the 13th of June 13

Susan's father's name is Bruce B

1. Date of your marriage: _____ OR Date you commenced living together: _____

2. Please list all of your children.
Mutual children from present relationship:

Age	Sex	Age	Sex

Check here if no children _____

3. Man's children from previous relationship(s):

Age	Sex	Resides with	Custody/Visitation Arrangement

Check here if no children _____

FAMILY BACKGROUND

4. Woman's children from previous relationship(s):

Age	Sex	Resides with	Custody/Visitation Arrangement

Check here if no children _____

5. How long (in years) did you know each other prior to your marriage/living together? _____

6. If you are married, did you live together prior to your marriage?

Circle one. YES NO

How long in years? _____

Did your children live with you? YES NO

Which ones: How long (in years) _____

		Man	Woman
7.	How old are you?		
8.	How far did you go in school? Choose the letter that applies to you. A) Did not complete high school B) High School diploma C) Technical training or 2-3 year college D) University degree E) Graduate training (please specify)		

FAMILY BACKGROUND

		Man	Woman
9.	What is your occupation?		
10.	How many years were you married/lived with your former partner?		
11.	Length of time (in years) between your previous marriage/partnership and the present one:		
12.	Is your ex-partner still living?		
13.	How far from your residence does your ex-partner live?		

Please feel free to include any comments regarding these two questionnaires.

Thank you very much for your help!

Appendix G

Table G-1

Observed and Expected Frequencies for Length of Time Cohabiting, by Family Group

	Years cohabiting					
	less than 2		3-5		6 or more	
Family Group	O	E	O	E	O	E
Intact	0	4.5	3	7.8	28	16.9
Simple blended	2	5.4	11	9.3	24	22.3
Complex blended	13	5.1	12	8.8	10	21.1

Note. Where observed frequencies are represented by O, expected frequencies are represented by E.

$\chi^2(4, N = 103) = 38.34, \quad p < .005.$

VITA

Surname: TERAUDS Given Names: MARIANNA ODINS

Place of Birth: Sweetsburg, Quebec Date of Birth: January 20, 1952

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL	1968 TO 1972
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, WINNIPEG	1973 TO 1974
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, B.C.	1984 TO 1988

Degrees and Diplomas awarded with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B.Sc.	1972	McGill University, Montreal
Certification in Education	1974	University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Awards:

B.C. Government Scholarship, 1985/86 and 1986/87

University of Victoria Scholarship, 1986/87

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Title of Thesis

MEASURING DYADIC ADJUSTMENT: DEVELOPMENT OF A PRELIMINARY VALIDATION SCALE TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF MARRIAGE AND OTHER DYADS IN BLENDED FAMILIES

Author [redacted]

MARIANNA ODINS TERAUDS

August 7, 1988