

**CLIENT'S PREFERENCES OF MARRIAGE COUNSELOR
CHARACTERISTICS AND METHODS OF
COUNSELING PREFERRED BY CLIENTS**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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CLIENT'S PREFERENCES OF MARRIAGE COUNSELOR CHARACTERISTICS
AND METHODS OF COUNSELING PREFERRED BY CLIENTS

An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Billy Barnes Kelley
August 1976

Abstract

The literature is replete with descriptions of the clients preferred by marriage counselors and counseling methods preferred by marriage counselors; however, very little has been published describing the client's preferences of marriage counselor characteristics and method of counseling preferred by clients. The present study was conducted to determine the preferences of a select population of married couples with regard to these factors.

Subjects were 25 married couples residing in an apartment complex in Clarksville, Tennessee. All couples were Caucasian and all were engaged in professional careers or occupations of similar status. None of the couples had ever seen a marriage counselor or were currently in counseling.

A questionnaire, devised by the writer, was administered to each of the subjects. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: respondent identification, characteristics desired of a counselor, types of techniques desired, and what circumstances would prompt the respondent to seek marital counseling.

The data were analyzed by determining the percentage of individuals agreeing to the item, the number of couples agreeing with each other on the items, and male and female responses were then computed separately.

Results of the survey indicated that the highest percentages of the couples sampled preferred a male counselor;

a counselor older than themselves; one of the same race and religion; and a person trained at the doctoral level. The highest percentage of male respondents preferred a counselor trained as a psychologist, whereas the largest percentage of the female population preferred a minister counselor. Conjoint counseling was chosen as the preferred method by 50% of the couples and concurrent counseling was selected by 40% of these couples. When asked under what conditions they would seek counseling, 44% responded that they would seek help under extreme conflict; while 10% stated they would never seek counseling.

Obviously, generalization from the results of the present study is limited because of the select sample. It is suggested that further research be conducted investigating the preferences of various types of populations (different age groups, socio-economic levels, religions, etc.) with regard to their preference of a marriage counselor and the method of counseling used.

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A Thesis
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Billy Barnes Kelley entitled "Client's Preferences of Marriage Counselor Characteristics and Methods of Counseling Preferred by Clients." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

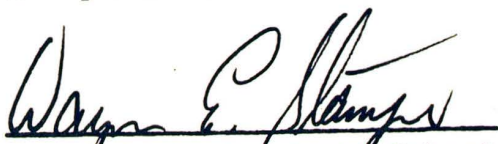

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:


Second Committee Member


Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express appreciation to Dr. Linda Rudolph, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Austin Peay State University, who helped in the refinement of the topic and gave valuable counsel throughout the thesis project. Sincere gratitude is also extended to Dr. John D. Martin and Dr. Garland E. Blair for their assistance during the early stages of research planning.

The author also wishes to thank Mr. Jimmy Carr for his cooperation in allowing the author to solicit the subjects from the tenant population of his apartment complex.

Finally, the author wishes to express special thanks to his wife, Shirley, whose extraordinary patience and constant encouragement contributed greatly to the completion of the project. Also the author thanks his two sons, Mike and Keith, and his daughter Candy for their never ending faith in him and to Dr. Alfred Bryson without whose assistance the author would not be here today.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The practice of marriage counseling is as old as the institution of marriage itself. From the earliest days, there have always been relatives, friends, officials, and religious leaders who have attempted to help people with their marital difficulties. However, during the last decade marriage counseling has continued to grow as a profession, with an increasing number of couples seeking help and an increase in the facilities for training professionals to work with the problems of marriage and family living (Alger, 1968). With this developing new profession have come problems with regard to the underlying assumptions of the counselor, the training appropriate for a marriage counselor, and questions concerning appropriate methods for working with married couples.

Review of the Literature

Definition and Terms

In Marriage Counseling: A Casebook (1968), edited by the American Association of Marriage Counselors, marriage counseling is defined as follows:

Marriage counseling may be defined as the process through which a professionally trained counselor assists a person or persons to resolve the problems

that trouble them in their interpersonal relationships. The focus is on the relationship between the two persons in marriage rather than as in psychiatric therapy, and the reorganization of the personality structure of the individual (In Ard and Ard, 1970, p. 63).

Goodwin and Mudd (1968) define marriage counseling as "the process by which a professionally trained counselor assists a person or persons to resolve the problems that trouble them in their interpersonal relationships as they move into marriage, live with it, or make a decision to terminate it" (p. 98). Ard and Ard (1969) define marriage counseling as "counseling with one or more clients dealing with problems related to marriage problems about getting married; staying married; getting out of marriage; getting a divorce; sexual problems; concerns about being a man, husband, lover, father, friend; or as a woman, wife, lover, friend, mother" (p. 5). Rutledge (1969) states that

Marriage counseling begins when one or both members of a couple come to a counselor for help in resolving tension-producing difficulties. Marriage counseling is the process whereby professional skills and experience, within the context of an understanding and accepting face-to-face relationship are brought to the assistance of spouses as they explore, evaluate, and clarify feeling and issues; as they seek to communicate verbally and emotionally; and as they learn to choose courses of action which will lead to some resolution of their problems (p. 3).

Goodwin and Mudd (1969) report that marriage counseling is similar to other forms of psychological counseling, since it usually is concerned with individuals who are in trouble and who frequently have severe psychological

difficulties. The one outstanding difference, however, between marriage counseling and other forms of counseling is that marriage counseling is concerned with at least two individuals, while general counseling or psychotherapy may only be concerned with one client.

The focus of treatment has been the subject of dispute by many authorities. Leslie (1969) contends that some authorities feel that a marriage itself can be sick, therefore the marriage, or the relationship between husband and wife should be the focus of treatment. Leslie further states that most counselors take a "middle of the road" stand and treat the individuals in a marriage rather than just the individuals. Eisenstein (1956) feels that most marriage counseling clients come for help because they are having trouble relating to their present or future mates. It is his belief that a marriage counselor diagnoses and treats an interpersonal relationship rather than only an individual, therefore the counselor must continually orient his efforts so that they benefit two or more individuals rather than merely one. Ard and Ard (1970) attempt to summarize the basic assumptions underlying marriage counseling by pointing out that throughout the literature, the idea of marriage counseling emphasizes the following dimensions:

. (a) that marriage counseling is a form of psychotherapy; (b) that the effective marriage

counselor needs to be able to recognize and differentiate between psychotic and neurotic problems; (c) that many of the difficulties within marriage are the result of personality conflicts within or between marriage partners: (d) that marriage counselors will be dealing with problems of the unconscious as well as the conscious, and at times will be involved in efforts of basic personality reorganization (p. 63).

Counselor Training

Marriage counseling is conducted today by a large number of professional workers trained in different disciplines. These disciplines include psychology, sociology, medicine, social work, law, and religion. However, Rutledge (1969) avers that:

The routine training of the established professions does not qualify persons as specialists in marriage relationships. The average physician is not prepared to deal adequately with marriage problems. Psychiatry as a whole does not attempt to do marriage counseling except in terms of one spouse. Clinical psychology is a good background for, and has much to contribute to, training in marriage counseling, but in itself does not provide adequate training. The same is true of social casework. The legal profession in general is ill prepared to deal with emotional factors in marital conflict. The clergy see an overwhelming amount of marital stress, but most seminaries continue to offer inadequate training in this area, in spite of major progress in recent years (p. 3).

Recently a group has emerged whose members have been specifically trained in marriage counseling rather than in some other basic discipline. Ellis (1963) reports that some of the older members in the field question this new trend on the grounds that marriage counseling is basically a clinical or psychotherapeutic procedure, therefore its

practitioners should be recruited from one of the clinical disciplines.

Methods of Counseling

There have been many procedures used in the counseling of maritally troubled people. One important procedure for handling disruptive interaction is concurrent counseling. Marriage Counseling: A Casebook (1958) defines concurrent counseling as counseling in which one counselor sees the husband and wife in separate and individual sessions. A survey of the techniques utilized by members of the American Association of Marriage Counselors, as reported in Marriage Counseling: A Casebook (1958) indicated that concurrent counseling appears to be the procedure most preferred of those marriage counselors questioned.

Although the concurrent type of counseling is the most popular, according to the American Association of Marriage Counselors, there are some disadvantages and hazards. One danger that is inherent in this dual counseling is that the counselor may seem more partial, understanding, or emphatic with one spouse than the other. At times this may be extremely difficult for many reasons. The marriage counselor may see one person's side a little more clearly; he may find one of the pair more attractive and admirable than the other; or he may himself tend to identify with one and not the other.

An additional problem facing the concurrent counselor is one of keeping track of two personalities, with not only the intra conflicts but also those inter conflicts. There are two sets of inconsistencies, indecisions and interpretations, and there is an array of perceptions in the interplay of feeling and action between the spouses. Because of these complexities, some counselors prefer to work with only one of the married pair; for example, counselors with a psychoanalytic orientation almost always work with only one spouse, and only if it is absolutely necessary will they have contact with the other marriage partner or his therapist. However, Bach and Alexander (1967) report that counselors who consider themselves primarily marriage counselors usually want to work with both of the partners and in cases where only one spouse comes for help, the counselor will try to induce the other to come in for therapy. By observing the interaction between the partners as well as learning of the perceptions and expectations of each partner, the marriage counselor gains more knowledge of his case and a much better "feel" of the situation. Some counselors believe that to counsel only one of the married pair is as divided as it would be to read the lines of only one character in a Shakespearian drama (Rutledge, 1958).

Satir (1964) explains that frequently only one of the spouses will seek counseling. She feels that although any

marriage counselor would prefer to have both spouses concerned and involved, it is better to have one than none. She further explains that probably the most successful method of involving the unwilling spouse is to enlist his aid in helping the counselor gain a more complete picture of the marriage situation and its conflict. This must be a genuine appeal and not simply a gimmick to bring the spouse into a counseling situation. If the counselor creates a genuine, warm, and accepting atmosphere, the unwilling spouse often becomes willing. He finds that here is someone who will listen to his side of the story as well as "the other side." Once he discovers that it is easy and safe to talk about himself, he, too may be eager to work with the counselor.

A second form of concurrent marriage counseling, collaborative counseling, is a process wherein each partner is treated individually by a different therapist. Grotjohn (1960) contends that most of the arguments for collaborative counseling are actually arguments against working with the partners in simultaneous treatment. Kubie (1956) points out that sometimes a marriage fails in spite of, and in some instances because of, the therapist's individual treatment of two partners. This is especially likely in cases where one partner has made notably more progress and growth in his therapy and has come to realize that the marriage is hopeless. When this occurs, the other partners

will often hold the therapist responsible. The injured or abandoned partner may often lose trust in the therapy or in the therapist and terminate treatment when most in need of help. Drellich (1968) feels that in such a circumstance, it is clear that one of the couple has had his therapeutic needs sabotaged by the initial decision to treat both simultaneously in a misguided attempt to save a marriage.

As a side issue, it must be mentioned that a separation or divorce often calls for the transfer of a patient to another therapist and raises immensely difficult questions. With which of the couple does the therapist's loyalty rest? Is it the partner who first sought his help? Is it the partner who is making the most progress? Is it the sicker patient who needs his help? Drellich (1968) submits that whoever is chosen for transfer to another therapist is likely to feel rejected and distrustful with consequent interference with his individual therapy.

A third procedure increasing in popularity is that of conjoint marriage counseling. In conjoint counseling one counselor sees the husband and wife together in joint sessions. At appropriate times the husband and wife also are seen in a separate meeting. In this form of counseling a much greater emphasis is placed directly on the disturbed marital interaction itself, although the individual problems within each spouse are not ignored (Calden, 1967).

Calden explains that conjoint marriage counseling has a number of unique features. With the marriage partners present, one can immediately observe and deal with the distorted perceptions and defensive behaviors that characterize so much of the marital interaction. Since the theater of operations of the marriage is in full view, the counselor can readily see the biases, distortions, and destructive behavior of each participant and can bring them to their attention. Conjoint counseling also offers the possibility of reducing the time and expense involved in treatment.

Mudd, Karpf, Stone, and Nelson (1958) argue against conjoint counseling with the following statement:

Husbands and wives may make the wildest accusations and say the most cutting things to each other without necessarily bearing a permanent grudge. Once these things are said in the presence of a third party, even a professional person, they tend to become fixed and to take on a different significance and value. A joint conference can provide just the opportunity for either or both parties to say things to punish and hurt each other which neither will forget because of a third party. The joint conference can, therefore, become the means of further separating spouses instead of bringing them together (p. 93).

Leslie (1969) counters the above argument with the following statement:

It is true that many couples in joint sessions will fight but it does not follow, however, that the fighting need produce deterioration of the marriage relationship. The question is not whether the couples will fight in the presence of the counselor. The couples have been fighting at home and will continue to do so. When a counselor excludes that conflict from the counseling sessions, he may inadvertently heighten the client's fears. On the other hand, when

the counselor can accept the conflicts without alarm, the effects of the conflict upon the partners tend to become less malignant. The temptation is there, but to portray conjoint therapy as a panacea will only bring discredit upon the procedure and delay its taking its proper place in the therapeutic arsenal. Unfortunately, the full limitations upon the use of conjoint therapy are not yet known (p. 64).

A fourth type of marriage counseling is group counseling. Group marriage counseling consists of four or five married couples working with one or two therapists in a group setting. Ard and Ard (1969) suggest that in view of what appears to be a constantly increasing need for marriage counseling, and the apparent reality that there probably will never be enough competent, professionally trained marriage counselors to meet this pressing need, there would seem to be an obvious point in considering group marriage counseling as one alternative to serve the growing number of people who are having difficulties in marriage. Obvious or not, group marriage counseling has not received the attention in the field one might expect under these circumstances. The first case book on marriage counseling put out by the American Association of Marriage Counselors (1958) did not include information on group marriage counseling. The literature on group marriage counseling in the years between 1958 and 1975 is relatively sparse, considering the seeming importance of an approach that offers to meet the needs of more people with fewer professional helpers than any other alternatives.

Purpose of Study

In surveying the literature, the present writer found an abundance of material describing the preference of marriage counselors. Rutledge (1969) describes the counselor's expectations of clients; Karpf (1951) lists several assumptions which can be seen as underlying marriage counseling; Fitzsimmons (1951) tells how a counselor should select his clients, and Kimber (1969) presents a study of who actually has been doing marriage counseling in the United States in recent years. However, very little information could be found in the literature describing the client's preference for a counselor. Therefore, it was the purpose of this present study to determine the preferences of a select sample population with regard to (1) the characteristics they deemed desirable in a marriage counselor; (2) the method of counseling preferred by these subjects, (3) and the circumstances under which they would seek marriage counseling.

Chapter II

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects of the present study were 25 Caucasian married couples, randomly selected from a pool of 40 couples who volunteered to participate in the study. All couples reside in a large apartment complex located in Clarksville, Tennessee. The ages of the respondents are 23 subjects in the 18-26 age group, 18 subjects in the 27-34 age group, and nine subjects over 35 years of age. All male subjects were college graduates. Occupations represented were university professors, lawyers, medical doctors, Army officers, and other vocations of similar status. Twenty-two of the 25 female subjects were college graduates. None of the couples had received marital counseling in the past, nor were any presently engaged in therapy.

This particular type of sample was selected with the assumption that the subjects represented in this socio-economic level would possibly be more knowledgeable about counseling and also would be more open to the idea of seeking marital counseling.

Instrumentation

Inasmuch as the literature contained no instruments to

collect the needed data, a questionnaire was devised by the writer and was administered to each of the subjects.

The questionnaire consists of four parts (see Appendix A): Part I identifies the characteristics of the respondent; Part II questions the characteristics desired of a marriage counselor; Part III asks for the respondent's preference of counselor methods; and Part IV questions the circumstances under which the subjects would seek marriage counseling.

Obviously, generalization from the results of the present study is limited because of the select sample. It is suggested that further research be conducted investigating the preference of various types of populations (different age groups, socio-economic levels, religion, etc.) with regard to their preference of a marriage counselor and the method of counseling used.

In an effort to determine the importance of the characteristics of sex, age, race, religion and degree of training to the respondents in the selection of a counselor, the subjects were asked to rate each of these characteristics on a scale from one to five.

Procedure

The questionnaire was individually administered by the present writer to each couple. A standard set of instructions for each area of the questionnaire was read to each

couple by the writer. After the questionnaires were completed by the couple, they were stapled together and placed in plain, unmarked envelopes in order to maintain anonymity.

Care was taken to control seating arrangements and interactions in order that the respondents would not be influenced by their partners or the researcher in answering the questionnaire.

Chapter III

RESULTS

The results of the present study are presented in Tables 1 through 4. The number of agreements with each statement on the questionnaire are shown in percentages. Respondents were also asked to rank in order of preference the type of counseling technique preferred (Sections II and III). The percentages shown for these questions indicate the number of respondents ranking this level of training or this method of counseling as their first choice.

Table 1 summarizes the individual responses of the total population ($N = 50$). Table 2 reflects the responses of married couples as they agreed on the particular items. The percentages given in Section I and IV indicate the number of couples agreeing on these particular items. The percentages shown in Section II and III indicate the number of couples agreeing on the items as their first choices. The responses of the male subjects to each question are given in Table 3 and female responses are shown in Table 4. Again, the percentages shown under Sections I and IV indicate agreement with the questions, while the percentages shown under Sections II and III

indicate the first choices of the respondent.

In an effort to determine the importance of the characteristics of sex, age, race, religion, and degree of training to the respondents in their selection of a counselor, the subjects were asked to rate each of these characteristics on a scale from 1 to 5. The mean degree of importance is also shown in Tables 1 through 4.

Table 1
Individual Responses of Subjects

I Characteristics Desired of A Counselor	% of Agreement	Mean of Levels of Importance
a. Preference for male counselor	86%	2.55
b. Preference for female counselor	14%	1.74
a. Preference for an older counselor	98%	3.55
b. Preference for a younger counselor	2%	5.00
a. Preference for counselor of same race	100%	3.56
b. Preference for counselor of different race	0%	
a. Preference for counselor of same religion	88%	2.73
b. Preference for counselor of different religion	14%	2.00
a. Preference for counselor with B.S. degree	12%	2.33
b. Preference for counselor with Masters degree	14%	3.67
c. Preference for counselor with Doctorate degree	64%	3.28

II Training of Counselor

a. Lawyer	0%
b. Minister	34%
c. Medical Doctor	8%
d. Social Worker	8%
e. Psychologist	30%
f. Psychiatrist	18%
g. Other	2%

Table 1 (continued)

III Types of Counseling

a. Collaborative	2%
b. Concurrent	40%
c. Conjoint	50%
d. Group	8%

IV Circumstances Under Which
Subjects Would Seek
Counseling

a. Mild conflict	6%
b. Moderate conflict	40%
c. Extreme conflict	44%
d. Never	10%

Table 2
Percentage of Couples in Agreement

I Characteristics Desired of A Counselor	% of Agreement	Mean of Levels of Importance
a. Preference for male counselor	76%	2.10
b. Preference for female counselor	4%	1.00
a. Preference for an older counselor	96%	3.62
b. Preference for a younger counselor	0%	0
a. Preference for counselor of same race	100%	3.56
b. Preference for counselor of different race	0%	0
a. Preference for counselor of same religion	80%	2.80
b. Preference for counselor of different religion	4%	2.00
a. Preference for counselor with B.S. degree	4%	1.00
b. Preference for counselor with Masters degree	12%	1.83
c. Preference for counselor with Doctorate degree	56%	3.39

II Training of Counselor

a. Lawyer	0%
b. Minister	16%
c. Medical Doctor	0%
d. Social Worker	4%
e. Psychologist	4%
f. Psychiatrist	4%
g. Other	0%

Table 2 (continued)

III Types of Counseling

a. Collaborative	0%
b. Concurrent	12%
c. Conjoint	24%
d. Group	4%

IV Circumstances Under which
Subjects Would Seek
Counseling

a. Mild conflict	4%
b. Moderate conflict	20%
c. Extreme conflict	24%
d. Never	0%

Table 3
Male Responses

I Characteristics Desired of A Counselor	% of Agreement	Mean of Levels of Importance
a. Preference for male counselor	88%	3.73
b. Preference for female counselor	12%	2.33
a. Preference for an older counselor	100%	3.48
b. Preference for a younger counselor	0%	0
a. Preference for counselor of same race	100%	3.48
b. Preference for counselor of different race	0%	0
a. Preference for counselor of same religion	92%	2.48
b. Preference for counselor of different religion	8%	3.00
a. Preference for counselor with B.S. degree	8%	1.50
b. Preference for counselor with Masters degree	24%	4.00
c. Preference for counselor with Doctorate degree	68%	3.12
II Training of Counselor		
a. Lawyer	0%	
b. Minister	32%	
c. Medical Doctor	4%	
d. Social Worker	12%	
e. Psychologist	36%	
f. Psychiatrist	8%	
g. Other	0%	

Table 3 (continued)

III Types of Counseling

a. Collaborative	0%
b. Concurrent	36%
c. Conjoint	52%
d. Group	12%

IV Circumstances Under Which
Subjects Would Seek
Counseling

a. Mild conflict	4%
b. Moderate conflict	32%
c. Extreme conflict	52%
d. Never	12%

Table 4
Female Responses

I Characteristics Desired of A Counselor	% of Agreement	Mean of Levels of Importance
a. Preference for male counselor	84%	2.52
b. Preference for female counselor	16%	2.40
a. Preference for an older counselor	96%	3.83
b. Preference for a younger counselor	4%	5.00
a. Preference for counselor of same race	100%	3.68
b. Preference for counselor of different race	0%	0
a. Preference for counselor of same religion	84%	3.00
b. Preference for counselor of different religion	16%	1.50
a. Preference for counselor with B.S. degree	16%	2.75
b. Preference for counselor with Masters degree	24%	3.33
c. Preference for counselor with Doctorate degree	60%	3.47

II Training of Counselor

a. Lawyer	0%
b. Minister	36%
c. Medical Doctor	12%
d. Social Worker	4%
e. Psychologist	24%
f. Psychiatrist	24%
g. Other	0

Table 4 (continued)

III Types of Counseling

a. Collaborative	4%
b. Concurrent	44%
c. Conjoint	52%
d. Group	4%

IV Circumstances Under Which
Subjects Would Seek
Counseling

a. Mild conflict	8%
b. Moderate conflict	48%
c. Extreme conflict	36%
d. Never	8%

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION

The result reported indicating that 86% of the respondents prefer a male counselor is not surprising. Other studies confirm that male counselors are preferred to female counselors. Koile and Bird (1956) found college students reporting a general preference for a counselor of the same sex, and the number of problems about which females were willing to consult a male counselor were greater than the number of problems about which males were willing to consult a female counselor. Fuller (1968) reported that pre-counseling preferences regarding counselor sex were obtained from 588 non-clients and 534 clients, and both pre- and post-counseling preferences from 40 of the clients. Male non-clients preferred male counselors and confidants more frequently and female counselors and confidantes less frequently than did females for both vocational and personal problems. Female clients with personal problems preferred male counselors more frequently than female non-clients. One statistic that was surprising was the low level of importance relative to the sex of the counselor. A mean of 2.55 for male preference seems low considering the large majority of respondents selecting males. The eight

respondents, three males and five females, who chose female counselors were not too strong in their feeling as indicated by the mean importance of 1.74.

The respondents were almost unanimous in favoring an older counselor rather than a younger counselor. The present writer was unable to find any literature related to this area. Several factors could have influenced the respondents in their decision to choose an older counselor. The ages of the respondents in this study are quite young and many have recently completed college. There were 23 people in the 18-26 age category, 18 in the 27-34 age category, and only nine over 35 years of age. The high mean of importance, 3.55, was indicative of the respondent's strong feeling about the age they desired in a counselor.

The feeling of the respondents toward the race of the counselor was very obvious in the unanimity and the mean of importance of 3.56. There is little in the literature concerning this facet of the present study. No prejudicial attitudes were indicated by the subjects; however, the possibility cannot be overlooked that geographical location could have influenced their responses.

The preference for counselors of the respondent's religion was much greater than that of a different religion. It would have been helpful in attempting to interpret these findings had the researcher ascertained the respondent's

religious affiliation and their rate of attendance. The mean of importance, 2.73, for those choosing counselors of their own religion and 2.00 for a different religion, could mean that the respondents did not feel strongly about the religion of their counselors.

The results concerning the counselor's educational level were predictable. In all the groups a counselor who holds the doctorate degree was the most popular by a large margin. Possibly the respondent's educational level had an influence on their decision. There also appears to be a general tendency for most people to seek the most knowledgeable person in terms of training or experiences whenever confronted with a problem.

The individual's preference for training of counselors was very interesting in that of the 50 individuals questioned, 34% ranked ministers as their first choice and 30% ranked psychologists as their first choice. Couples agreed on ministers as first choice, males placed ministers as a close second following psychologists, while female respondents chose ministers as the favorite for first choice. Although it is generally assumed that psychologists are trained more specifically for counseling than ministers, this finding could be explained by Moser's (1962) statement:

Before the development of a professional counseling discipline, the clergy was called upon almost exclusively for help. Aside from friends and parents of the marriage partners there was little

place to turn except to the clergy. Today, even with other resources available, the clergyman receives more requests for help than others because he is by far the most logical source of help. Marriage ceremonies are performed by the clergyman; and because of his trusted position, he is consulted when some difficulty threatens the relationship. Marriage problems comprise approximately one-half the counseling cases in the religious setting (p. 177).

Psychologists were ranked as second with regard to level of training desired. Lawyers and medical doctors were the least desired of all the disciplines.

In a study by Horne and Graff (1973) respondents were asked to indicate to whom they would go for help. The group surveyed indicated a preference for a person with a medical background, medical doctor or psychiatrist, to advise them on problems related to sexual adjustment and child rearing. Psychologists were indicated as being the primary resource person for assisting with incompatible needs and communication problems. Horne and Graff's study included an interesting point on undergraduate and graduate student desires. Undergraduates indicated less awareness of or need for professional resource persons for assistance in solving problems. The undergraduate was more likely to talk to a parent, friend, or minister. Graduate students are more likely to select a psychologist or psychiatrist for help and placed less emphasis on parents, friends, ministers.

In individual preferences, couples preferences, male preferences, and female preferences, conjoint counseling was preferred most often as first choice and concurrent counseling was chosen second. If the need for counseling arose, it appears that these subjects would select the method of counseling that most marriage counselors themselves prefer. Marriage Counseling: A Casebook (1958), Bach and Alexander (1967), Rutledge (1958), and Drellich (1968) propose that concurrent counseling is the best. Calden (1967), Leslie (1969), Goodwin and Mudd (1969), and Rydmen (1969) are all proponents of conjoint counseling.

One unexpected statistic was that more respondents chose group counseling than collaborative counseling. This finding was unexpected in that the review of the literature indicated that little has been written about group counseling for marital problems. A possible explanation for group counseling being slightly more popular than collaborative counseling is that, like conjoint and concurrent counseling, group counseling involves the couples receiving therapy together with the same counselor.

As expected, it was found that more individuals and couples (44%) would enter into marital counseling under extreme conflict, when the problems in the marriage were of such extent and nature that divorce was imminent. However, 40% of the couples indicated they would enter counseling

under moderate conflict, where problems in the marriage were causing constant tension, conflict and unhappiness. In view of the fact that a large segment of our society feels that to enter counseling carries a stigma it was surprising that so few people, a total of five, stated that they would not enter therapy no matter how severe the conflict.

In a study by Horne and Graff (1973) wives, more than husbands, reported difficulties and a greater desire to talk to a counselor. This present study confirms Horne and Graff's study by showing that females would enter therapy under mild and moderate conflict more readily than males.

In reviewing the literature and conducting the present study the writer discovered that there is little research on the preferences of clients in selection of a marital counselor. Obviously, generalization from the result of the present study to the total population is limited because of the sample selected. It is suggested that further research in the area of client preferences be conducted as outlined by Rosen (1968):

One area of research has received relatively little attention especially in light of its potential importance. This has to do with the preference of clients regarding characteristics and behavior of counselors. In fact, the study of certain kinds of preferences of either clients or counselor, such as religion, race, marital status, or physical attractiveness, seems to be a taboo topic. Although

the literature on client preferences for certain characteristics and procedures of psychotherapists is not yet sufficiently developed to warrant major interpretation, some suggestions regarding future research are relevant. Certainly the research to date, as well as clinical impressions, suggests that potential and actual clients have implicit and explicit ideas covering the characteristics they would like manifested in their counselors. These preferences might determine to a significant degree whether or not they seek counseling, length of counseling, various aspects of client-counselor interaction, their subsequent evaluation of the experience, and other measures of the effectiveness of counseling. Needed is the following kind of study: Clients preferences concerning counselors age, marital status, race, religion, sex, personality characteristics, physical appearances and attractiveness, professional discipline, and counseling procedure (p. 20).

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to be used by Billy Kelley, graduate student at Austin Peay State University, as a part of his Master of Arts degree thesis. Your name is not required and the information you provide will be kept in strict confidence. No individual data will be used. Only a summation of the total results will be shown and discussed in the thesis.

Part I describes the characteristics of you, the respondent. Parts II and III inquires about the characteristics you would desire in a marriage counselor and types of techniques you would desire to be used by a counselor.

I. Identification Characteristics of Respondent

1. Sex
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. Age
 - a. 18-26
 - b. 27-34
 - c. 35 and older
3. Number of years married
 - a. 5 or less
 - b. 6-10
 - c. 10-16
 - d. 16 or more

II. Characteristics Desired of Counselor

Circle either a or b. Also rate how important the particular characteristic is to you in selecting a counselor by circling one of the numbers.

1. Sex
 - a. I would prefer a male counselor
 - b. I would prefer a female counselor

Little importance 1 2 3 4 5 Great importance
2. Age
 - a. I would prefer a counselor older than I
 - b. I would prefer a counselor younger than I

Little importance 1 2 3 4 5 Great importance

3. Race

- a. I would prefer a counselor of my race
 b. I would prefer a counselor of a different race
- Little importance 1 2 3 4 5 Great importance

4. Religion

- a. I would prefer a counselor of my religion
 b. I would prefer a counselor of a different religion
- Little importance 1 2 3 4 5 Great importance

5. Degree of training

- a. I would prefer a counselor who holds a B.S. degree
 b. I would prefer a counselor who holds a Masters degree
 c. I would prefer a counselor who holds a Doctorate degree
- Little importance 1 2 3 4 5 Great importance

6. Training of Counselor

Please rank in order of preference

- _____ a. Lawyer
 _____ b. Minister
 _____ c. Medical Doctor
 _____ d. Social Worker
 _____ e. Psychologist
 _____ f. Psychiatrist
 _____ g. Other (please specify) _____

III. Type of Technique

Please rank in order of your preference

- a. _____ Collaborative: Marriage counseling in which my spouse and I are treated in separate sessions by different counselors.
- b. _____ Concurrent: Marriage counseling in which my spouse and I are treated individually in separate sessions by the same counselor.
- c. _____ Conjoint: Marriage counseling in which my spouse and I are treated together in the same session by the same counselor.
- d. _____ Group: Marriage counseling in which my spouse and I are treated together in the same sessions with other couples.

IV. Under what circumstance would you seek marital counseling?

- a. Mild conflict: Problems that are causing unhappiness in the marriage, but not threatening the stability of the marriage.
- b. Moderate conflict: Problems that are causing constant tension, conflict, and unhappiness.
- c. Extreme conflict: Problems of such extent and nature that divorce was imminent.
- d. I would not consider seeing a marriage counselor, no matter how severe the marital conflict.