

Chapter VIII

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Evaluation of Inventories

An important strength of the PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories is their strong, psychometric properties. High levels of reliability and validity have been found for each instrument, making them valuable tools for research as well as clinical use. This chapter supplies information on the reliability and validity of each instrument and offers a synopsis of research studies using the PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories as outcome measures.

The reliability of an assessment instrument refers to (1) the level of accuracy and consistency it displays in measuring a variable; and (2) its ability to maintain stable results over a period of time. The first type of reliability, often called internal consistency, randomly divides items from the scale into two samples and correlates the groups. The resulting coefficient provides a measure of the degree to which items within a scale are measuring the same concept.

Stability over time is measured by a procedure known as test-retest reliability. A scale is administered to a set of subjects, then readministered at a later point in time, typically four to six weeks. The two sets of scores are correlated, providing a coefficient which assesses the degree to which the second set of scores replicates the first set.

High reliability coefficients support claims that an instrument is a dependable measure of what it purports to measure. Differences may exist in the degree to which the reliability estimate measures the “true” reliability of the instrument. Internal consistency is considered to be a minimum-likelihood estimate (reliability is probably higher but not lower) while test-retest is viewed as a maximum-likelihood estimate (true reliability is probably lower than the estimate). However, both types of reliability are valuable because of their differing approaches to the issue of instrument accuracy.

Table 1 illustrates the internal consistency and test-retest reliability for each of the subscales on all Inventories. Internal consistency estimates are high, ranging from .71 to .89. PREPARE (n=158,406; average=.80); PREPARE-MC (n=46,670; average=.79); PREPARE-CC (n=7,706; average=.78); ENRICH (n=29,654; average=.84).

Similar results were found for the test-retest procedure. Reliability ranged from .74 to .93 for a combined sample of PREPARE and PREPARE-MC respondents (n=472; average=.80) and .77 to .92 for a sample using ENRICH (n=115; average=.86.)

Reliability of Scales

**Table 1: Reliabilities Alpha for PREPARE, PREPARE-MC and ENRICH
(Based on 2001-2002 Data)**

Category	Internal Consistency*					Test-Retest**	
	PRE	CC	MC	ENR	MATE	PRE	ENR
Idealistic Distortion	.79	.80	.82	.89	.87	.79	.92
Marriage Expectations	.78	.75A	.79	NA	.83A	.82	NA
Marriage Satisfaction	NA	NA	NA	.87	NA	.86	NA
Personality Issues	.81	.82	.85	.86	.87	.79	.81
Communication	.81	.82	.84	.89	.89	.78	.81
Conflict Resolution	.79	.72	.80	.81	.84	.80	.90
Financial Management	.78	.79	.78	.88	.81	.81	.88
Leisure Activities	.76	.71	.74	.76	.80	.79	.77
Sexual Relationship	.78	.79	.76	.88	.87	.74	.92
Children and Parenting	.82	.70	.75	.79	.78B	.75	.89
Family/Friends	.79	.72	.75	.78	.79C	.78	.82
Role Relationship	.78	.76	.77	.78	.81	.83	.90
Spiritual Beliefs	.87	.80	.87	.88	.87	.93	.89
Family Closeness	.85	.85	.77	.85	.86	.83	.83
Family Flexibility	.80	.81	.81	.81	.84	.80	.80
Average across scales	.80	.78	.79	.84	.84	.81	.86

* PREPARE (N=158,406); PREPARE-MC (N=46,670); PREPARE-CC (N=7,706); ENRICH (N=29,654); MATE (N=5,026)

** PREPARE and PREPARE-MC (N=693); ENRICH (N=456)

FOR PREPARE-CC: A = Cohabitation Issues;

FOR MATE: A = Life Transitions, B = Intergenerational Issues, C = Health Issues

With multidimensional instruments like the PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories, an important issue is the degree of overlap between scales. Because ENRICH is measuring relationship satisfaction in a variety of categories with each area attempting to provide a comprehensive assessment of the category, some amount of correlation between the scales is expected. However, extremely high correlations would indicate considerable overlap between the scales (Table 2).

Table 2: ENRICH Individual Scale Intercorrelation Matrix

	PI	ER	CO	CR	FM	LA	SR	CP	FF	RO
Personality Issues	—	.03*	.75	.72	.51	.56	.55	.47	.55	.42
Equalitarian Roles		—	-.03*	-.02*	-.01*	-.01*	-.09*	-.04*	-.06*	-.30
Communication			—	.83	.49	.60	.67	.46	.52	.42
Conflict Resolution				—	.48	.60	.61	.46	.51	.43
Financial Management					—	.46	.39	.39	.44	.32
Leisure Activities						—	.53	.45	.54	.39
Sexual Relationship							—	.41	.45	.39
Children/Parenting								—	.41	.40
Family/Friends									—	.42

Key: PI=Personality Issues; ER=Equalitarian Roles; CO=Communication; CR=Conflict Resolution; FM=Financial Management; LA=Leisure Activities; SR=Sexual Relationship; CP=Children and Parenting; FF=Family/Friends; RO=Religious Orientation

* All correlations significant at $p < .001$ except those starred.

Source: Fowers and Olson (1989)

The amount of overlap is assessed by squaring the correlation (r) ($r = .40$; $r^2 = .16$). So a correlation between two categories of .40 means that they have a 16% overlap. It is assumed that scales that are conceptually related (i.e., communication and conflict resolution) should be related empirically.

Fowers and Olson (1989) examined the intercorrelation of the ENRICH scales with a sample of 7,261 couples who had completed ENRICH over a two- and a-half-year period. The results are found in Table 2.

Correlations between the scales ranged from $-.30$ to $.83$, with an average of $.37$. The highest correlation ($.83$) was between communication and conflict resolution, which is not surprising given the related nature of the two factors. The only scale with very low correlations was equalitarian roles, which also had a significant negative correlation with Religious Orientation. In general, correlations between the scales appear to be at expected levels.

Personality Scales

Reliability of Scales

Reliability of Personality Scales:

Reliability (alpha) assesses the degree to which the items in each of the personality scales are interrelated and provide a reliable assessment of that area. The reliabilities of the four personality scales are based on a sample of 2,766 individuals (an equal number of male and females) and are at an acceptable level.

Personality Scale	Reliability (Alpha)
Assertiveness	.73
Self Confidence	.82
Avoidance	.71
Dominance	.73

Scale Intercorrelations

Intercorrelations Between Personality and PREPARE Scales:

The correlation analysis was based on the same sample of 2,766 people who took PREPARE. Correlations were computed between the three personality scales of Assertiveness, Avoidance, and Partner Dominance (self confidence was not available) and with other PREPARE categories (Personality, Communication and Conflict Resolution).

As hypothesized, there were specific relationships between the three personality scales. Assertiveness was found to be negatively correlated with avoidance (-.72) and partner dominance (-.50). This means that the more assertive a person is, the less they use avoidance and perceive their partner as dominating them. As expected, there is a positive correlation between avoidance and partner dominance (.62). This indicates that the more a person uses avoidance, the more they perceive their partner as dominant.

Assertiveness is also highly correlated with other categories in PREPARE. The higher a person scores on Assertiveness, the more the person likes the personality of their partner (.49), feels good about their communication (.77) and feels good about their conflict resolution (.68).

Conversely, people with high scores on Avoidance tend to perceive their relationship with their partner in more negative terms. People high in Avoidance tend to dislike the personality of their partner (-.59) and not feel good about the communication (-.66) or conflict resolution (-.71) with their partner.

People who view their partner as dominating (high score on Partner Dominance) tend not to like the personality of their partner (-.83) and dislike their communication (-.67) and conflict resolution (-.66) with their partner.

Validity Studies

Validity of PREPARE

Validity refers to the ability of an instrument to measure the characteristics it was designed to measure. It attempts to answer the question “Are we measuring what we think we are measuring?” (Kerlinger, 1986). A number of methods exist which attempt to assess validity. Following are several types that have been applied to the PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories.

Content Validity

Content or face validity is concerned with whether the items of a scale are relevant to the category being measured and whether the scale provides an appropriate number of items to adequately assess the concept under consideration.

The PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories are intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of relationship functioning. An extensive review of the relevant literature was conducted prior to the construction of PREPARE to discover which areas were most often found to be problematic for couples. Scales were then developed to measure these various categories.

The completed Inventory was submitted to a panel of clinicians who rated the relevance of the items for each of the subscales. In general, items from PREPARE were given high ratings in terms of their relevance to the factors being measured.

Concurrent Validity

Concurrent validity determines the extent to which scores from a given instrument correlate with scores from an instrument assessing a similar dimension. Fournier (1979) found significant correlations between subscales of PREPARE and measures related to conflict, self-esteem, communication, empathy, equalitarianism, assertion, temperament, cohesion and independence. He also found significant correlations for all 12 subscales of PREPARE (Adaptability and Cohesion excluded) and the Locke–Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (1959)—a classic measure of marital satisfaction. A full description of these concurrent validity procedures and results is found in Fournier (1979.)

Construct Validity

Construct validity seeks to address whether a scale accurately measures the theoretical construct it proposes to measure. A common means of assessing construct validity is factor analysis—a statistical procedure that evaluates the degree of interrelatedness among items measuring the same factor. Theoretically, separate factors should emerge for each of the categories measured.

Results of factor analysis on PREPARE revealed 11 unique factors among the 12 assessed dimensions (Adaptability and Cohesion were excluded from the analysis.) Personality Issues and Communication combined to form one factor, accounting for the discrepancy.

Intrascale factor analysis revealed that most scales reflected one significant factor, supporting the unidimensional nature of the scales. A complete description of the factor analysis is found in Fournier (1979). In general, this procedure supported the construct validity of PREPARE, although subsequent revisions were made to further strengthen the instrument based on these findings.

Predictive validity assesses the ability of an instrument to accurately predict an hypothesized outcome. An important criterion for PREPARE is whether it is able to predict future marital happiness and stability. Two separate studies have evaluated the ability of PREPARE to distinguish between couples who are happily married and those who are unhappily married, separated or divorced after two to three years by using the results of an Inventory completed three to four months prior to marriage.

Fowers and Olson (1986) studied 164 couples recruited through clergy who used PREPARE. Couples were divided into four groups based upon their marital status and the results of a marital satisfaction questionnaire: married satisfied (n=59), married dissatisfied (n=22), cancelled marriage plans (n=52) and divorced/separated (n=31.)

Discriminant analysis was used to determine ability to correctly classify the couples by group using their PREPARE scores. Using both REV and PCA Scores, PREPARE was able to correctly distinguish between the married-satisfied group and the other groups in 80–90 percent of the cases (separated/divorced=91%; married-dissatisfied=88%; cancelled/delayed=84%.)

As hypothesized, significant differences were found between the married-satisfied group and separated/divorced couples in ten scales (all except Children and Parenting), cancelled/delayed couples in 7 scales (Realistic Expectations, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Sexual Relationship, Family/Friends and Equalitarian Roles) and married–dissatisfied couples in 6 scales (Communication, Conflict Resolution, Leisure Activities, Financial Management, Sexual Relationship and Equalitarian Roles).

Larsen and Olson (1989) replicated this study later using 179 couples divided into the same four groups (married satisfied, n=49; married dissatisfied, n=57; cancelled/delayed, n=37; separated/divorced, n=36). Analyses of variance found differences among the groups for 9 of 11 scales (all except Children and Parenting and Religious Orientation.) T–tests comparing the married-satisfied group with the separated/divorced group found significant differences for 8 variables (Realistic Expectations,

**Predictive
Validity**

**PREPARE
Accuracy of
Prediction was
80-85%**

**Second Validity
Study Replicated
80% Accuracy**

Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Leisure Activities, Family/Friends, Equalitarian Roles and Religious Orientation).

Results of the discriminant analysis were similar to those of Fowers and Olson. PREPARE was able to distinguish between the married-satisfied group and the other groups in over 80% of the cases using either PCA or REV Scores (PCA: divorced/separated =84%; cancelled/delayed =76%; married-dissatisfied =85%; Individual: divorced/separated =77%; cancelled/delayed =79%; married-dissatisfied =75 %).

Both studies indicate that PREPARE has excellent predictive validity. It is able to determine with 80–85 percent accuracy couples who will tend to be satisfied with their marriages and couples who are likely to experience difficulties. While PREPARE is not intended to predict the marital success of specific couples, these studies do suggest that couples experiencing difficulties identified through the Inventory are more likely to continue problematic patterns of behavior after marriage unless they implement measures to change those patterns.

Concurrent validity examines the relationship between a given scale and other scales which are generally accepted as measuring similar concepts. High correlations between the scales would suggest that the instrument under consideration is an acceptable measure of the variable of focus when compared with an outside criterion.

In a national study of 1,200 couples, Olson, McCubbin, et al. (1989) compared the Marital Satisfaction subscale of ENRICH with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale—a classic measure of marital satisfaction. Good evidence of concurrent validity was found with correlations of .73 for individual scores and .81 for couple scores.

When used in a clinical setting, an assessment instrument needs to have the ability to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional populations. Discriminant validity attempts to determine the ability of a measure to discriminate between two or more groups by categorizing them according to an external criterion, then determining the extent to which the instrument categorizes them in the same way.

Validity of ENRICH

Concurrent Validity

Discriminant Validity

Fowers and Olson (1989) did a validation study using the Marital Satisfaction item from the background section of ENRICH as the external criterion measure. Couples where both partners were satisfied were placed in one group (n=2,664); couples where both partners were dissatisfied were placed in the other group (n=2,375). Cases with split responses were discarded from the analysis (n=2,222). The resulting sample was randomly split for purposes of cross-validation (validation group n=2,514; cross-validation group, n=2,525).

Discriminant analysis was carried out on both the validation and cross-validation groups to determine if they correctly classified satisfied from dissatisfied couples. Using individual scores, 92.9 percent of the validation group and 91.7 percent of the cross-validation group were correctly classified. Using couple scores, 91.2 percent of the validation group and 90.1 percent of the cross-validation group were correctly classified. These analyses suggest that ENRICH has an excellent capacity to discriminate between stressed and non-stressed couples.

ENRICH
Accuracy of
Prediction - 90%

Four Types of Premarital Couples

Using a sample of 4,618 couples who took PREPARE before marriage, four types of premarital couples were identified. In a study by Blaine Fowers and David Olson (1992), these four couple types were identified using the positive couple agreement scores [PCA] from PREPARE. One useful application of this research is that premarital counseling can be tailored to specific issues for each of the four types of couples.

Vitalized Couples

The first type of couple was called *vitalized* because they had a very high level of positive couple agreement on all the 11 dimensions. There were 1,279 couples (28%) in this type. The second type was called *harmonious* and consisted of 1,249 (27%) couples. These couples had moderate to high relationship satisfaction across most of the scales, with somewhat lower scores in Realistic Expectations, Children and Parenting, and Religious Orientation.

Harmonious Couples

Traditional Couples

The third group consisted of a *traditional* type, representing 1,053 (23%) couples. These traditional couples had somewhat lower scores on their internal dynamics (Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management) with somewhat higher scores on Children and Parenting, Family and Friends, Religious Orientation, and had more traditional roles. The fourth type was called *conflicted* because these premarital couples had the lowest positive couple agreement scores across all the categories. There were 1,037 (22%) couples in this conflicted group.

Conflicted Couples

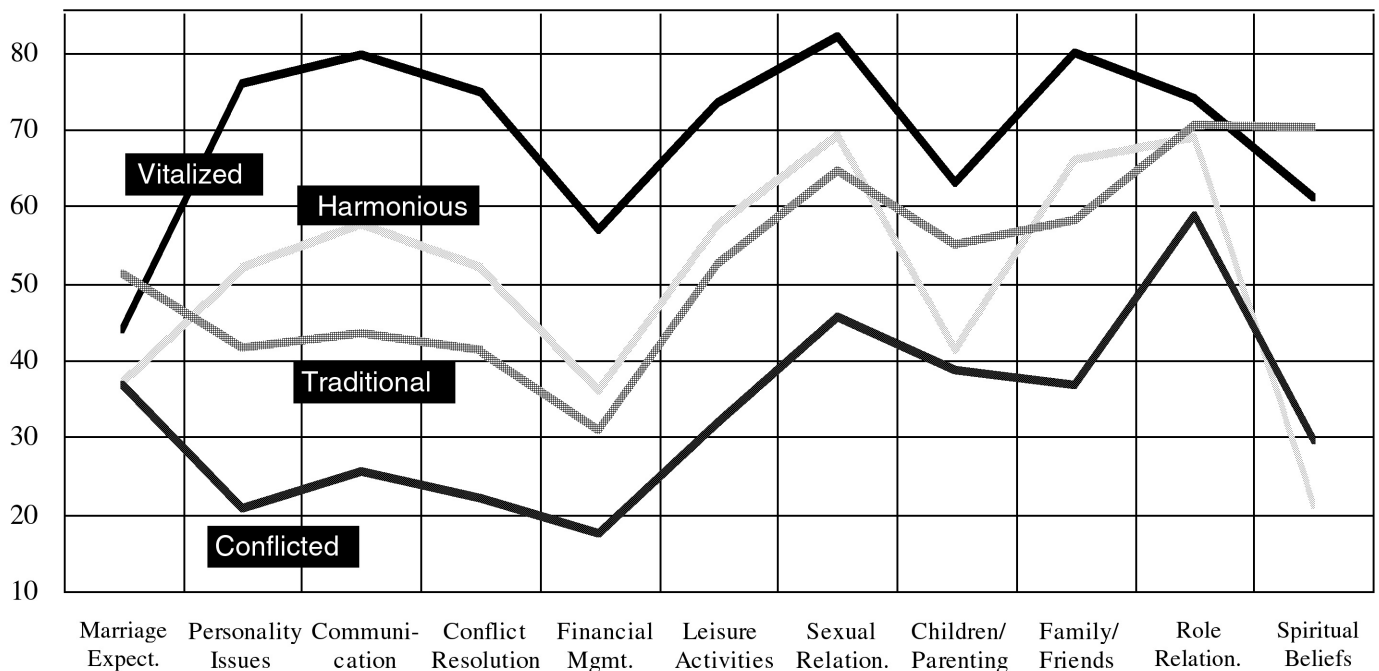
In order to learn more about each of the couple types, a comparison was done on their background characteristics. In regard to both their parents' and friends' reactions to the marriage, the findings clearly indicate that both parents and friends have a very accurate perception of the quality of the couple's relationship.

More specifically, in the vitalized couples, about 73% of the parents and 75% of the friends strongly approved of the marriage. Conversely, in the conflicted type, only about 47% of the parents and 40% of the friends approved of the relationship.

In terms of cohabiting, 35% of the conflicted couples cohabited, while about 33% of the harmonious type cohabited. The lowest rates of cohabitation were in the traditional (22%) and in the vitalized (22%) groups.

The results suggest that different types of premarital intervention would be useful for these four types of premarital couples. This is particularly true when we compare the vitalized couples, who have many strengths, with the conflicted couples, who have few strengths as a couple.

Figure 1: Four Types of Premarital Couples



Source:

Fowers, B.J. and Olson, D.H. (1992). Four Types of Premarital Couples: An Empirical Typology Based on PREPARE. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 6, 10-21.

Based on our past studies (Larsen and Olson, 1989), we have found that conflicted couples have a high probability of divorce. Because of this, it would be important to offer more intensive premarital counseling and help after the marriage to the conflicted couples.

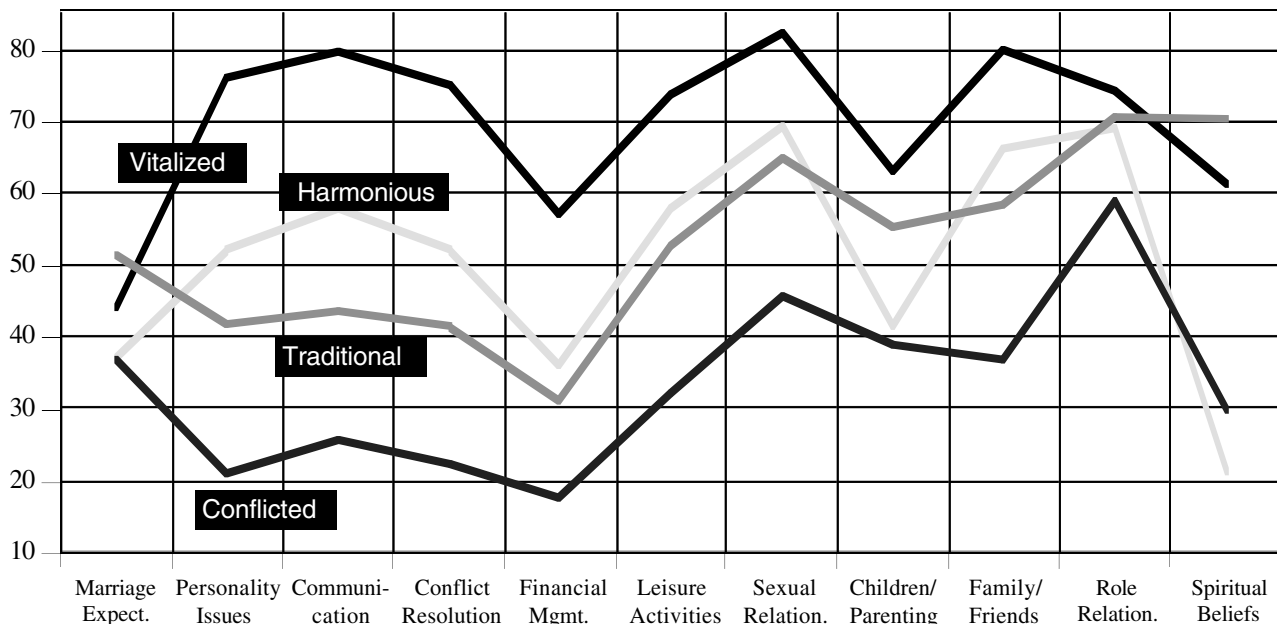
It also appears that harmonious and traditional couples would benefit from working on internal dynamics, such as resolving personality differences and improving communication, and conflict resolution skills. They would also benefit from counseling on financial issues.

Predicting Marital Success using the Four PREPARE Types

On page 4 of the PREPARE Computer Report, the four types of couples identified by PREPARE are presented. These four types are called: *vitalized*, *harmonious*, *traditional* and *conflicted*. The couple for whom the Report was prepared is compared with these four types based on their Positive Couple Agreement (PCA) scores. The Report then lists what couple type the couple matches most closely. Then suggestions for working with this couple are provided, which are based on the results from the following study.

A sample of 328 premarital couples were followed for three years after marriage to see the impact of couple type on marital success. The four premarital couple types identified before marriage were: *vitalized* (23%), *harmonious* (26%), *traditional* (22%) and *conflicted* (29%). The four types were based on positive couple agreement (PCA) scores; Figure 2 illustrates the PCA scores for each type of couple. A more complete description of the four couple types is reviewed on page 110 in the study entitled "Four Types of Premarital Couples: An Empirical Typology Based on PREPARE."

**Figure 2: Four Types of Premarital Couples Based on PREPARE:
Based on Mean Positive Couple Agreement (PCA) Scores**



Source:

Fowers, B.J., Montel, K.H. and Olson, D.H. (1996). Predicting marital success for premarital couple types based on PREPARE. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 22, 1, 103-119.

The important question is whether there was any difference in marital success among these four different types of premarital couples. Table 3 summarizes the important findings linking premarital couple types and marital success. As hypothesized, *vitalized couples* had the highest percentage of satisfied couples (60%); *conflicted couples* contained the least number of satisfied couples (17%).

In terms of divorce, over half (53%) of the conflicted couples ended up divorcing and another 30% of them were less happily married. Conversely, only 17% of the vitalized couples had divorced.

The couple type with the lowest divorce rate was traditional couples, with only 16%. However, the traditional couples had the highest percentage of less happy marriages (50%). For more details, see Table 3 and the Fowers, Montel and Olson (1996) article.

**Table 3:
Premarital Types based on PREPARE & Marital Outcome***

	<u>Vitalized</u>		<u>Harmonious</u>		<u>Traditional</u>		<u>Conflicted</u>		<u>Total</u>
Happily Married	38	60%	30	46%	17	34%	10	17%	95
Less Happily Married	15	23%	19	29%	25	50%	18	30%	77
Separated/ Divorced	11	17%	16	25%	8	16%	32	53%	67
Total	64	100%	65	100%	50	100%	60	100%	239

**This table was revised from the original article in that the couples who cancelled their weddings were omitted and the percentages were computed within types rather than within outcomes.*

In summary, this analysis clearly demonstrated the predictive validity of the PREPARE premarital couple types. These types are used in the Computer Report to provide you with a more comprehensive picture of each couple

Five Types of Married Couples

Using a sample of 6,267 married couples who took ENRICH, five types of married couples were identified in a study by David Olson and Blaine Fowers (1993). The five types of couples were *vitalized*, *harmonious*, *traditional*, *conflicted* and *devitalized* (Figure 3). To identify these types, cluster analysis was done using the Positive Couple Agreement (PCA) scores on all the ENRICH categories. The percentages in each couple type are not representative of the United States population because the sample contains a high percentage of couples seeking marital therapy.

This analysis is validating and revealing in that four of these couple types are the same ones identified with premarital couples using PREPARE. The new type identified among married couples is the devitalized couple, which naturally would not occur with premarital couples.

Vitalized Couples

The most satisfied type of couple is called *vitalized* because they have a very high level of positive couple agreement (PCA) in all the categories, which indicates that they have many relationship strengths. There were 802 couples (12%) in this couple type and this couple type is at the least risk for divorce. The majority of these couples (98%) were very happy and most had never considered divorce (86%).

Harmonious Couples

The second most satisfied type of couple is the *harmonious* type, who had a high level of positive couple agreement (PCA) in all the categories except for Children & Parenting. There were 721 couples (11%) in this couple type, and they also had a low risk of divorce. The majority of these couples (94%) were very happy and most had never considered divorce (72%).

Traditional Couples

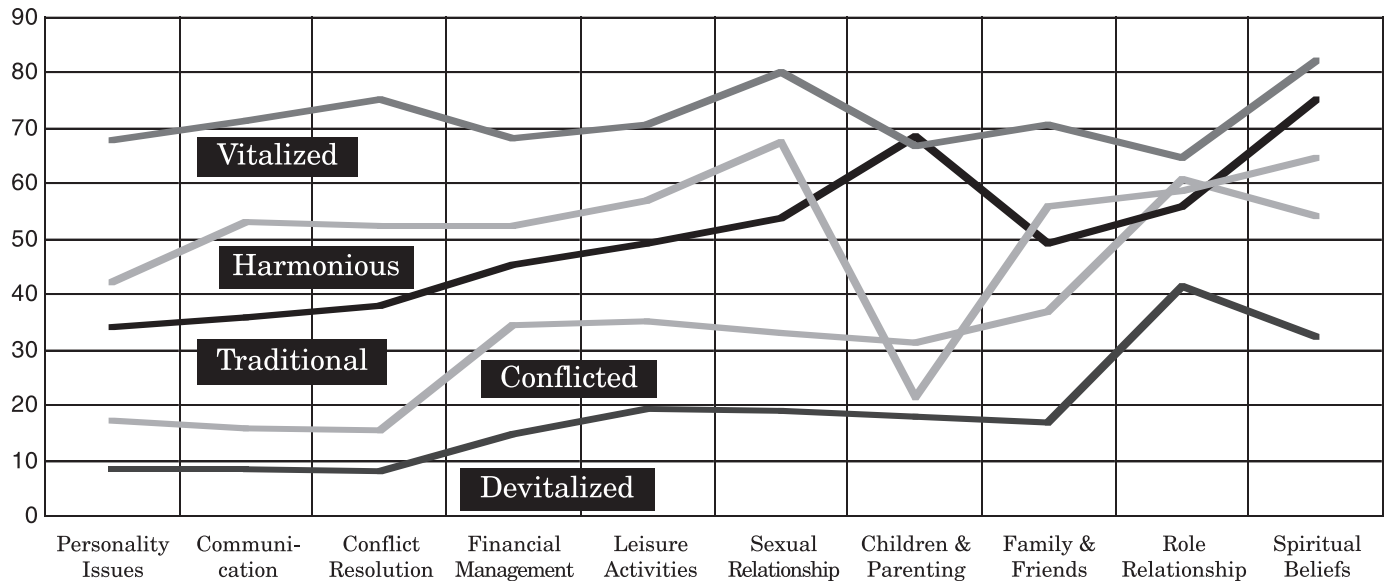
The third most satisfied type of couple is the *traditional* type, which had high PCA scores in Children & Parenting, Family & Friends, and Spiritual Beliefs ---hence, the name traditional. They had lower scores in the relationship skills areas of Communication and Conflict Resolution and they tended to dislike the personality of their partner. There were 1,060 couples (16%) in this couple type, and their most striking characteristic is that they tend to stay married even when they are unhappily married. About two-thirds (63%) of these couples were happily married; in about 20%, one spouse was unhappy; and in 17%, both spouses were unhappy.

Conflicted and Devitalized Couples

The *conflicted* and *devitalized* types of couples were the ones who were most unhappy with their marriage and who had the highest risk for divorce. Because this sample contained a large percentage of clinical couples, there was a unusually high percentage of conflict and devitalized couples in the sample: 1,650 conflicted couples

(25%) and 2,275 devitalized couples (36%). Both spouses were dissatisfied with their marriage in 46% of the conflicted couples and in 70% of the devitalized couples. Both types of couples tend to have very few relationship strengths and are at highest risk for divorce.

Figure 3: Five Types of Marriages



Source:

Olson, D.H. and Fowers, B.J. (1993). Five types of marriages: An Empirical Typology Based on ENRICH. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples & Families*. 1, 3, 196-207.

Replication of Five Types with African American Couples

Using a sample of 450 African-American, married couples, William Allen and David Olson (2001) used cluster analysis to replicate the same five marital types found earlier in ethnically mixed (predominantly European-American) samples of married couples. This replication not only supported the five couple typology, but reaffirmed the relative distribution of couple types within the sample (the percentage of *Vitalized*, *Harmonious*, *Traditional*, *Conflicted* and *Devitalized* couples). This strongly suggests that the marital types are valid across ethnic groups.

Allen, W.D. and Olson, D.H. (2001). Five types of African-American Marriages. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27, 3, 301-314.

Replication with African American Couples

Case Study of Marital Therapy Using ENRICH

Alan and Barbara Williams (fictitious names) had been married about three years when they entered therapy. Both were in their early thirties. The couple had no children. Alan was a mental health professional and Barbara was a part-time teacher.

Presenting Problem

Therapy was initiated by Barbara, who described herself as perpetually angry. During the first session, which she attended alone, she expressed anger toward her parents, whom she thought were still trying to control her life in spite of the fact that they lived in another state.

Barbara was also frustrated with Alan for his apparent unwillingness to deal with conflicts which arose between them. It was suggested that he come to the next session to address the issue of their conflicts.

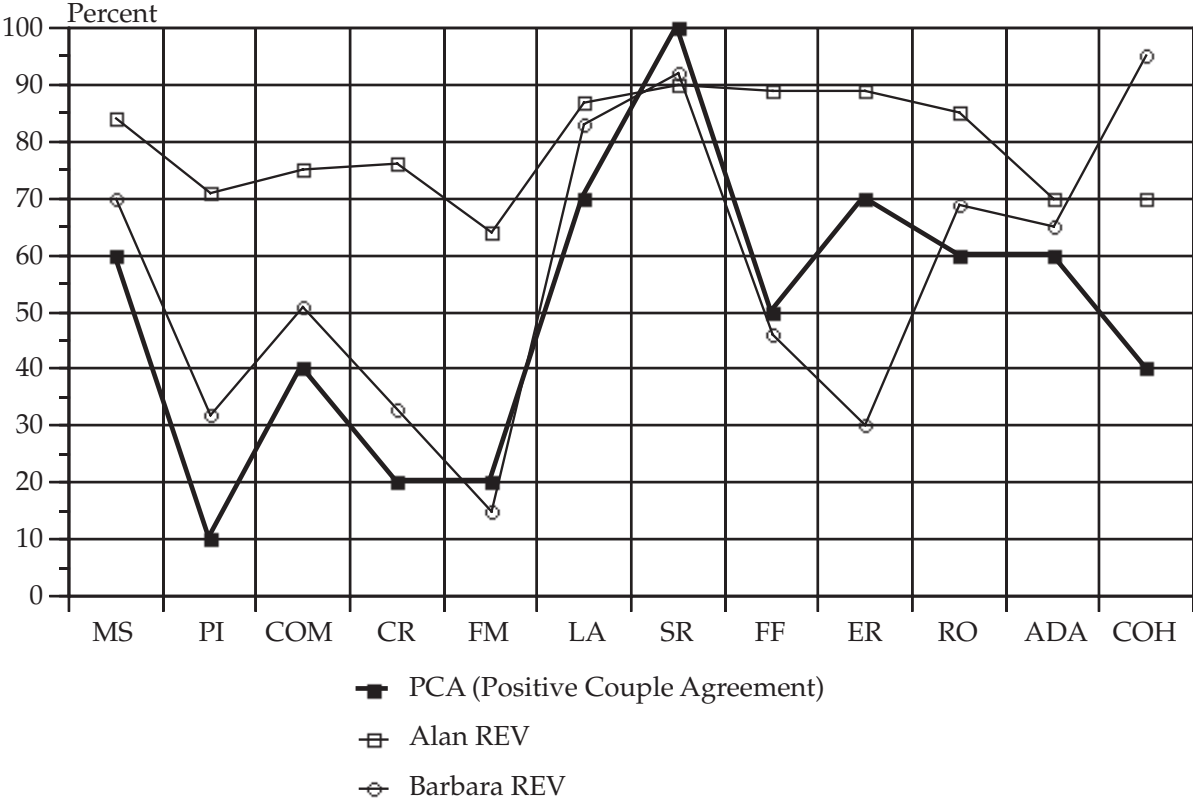
At the second session, Barbara described Alan as withdrawing from conflictual situations by not looking at her, thereby refusing to listen. Alan, on the other hand, was concerned with Barbara's "negative attitude", indicating that she often found fault with their relationship. He also indicated that her parents tended to have a negative impact on their relationship, primarily because Alan and Barbara owed them a substantial amount of money. Following this session, the couple was given ENRICH.

Feedback on ENRICH

At the following session, the Williams were given feedback on their ENRICH results, which are shown in Figure 4. The PCA scores revealed a moderate level of marital satisfaction, with Sexual Relationship and Leisure Activities denoted as relationship strengths (high level of positive couple agreement). However, several other areas surfaced as growth areas (low levels of positive couple agreement), including Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Financial Management.

The individual scores provided some insight into the lack of agreement in these categories. Alan's scores were quite high in nearly every area, even after being corrected for an extremely high Idealistic Distortion score (96%).

Figure 4: Pre Scores on ENRICH



Barbara, on the other hand, tended to have much lower individual scores in those categories which were revealed as growth areas in the PCA scores, with discrepancies ranging from 24 to 49 points. She also had moderately low scores for Family and Friends and Equalitarian Roles, indicating a concern over interference from outside relationships (i.e., parents) and a preference for more traditional sex roles.

These results suggested that Alan had a somewhat idealized picture of their relationship, while Barbara had a more realistic view and had concerns about several key areas (i.e. Communication, Conflict Resolution, Personality Issues, and Financial Management).

Six Intervention Sessions

Based on the ENRICH results, it was decided to focus initially on building conflict resolution skills in the William's relationship. Behavior patterns were explored to determine ways in which each partner contributed to communication breakdowns surrounding conflictual issues. Problem-solving was introduced, which enabled the couple to work together to explore various alternatives to important issues, including those related to the financial obligations to Barbara's parents.

After a three-month period, the Williamses reported a substantial reduction in their frequency and intensity of conflicts. They indicated they were working more as a team, that levels of affection had increased, and that they were doing more things together as a couple. They had resolved the financial issues with Barbara's parents and were less concerned over the influence they exerted on their marriage. There was some discussion about termination of treatment and it was decided to readminister ENRICH to help evaluate their progress.

Post-Test on ENRICH

The results from ENRICH were presented at the next session (see Figure 5). Substantial improvements were found in several areas. Among PCA scores (see Figure 6), a gain was found for 8 categories, including an increase of 40 points for Conflict Resolution and 30 points apiece for Personality Issues and Religious Orientation. In addition, Family and Friends showed a gain of 20 points, reflecting improved relations with Barbara's parents.

Improvement was also found among the individual (REV) scores (see Figure 7). Alan's scores remained high (above 80 in all but one category), with major gains found in three areas (Financial Management, Religious Orientation, and Cohesion). Barbara showed gains of at least 20 points in six categories, with the largest improvements found for Conflict Resolution and Family and Friends.

In spite of these encouraging results, several problem indicators remained. Communication was largely unchanged, with the PCA scores being identical for both administrations. Financial Management, while showing substantial improvement on individual scores, remained a growth area on the PCA scores, indicating a lack of consensus in that area.

Figure 5: Post Scores on ENRICH

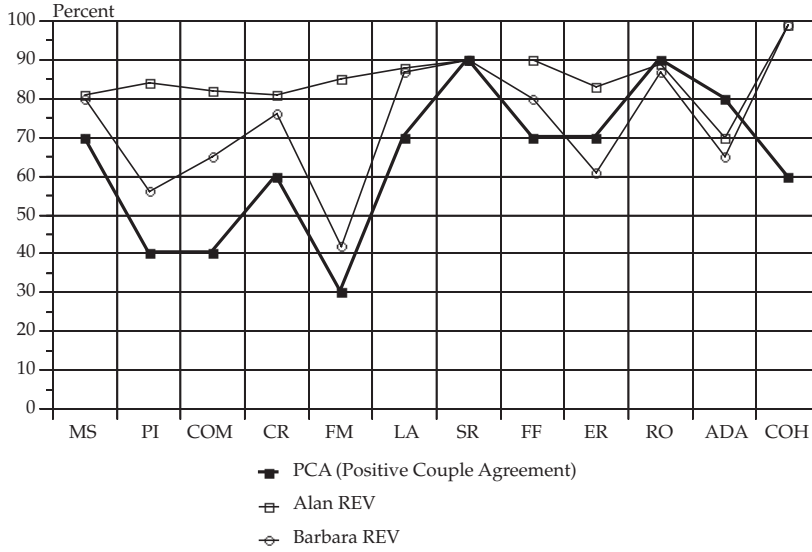


Figure 6: Couple Scores at Pre and Post-Testing (ENRICH)

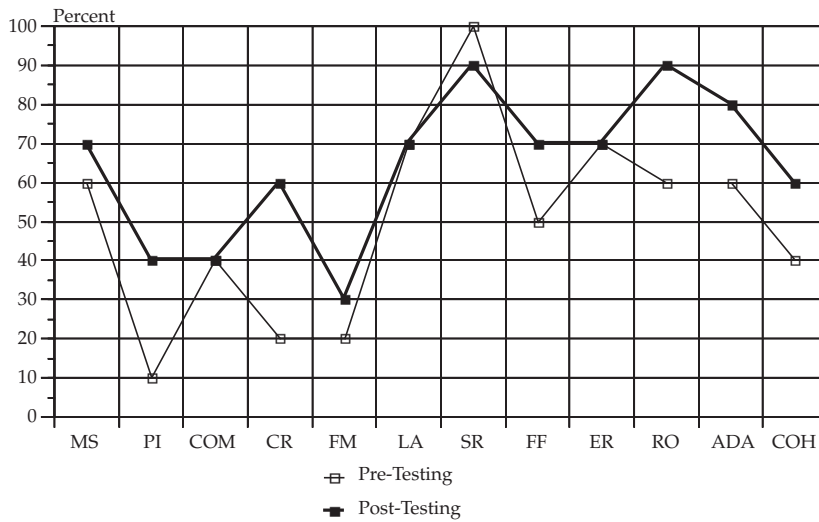
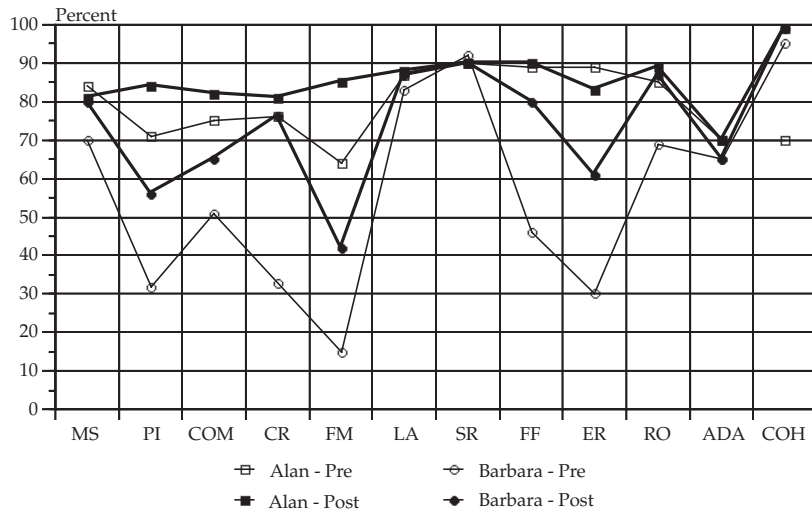


Figure 7: Individual Scores at Pre and Post-Testing (ENRICH)



CONCLUSION

This case illustrates the multiple uses of ENRICH in couples therapy. Initially, ENRICH was used to assess relationship areas in need of change and contributed to the formulation of a treatment strategy. It was readministered to evaluate the effectiveness of therapy and was a factor in determining whether to continue treatment. Finally, the feedback process served as an important intervention, with the couple reporting that ENRICH "helped a lot, so we would know what our problem areas were".

Couple assessment tools like ENRICH can be an important treatment resource. Although they are not intended to replace the clinical judgments of an experienced therapist, assessment instruments offer a supplementary perspective which can be a vital aid in the assessment process, treatment planning and evaluation of treatment effectiveness.

Other Research Studies

Several studies have used PREPARE to evaluate the effects of various types of premarital interventions. The following section provides a summary of several of those studies.

Comparison of Five Premarital Approaches (Druckman, Fournier, Robinson, and Olson, 1979).

This study compared the effects of several differing approaches to premarital preparation. Analysis was completed on 116 couples divided into five groups:

1. No premarital preparation.
2. Participation in one of a variety of premarital programs.
3. PREPARE without feedback.
4. PREPARE with a two-hour feedback session.
5. PREPARE with four two-hour sessions.

Pretesting was done on PREPARE groups three to four months prior to marriage. All groups were tested two to three months after marriage using PREPARE, the Inventory of Premarital Conflict and a background information form. Groups were similar in terms of their background characteristics, and there was an adequate sample size for each group.

All **three PREPARE** groups had significantly higher scores after marriage than did the couples in the other groups. Couples in all three groups became more independent and less controlling after marriage.

Couples in the **PREPARE with feedback** group reported increases in Realistic Expectations, Financial Management and on the ability to compromise, and couples in the **PREPARE with extended feedback** group showed increases in Realistic Expectations, Communication, Financial Management and empathy.

This study indicates the positive value for couples of taking PREPARE, especially with feedback. It also demonstrates that the opportunity to discuss the results of the instrument with a counselor produces the most positive changes for premarital couples.

**Studies with
PREPARE**

Effectiveness of a Religiously-Based Premarital Program (Megorden, 1985).

Twenty couples participated in a premarital group program offered by a religiously affiliated organization at a Midwestern university. A pre-/post-test design was used, with a six-session intervention between testing. Couples also completed PREPARE and participated in three, five-hour evaluations with a group leader.

Positive changes were found for seven of eleven categories: Average Couple Agreement, Realistic Expectations, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting and Family and Friends.

Male and female individual post-test scores were compared using analysis of covariance. No significant differences were found between the groups on any variable, suggesting similar levels of satisfaction with the relationship between both sexes.

Overall, this research supports the effectiveness of this couple program in several key areas of marital functioning. However, the author notes that a small sample size and lack of a control group limit the generalizability of the findings.

Belleville Diocesan Survey (Dayringer, Margason & Huesman 1981).

In addition to the outcome studies summarized above, a survey of participants in a marriage preparation program utilizing PREPARE was conducted by the Belleville, Illinois Diocese of the Catholic Church. Feedback from PREPARE with clergy was used in the initial phase of the program, followed by a group process led by trained married couples. Both clergy and couples were surveyed concerning their perceptions on the effectiveness of PREPARE.

In general, clergy found PREPARE to be a very valuable tool for marriage preparation. A number stated that it provided a useful framework for discussion with the couples and that it helped them to get to know the couples better. Results from the clergy were:

- 91% found it useful in their work with engaged couples.
- 96% indicated it served as a focus for discussion.
- 93% viewed it as a valuable base to organize discussion.
- 94% believed couples took PREPARE seriously.
- 74% thought couples found it helpful in working out questions regarding marriage.
- 87% favored continued use of PREPARE for marriage preparation.

Couples also responded favorably to PREPARE, and they indicated that it raised issues for discussion which they had not previously considered. In some cases, couples indicated the amount they had learned from the Inventory outweighed their initial resistance to taking it. Findings from the couples included:

- 72% indicated it gave them increased insights into their relationship.
- 76% discovered it helped them to see their strengths as couples.
- 63% found it helped them focus on problems to resolve during their engagement.
- 57% indicated it brought issues to light that they had not previously discussed.
- 53% believed it helped them increase their skills at resolving differences.
- 68% reported PREPARE was a meaningful part of their marriage preparation.
- 84% found the clergy who administered PREPARE to be helpful and supportive in their decision to marry.
- 76% recommended continued use of PREPARE in marriage preparation.

A number of studies have also been conducted using ENRICH as an outcome measure. Following are synopses of several of those studies:

Families: What Makes Them Work (Olson, McCubbin & Associates, 1989).

This major study, with a national sample of 1,124 couples and families, examined differences between them at differing points in the family life cycle. Utilizing a cross-sectional design, ENRICH was one of several measures which assessed the satisfaction, strengths, stresses and coping resources of couples in each of seven stages in the family life cycle.

Significant differences were found for **marital satisfaction** between each of the seven stages. When viewed over the life cycle, marital satisfaction tended to take on the shape of a shallow *U-curve*, with the lowest levels of satisfaction during the adolescent stage.

A significant finding was that the couples who coped best with stress across the life cycle had higher scores on many of the ENRICH scales. In other words, couples with strong marriages coped better with stress. This was particularly true at the adolescent stage, when family stress was the highest.

Newlywed Enrichment Project (Hawley, 1991; Hawley & Olson, 1995)

This study evaluated the effects of three marriage enrichment programs with an early marital population:

- *Growing Together* (Dyer & Dyer, 1990)
- *Training In Marriage Enrichment/TIME* (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1984)
- *Learning to Live Together* (Bader & Remmel, 1987)

Seventy-one newlywed couples participated in one of the programs mentioned above for six weeks. ENRICH was administered to each couple before and after the programs. A control group (n=28) was also given ENRICH at a ten-week interval to provide a basis of comparison between treatment and nontreatment couples.

Significant differences were found between the couples in the enrichment groups and the control group for six **individual variables** (Personality Issues, Marital Satisfaction, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management and Family/Friends) and **three couple variables** (Personality Issues, Financial Management, Family/Friends.) However, no significant differences were discovered using analysis of covariance when all treatment groups were combined and compared with the control group.

Some differences were also found between the programs. Significant differences were discovered for Conflict Resolution (TIME > Growing Together) and Marital Adaptability (Growing Together and TIME > Learning to Live Together). Using change scores, TIME was found to be significantly higher than Growing Together on Conflict Resolution and TIME and Learning to Live Together to be higher than Growing Together on Communication.

Intensive Marriage Enrichment Training (Lynch & Deschner, 1991).

Twenty-nine couples participated in a marriage enrichment program extending over a nine-month period. The program consisted of three weekend retreats (one every three months) supplemented by weekly support groups. A variety of marital issues were addressed in the program, including communication training, family-of-origin concepts, developmental stages, family systems interactions and cognitive behavioral modification.

Couples were selected from a Christian community located in the southwestern United States on the basis of their level of involvement in community life and on the recommendation of community leaders. Only couples without known marital problems and with a commitment to fully participate in the program were accepted.

The findings clearly demonstrated positive changes in the quality of the marriages. The ENRICH Inventory was administered to all couples prior to and at the end of the program. T-tests comparing pre- and post-test scores revealed **significant differences for PCA scores for all of the 11 categories** (Idealistic Distortion, Marital Adaptability and Marital Cohesion were omitted) considered. In addition, a significant difference between pre- and post-test results was found for a total score averaging all ENRICH categories.

Comparison of Therapeutic Approaches (Aradi, 1985).

This study compared two approaches to marital therapy: **Relationship Enhancement (RE)** and **Strategic Therapy (ST)**. ENRICH was administered to 20 couples before they began treatment and again after 14 sessions or termination, whichever came first.

Few differences were found between the two types of approaches. Both treatment groups showed gains for **nine of the categories measured by ENRICH**: Marital Satisfaction, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Marital Cohesion, and Marital Adaptability.

T-tests between pre-test and post-test scores revealed these gains to be significant on **seven subscales for RE** (Marital Satisfaction, Conflict Resolution, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Family and Friends and Marital Adaptability) and on **two subscales for ST** (Marital Satisfaction and Conflict Resolution).

Strengths and Stressors of Stepfamilies (Schultz, Schultz & Olson, 1991).

This study used ENRICH as the outcome measure in comparing two types of stepfamilies in Australia: *simple* stepfamilies (n=41) were defined as those in which only one partner was a parent prior to marriage or entrance into a *de facto* relationship; *complex* stepfamilies (n=29) were those where both partners were parents prior to marriage.

**Effectiveness of
Couple Therapy
Using ENRICH**

**Stepfamilies and
ENRICH**

Differences were discovered between simple and complex stepfamilies for several variables. Most notable was Children and Parenting, where differences were found for every item. In each case, simple stepfamilies had more positive scores than complex stepfamilies.

Overall, this research suggests that simple stepfamilies have a higher number of strengths and fewer stressors than complex stepfamilies.

Most notable categories were Communication, Conflict Resolution and Personality Issues—where scores for the simple group were found to be significantly higher than those of the complex group. Adjustments and Children and Parenting appeared to be the greatest stressors for complex stepfamilies, who were found to have significantly lower mean PCA Scores on these variables than simple stepfamilies.

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