

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: DEVELOPMENT AND INITIAL VALIDATION OF THE
DYADIC RELIGIOUS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE:
A MEASURE OF COUPLES' RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES,
THEIR IMPORTANCE, AND THEIR MEANINGS

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This research involved development of a research instrument, the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire (DRAQ), and an initial evaluation of its reliability and validity in the examination of the nature, subjective meaning, and importance of couples' joint religious activities. The study examined the frequencies of occurrence of various religious activities in couples' lives, how couples experience religious activities in a dyadic context, which facets of shared religious activities couples consider important and beneficial, and the degree to which these aspects of religious involvement are associated with relationship satisfaction and relationship stability. Data were obtained from 175 individuals in couple relationships who completed the DRAQ, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Marital Status Inventory-Revised. Results indicated that reliability and validity of the DRAQ were acceptable, and that frequency of joint religious activities, positive individual affect, and importance of joint religious activity benefits were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction.

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of Study	6
Chapter II: Review of Literature	10
Theoretical Framework	10
Historical Overview of Knowledge on Religion and Marriage	13
Church Attendance and Marital Quality	13
Religiosity	15
Religious Affiliation	16
Church Attendance	16
Religious Beliefs	17
Spiritual Well-Being	18
Religion and Behavior	19
Specificity of Religious Constructs	20
Religious Homogamy	21
Marital Conventionalization	22
The Meaning of Joint Religious Activities	23
Hypotheses	27
Research Question	28
Chapter III: Methodology	30
Sample	30
Measures	31
Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire	31
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	36
Marital Status Inventory-Revised	37
Operationalization of Specific Hypotheses	37
Procedure	39
Chapter IV: Results	44
Overview of Analyses	44
Demographic Data	44
Psychometric Characteristics of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire	44
Tests of the Hypotheses and Research Questions	45
Analysis of Qualitative Data on Perceived Benefits from Religious and Non-Religious Activities	46
Demographic Characteristics	47
Associations Between Study Variables and Demographics	50
Psychometric Properties of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire	52

TABLE OF CONTENTS, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Construct Subscales	52
Internal Consistency of DRAQ Construct Subscales	68
Tests of the Hypotheses	73
Multiple Regression Analysis Testing Joint Association of Aspects of Joint Religious Activities and Relationship Quality	82
Qualitative Results	91
Chapter V: Discussion	93
Sample Demographics	93
Reliability and Validity of the DRAQ Instrument	94
Characteristics of Couples' Religious Activity Experiences	95
Tests of the Hypotheses	98
Combined Religious Activity Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction and Stability	106
Predictors of Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities	109
Findings from Qualitative Data	109
Summary	111
Limitations	112
Future Research	113
Conclusion	116
Appendices	
Appendix A: Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire	118
Appendix B: Dyadic Adjustment Scale	124
Appendix C: Marital Status Inventory-Revised	130
Appendix D: IRB Application	131
Appendix E: DRAQ Qualitative Data	138
References	151

LIST OF TABLES

1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample	48
2. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 1—Frequency of Joint Religious Activities	53
3. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 7—Importance of Joint Religious Activities	57
4. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 8—Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits	61
5. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 9—Importance Ranking of Joint Religious Activity Benefit Subscales	65
6. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 10—Individual Affect During Joint Religious Activities	66
7. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 2—Benefits Experienced From Joint Religious Activities	68
8. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 3—Benefits Experienced Exclusively From Joint Religious Activities	69
9. Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 4—Benefits Common to Both Joint Religious Activities and Other Joint Activities	71
10. Cronbach alpha Coefficients of Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire Construct Subscales	72
11. Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for the Total Sample	74
12. Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for Male Participants	75
13. Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for Female Participants	76
14. Correlational Relationships Between Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Items and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Stability	77
15. Pearson Correlations in the Total Sample Between Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities Items and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Stability	80

LIST OF TABLES, continued

16. Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Total Study Sample	83
17. Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Male Study Participants	84
18. Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Female Study Participants	85
19. Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Question 7 Items as Predictors of Males' Relationship Satisfaction	90
20. Comparison of Mean Rankings for DRAQ Questions 7 & 9	97
21. Correlational Relationships Among Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits and Ranked Religious Activity Benefit Items	106

Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Throughout history, the social, political, and emotional roots of marriage and religion have been tightly intertwined in numerous societies. Currently, researchers are working to discover how and why these two social institutions influence each other. Church attendance and affiliation were identified in early studies to be correlated with higher marital satisfaction (Burgess & Cottrell, 1939; Landis, 1946; Locke, 1951). Later studies narrowed the duo of variables to church attendance as a consistent correlate of marital satisfaction (Filsinger & Wilson, 1984; Gruner, 1985; Hunt & King, 1978; Kunz & Albrecht, 1977; Larson & Goltz, 1989; Roth, 1988; Wilson & Filsinger, 1986; Wilson & Musick, 1996). Recent empirical surveys suggest that religion continues to interact with and influence marital relationships (Blumel, 1992; Jenkins, 1992). Call and Heaton (1997) have established that, of all aspects of religious experience, the frequency of church “attendance has the greatest impact on marital stability” (p. 382). Their research demonstrated that when the two spouses attend church together couples experience the lowest risk of divorce. When spouses exhibit differences in church attendance, the risk of marital dissolution is greater. Call and Heaton concluded that, “shared participation in religious activities is a critical aspect of religious experience that can sustain marriages” (p. 382). It is important to note that the studies linking religious participation and relationship stability are correlational, and the direction of causality cannot be determined; i.e., the correlation does not indicate whether church attendance produces more stable relationships, whether more stable relationships lead to greater church attendance, or whether an unmeasured third variable contributes to both church

attendance and relationship stability. Nevertheless, many studies have established that there is a link between couples' religious participation and the quality of their relationships, so this association clearly warrants further investigation so that its characteristics can be understood.

Research has revealed that the strength of a marital relationship is not associated with denominational preference (Shrum, 1980). Participation in religious activities has been shown to play a greater role in marital stability than the particular form of religious affiliation (Glenn & Supancic, 1984). Additionally, similarity of religious affiliation, attendance, or beliefs within couples has been shown to be associated with greater marital stability (Heaton, 1984; Heaton & Pratt, 1990; Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993). Further studies have established that *attendance homogamy* or similarity is more strongly linked to marital satisfaction than are *affiliation or belief homogamy* (Call & Heaton, 1997; Heaton, 1994; Heaton & Pratt, 1990).

In light of these findings, researchers have tried to explain how couples' religious activity influences their relationship state. Some have suggested that couples experiencing similar religious practices reap a wide range of relational benefits, including spending time together (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank, 2001), a sense of purpose (Shrum, 1985; White, 1990), greater commitment to marriage (Larson & Goltz, 1989), bonding and emotional intimacy (Robinson, 1994; White & Booth, 1991), shared activities providing positive interactions which strengthen the relationship (Heaton & Pratt, 1990), shared interests (Argyle & Furnham, 1983), and value consensus and a shared belief system (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983; Fiese & Tomcho, 2001; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar et al.). Although attendance has been singled out as

the most salient aspect of couples' religiosity that is associated with relationship quality, exactly which of the above facets of religious attendance and activity are influential is unknown.

Thomas and Cornwall (1990) believe that advances in conceptual models, identification of relevant variables, and measurement methods are needed to continue viable future research on marriage and religion. Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshmar, and Swank (2001) and others have agreed that many questions and points of intersection between marriage and religious constructs remain unidentified and unexamined (Breault & Kposowa, 1987). One researcher has suggested that "lived-out spirituality," or the observable behavioral manifestations of internal spiritual emotion and/or cognition, significantly affects one's experience of marital happiness (Roth, 1988). However, to date, research that specifically addresses the detailed facets of the religious behavior of couples is scant. Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. (1999) describe marriage and religion as being "studied primarily from a distance" (p. 323), and in a meta-analytic study of empirical literature of the 1980s and 1990s addressing religion and marital and parental functioning, Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar et al. conclude that most research has depended on global indices to measure religious variables, which fail to reveal how aspects of religion might affect marriage. Call and Heaton (1997) rightly observed that researchers often suggest possible factors to explain the influences of religion on couples' relationships, but they rarely actually test them.

Call and Heaton (1997) also state that, "religious experience is so diverse and multifaceted that a single measure of religion is inadequate" (p. 382). Couples' participation in religious activities involves, at a minimum, factors of relational

interaction, socialization with others, affect, affiliation, religious service participation, doctrinal beliefs, personal spirituality, and other experiential dimensions, according to Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1993). Giblin (1996) concurs, stating that much more research is needed that examines more than just the main effect of one religious variable in relation to marital strength or quality. Call and Heaton (1997) theorize that marital conflicts of couples regarding religion most likely occur over “saliency of religion, religious activity, the priority they place on shared activities, and the significance they place on religious compatibility” (p. 383). If this is the case, then conversely, would relationship strength be related to the presence of such dimensions of religious unity within couples? Only one study to date has begun to explore these more specific aspects of religious experience within couple relationships, including subjective meanings that partners attach to religious behavior (Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. 1999).

Current research has also not yet thoroughly explored whether or not couples actually experience certain benefits in relation to their religious activities, which benefits are meaningful to them, and which aspects of religious experiences relate to these benefits that couples enjoy. Only one documented study has begun to investigate whether or not couples experience benefits from participation in religious activities as part of their dyadic relationship rather than as an individual phenomenon for each partner (Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. 1999). Mahoney et al. have been the first researchers to use questionnaire items that ask individuals about dyadic religious activities and experiences in relation to marital functioning, stating that “individually based measures of religiousness do not address the extent to which couples integrate religion into their dyadic activities or perceptions of their marriage” (p. 322).

Call and Heaton (1997) posited two other deficits of previous research in adequately investigating religious influences on marital stability and satisfaction. Along with citing the complex nature of religion that often goes unaddressed, and the lack of tests of relationships between specific aspects of religious activity and marital functioning, they also observed that studies typically rely on cross-sectional data that make it difficult to identify causal relations among variables. Sullivan (2001) argues that the greatest impediment to pertinent research to date is that grounding in solid theory is either weak or absent. Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger and Gorsuch (1996) put it succinctly when they said that, “within the psychology of religion, the cry for a good theory has reached the level of cacophony” (p. 446).

In summary, previous researchers have shown definite links between religious activities and marital satisfaction, but have not yet fully explored and understood this relationship. Although religious attendance and participation is shown to be associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction, and lower probability of separation or divorce (Call and Heaton, 1997; Larson & Munro, 1985), exactly which church attendance and participation factors contribute to these trends remains unknown. Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. (1999) have stated that more extensive research is necessary to gain a clearer picture of how couples use religion. Our understanding of how aspects of joint religious activities influence couples remains limited and unclear.

Because such a minimal amount of knowledge exists in the extant literature regarding experiential religious factors involved in couples' relationship quality, the present study was intended to examine this field of interest further. The research was designed to (a) develop a more comprehensive assessment of couples' joint involvement

in religious activities and the functions that the shared activities serve in their relationships, and (b) test the degrees to which particular aspects of partners' participation in religious activities together relate to greater relationship satisfaction and stability.

The present study was designed to overcome the weaknesses described above in existing research and to close some of the gaps recognized in the current knowledge of religious activities and relationship satisfaction and stability. It assessed a more complex array of aspects of couples' religious involvement, and tested possible reasons for the association between religious activity and relationship satisfaction that have only been suggested in previous studies. Although this study utilized cross-sectional data, it attended to both the *religious affiliation homogamy* and the *religious activity homogamy* of the participant subjects. Furthermore, the study investigated the meanings that shared religious activities have for members of couples, and how those meanings relate to partners' relationship quality.

Purpose of Study

The purposes of this study were to develop and initially validate a research instrument designed to obtain data on the frequencies of occurrence of various religious activities in couples' lives, to examine how couples experience these religious activities in a dyadic context, to assess which facets of shared religious activities couples consider important and experience as beneficial, and to determine the degree to which these aspects of religious involvement are associated with the degrees of relationship satisfaction and relationship stability that couples experience. Specifically, this study examined

- the reliability of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, a new research instrument designed to measure religious activities, their meanings, and their importance for couples;
- the frequency of joint religious activities that couples experience and how the partners feel individually as they participate as a couple in those activities;
- what benefits couples experience from joint religious activities, and to what degrees;
- how couples rank religious activity benefits in importance relative to one another,
- how important members of couples believe these benefits are in their lives;
- how the degrees of relationship satisfaction and relationship stability that participant couples currently report in their relationship are related to (a) the frequency of their joint religious activities, (b) the benefits couples experience from their joint religious activities, (c) the importance that couples place on religious activity benefits, and (d) how members of couples individually feel as they participate in joint religious activities; and
- how couples qualitatively characterize the dyadic role that joint religious activities play in their lives.

This study adds to the limited number of extant studies that have explored the specifics of how relationship satisfaction is related to the dyadic phenomena that couples experience as they engage in religious activities together. Findings provide important information about variables at work in couples' dyadic religious experiences, and foster future researchers' abilities to study these variables in finer detail. Although the terms

“couples” and “partnerships” sometimes connote legally couples, this study did not limit research participants to that category of legally sanctioned relationships. The topic of this study was relevant to couples currently in heterosexual, gay, and lesbian relationships. For this reason, the term “relationship satisfaction” is used in this study to refer to the quality of all types of couples’ relationships. Future studies are needed to determine whether or not the findings of this study can be generalized to all types of couples. References to “marital therapists,” “couples,” “partners,” or “relationships” occurring in this text refer inclusively to any type of intimate couple.

Previous research has established that on the average marital therapists are less religiously oriented than the general population and are inadequately trained to understand and utilize aspects of their clients’ religious lives for the clients’ benefit (Shafranske, 1996; Shafranske & Malony, 1990). Although Weaver, Samford, Morgan, Larson, Koenig and Flannelly (2002) conclude that marriage and family research journals are more sensitive to religious factors than journals in other disciplines, Weaver, Koenig, and Larson’s (1997) previous assertion that marriage and family therapists could benefit from greater mindfulness of the roles religion may play in marital dynamics probably still holds true. Stander, Piercy, Mackinnon and Helmeke (1994) observed that failing to acknowledge the pervasive influence that religion wields in our society devalues an important portion of personal culture and personal moral perspective. The findings of the present study serve to (a) help prevent clinicians from overlooking or neglecting religious activities as a pertinent issue in their practices, (b) provide mental health professionals with a greater understanding of how the behavior, affect, and cognitions of participation in religious activities influence the relationships of couples for whom religious activities

are meaningful, and (c) encourage professionals to include couples' religious activities as a possible resource in their therapeutic work.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following three topics are discussed in the literature review of this study: (a) the theoretical foundation for this research, (b) an historical overview of previous research on this topic, and (c) study hypotheses. Definitions of terms used in this area of study are provided within this discussion, and the areas of focus included and excluded in this study are addressed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical and conceptual framework guiding this study is *symbolic interaction theory*. Symbolic interaction theory defines individual behavior as a function of how each person assesses and defines his or her world (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1959, 1967, 1972; Winton, 1995). The theory posits that people choose certain behavior based on the meaning or significance that behavior holds for them. Behavior is adopted, or constructed, according to the definitions or meanings that people assign to the different behaviors or elements in their environment (Winton, 1995).

These elements take into account all the different experiences that comprise our lives. They include people, situations, activities, rituals, words, behavior, objects, conditions, memories, traits, opinions, ideas, etc. In a symbolic interaction framework, each of these items can serve as a symbol, something that carries more than just one literal or pragmatic form of significance (Blumer, 1969). Individuals then select certain items, or behaviors, to incorporate in their lives, based on the meaning(s) that the items symbolically provide them, that they desire to have in their lives. For those who adhere to symbolic interaction theory, the meanings that people assign to the different symbols in their lives determine how those people will act, react, and interact in society.

For this reason, in symbolic interaction theory, rituals—repeated acts that usually carry strong significance for the participants, such as family dinners or holiday celebrations—often function as powerful and steadying activities, or symbols, for individuals. Shared experiences may produce shared assumptions, mutual meanings, or shared symbols between individuals. Using a symbolic interaction approach, personal meaning can result from either outer relational experiences, or from inner individual processes unrelated to social interactions.

Change does not hold as prominent a position in this theoretical framework as does constancy. To maintain a foundation of meaning in one's life, a person must continue to value and repeat those behaviors, conditions, etc., that are meaningful for him or her. Change occurs in symbolic interaction theory when a shift of perception creates a change in meaning or significance, which may then trigger an individual or relational change of behavior.

Human cognition and choice are the driving forces fueling symbolic interaction theory. Unlike structural functional theory, conflict theory, or social exchange theory, this theory does not impose or apply any societal expectations or parameters as determining forces of behavior. Instead, adherents to symbolic interaction theory recognize the powers of action and constraint as residing within individuals, rather than in external forces or influences. In symbolic interaction theory, predetermined personal meaning always precedes and determines behavior. Symbolic interactionism does not specify how or where meaning originates, other than describing a personal *a priori* source. The theory does not argue against the possibility of forces of socialization, such as experiences with family, friends, and the broader culture, influencing how a person

determines meaning in his or her life. Meaning could arise from what one observes and learns through socialization, or from a purely intuitive, internal process exclusive of outside factors.

As a framework for understanding couples' behavior, symbolic interaction theory proposes that partners determine their behavior in the same way that individuals do; namely, based on meaning. A couple builds their relationship through choosing behaviors that have shared meaning for them. Certain dialogue, actions, situations, settings, activities, etc., carry certain meanings for the couple—meanings chosen through their mutual interpretation and analysis of their world. These symbolic meanings dictate how partners choose to interact as a couple and with the rest of the world.

For instance, a couple that believes religious activities carry significance and benefit for them will most likely seek out religious activities and engage in them frequently. However, partners who believe that religious activities are restrictive or meaningless will most likely fail to incorporate them in their life together. According to symbolic interaction theory, a couple's relationship is of their own making, a unit interacting in accordance with the symbolic meanings they interpret and assign to the elements of the world around them.

In this study, understanding the relationship between relationship functioning and religious activity using symbolic interaction theory is a function of understanding what meanings couples have adopted for the behavior being studied. Symbolic interaction theory embraces the idea that couples choose behavior based on their assignment of meaning or importance to that behavior. This theory allows researchers to examine

couples' actions in a value-neutral way, linking them to the meanings that the partners have attached to their actions, rather than categorizing the behavior as good or bad.

Historical Overview of Knowledge on Religion and Marriage

Church Attendance and Marital Quality

The issue of religion and its influence on married couples was first examined by Kirkpatrick (1937). Using what he described as a “somewhat novel sampling method,” (p. 270) Kirkpatrick asked students to select married couples they knew well that they considered to be either well-adjusted or poorly adjusted to participate in his study. He reported that religious preference or affiliation seemed to play no influential part in the quality of marital relationships, due to the absence of any correlation between religious affiliation and marital functioning. Eighty-three percent of his sample population indicated similar religious affiliation between the couples. Terman (1938) examined the relationship between the level of religious training received at home and marital happiness. His results showed that moderate amounts of religious training, defined as the degree of spiritual strictness perceived from one's parents during childhood, were more often associated with marital happiness, whereas large or small amounts of religious training were associated with less marital happiness. Burgess and Cottrell (1939) reported in their seminal book, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, that studies dealing with religiosity showed regular church attendance to be associated with success in marriage.

Burchinal (1957) tested the hypothesis that husbands and wives who are church members or church attenders would show greater marital satisfaction than couples who

are not¹. Although his results were not statistically significant, the direction of the effect was in the hypothesized direction. Gurin, Veroff, and Fell (1960) found a positive relationship between church attendance and marital happiness. Their findings indicated that church attendance was more strongly related to individual marital happiness than general happiness with life, which led them to suggest that church attendance carries some type of “special relevance” to marital stability (p. 241).

Gurin et al. also reported that the Protestant survey participants who were frequent church attenders were more likely to identify the source of their marital happiness as their marital relationship than were infrequent Protestant church attenders, or church attenders of the Catholic faith. Therefore, along with verifying a relationship between church attendance and marital happiness, Gurin et al.’s study also suggests that the nature of marital happiness may differ by degree of religious activity or by denomination. Although denominational affiliation did not appear to mediate the relationship between church attendance and marital stability, Gurin et al.’s findings imply that the perceived nature of marital happiness may not be uniform for all faiths.

Carey (1966) also found support for Burchinal’s hypothesis about the link between church involvement and marital quality. Using a sample of 1,617 Catholic couples surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center, he found a positive linear relationship between religious orientation and general happiness of the participants. Carey defined religious orientation using five indices: devotional index (measuring church attendance frequency), ethical attitudes index (measuring affect regarding moral

¹ Specific denominational breakdowns of each study sample are not included in this review, because of research findings (mentioned later) that indicate type of religious affiliation is not related to marital satisfaction.

choices), doctrinal attitudes index (measuring attitudes toward church teachings), religious knowledge index (measuring knowledge of church teachings), and Catholic schooling index (measuring degree of Catholic schooling received). The first three of these indices showed significant linear relationships with the general happiness of married Catholic men and women. These relationships remained when demographic factors such as age, gender, educational level, and income were controlled statistically.

Kunz and Albrecht (1977), using a sample of participants from Utah, and therefore of probable low generalizability, showed church attendance and marital satisfaction to be strongly related. Hunt and King (1978) also reported religious participation to be linked with marital success. Sixty-four married couples, ranging in age from 19 to 33, were invited by university students to participate in the study and complete the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test and two scales measuring religiosity. Hunt and King concluded that “certain types of religiosity and marriage success are related,” noting both that items dealing with belief, effort, and participation were especially salient, and that details about the relationship aspects of religious involvement were only partially clear. They stated that “something about the more complex, symbolic approach to religion” is related to marital happiness. In an unpublished study, Gruner (1982) reported “both the conversion experience and emotional participation in religious practices” to be correlated with marital adjustment (Gruner, 1985, p. 48).

Religiosity

Religiosity is a concept commonly used in this area of study, yet current research does not embrace an entirely uniform definition of the term. The definition and measures

that researchers use to operationalize religiosity, while usually similar, vary specifically from study to study. At present, religiosity is most commonly defined as a composite of three elements—church affiliation, church attendance, and religious beliefs (Call & Heaton, 1997).

Religious affiliation.

Shrum (1980) examined the relationship between religious affiliation (i.e., religious denomination) and marital stability. His sample of 3,143 adults participating in the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center from 1972 to 1977 showed no relationship between the two variables. His findings, later affirmed by others (Glenn & Supancic, 1984; Heaton, 1984; Larson & Goltz, 1989), supported the hypothesis that marital instability is *not* a function of denominational preference. For this reason, religious affiliation was not a major focus of this study.

Church attendance.

Using a random sample of 179 couples (358 individuals), Larson and Goltz (1989) reported church attendance to be a major predictor of marital commitment². They speculated that church attenders may feel that they have stronger marriages because religious beliefs tend to uphold and validate the institution of marriage and function as a barrier to divorce. Larson and Goltz suggested that, “among non-religious couples there are simply fewer barriers to leaving their marriages and they likely sense fewer constraints to stay” (p. 396). Twelve years earlier, Kunz and Albrecht (1977) had already broached the concept that, for couples who hold conservative religious beliefs, the

² The term “church attendance” is used in this study to encompass any degree of attendance at a religious organization (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque). A couple’s religious service attendance or abstinence does not solely determine whether a couple characterizes themselves as “religious.” Other behaviors, cognitions, and affect may determine how a couple classifies themselves.

doctrinal inconsistency of separation or divorce may appear more distasteful than the idea of weathering a less than ideal partnership.

Religious beliefs.

Research findings do suggest that couples' doctrinal beliefs are related in some way to their cognitions about their relationship. Although one aspect of experiencing religious activities together is certainly shared doctrinal beliefs, examining this element of religion in detail covers such a spectrum of subject matter that its vastness would overwhelm a study attempting to address any other issues. A thorough examination of specific similarities and differences of doctrinal beliefs between partners was beyond the scope of this research, and was not prominently addressed in this study. For this study, it was sufficient to examine whether couples share common doctrinal beliefs, as opposed to examining what those beliefs are, and how they might match or differ.

It is possible that church attending couples are more motivated to work to maintain or endure their relationships than non-church attending couples because of the values and beliefs that the couples embrace from their religious doctrine. Consequently, the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, a new instrument designed for this study (see Appendix A), asked couples to indicate the degree to which "religious activities provide common values and beliefs [they] share together" and the degree to which "religious activities provide [them] with a moral compass that guides [their] choices as a couple." Study participants were also asked to rank how important the common values and beliefs inherent in church activities are for them as a couple, as compared to other benefits that they receive from participating in church activities together. These questionnaire items were designed to identify the priority couples place on the guidance

and common values and beliefs that religious activities generate for them when they engage in religious activities together. The results of these items shed new light on Larson's and Goltz's speculations regarding the importance that religious beliefs play in acting as a protective barrier against separation or divorce.

Spiritual Well-Being

Roth (1988) examined the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment. She defined spiritual well-being as “an internal...religious and existential orientation which has been well integrated into the inner fiber of the person, that is, a way of being in the world that matches one's religious beliefs about the world” (p. 153). Spiritual well-being was measured using scores obtained on Paloutzian's and Ellison's (1982) Spiritual Well-Being Scale. Marital adjustment was measured using Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Her research indicated that the spiritual well-being of 147 married individuals attending church in California correlated highly with their perception of marital adjustment, which led Roth to believe that the actual practice of religious acts, as opposed to religious membership or professed beliefs, contributes significantly to perceived states of marital well-being. Roth's stance lends support to the major focus of this study—to examine couples' specific forms of religious practices and the subjective meanings that those activities have for them.

An examination of the nature of couples' or individuals' spiritual well-being or spiritual orientation, however, was beyond the scope of the present study. Spirituality is often characterized in the research literature as an “internal orientation” of subjects, whereas religious practices are thought of as participants' external behaviors. Giblin (1996) describes characteristics of spirituality as “inner [oriented], individual, affective,

immediate, and flexible,” while describing qualities of religion as “outer [oriented], relational, cognitive, distant, and rigid.” Sullivan (2001) categorizes two areas in which religion may influence marital quality: attitudinal and behavioral. Although this study examined attitudinal and behavioral aspects of partners’ shared religious activities, the inclusion of an assessment of spiritual well-being was beyond the scope of this research. This study examined individuals’ internal religious characteristics and phenomena as they related to couples’ relational, or dyadic, experiences, rather than the religious experiences that each person engaged in by himself or herself.

Religion and Behavior

Attending church is shown to be associated with a lower probability of separation or divorce. This study examined the degree to which certain religious factors are associated with individuals’ relationship satisfaction. The focus of this study was on an investigation of the elements involved in couples’ beneficial experiences of involvement in religious activity.

Thornton and Camburn (1989) comment that some researchers, using cross-sectional data, assume that religion causes positive functioning in couple relationships. Thornton and Camburn suggested, and Booth, Johnson, Branaman and Sica (1995) concurred, that the causal relationship between religion and constructive behavior between partners could possibly be reciprocal. The present study was not intended to discover causal or chronological aspects of the relationship between religious behavior and relationship quality and stability, but was designed to broaden knowledge about the aspects of religious involvement that are associated with more successful relationships.

Specificity of Religious Constructs

Some studies have shown moderate, mixed, or contradictory levels of support for the hypothesized relationship between religion and marital quality (Booth, et al, 1995; Jenkins, 1991; Schumm, Obiorah, & Silliman, 1989; Thornes & Collard, 1979). Sullivan (2001) reports that from her study's analysis of immediate and longitudinal effects of religiosity on marriage, "the relationship [between religiosity and marriage] appears to be weak and inconsistent" (p. 623). There are several factors that contribute to this assessment of the situation. First, Sullivan admits that her instrument for measuring religiosity is "brief" and possibly weak. Many studies still use global items that imprecisely and superficially address specifics of couples' involvement in religion. Second, Sullivan and other researchers continue to use measures that assess individual qualities rather than dyadic qualities, creating a mismatch between the relational variables that they intend to study and the individually-oriented measures they use to assess them. Third, researchers including Sullivan fail to discriminate among the multiple components of religiosity, as if it were accurate to assume that religious affiliation, attendance, and belief all are synchronized aspects of the same construct. Baucom (2001) terms religious constructs "soft [and] fuzzy" (p. 652), emphasizing that specificity of concepts and operational definitions are needed in current research. Astute researchers must now recognize that different dimensions of religiosity must be separated and researched distinctly to obtain accurate and robust results. In sum, Sullivan's study is typical of most research on religion and relationships in that it does not assess the types of people's religious involvement that involve couple interaction and that are most likely to be related to relationship quality. The present study was designed to avoid these limitations

that most likely have interfered with the ability of many previous studies to accurately assess the relationship between religion and relationship functioning.

Studies have shown that spousal intimacy is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction (Koehne, 2000; Robinson, 1994; White & Booth, 1991). This study examined whether or not religious “intimacy,” or religious activities shared by a couple through joint outward behavior, experience, and dialogue, also functions as a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction. Few studies specifically delineate between individual and joint experiences of religious activities. In this study, this distinction and definition of the variables examined was a key focus.

Religious Homogamy

A number of researchers have explored the issue of denominational homogamy and its counterpart, denominational heterogamy. Religious homogamy refers to partners who identify themselves as members of the same faith, whereas religious heterogamy describes partners who have different religious affiliations. Research indicates that individuals in religiously heterogamous partnerships report lower marital satisfaction or adjustment (Glenn, 1982; Heaton, 1984; Ortega, Whitt, & Williams, 1988) and exhibit an increased likelihood of divorce than individuals in religiously homogamous relationships (Bahr, 1981; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Heaton, Albrecht & Martin, 1985). Heaton noted that heterogamous partners have a lower frequency of church attendance than homogamous partners, and proposed that lower marital satisfaction in heterogamous couples could be more attributable to lower church activity than to the partners’ different religious affiliations. Greenberg (1997) found evidence similar to Heaton’s, that interfaith (heterogamous) couples were less religious in their beliefs than intrafaith

(homogamous) couples. Heaton suggested that because religiously active individuals tend to marry homogamously (Peterson, 1986), the marital quality of religiously active couples may be a function of both homogamy and religiosity. Petersen found, however, that marital satisfaction for heterogamous Catholics was no lower than for homogamous Catholics. Call and Heaton (1997) found that not only religious affiliation homogamy, but also religious activities spouses jointly engage in, or “religious activity homogamy,” was associated with a lower likelihood of marital dissolution. This study provided more information relevant to the issue of what aspects of couples’ religious activity homogamy are related to relationship quality and stability, because it examined (a) homogamy in partners’ religious affiliation, (b) homogamy in couples’ religious activity, and (c) couples’ religious activity frequency.

Call and Heaton (1997) postulated that mixed-faith, or heterogamous, marriages exhibit higher risks of divorce that could be as much due to the differences in partners’ demographic characteristics as to their differences in religious affiliation. They stated that, even after controlling for differing demographics and strong beliefs against non-marital sex in their analyses, religious attendance heterogamy (couples exhibiting different patterns of religious activity) was still positively related to marital dissolution.

Marital Conventionalization

Schumm, Bollman, and Jurich (1982) addressed the issue of “marital conventionalization,” defined by Chamberlain and Hall (2000) as “the tendency for people to inflate their level of marital adjustment by reporting that their marriages are better and happier than they actually are” (p. 161). Schumm et al. felt that such behavior would skew the results of studies investigating marital satisfaction levels, especially

studies in which researchers ask the respondents to report on both their religious norms and their marital condition. Research in the field of psychology has verified that subjects' needs for consistency, or lower cognitive dissonance, does sometimes influence subjects' responses.

Schumm, Bollman, and Jurich (1982) proposed that the link between religiosity and marital satisfaction found in various studies may be a function of both variables being correlated with marital conventionalization, or the tendency to describe one's marriage in socially desirable terms rather than acknowledging problems. However, Schumm et al.'s study of these variables produced inconclusive findings, and the researchers concluded that, "association between religiosity and marital adjustment should not be automatically dismissed as mere artifacts of marital conventionalization" (p. 240). Filsinger and Wilson's (1984, 1986) studies showed strong correlations between religiosity and marital adjustment, while controlling for marital conventionalization. Their later study demonstrated that the greater the degree of religious experiences such as rituals in couples' lives, and the more conservative the couples' religious beliefs, the greater the reported degree of marital adjustment.

The Meaning of Joint Religious Activities

Identifying a need to refine the understanding of the impact of religion on marriage, Gruner (1985) hypothesized that the greater the number of private religious practices individuals engaged in, the greater their reported marital adjustment would be, because the private religious practices were assumed to serve as means for coping with marital problems. Private religious practices were defined as individual prayer and individual Bible reading, and Gruner measured marital adjustment using the Locke-

Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959). Gruner found a positive relationship between prayer and marital adjustment across the four categories of religious affiliation used in the study. However, although Bible reading was strongly correlated with marital adjustment for the evangelical and sect groups, it was not for the Catholic and liberal groups. Gruner suggested that this difference may have occurred because certain denominational doctrines emphasize certain religious practices, while other denominational doctrines do not. Gruner's suggestion highlights the fact that, consistent with symbolic interaction theory, knowing the degree to which couples value specific religious activities and specific religious payoffs or benefits is important in evaluating whether or not such activities and benefits are related to couples' experience of relationship satisfaction. As described in the Method chapter, this study was designed to elicit such information from participants.

As mentioned earlier, Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. (1999) were the first researchers to document specific dyadic religious behaviors that couples engage in, and perceptions of religious aspects of their marriages. They distinguished a religious construct called *joint religious activities* to more precisely examine religion and marriage. Joint religious activities refers to both formal and informal religious or spiritual experiences that a couple shares together, such as attending religious services together, praying together, discussing spiritual issues together, or celebrating religious holidays together. Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell et al. also drew a distinction between "proximal" and "distal" religious factors. Proximal factors are those that are closely related to couples' relationship daily subjective experiences, such as daily prayer or talking about spiritual issues together. Distal factors are those less immediately tied to a relationship,

such as religious affiliation or individual religious service attendance. They found better marital functioning to be associated with couples' greater levels of proximal factors (joint religious activities), but that distal variables, such as affiliation homogamy, were not related to marital satisfaction. Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. urged further research to examine why joint religious activities are related to marital functioning. They suggested that measures be developed that can assess ways in which religious activities enhance or inhibit marital functioning.

Fiese and Tomcho (2001) proposed that, "religion is related to marital satisfaction through the meaning created in shared rituals" (p. 600). Their view is consistent with symbolic interaction theory and the premise of this study that it is the meaning that couples give to the "doing" of their religious activities that strengthens their relationships. Fiese and Tomcho's focus on the impact of couples' ritual behaviors being a function of the meaning created between partners appears to be an example of a productive proximal variable. These researchers explain that while an individual partner's connection to religious beliefs or feelings is distal, the meaning that couples derive from a joint religious activity is proximal, and has a greater effect on relationship satisfaction. The theory and research in the present study extend this area of Fiese and Tomcho's work further.

Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell et al. (1999) also recommend that future research examine whether or not other joint non-religious activities provide similar influences on marital relationships as do religious activities. The present study investigated this question as well.

This study was designed to capitalize on all of the above suggestions offered by previous researchers. In summary, from the three components comprising the construct of religiosity—church affiliation, church attendance, and beliefs—this study examined couples’ attendance at formal religious ceremonies and other institutionalized activities, and its relationship to couples’ relationship satisfaction. This study utilized an expanded perspective on the component “church attendance,” encompassing a wide spectrum of religious activities that members of couples engage in together. As suggested by Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell et al. and others, joint religious activities can comprise any of the follow items done together as a couple: attending religious services together, celebrating religious holidays together at home or elsewhere, attending religious events together, having spiritual conversations, praying together, participating in religious rituals together, religious planning or goal setting, etc. Such a definition of “religious activities” was used for this study.

Baucom (2001) states that not only should proximal variable definitions be used in marriage and religion studies, but they also should be linked clearly to specific dimensions of marital functioning. For instance, Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, et al. (2001) use verbal conflict as a variable to examine marital functioning. The present study followed that recommendation, relating proximal religious variables, such as practicing religious rituals together or studying scriptures together, to specific relationship functioning such as feelings of intimacy, feeling connected, or having a sense of spiritual meaning and purpose. Baucom (2001) also speculates whether or not other activities besides religious activities might afford couples similar benefits, suggesting that researchers attempt to clarify the degree to which religious influences on relationships are

unique. As noted above, this study examined the degree to which partners perceive that particular non-religious activities serve similar functions in their relationships as religious activities.

Hypotheses

The variables used in this study included frequency of joint religious activities, importance of joint religious activity benefits, frequency of joint religious activity benefits, affect associated with joint religious activities, relationship satisfaction, and relationship stability. The operational definitions of these variables and methods of assessment for these variables used in this study are described in the Method chapter. The following were the hypotheses of this study:

Hypothesis 1: Members of couples who engage in more religious activities together will report greater relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Members of couples who engage in more religious activities together will report greater relationship stability.

Hypothesis 3: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities more will report greater relationship stability.

Hypothesis 5: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship stability.

Hypothesis 7: Individuals who indicate that they experience a higher degree of positive individual affect while engaging in religious activities as a couple will report a greater degree of relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 8: Individuals who indicate that they experience a higher degree of positive individual affect while engaging in religious activities as a couple will report a greater degree of relationship stability.

Hypothesis 9: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report engaging in a higher frequency of joint religious activities.

Hypothesis 10: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report experiencing more religious activity benefits from joint religious activities.

Hypothesis 11: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint religious activities will experience more positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities.

Research Question

In addition to the above set of hypotheses, this study examined three research questions:

(1) What is the *combined effect* of frequency of engagement in joint religious activities, valuing of benefits from joint participation in religious activities, experience of benefits from joint participation, and experience of positive individual affect from joint participation on relationship satisfaction and on relationship stability?

(2) To what degree does each of the above characteristics of couples' joint participation in religious activities make a unique contribution to relationship satisfaction and to relationship stability?

(3) To what degree are the 14 individual items comprising the importance of particular types of benefits from joint religious activities associated with individuals' levels of relationship satisfaction, in combination with the frequency with which couples engage in joint religious activities?

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample selected for this study was purposive, rather than a convenience or random probability sampling of the target population. Because the purpose of this study was to focus on dyadic religious experiences of couples, a sampling technique that would yield a source of couple respondents who engage in degrees of religious activities was necessary. The choice of subject selection was also influenced by the logistical, financial, and scheduling factors involved in obtaining a sample that would be willing to complete a seven page written questionnaire regarding relationship quality and religious practices. For this reason, purposive sampling was chosen for this study.

Two source groups of survey participants were selected for this study. A parenting training organization known as the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP) in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. community was chosen, along with local Rotary Clubs selected from Rotary International District 7620 of the greater Washington, D.C. area, for their willingness to grant permission to gain access to their members and request their study involvement. A third source of participants, University of Maryland University College (i.e., adult education) undergraduate and graduate students, was explored and rejected, due to the unwieldy nature of securing permission to request participant involvement. The two initial groups were suitable sources of participants for this study, because their composition includes significant numbers of established couples, and membership is not tied to any religious group. Thus, it would be likely that the attendees would vary considerably in religious affiliation and involvement in religious activities.

Survey volunteers self-selected for participation in this study after hearing a short verbal explanation of the study and a description of participants needed, given by the principal researcher, who attended class sessions or meetings of the groups. Prospective study participants were informed that the study dealt with issues of relationship strength and religious influences, that their participation would be voluntary, that data would be compiled anonymously, and that they must be involved in a couple relationship of at least six months duration to participate. No incentives to participate in the study were offered to prospective participants. The study sample sought was not restricted to church/synagogue-going couples only, because such a sample population might be biased toward particular forms of church activity. Further specifics of recruitment are discussed in the Procedures section of this thesis.

A sample size of 175 respondents was obtained. This sample size was used on the one hand to insure sufficient statistical power for the analyses and on the other hand to insure that the study would be feasible. Specifically, the sample included 95 male and 80 female participants. One hundred twenty-six questionnaires were received from both members of 63 couples; 49 questionnaires were returned by only one member of a couple. Questionnaire responses were received from 129 Rotarians and 46 members of the Parent Encouragement Program.

Measures

Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire

This study utilized a non-experimental one-time survey research design. Butler, Stout and Gardner (2002) are but one example of researchers who have created new instruments to address this developing area of research, because measures in earlier

studies were imprecise in defining and operationalizing important aspects of couples' religious involvement. This research utilized a new research instrument, developed by the principal researcher, to assess couples' religious involvement, entitled the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, in addition to the Dyadic Assessment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976), the most widely used self-report measure of overall relationship satisfaction, and the Marital Status Inventory-Revised (Weiss & Cerreto, 1980), a self-report questionnaire widely used to assess the degree to which a member of a couple relationship has acted to dissolve a relationship. Copies of the DRAQ, DAS, and MSI-R are included in the Appendix.

The Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire (DRAQ) was designed to assess aspects of couples' joint religious activities that previous studies have suggested may account for the observed association between joint religious activities and relationship quality. Specific items of this instrument ask respondents to indicate either the frequency of occurrence, the degree of importance, or the relative rankings of importance for each of the following aspects of joint religious activities mentioned by previous researchers. Call and Heaton (1997) suggested that joint religious activities increase couple solidarity through the partners' exposure to religious teachings that affirm the importance of marriage, and through the couple's participation in social networks that build positive couple interactions. Two related items used in the DRAQ were, "Religious activities provide a spiritual orientation that enriches our lives," and "Religious activities provide us with social support structures, such as time with friends or relatives." Albrecht et al. (1983) offered religious value consensus as a characteristic that strengthens relationships. Questions seven, eight, and nine of the DRAQ include the item, "Religious activities

provide common values and beliefs we share together.” Argyle and Furnham (1983) found shared interests to be a source of relationship satisfaction, although they did not relate it to religious practices. A related item in both questions seven and eight of the DRAQ was, “Religious activities allow us to enjoy common tasks together.” Fiese and Tomcho (2001) concluded that rituals affirm relationships and connect values and beliefs. Questions seven, eight, and nine of the DRAQ used the item, “Religious activities provide rituals and traditions that give continuity to our life together.” Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, et al. (2001) stated that joint religious activities allow couples to enjoy rituals together, develop shared values together, and support each other. They believed that joint religious activities might foster intimacy and social support to help couples cope with conflict better. The DRAQ addressed these aspects of religion using the following items in questions seven, eight, and nine: “Religious activities promote healthy ways to interact with each other, such as forgiving each other or managing our disagreements better,” and “Religious activities increase our feelings of intimacy with each other.” Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, et al. (1999) were the first researchers to utilize a religious construct labeled “joint religious activities” as a more in-depth approach to measuring dyadic religious behavior. A number of DRAQ items were modeled after their research efforts to include specific inquiries about couples’ shared religious practices. For instance, a sample DRAQ item reads, “Religious activities give us time to spend together as a couple.” Responses were obtained using Likert scales of frequency and intensity, such as “regularly, often, sometimes, rarely, never” or “very important, somewhat important, neutral, not very important, and unimportant.”

Frequency of joint religious activities, importance of joint religious activity benefits,

frequency of joint religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities were the four constructs used in the DRAQ. They are defined as follows.

Frequency of joint religious activities was defined as the total score that a study participant received on the fifteen items of *question one* of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire. Question one of the DRAQ reads, “Please rate how frequently the following religious activities occur in your life together as a couple.” Responses include regularly, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. Participants indicated their responses numerically, ranging from one as the lowest frequency response (never) to five as the highest frequency response (regularly). Total scores for question one ranged from 15 to 75. See Appendix A for the individual religious activity items.

Importance of joint religious activity benefits was defined as the total score that a study participant received on the fourteen items of *question seven* of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire. Question seven of the DRAQ reads, “Please rate the following aspects of religious activities according to how important each one is for you as a couple.” Responses included very important, somewhat important, neutral, not very important, and unimportant. Participants indicated their responses numerically, ranging from one (unimportant) to five (very important). Thus, total scores for question seven can range from 14 to 70. See Appendix A for the individual items rated.

Frequency of joint religious activity benefits was defined as the total score that a study participant received on the fourteen items of *question eight* of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire. Question eight of the DRAQ reads, “Please rate these same aspects of religious activities according to how frequently they actually occur in your

relationship.” Responses included occur regularly, occur often, occur sometimes, occur rarely, and never occur. Participants indicated their responses numerically, ranging from one (never occur) to five (occur regularly). Total scores for question eight can range from 14 to 70. See Appendix A for the individual items of this construct subscale.

Positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities was defined as the total score that a study participant received on the six items of *question ten* of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire. Question ten of the DRAQ reads, “When we participate in religious activities together as a couple, I personally feel:” followed by six affective conditions. Response options include regularly, often, sometimes, rarely, never, and not applicable. Participants indicate their responses numerically, ranging from zero (not applicable) to five (regularly). Total scores for question ten can range from zero to 30. See Appendix A for the individual items ranked for this item.

Total scores on the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire were calculated as the sum of scores received on each of the four constructs used in the DRAQ—frequency of joint religious activities, importance of joint religious activity benefits, frequency of joint religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities. DRAQ scores ranged from 43 to 245. Respondents’ total scores represented a composite measuring, or amalgam, of the degree of joint religious activity occurrence, the degree of desired meaning of joint religious activity benefits, the degree of occurrence of joint religious activity benefits, and the degree of positive individual affect experienced during joint religious activities in a respondent’s life.

Questions two through six of the DRAQ were open-ended inquiries designed to obtain qualitative data to aid in further understanding the field of religion and

relationships (see copy of the DRAQ Appendix A). For example, question two asks, “The benefits we enjoy as a couple from participating in ‘religious activities’ together are:...” Question three asks, “Please describe any benefits you gain as a couple from “religious activities” that you do not receive from any other activity.” In a content analysis, participants’ responses to these questions were categorized, using categories defined in question nine of the DRAQ. These categories comprise the seven subscales used in questions seven and eight of the DRAQ, which consist of cohesion, meaning, positive relating, value consensus, ritual, social support, and intimacy. These subscales are the items listed in question nine, labeled as a, b, c, d, e, f, and g.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) is a 32-item questionnaire used to assess partners’ overall relationship satisfaction. The instrument is scored by totaling the sum of responses to all items. A score of 100 is considered the dividing line between a distressed and a non-distressed relationship. Spanier (1976) reported that a factor analysis indicated four highly correlated DAS subscales—dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. The DAS is an established and commonly used instrument that consistently demonstrates strong reliability and validity in couples’ research. Cronbach’s alpha ranges from .73 to .94 for the four subscales, and is .96 for the DAS overall. The content validity of all items has been judged to be appropriate. Twenty-five percent of studies examining religion and marital functioning in the last two decades have utilized the DAS as an assessment tool (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, et al., 2001). In this study, relationship satisfaction

is operationalized as the total score that a participant receives on the Dyadic Assessment Scale.

Marital Status Inventory-Revised

The Marital Status Inventory (Weiss & Cerreto, 1980) is a 14-item questionnaire that measures the degree to which an individual is in the process of ending his or her relationship. Items are answered in a true-false format. A sample item reads, “I have occasionally thought of divorce or wished that we were separated, usually after an argument or other incident.” The coefficient of reproducibility is reported to be .90, and Crane, Newfield, and Armstrong (1984) found the split-half reliability for the MSI to be approximately .86. Epstein and Werlinich (2001) modified the MSI to include language that applies to all intimate couples rather than only legally married heterosexual couples, resulting in the MSI-Revised (MSI-R). Possible scores on the MSI-R range from zero to 18. Given that the MSI-R has not been used in research before, normative data are not yet available on mean scores in clinical or community samples. In this study, relationship stability is operationalized as the total score that a participant receives on the Marital Status Inventory-Revised. Higher scores indicate *lower* relationship stability (i.e., more thoughts and actions toward ending one’s relationship).

Operationalization of Specific Hypotheses

The four independent variables of this study included *frequency of joint religious activities*, *importance of joint religious activity benefits*, *frequency of joint religious activity benefits*, and *positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities*. The two dependent variables of this study included *relationship satisfaction* and *relationship stability*. The following hypotheses are operationalizations of the conceptual

hypotheses listed in the Introduction, defined in terms of the individual operational variables that were measured in this study.

(1) It was hypothesized that frequency of joint religious activities assessed by *DRAQ question one* would be positively related to relationship satisfaction assessed by the *DAS*.

(2) It was hypothesized that frequency of joint religious activities assessed by *DRAQ question one* would be positively related to relationship stability assessed by the *MSI-R*.

(3) It was hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question seven* would be positively related to relationship satisfaction assessed by the *DAS*.

(4) It was hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question seven* would be positively related to relationship stability assessed by the *MSI-R*.

(5) It was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question eight* would be positively related to relationship satisfaction assessed by the *DAS*.

(6) It was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question eight* would be positively related to relationship stability assessed by the *MSI-R*.

(7) It was hypothesized that positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities, as assessed by *DRAQ question ten*, would be positively related to relationship satisfaction assessed by the *DAS*.

(8) It was hypothesized that positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities, as assessed by *DRAQ question ten*, would be positively related to relationship stability assessed by the *MSI-R*.

(9) It was hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question seven* would be positively related to frequency of joint religious activities assessed by *DRAQ question one*.

(10) It was hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question seven* would be positively related to frequency of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question eight*.

(11) It was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits assessed by *DRAQ question eight* would be positively related to positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities, as assessed by *DRAQ question ten*.

The research questions concerning the combined association of frequency of engagement in joint religious activities, valuing of benefits from joint participation in religious activities, experience of benefits from joint participation, and experience of positive individual affect from joint participation with relationship satisfaction and with relationship stability were assessed with scores from the DRAQ construct subscales and with the criterion variables of the DAS and MSI-R.

Procedure

Telephone contact was made with a board member of the Parents Encouragement Program in Kensington, Maryland during the formulation of this study effort. A formal letter of request signed by the researchers was submitted to the PEP Board of Directors, and permission was granted at their next scheduled meeting for PEP members to be canvassed for participation in the study. A PEP staff member prepared a schedule of appearances, with locations of classes and instructor contact information, for use by the

principal researcher. Access was provided by PEP to all of their courses currently in session during the recruitment period of this study.

Telephone contact was also made with both the Club President and Program Chairperson of the College Park Rotary Club during the formulation of this study effort. The College Park Program Chairperson agreed to serve as an introductory sponsor for contacts made by the principal researcher with other local Rotary Clubs. Using a Rotary district directory, contacts were made with 27 area Rotary Club officers. Rotary Clubs were initially selected for contact on the basis of their proximity to the local Washington, DC area. Subsequent contact was pursued with those club presidents who responded favorably to the principal researcher's initial verbal request for club participation in the study.

A pilot version of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire was circulated to 25 potential reviewers during the formulation of this study. Sixteen pilot questionnaires were completed and returned. The choice to pilot the draft study questionnaire proved to be productive and refining. Written instructions were clarified, demographic options were refined, category options were adjusted, and the wording of several DRAQ questions was improved.

Following the approval of the study proposal, application was made to the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board to conduct human subjects research (see Appendix D). After permission was obtained from the IRB, requests for study participants were made by the principal researcher at 13 PEP classes and 22 Rotary Club meetings. The written content of the verbal announcement presented by the principal researcher appears in Appendix D. A total of 894 surveys were distributed.

Members of couples who wished to participate in the study were given a set of two questionnaires, each with an information and instruction sheet and return addressed mailing envelope attached to each partner's form. (Copies of the Information and Instruction Sheet and study questionnaire appear in Appendix A.) Although the surveys used in this study were completed anonymously, the questionnaires distributed were numerically coded in advance to identify which questionnaires corresponded to members of the same couple. If only one partner was present at the moment of questionnaire distribution and wished to participate, he or she received a set of questionnaires on the verbal assurance that both partners would complete and return their surveys. Verbal instructions were given directing participants to complete questionnaires independently, and to seal completed questionnaires in the addressed envelope provided and return it to the researchers by mail. The information and instructions sheet contained these same written instructions.

Study questionnaires were received by mail at the primary researcher's university address, until a sufficient sample size was obtained. Data received were filed and stored in the graduate assistant suite, which is a limited access office, under the care of the principal investigator. Data were collected over a six-month period, from March to September of 2003.

Data entry was performed solely by the principal researcher using SPSS software. Category codes were established for demographic data not already numerically designated. For gender, male was coded as one and female coded as zero. With regard to source of participant, Rotarians were coded as one and PEP members as two. Occupation and Country of Origin were not entered as part of the data tabulation. For the question

assessing previous marriage, Yes was coded as one and No was coded as two. Religious Affiliation was a self-described, fill-in-the-blank item, and was coded as Baptist-one, Catholic-two, Episcopal-three, Jewish-four, Latter-Day Saint-five, Lutheran-six, Methodist-seven, Presbyterian-eight, Protestant-nine, Seventh Day Adventist-ten, Other-eleven, None-twelve, and Interfaith-thirteen. Affiliations categorized as other included the following 13 responses: Christian (7 responses), Eastern Orthodox (2 responses), Disciples of Christ, Greek Orthodox, Humanist, Unitarian. Affiliations categorized as Interfaith encompassed the following three responses: Interfaith Protestant/Jewish, Methodist/Jewish, and United Methodist/Presbyterian. A “Same Religion” category was created to code religious homogamy for those surveys received by both members of a couple. Participants whose partner indicated the same religious affiliation as the respondent were coded as one for Yes; participants whose partner indicated differing religious affiliation from the respondent were coded as two, for No.

A few questionnaires were received with values missing on certain measures of the study instruments. If entire sections or measures of information were incomplete, the data for that entire questionnaire were not used. If an occasional, single item was omitted from a participant’s survey, mid-point values of the appropriate response scale for that question were “pro-rated,” or added, to complete the data for that individual survey. Four surveys were received missing a value on one item of question one of the DRAQ, the frequency of joint religious activities measure. Scores of “three” were inserted for those items. Out of 15 items scored for question one on 175 survey responses, four missing values represent 0.15 percent of the 2,625 responses received. One missing response was prorated for question ten of the DRAQ, representing 0.1 percent of a total of 1,050

responses for that measure. Forty-four missing responses were prorated for the DAS, representing 0.78 percent of a total of 5,600 responses for that instrument. One missing response was prorated for the MSI-R, representing 0.03 percent of a total of 3,150 responses received on that instrument.

During data entry, it was realized that a zero response received on any item of question ten of the DRAQ, in conjunction with any other values given as responses to question ten items, indicated a misinterpretation of scoring on the part of the respondent. If the respondent indicated affective values other than zero for any of the six items of the measure, then, because the respondent indicated some level of affective experience, “zero” responses in fact must be coded as “one,” *never*, rather than “zero”, *not applicable (does not occur)*. Twenty responses of “zero” were transformed into responses of “one” for question ten of the DRAQ, representing 1.9 percent of the 1,050 total responses received for that measure.

It was similarly realized during coding that a mismatch of numerical sequencing occurred for question nine of the DRAQ. The “not important at all” category, while falling sequentially immediately after the “seventh most important” category, was coded as “zero” instead of “eight.” Computation of data analyses would be skewed using “zero” values for this category. Therefore, SPSS software features were used to treat zero values as missing values during data analysis.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Overview of Analyses

This study elicited both qualitative and quantitative responses from participants. This chapter presents four areas of data analyses—(a) demographic data regarding study participants, (b) data concerning the psychometric characteristics of the DRAQ, (c) tests of hypotheses, using quantitative responses to DRAQ items assessing aspects of participants' religious activities and relationship quality, and (d) qualitative data from participants' responses to open-ended DRAQ questions about their religious activities and relationship quality.

Demographic Data

The descriptive characteristics of the sample population demographic data, such as minimums, maximums, means, frequencies, and percents, were obtained using SPSS software.

Psychometric Characteristics of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire

The psychometric properties of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire (DRAQ) as a newly created research instrument were calculated using SPSS software. Calculations of Cronbach's alpha (an inspection of item-total correlations for identification of potentially weak items) were used to indicate the degree of internal consistency displayed by the construct subscales of the DRAQ. Initial evaluation of the construct validity of the DRAQ involved the tests of the study's hypotheses regarding the degrees to which the variables assessed by the DRAQ construct subscales were associated with the degrees of relationship satisfaction and relationship stability assessed by the participants' DAS and MSI-R scores (see section on tests of hypotheses below).

Tests of the Hypotheses and Research Questions

The quantitative data obtained in this research to test the study's hypotheses were analyzed using SPSS software. Data analyses of study variables included: (i) descriptive statistics, such as range, means, medians, modes, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, (ii) Pearson correlation coefficients describing the strength of relationships between pairs of the study variables (for example, correlations of the DAS and MSI-R with frequency of joint religious activities, importance of religious activity benefits, occurrence of religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect), and (iii) multiple regression analyses to test the combined association of predictor variables (e.g., frequency of joint religious activities and occurrence of religious activity benefits) with the criterion of relationship satisfaction, and to test whether or not subjective experiences of joint religious activities (e.g., importance of religious activity benefits and positive individual affect) are mediators of the relationship between religious participation and relationship satisfaction and stability.

In addition to the above tests of the hypotheses, analyses were conducted to examine another research question pertinent to the theoretical base of this study. It was considered to be of empirical and theoretical interest to examine whether or not any relationship existed between actual *frequencies of religious activity benefits* experienced by couples (assessed by question eight of the DRAQ) and couples' forced relative rankings of *importance of benefits* (assessed by question nine of the DRAQ). An exploratory analysis was conducted to determine whether or not the reality of couples' religious experiences, as measured by the degree of occurrence of benefits, was congruent with the couples' prioritizing of benefits accrued from religious activities (i.e.,

their cognitive ideals). This analysis addressed the theoretical foundation of this study—how the meaning or import of religious activity is associated with couples’ actual lived experience.

Analysis of Qualitative Data on Perceived Benefits from Religious and Non-Religious Activities

The qualitative responses to open-ended questions two, three, and four of the DRAQ, listing benefits participants receive from engaging in religious activities or other activities, were numerically categorized by the principal researcher according to the subscales used in question nine of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, with the inclusion of two additional categories. For example, question two reads, “As a couple, we enjoy the following benefits from participating in religious activities together.” Written responses were classified numerically using the subscale categories of question nine—cohesion (1), meaning (2), positive relating (3), value consensus (4), ritual (5), social support (6), and intimacy (7)—with the addition of an “other” category (8) and a “family cohesion” category (9). Special care was taken to insure that consistent criteria were used to classify each written response into the proper category. The categorized qualitative responses of questions two, three, and four were then tabulated as nominal data, and analyses of frequency of occurrence were performed. Comparisons of qualitative responses by gender and other demographic characteristics were calculated. Categorized qualitative data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Question four of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire asked participants to list joint activities, other than religious activities, from which they also gain benefits. Question five of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire requested

participants to itemize benefits they personally feel they derive from participating as a couple in joint religious activities. Question six of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire asked participants to record topics they personally think about while engaging in religious activities with their partner. Responses for each of the qualitative questions were tallied in list format, grouped by similar subject themes, and appear in Appendix E.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the study sample population are presented in Table 1. The study sample consisted of 175 adults, each of whom was a member of a couple for at least six months. Ninety-five respondents were male and 80 were female. Using the questionnaire code numbers, 126 questionnaires were identified as received from 63 couples, whereas 49 questionnaires were received from individuals singly, without a matching questionnaire from their partner. One hundred and twenty-nine participants were from Rotary Clubs and 46 questionnaires were PEP members. The mean participant age was 54.61 years old. One hundred sixty-six respondents, or 94.9% of the study sample, indicated that they were married. The average level of education fell between having received a bachelor's degree and completing some graduate education. Fifty percent of the study participants were employed full-time, 16% were employed part-time, and 21.7% were retired. Data revealed that study participants' household income averaged \$138,710 per year. As Table 1 indicates, racial data revealed that 90.9% of the study sample were Caucasian, 2.9% Hispanic, 2.3% African American, 1.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.1% Native American. With respect to marital longevity, study participants indicated they had been married an average of 26.27 years;

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	Mean	Frequency	Percent
Age	54.61	--	--
Gender			
Female	--	80	45.7
Male	--	95	54.3
Educational Level			
High School Diploma	--	7	4.0
Some College	--	21	12.0
Associates Degree	--	4	2.3
Bachelors Degree	--	37	21.1
Some Graduate Education	--	30	17.1
Masters Degree	--	41	23.4
Doctoral Degree	--	32	18.3
Trade School	--	3	1.7
Employment Status			
Employed Full-time	--	88	50.3
Employed Part-time	--	28	16.0
Not Employed Outside the Home/Unemployed	--	20	11.4
Retired	--	38	21.7
Disabled/Unable to be Employed	--	1	0.6
Race			
African American	--	4	2.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	--	3	1.7
Caucasian	--	159	90.9
Hispanic/Latino	--	5	2.9
Native American	--	2	1.1
Other	--	1	0.6
Missing	--	1	0.6
Number of Children in Household	1.22	--	--
0	--	72	41.1
1	--	21	12.0
2	--	44	25.1

Table 1, continued

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	Mean	Frequency	Percent
Number of Children in Household, continued			
3	--	22	12.6
4	--	7	4.0
Missing	--	9	5.1
Total Years in Relationship	27.30	--	--
Years Married	26.27	--	--
Married Previously			
Yes	--	33	18.9
No	--	141	80.6
Missing	--	1	0.6
Religious Affiliation (self-described)			
Baptist	--	5	2.9
Catholic	--	38	21.7
Episcopal	--	13	7.4
Jewish	--	16	9.1
Latter-day Saint	--	4	2.3
Lutheran	--	6	3.4
Methodist	--	16	9.1
Presbyterian	--	16	9.1
Protestant*	--	14	8.0
Seventh Day Adventist	--	5	2.9
Interfaith	--	3	1.7
None	--	25	14.3
Other	--	13	7.4
Missing	--	1	0.6
Partner Same Religion			
Yes	--	88	50.3
No	--	38	21.7
Missing	--	49	28.0

*The term Protestant can be used to refer to a category of religious affiliations, or to a specific denominational faith. Because of the self-descriptive nature of the reporting of this demographic characteristic, the exact meaning of participants reporting their religious affiliation as Protestant is unclear.

Table 1, continued

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	Mean	Frequency	Percent
Personal Income (in thousands)	85.77	--	--
Household Income (in thousands)	138.71	--	--
Source of Participant			
Rotarians	--	129	73.7
PEP Members	--	46	26.3

N=175

18.9% indicated they had been married previously. With regard to religious affiliation, 50.3 percent of participants indicated they were the same religion as their partner; 21.7% indicated they were not. Subject demographic characteristics varied little in terms of gender. Only personal annual income and educational level revealed statistically significant variations by gender. Possible gender differences in means for demographic characteristics were tested with t-tests. The results indicated that the t-value for educational level was 2.24, $p < .05$, and the t-value for personal income was 6.16, $p < .001$. Thus, the sample tended to be highly educated (with males more highly educated), financially successful, middle-aged, white, and involved in stable long-term marriages. Males averaged \$112,230 and females averaged \$43,990 in personal annual income.

Associations Between Study Variables and Demographics

Because certain demographic characteristics have been shown to be correlates of relationship satisfaction or religiousness in past research, an examination of the

relationship between the demographic variables of this study and the rankings of joint religious activity benefit items was performed. For instance, in past studies females have been found to be more “religious” than males, in both beliefs and practice. Women also have been found to be less satisfied with their relationships than men. Individuals with higher levels of education have been shown to be less likely to hold religious beliefs (Petersen, 1986) and to report higher levels of marital satisfaction (Locksley, 1982). Age has also been shown to correlate with religiosity and/or marital happiness (Shehan & Bock, 1990). Because of these past research results, a correlational analysis was computed between six of the demographic variables—gender, age, personal income, household income, years married, and educational level—and the seven religious activity benefit subscales of question nine. Findings indicated that very few, if any, relationships of import exist between couples’ religious benefit priorities and the sample population characteristics. Only two relationships of statistical significance appeared. “Importance of time spent together” was ranked higher by females than by males (correlated with gender at $r = .162$, significant at $p = .038$), and “importance of rituals and traditions” was negatively correlated with level of education ($r = -.156$, $p = .040$). These findings suggest some consistency with the current literature indicating that those of higher education are less likely to hold religious beliefs than those of lesser education, and that females tend to value couple intimacy that involves spending time together with their spouses in intimacy-enhancing activities such as religion. However, the correlations were of low magnitude, and this analysis suggested that it was not necessary to control statistically for demographic characteristics in the tests of the hypotheses.

The relationships between study participants' indicating the same versus different religious affiliations as their partner and frequency of joint religious activities, degree of relationship satisfaction, and degree of relationship stability also were examined. As noted earlier, researchers have begun to distinguish between *affiliation homogamy* and *activity homogamy*. Whereas couples' indications of religious affiliation similarity are not indications of whether they jointly participate in religious activities together, it is interesting to note that similarity of religious affiliation was significantly correlated with both relationship satisfaction ($r = -.211$; $p = .009$) and with frequency of religious activities ($r = -.404$; $p < .001$). These correlational findings are consistent with Heaton's (1984) suggestion that the marital quality of religiously active couples may be a function of both affiliation homogamy and religiosity, or activity homogamy.

Psychometric Properties of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Construct Subscales

Tables 2 through 9 display the descriptive statistics for participants' responses to questions one, two, three, four, seven, eight, nine, and ten of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire (DRAQ). Each table provides means and frequencies computed for the individual items of each question.

Table 2 indicates that the three joint religious activities couples reported engaging in most frequently were 1st-celebrating holidays religiously, 2nd-attending worship services, and 3rd-planning religious celebrations. These were followed in descending order of frequency by: 4th-expressing feelings during holidays, 5th-talking about religious or spiritual issues, 6th-religious social activities, 7th-religious rituals, 8th-discussing religious practices, 9th-volunteering for religious activities, 10th-prayer together, 11th-

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 1—Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
a) Attending worship services	3.29 (2 nd)	--	--
Never	--	33	18.9
Rarely	--	35	20.0
Sometimes	--	25	14.3
Often	--	11	6.3
Regularly	--	70	40.0
Missing	--	1	0.6
b) Attending religious classes	1.90 (13 th)	--	--
Never	--	101	57.7
Rarely	--	25	14.3
Sometimes	--	25	14.3
Often	--	7	4.0
Regularly	--	15	8.6
Missing	--	2	1.1
c) Attending spiritual retreats	1.46 (15 th)	--	--
Never	--	122	69.7
Rarely	--	30	17.1
Sometimes	--	16	9.1
Often	--	2	1.1
Regularly	--	3	1.7
Missing	--	2	1.1
d) Celebrating holidays religiously	3.57 (1 st)	--	--
Never	--	40	22.9
Rarely	--	10	5.7
Sometimes	--	16	9.1
Often	--	27	15.4
Regularly	--	81	46.3
Missing	--	1	0.6

Table 2, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 1—Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
e) Discussing religious practices	2.68 (8 th)	--	--
Never	--	56	32.0
Rarely	--	25	14.3
Sometimes	--	38	21.7
Often	--	29	16.6
Regularly	--	26	14.9
Missing	--	1	0.6
f) Prayer together	2.44 (10 th)	--	--
Never	--	73	41.7
Rarely	--	23	13.1
Sometimes	--	30	17.1
Often	--	24	13.7
Regularly	--	24	13.7
Missing	--	1	0.6
g) Religious rituals	2.72 (7 th)	--	--
Never	--	59	33.7
Rarely	--	30	17.1
Sometimes	--	25	14.3
Often	--	19	10.9
Regularly	--	40	22.9
Missing	--	2	1.1
h) Expressing feelings during holidays	2.88 (4 th)	--	--
Never	--	38	21.7
Rarely	--	27	15.4
Sometimes	--	50	28.6
Often	--	34	19.4
Regularly	--	24	13.7
Missing	--	2	1.1

Table 2, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 1—Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
i) Religious social activities	2.79 (6 th)	--	--
Never	--	49	28.0
Rarely	--	26	14.9
Sometimes	--	37	21.1
Often	--	34	19.4
Regularly	--	27	15.4
Missing	--	2	1.1
j) Planning religious celebrations	3.09 (3 rd)	--	--
Never	--	39	22.3
Rarely	--	26	14.9
Sometimes	--	31	17.7
Often	--	37	21.1
Regularly	--	41	23.4
Missing	--	1	0.6
k) Reading religious material together	2.10 (12 th)	--	--
Never	--	73	41.7
Rarely	--	45	25.7
Sometimes	--	32	18.3
Often	--	10	5.7
Regularly	--	13	7.4
Missing	--	2	1.1
l) Scripture study together	1.66 (14 th)	--	--
Never	--	116	66.3
Rarely	--	23	13.1
Sometimes	--	19	10.9
Often	--	6	3.4
Regularly	--	9	5.1
Missing	--	2	1.1

Table 2, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 1—Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
m) Talking about God's role	2.38 (11 th)	--	--
Never	--	68	38.9
Rarely	--	26	14.9
Sometimes	--	42	24.0
Often	--	22	12.6
Regularly	--	16	9.1
Missing	--	1	0.6
n) Talking about religious or spiritual issues	2.86 (5 th)	--	--
Never	--	34	19.4
Rarely	--	33	18.9
Sometimes	--	52	29.7
Often	--	32	18.3
Regularly	--	22	12.6
Missing	--	2	1.1
o) Volunteering for religious activities	2.51 (9 th)	--	--
Never	--	66	37.7
Rarely	--	30	17.1
Sometimes	--	29	16.6
Often	--	18	10.3
Regularly	--	30	17.1
Missing	--	2	1.1

N=175

talking about God's role, 12th-reading religious material together, 13th-attending religious classes, 14th-scripture study together, and 15th-attending spiritual retreats.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 7—Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean Rating (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
a) Promoting healthy interaction	3.59 (3 rd)	--	--
Unimportant	--	30	17.1
Not very important	--	11	6.3
Neutral	--	22	12.6
Somewhat important	--	49	28.0
Very important	--	62	35.4
Missing	--	1	0.6
b) Common values and beliefs	3.79 (1 st)	--	--
Unimportant	--	28	16.0
Not very important	--	6	3.4
Neutral	--	19	10.9
Somewhat important	--	42	24.0
Very important	--	79	45.1
Missing	--	1	0.6
c) Time spent together	3.35 (9 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	32	18.3
Not very important	--	16	9.1
Neutral	--	32	18.3
Somewhat important	--	47	26.9
Very important	--	47	26.9
Missing	--	1	0.6
d) Feeling connected	3.52 (4 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	29	16.6
Not very important	--	13	7.4
Neutral	--	25	14.3
Somewhat important	--	53	30.3
Very important	--	54	30.9
Missing	--	1	0.6

Table 3, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 7—Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean Rating (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
e) Spiritual orientation	3.63 (2 nd)	--	--
Unimportant	--	32	18.3
Not very important	--	10	5.7
Neutral	--	23	13.1
Somewhat important	--	34	19.4
Very important	--	75	42.9
Missing	--	1	0.6
f) Feeling relationship will last	3.32 (11 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	35	20.0
Not very important	--	16	9.1
Neutral	--	36	20.6
Somewhat important	--	32	18.3
Very important	--	55	31.4
Missing	--	1	0.6
g) Moral compass as a guide	3.49 (6 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	35	20.0
Not very important	--	8	4.6
Neutral	--	25	14.3
Somewhat important	--	49	28.0
Very important	--	57	32.6
Missing	--	1	0.6
h) Common tasks together	3.07 (13 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	38	21.7
Not very important	--	15	8.6
Neutral	--	42	24.0
Somewhat important	--	55	31.4
Very important	--	24	13.7
Missing	--	1	0.6

Table 3, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 7—Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean Rating (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
i) Emotional closeness	3.37 (8 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	33	18.9
Not very important	--	11	6.3
Neutral	--	37	21.1
Somewhat important	--	44	25.1
Very important	--	49	28.0
Missing	--	1	0.6
j) Communicating effectively	3.18 (12 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	36	20.6
Not very important	--	16	9.1
Neutral	--	47	26.9
Somewhat important	--	31	17.7
Very important	--	44	25.1
Missing	--	1	0.6
k) Feelings of intimacy	2.94 (14 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	40	22.9
Not very important	--	26	14.9
Neutral	--	43	24.6
Somewhat important	--	36	20.6
Very important	--	30	17.1
l) Rituals and traditions that give continuity	3.42 (7 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	34	19.4
Not very important	--	11	6.3
Neutral	--	27	15.4
Somewhat important	--	54	30.9
Very important	--	49	28.0

Table 3, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 7—Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean Rating (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
m) Social support structures	3.33 (10 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	31	17.7
Not very important	--	14	8.0
Neutral	--	39	22.3
Somewhat important	--	48	27.4
Very important	--	43	24.6
n) Spiritual meaning and purpose	3.51 (5 th)	--	--
Unimportant	--	32	18.3
Not very important	--	11	6.3
Neutral	--	28	16.0
Somewhat important	--	43	24.6
Very important	--	60	34.3
Missing	--	1	0.6

N=175

Table 3 indicates that the three joint religious activity benefits couples reported of most importance to them were 1st-common values and beliefs, 2nd-spiritual orientation, and 3rd-promoting healthy interactions. These were followed in descending order of importance by: 4th-feeling connected, 5th-spiritual meaning and purpose, 6th-moral compass as a guide, 7th-rituals and traditions that give continuity, 8th-emotional closeness, 9th-time spent together, 10th-social support structures, 11th-feeling relationship will last, 12th-communicating effectively, 13th-common tasks together, and 14th-feelings of intimacy.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 8—Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
a) Promoting healthy interaction	2.61 (12 th)	--	--
Never	--	59	33.7
Rarely	--	16	9.1
Sometimes	--	54	30.9
Often	--	24	13.7
Regularly	--	21	12.0
Missing	--	1	0.6
b) Common values and beliefs	3.17 (1 st)	--	--
Never	--	43	24.6
Rarely	--	18	10.3
Sometimes	--	25	14.3
Often	--	43	24.6
Regularly	--	45	25.7
Missing	--	1	0.6
c) Time spent together	2.97 (4 th)	--	--
Never	--	43	24.6
Rarely	--	23	13.1
Sometimes	--	41	23.4
Often	--	31	17.7
Regularly	--	36	20.6
Missing	--	1	0.6
d) Feeling connected	2.95 (6 th)	--	--
Never	--	46	26.3
Rarely	--	22	12.6
Sometimes	--	36	20.6
Often	--	35	20.0
Regularly	--	35	20.0
Missing	--	1	0.6

Table 4, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 8—Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
e) Spiritual orientation	3.06 (2 nd)	--	--
Never	--	48	27.4
Rarely	--	17	9.7
Sometimes	--	31	17.7
Often	--	33	18.9
Regularly	--	45	25.7
Missing	--	1	0.6
f) Feeling relationship will last	2.95 (7 th)	--	--
Never	--	55	31.4
Rarely	--	15	8.6
Sometimes	--	27	15.4
Often	--	37	21.1
Regularly	--	40	22.9
Missing	--	1	0.6
g) Moral compass as a guide	2.97 (5 th)	--	--
Never	--	48	27.4
Rarely	--	18	10.3
Sometimes	--	34	19.4
Often	--	38	21.7
Regularly	--	35	20.0
Missing	--	2	1.1
h) Common tasks together	2.71 (11 th)	--	--
Never	--	51	29.1
Rarely	--	25	14.3
Sometimes	--	43	24.6
Often	--	32	18.3
Regularly	--	22	12.6
Missing	--	2	1.1

Table 4, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 8—Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
i) Emotional closeness	2.74 (10 th)	--	--
Never	--	52	29.7
Rarely	--	26	14.9
Sometimes	--	33	18.9
Often	--	39	22.3
Regularly	--	23	13.1
Missing	--	2	1.1
j) Communicating effectively	2.56 (13 th)	--	--
Never	--	54	30.9
Rarely	--	34	19.4
Sometimes	--	36	20.6
Often	--	32	18.3
Regularly	--	17	9.7
Missing	--	2	1.1
k) Feelings of intimacy	2.45 (14 th)	--	--
Never	--	58	33.1
Rarely	--	35	20.0
Sometimes	--	39	22.3
Often	--	26	14.9
Regularly	--	15	8.6
Missing	--	2	1.1
l) Rituals and traditions that give continuity	3.03 (3 rd)	--	--
Never	--	46	26.3
Rarely	--	20	11.4
Sometimes	--	32	18.3
Often	--	32	18.3
Regularly	--	43	24.6
Missing	--	2	1.1

Table 4, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 8—Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
m) Social support structures	2.87 (9 th)	--	--
Never	--	47	26.9
Rarely	--	24	13.7
Sometimes	--	38	21.7
Often	--	32	18.3
Regularly	--	32	18.3
Missing	--	2	1.1
n) Spiritual meaning and purpose	2.95 (8 th)	--	--
Never	--	47	26.9
Rarely	--	26	14.9
Sometimes	--	30	17.1
Often	--	30	17.1
Regularly	--	41	23.4
Missing	--	1	0.6

N=175

Table 4 indicates that the three joint religious activity benefits couples reported experiencing most frequently were 1st-common values and beliefs, 2nd-spiritual orientation, and 3rd-rituals and traditions that give continuity. These were followed in descending order of importance by: 4th-time spent together, 5th-moral compass as a guide, 6th-feeling connected, 7th-feeling relationship will last, 8th-spiritual meaning and purpose, 9th-social support structures, 10th-emotional closeness, 11th-common tasks together, 12th-promoting healthy interactions, 13th-communicating effectively, and 14th-feelings of intimacy.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 9—Importance Ranking of Joint Religious Activity Benefit Subscales

Question Item (scored from 1 to 7; 1 is highest value)	Mean & Rank (relative to other items)
a) Time spent together	4.19 (5 th)
b) Spiritual meaning and purpose	3.27 (2 nd)
c) Healthy interactions	3.97 (4 th)
d) Common values and beliefs	2.54 (1 st)
e) Rituals and traditions	3.57 (3 rd)
f) Social support structures	4.35 (6 th)
g) Feelings of intimacy	5.57 (7 th)

N=175

Table 5 indicates that when members of couples ranked the importance of joint religious activity benefits relative to each other, common values and beliefs exceeded all other benefits as the most important joint religious activity benefit. This benefit was followed in descending order of ranked importance by: 2nd-spiritual meaning and purpose, 3rd-rituals and traditions, 4th-healthy interactions, 5th-time spent together, 6th-social support structures, and 7th-feelings of intimacy.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 10—Positive Individual Affect During Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
a) Feeling eager to communicate	3.36 (6 th)	--	--
Never	--	11	6.3
Rarely	--	9	5.1
Sometimes	--	54	30.9
Often	--	46	26.3
Regularly	--	17	9.7
Missing	--	38	21.7
b) Feeling emotionally close	3.66 (3 rd)	--	--
Never	--	7	4.0
Rarely	--	9	5.1
Sometimes	--	34	19.4
Often	--	61	34.9
Regularly	--	26	14.9
Missing	--	38	21.7
c) Feeling happy	4.01 (2 nd)	--	--
Never	--	6	3.4
Rarely	--	3	1.7
Sometimes	--	23	13.1
Often	--	57	32.6
Regularly	--	48	27.4
Missing	--	38	21.7
d) Feeling secure	4.04 (1 st)	--	--
Never	--	9	5.1
Rarely	--	3	1.7
Sometimes	--	19	10.9
Often	--	48	27.4
Regularly	--	58	33.1
Missing	--	38	21.7

Table 6, continued

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 10—Positive Individual Affect During Joint Religious Activities

Question Item (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest value)	Mean (and rank relative to other items)	Frequency	Percent
e) Feeling I understand my partner	3.56 (4 th)	--	--
Never	--	9	5.1
Rarely	--	10	5.7
Sometimes	--	40	22.9
Often	--	51	29.1
Regularly	--	27	15.4
Missing	--	38	21.7
f) Feeling understood by my partner	3.43 (5 th)	--	--
Never	--	12	6.9
Rarely	--	10	5.7
Sometimes	--	44	25.1
Often	--	49	28.0
Regularly	--	22	12.6
Missing	--	38	21.7

N=175

Table 6 indicates that the three most frequently reported items of positive individual affect members of couples felt when engaging in religious activities together were: 1st- feeling secure, 2nd-feeling happy, and 3rd-feeling emotionally close. These items were followed in descending order of frequency by: 4th-feeling I understand my partner, 5th-feeling understood by my partner, and 6th-feeling eager to communicate.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 2—Benefits Experienced From Joint Religious Activities

Question Category (listed in order of frequency)	Frequency	Percent
1) Healthy interactions	36	20.6
2) Increases intimacy	33	18.9
3) Other	31	17.7
4) Social support	28	16.0
5) Spiritual meaning or purpose	27	15.4
6) Time spent together	25	14.3
7) Family unity	19	10.9
8) Common values or beliefs	17	9.7
9) Rituals and traditions	17	9.7

N=175

Table 7 displays, in order of frequency mentioned, the benefits members of couples provided when asked to list the benefits they experience while engaging in joint religious activities. They were: 1st-healthy interactions, 2nd- increase of intimacy, 3rd- other, 4th-social support, 5th-spiritual meaning or purpose, 6th-time spent together, 7th- family unity, 8th-common values or beliefs, and 9th-rituals and traditions. Responses categorized as “Other” comprised a number of sub-category groupings, identified as “Peace,” “Community,” “Happiness,” “Generational,” “Gratitude,” “Reflection,”

“Service,” and “Relationship with God.” An itemization of “Other” sub-category responses for DRAQ question two appears in Appendix E.

Table 8 displays, in order of frequency mentioned, the benefits members of couples provided when asked to list the benefits they exclusively experience while engaging in joint religious activities. They were: 1st-spiritual meaning or purpose, 2nd-other, 3rd-healthy interactions, 4th-social support, 5th-rituals and traditions, 6th-common values or beliefs, 7th-increases intimacy, 8th-time spent together, and 9th-family unity. Responses categorized as “Other” also comprised certain sub-category groupings, labeled “Relationship with God,” “Peace,” “Community,” “Generational,” “Gratitude,” and “Service.” An itemization of “Other” sub-category responses for DRAQ question three appears in Appendix E.

Table 9 displays, in order of frequency mentioned, the benefits members of couples provided when asked to list the benefits they experience while engaging in joint religious activities that are also common to any other joint activities they engage in. They were: 1st-time spent together, 2nd- social support, 3rd-healthy interactions, 4th-family unity, 5th-increases intimacy, 6th-other, 7th-common values or beliefs, 8th-rituals and traditions, and 9th-spiritual meaning or purpose.

Internal Consistency of DRAQ Construct Subscales

The Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency was computed for each of the four construct subscales (questions) of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire: frequency of joint religious activities, importance of religious activity benefits, frequency of religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities. For each construct subscale, Cronbach’s alpha was computed for the total

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 3—Benefits Experienced Exclusively From Joint Religious Activities

Question Category (in order of frequency)	Frequency	Percent
1) Spiritual meaning or purpose	40	22.9
2) Other	27	15.4
3) Healthy interactions	19	10.9
4) Social support	13	7.4
5) Rituals and traditions	12	6.9
6) Common values or beliefs	9	5.1
7) Increases intimacy	8	4.6
8) Time spent together	7	4.0
9) Family unity	0	0.0

N=175

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for DRAQ Question 4—Benefits Common to Both Joint Religious Activities and Other Joint Activities

Question Category (in order of frequency)	Frequency	Percent
1) Time spent together	55	31.4
2) Social support	40	22.9
3) Healthy interactions	23	13.1
4) Family unity	16	9.1
5) Increases intimacy	10	5.7
6) Other	10	5.7
7) Common values or beliefs	7	4.0
8) Rituals and traditions	6	3.4
9) Spiritual meaning or purpose	4	2.3

N=175

Table 10

Cronbach alpha Coefficients of Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire Construct Subscales

DRAQ Construct Subscale	Total Sample alpha	Male alpha	Female alpha
DRAQ Question 1: Frequency of Joint Religious Activities (15 items)	.96 n=173	.96 n=93	.96 n=80
DRAQ Question 7: Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits (14 items)	.98 n=174	.98 n=95	.98 n=79
DRAQ Question 8: Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits (14 items)	.98 n=173	.98 n=94	.98 n=79
DRAQ Question 10: Positive Individual Affect Associated With Joint Religious Activities (6 items)	.90 n=137	.88 n=77	.92 n=60

sample, males only, and females only, as presented in Table 10. The internal consistencies of the construct subscales were robust, ranging from .88 to .98. There was very little variation in internal consistency reliability of the DRAQ construct subscales by gender.

Tests of the Hypotheses

The study's hypotheses concerning the relationship between aspects of couples' joint involvement in religious activities and the quality of their relationships were tested with Pearson correlations. Table 11 displays these bivariate linear relationships among all the variables of this study for the total sample, Table 12 presents the correlations for the males only, and Table 13 presents the correlations for the females only.

The following are the results regarding each of the hypotheses proposed in this study (1-tailed tests, given that these were tests of directional hypotheses):

Hypothesis 1: Members of couples who engage in more religious activities together will report greater relationship satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation between DRAQ question one and DAS scores was .171 ($p < .05$) for the total sample, .195 ($p < .05$) for the males, and .141 ($p = .108$) for the females. Thus, the hypothesis was supported for males and the total sample. In a post-hoc exploratory analysis, correlations were also computed between relationship satisfaction and stability and each individual item of the frequency of joint religious activity question items listed in the DRAQ. As indicated in Table 14, ten out of fifteen items had significant positive correlations with relationship satisfaction; two items correlate negatively with relationship instability.

Hypothesis 2: Members of couples who engage in more religious activities together will report greater relationship stability.

Table 11

Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for the Total Sample

Variable	DAS	MSI	FREQRA	IMPORTRA	FREQBEN	INDIVAFF
FREQRA n	.171* 171	-.114 169				
IMPORTRA n	.070 172	-.107 170	.759*** 172			
FREQBEN n	.127* 171	-.136* 169	.881*** 171	.857*** 172		
INDIVAFF n	.405*** 135	-.118 133	.508*** 135	.718*** 137	.641*** 135	
DRAQSUM n	.253** 131	-.062 129	.880*** 133	.915*** 133	.955*** 133	.742*** 133

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DRAQSUM= Total DRAQ Score (FREQRA+IMPORTRA+FREQBEN+INDIVAFF)

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

Table 12

Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for Male Participants

Variable	DAS	MSI	FREQRA	IMPORTRA	FREQBEN	INDIVAFF
FREQRA n	.195* 92	-.119 91				
IMPORTRA n	.075 94	-.107 93	.747*** 93			
FREQBEN n	.133 93	-.144 92	.851*** 92	.884*** 94		
INDIVAFF n	.364** 76	-.165 75	.487*** 75	.777*** 77	.650*** 76	
DRAQSUM n	.305** 73	-.095 72	.851*** 74	.919*** 74	.950*** 74	.766*** 74

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DRAQSUM= Total DRAQ Score (FREQRA+IMPORTRA+FREQBEN+INDIVAFF)

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

Table 13

Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables for Female Participants

Variable	DAS	MSI	FREQRA	IMPORTRA	FREQBEN	INDIVAFF
FREQRA n	.141 79	-.111 78				
IMPORTRA n	.054 78	-.111 77	.774*** 79			
FREQBEN n	.118 78	-.132 77	.913*** 79	.830*** 78		
INDIVAFF n	.442*** 59	-.043 58	.528*** 60	.622*** 60	.619*** 59	
DRAQSUM n	.173 58	-.007 57	.916*** 59	.910*** 59	.959*** 59	.703*** 59

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DRAQSUM= Total DRAQ Score (FREQRA+IMPORTRA+FREQBEN+INDIVAFF)

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

Table 14

Correlational Relationships Between Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Items and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Stability

Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Item	Correlation with Relationship Satisfaction	Correlation with Relationship Stability
Attending worship services n	.070 172	-.035 170
Attending religious classes n	.120 171	-.029 169
Attending spiritual retreats n	.168* 171	-.061 169
Celebrating holidays religiously n	.088 172	-.106 170
Discussing religious practices n	.185** 172	-.093 170
Prayer together n	.185** 172	-.118 170
Religious rituals n	.028 171	-.066 169
Expressing feelings during holidays n	.182** 171	-.143* 169
Religious social activities n	.075 171	-.122 169
Planning religious celebrations n	.146* 172	-.092 170
Reading religious material together n	.134* 171	-.078 169
Scripture study together n	.168* 171	-.101 169
Talking about God's role n	.148* 172	-.096 170

Table 14, continued

Correlational Relationships Between Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Items and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Stability

Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Item	Correlation with Relationship Satisfaction	Correlation with Relationship Stability
Talking about religious or spiritual issues n	.172* 171	-.103 169
Volunteering for religious activities n	.205** 171	-.132* 169

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question one and MSI-R scores was -.114 ($p = .071$) for the total sample, -.119 ($p = .131$) for the males, and -.111 ($p = .166$) for the females. The results did not support the hypothesis. As with hypothesis one, in a post-hoc exploratory analysis, correlations were computed between relationship stability and each individual item of the frequency of joint religious activity question items listed in the DRAQ. As indicated in Table 14, two of the fifteen joint religious activity items had significant negative correlations with relationship instability.

Hypothesis 3: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question seven and DAS scores was .070 ($p = .182$) for the total sample, .075 ($p = .236$) for the males, and .054 ($p = .321$) for the females. The results did not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities more will report greater relationship stability.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question seven and MSI-R scores was $-.107$ ($p = .082$) for the total sample, $-.107$ ($p = .155$) for the males, and $-.111$ ($p = .168$) for the females. The results did not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question eight and DAS scores was $.127$ ($p < .05$) for the total sample, $.133$ ($p = .102$) for the males, and $.118$ ($p = .151$) for the females. The results supported the hypothesis for the total sample but not for either the males or females separately.

Hypothesis 6: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report greater relationship stability.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question eight and MSI-R scores was $-.136$ ($p < .05$) for the total sample, $-.144$ ($p = .085$) for the males, and $-.132$ ($p = .126$) for the females. The results supported the hypothesis for the total sample but not for either males or females separately.

Hypothesis 7: Individuals who indicate that they experience a higher degree of positive individual affect while engaging in religious activities as a couple will report a greater degree of relationship satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question ten and DAS scores was $.405$ ($p < .001$) for the total sample, $.364$ ($p = .001$) for the males, and $.442$ ($p < .001$) for the females. The results supported the hypothesis for the total sample, the males, and

the females. A post-hoc exploratory analysis examined the correlations of the individual items of the DRAQ construct subscale of positive individual affect and the DAS and MSI-R. The results, presented in Table 15, indicate that all of the forms of positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities were significantly correlated with individuals' relationship satisfaction but none were correlated with the index of relationship stability.

Table 15

Pearson Correlations in the Total Sample Between Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities Items and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Stability

Positive Individual Affect Associated W/ Joint Religious Activities Items	Correlation with Relationship Satisfaction	Correlation with Relationship Stability
Feeling eager to communicate n	.204** 135	-.049 133
Feeling emotionally close n	.378*** 135	-.097 133
Feeling happy n	.233** 135	-.072 133
Feeling secure n	.337*** 135	-.095 133
Feeling I understand my partner n	.405*** 135	-.128 133
Feeling understood by my partner n	.413*** 135	-.138 133

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

Hypothesis 8: Individuals who indicate that they experience a higher degree of positive individual affect while engaging in religious activities as a couple will report a greater degree of relationship stability.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question ten and MSI-R scores was $-.118$ ($p = .088$) for the total sample, $-.165$ ($p = .079$) for the males, and $-.043$ ($p = .376$) for the females. The results did not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 9: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report engaging in a higher frequency of joint religious activities.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question seven and scores on DRAQ question one was $.759$ ($p < .001$) for the total sample, $.747$ ($p < .001$) for the males, and $.774$ ($p < .001$) for the females. The results provided strong support for the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 10: Members of couples who value benefits from joint participation in religious activities will report experiencing more religious activity benefits from joint religious participation.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question seven and scores on DRAQ question eight was $.857$ ($p < .001$) for the total sample, $.884$ ($p < .001$) for the males, and $.830$ ($p < .001$) for the females. The results strongly supported the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 11: Members of couples who experience more benefits from joint religious activities will experience more positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities.

The Pearson correlation between scores on DRAQ question eight and scores on DRAQ question ten was .641 ($p < .001$) for the total sample, .650 ($p < .001$) for the males, and .619 ($p < .001$) for the females. The results strongly supported the hypothesis.

Multiple Regression Analysis Testing Joint Association of Aspects of Joint Religious Activities and Relationship Quality

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to address the research questions of this study regarding the relative contributions of (a) frequency of joint religious activities, (b) positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities (c) importance of religious activity benefits, and (d) frequency of religious activity benefits experienced in statistically predicting individuals' levels of relationship quality. Table 16 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis for the total sample, using the DAS as the dependent variable. Table 17 presents an identical analysis using male participants only, and Table 18 displays the same analysis again using female participants only. Similar multiple regression analyses run on the independent measures using the MSI-R as the dependent variable yielded no significant predictor variables.

For the total study sample, model one showed that frequency of joint religious activities was a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction at $p < .002$, with an R value of .269, an R^2 value of .072, an R^2 change value of .072, and an F value of 10.034. Frequency of joint religious activities alone, therefore, explained 7.2% of the variance in DAS scores.

Table 16

Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Total Study Sample

Model	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.269 ^a	.072	.072	10.034	.002
2	.416 ^b	.173	.101	15.595	.000
3	.527 ^c	.277	.104	18.340	.000

a. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant)

b. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF

c. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF, IMPORTRA

d. Dependent Variable: DAS

Excluded Variables: FREQBEN

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DAS= Dyadic Assessment Scale (measure of relationship satisfaction)

Table 17

Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Male Study Participants

Model	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.326 ^a	.106	.106	8.425	.005
2	.407 ^b	.165	.059	4.970	.029
3	.459 ^c	.211	.046	4.000	.049

a. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant)

b. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF

c. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF, IMPORTRA

d. Dependent Variable: DAS

Excluded Variables: FREQBEN

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DAS= Dyadic Assessment Scale (measure of relationship satisfaction)

Table 18

Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Measures as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction (DAS) for Female Study Participants

Model	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.192 ^a	.037	.037	2.145	.149
2	.445 ^b	.198	.161	11.034	.002
3	.621 ^c	.386	.188	16.559	.000

a. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant)

b. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF

c. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), INDIVAFF, IMPORTRA

d. Dependent Variable: DAS

Excluded Variables: FREQBEN

FREQRA= Frequency of Joint Religious Activities

IMPORTRA= Importance of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

FREQBEN= Frequency of Occurrence of Joint Religious Activity Benefits

INDIVAFF= Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

DAS= Dyadic Assessment Scale (measure of relationship satisfaction)

For the total study sample, model two showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities together were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction at $p < .001$, with an R value of .416, an R^2 value of .173, an R^2 change value of .101, and an F value of 15.595 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect, therefore, explained 17.3% of the variance in DAS scores.

For the total study sample, model three showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with both positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction at $p < .001$, with an R value of .527, an R^2 value of .277, an R^2 change value of .104, and an F value of 18.340 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits, therefore, explained 27.7% of the variance in relationship satisfaction scores. Frequency of religious activity benefits was an excluded variable in each model, and was not found to be a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction.

For males only, regression model one showed that frequency of joint religious activities was a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction at $p < .005$, with an R value of .326, an R^2 value of .106, an R^2 change value of .106, and an F value of 8.425. For males, frequency of joint religious activities alone explained 10.6% of the variance in DAS scores.

For males only, regression model two showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities together were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction at $p <$

.029, with an R value of .407, an R^2 value of .165, an R^2 change value of .059, and an F value of 4.970 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect, therefore, explained 16.5% of the variance in DAS scores for males.

Again for males only, regression model three showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with both positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction at $p < .049$, with an R value of .459, an R^2 value of .211, an R^2 change value of .046, and an F value of 4.000 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits, therefore, explained 21.1% of the variance in relationship satisfaction scores for males. Frequency of religious activity benefits was an excluded variable in each model for males, and was not found to be a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction.

For females only, results of regression model one showed that frequency of joint religious activities was not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction at $p < .149$, with an R value of .192, an R^2 value of .037, an R^2 change value of .037, and an F value of 2.145. Frequency of joint religious activities alone, therefore, did not predict relationship satisfaction for female participants.

Results of the second regression model for females showed that only when frequency of joint religious activities was combined with positive individual affect, together the two variables were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction at $p < .002$, with an R value of .445, an R^2 value of .173, an R^2 change value of .198, and an F value of 11.034 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined

with positive individual affect, therefore, explained 19.8% of the variance in DAS scores for females.

Results of the third regression model for females showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with both positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction again at $p < .001$, with an R value of .621, an R^2 value of .386, an R^2 change value of .188, and an F value of 16.559 for the change in R^2 . Frequency of joint religious activities combined with positive individual affect and importance of religious activity benefits, therefore, explained 38.6% of the variance in relationship satisfaction scores for females. Frequency of religious activity benefits was an excluded variable in each model for females only, and was not found to be a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction.

A final set of hierarchical multiple regression analyses was used to determine whether or not any of the 14 individual items comprising the importance of religious activity benefits measure exhibited predictive power with regard to the DAS dependent study variable. Frequency of joint religious activities was forced into the analysis first as a predictor variable, to determine the degree to which importance of benefits account for variance in relationship satisfaction above and beyond satisfaction associated with frequency of shared religious activities. Analyses were run for both gender groups. No significant predictors of relationship satisfaction were found in the individual items of importance of religious activity benefits for females. Results for males are listed in Table 19.

Regression model one of the analysis for males shows that frequency of joint religious activities was not a significant predictor alone of relationship satisfaction, at $p < .062$, with an R value of .195, an R^2 value of .038 an R^2 change value of .038, and an F value of 3.564.

However, individual items assessing the importance of particular benefits of joint religious activities did add significant amounts of variance accounted for in males' DAS scores. Regression model two showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with importance of promoting healthy interaction together were significant predictor variables of relationship satisfaction for males at $p < .036$, with an R value of .291, an R^2 value of .085, an R^2 change value of .047, and an F value of 4.542.

Frequency of joint religious activities combined with importance of promoting healthy interactions, therefore, explained 8.5% of the variance in DAS scores for males.

Regression model three showed that frequency of joint religious activities combined with both importance of promoting healthy interactions and importance of communicating effectively significantly predicted relationship satisfaction for males at $p < .041$, with an R value of .357, an R^2 value of .127, an R^2 change value of .043, and an F value of 4.300. Frequency of joint religious activities combined with importance of promoting healthy interactions and importance of communicating effectively, therefore, explained 12.7% of the variance in relationship satisfaction scores for males. The other twelve individual items of the importance of religious activity benefits measure were excluded variables in each model, and were not found to be significant predictors of relationship satisfaction for males.

Table 19

Multiple Regression Results for DRAQ Question 7 Items as Predictors of Males' Relationship Satisfaction

Model	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.195 ^a	.038	.038	3.564	.062
2	.291 ^b	.085	.047	4.542	.036
3	.357 ^c	.127	.043	4.300	.041

a. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant)

b. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), importance of promoting healthy interaction

c. Predictors: FREQRA (Constant), importance of promoting healthy interaction, importance of communicating effectively

d. Dependent Variable: DAS

Excluded Variables: Importance of common values and beliefs, importance of time spent together, importance of feeling connected, importance of spiritual orientation, importance of feeling relationship will last, importance of moral compass as a guide, importance of common tasks together, importance of emotional closeness, importance of feelings of intimacy, importance of rituals and traditions, importance of social support structures, importance of spiritual meaning and purpose

Qualitative Results

Tables 7, 8, and 9 display the frequencies and percentages of responses received in each of the nine categories established to group the qualitative data of questions two, three, and four of the DRAQ. Question two asked participants to list the joint religious activity benefits they experience. Responses indicated that couples experience measurable benefits in each of the seven benefit categories, and in two additional categories established for the qualitative data analysis, “family cohesion” and “other.” The frequencies of occurrence of the responses for question two differed somewhat from the order of frequencies indicated in the benefit subscales of questions seven and nine of the DRAQ. However, the data confirmed that, without being prompted or guided by the categories suggested later in the quantitative questions of the DRAQ, couples reported benefits of identical content in the qualitative questions. Question three requested participants to list the joint religious activity benefits that they gain only through religious activities, but not from any other activity. Results for question three revealed one exceptionally strong item. Data showed that 22.9% of respondents indicated “spiritual meaning and purpose” was a benefit unique to religious activities, suggesting that this benefit, above all the other benefits by far, is the one that uniquely characterizes religious activities, and that couples are especially aware of and prize this aspect of joint religious interaction. Question four requested study participants to list the benefits they enjoy from joint religious activities that they also gain from other activities. The qualitative results indicated that time together, social support, and interacting in healthy ways were the three benefits most frequently listed. It is interesting to note that the three least frequently

listed benefits couples mentioned experiencing through other activities, “spiritual meaning or purpose,” “common values or beliefs,” and “traditions and rituals,” were the three most frequently occurring joint religious activity benefits for questions seven and nine of the DRAQ, suggesting that some definite distinctions do exist between the benefits that couples experience through other activities and the benefits that they experience from joint religious activities alone.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study utilized a symbolic interaction model to examine the relationships between couples' joint religious activities and their levels of relationship satisfaction and stability. Although previous research has established that a relationship exists between religious behaviors and relationship quality, relatively few studies have examined the dimensions of this topic from a dyadic point of view. Few researchers have studied this subject using constructs of greater specificity than "joint religious involvement." Furthermore, even fewer studies have been grounded in a solid and applicable theory in the design and analysis of their research. This study adds to the literature examining specific dimensions of couples' dyadic experiences in religious activities, how they are related to relationship quality, and how to best measure and interpret those dimensions.

Sample Demographics

An examination of the demographic data reveals that the study sample was limited in diversity of race, socioeconomic status, education, age, and years of marriage. This was most likely due to the characteristic makeup of the Rotarian population chosen, and the economic affluence of most of the PEP parenting program members. Rotary Club members are typically well established and settled in their careers, and choose membership in Rotary to participate in giving service to their communities. They would therefore likely fall into higher educational and economic categories, as well as into higher age and years of marriage categories. Due to the cost incurred to participate in PEP classes, members of this population would likely also fall into higher socioeconomic and possibly educational categories. Thus, caution must be exercised in generalizing the results of this study to broader populations of couples.

Reliability and Validity of the DRAQ Instrument

The results of Cronbach's alpha analyses computed to determine the internal consistency of the four quantitative construct subscales of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire signify that the internal consistency reliability for each DRAQ variable was high. Results suggest that the individual items included in each question of the DRAQ are highly interrelated.

The strong consistency observed in the participants' responses to questions seven and nine of the DRAQ—individual ratings and forced rankings of religious activity benefits—also suggests that the DRAQ performs well in examining the variables of interest specified in this study. The strong correlations observed among the four construct subscales of the DRAQ suggest that these variables are strongly related to each other, and that the components of the DRAQ exhibit convergent validity. In addition, the significant relations between DRAQ construct subscales and the criterion of relationship satisfaction suggest that the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire also exhibits good criterion validity, an important component of construct validity.

Although face validity is the least sophisticated method of establishing construct validity, it is apparent from the quantity and specificity of the qualitative responses obtained in this study that the qualitative questions used in the DRAQ effectively tapped participants' understanding of the religious activity benefits they experience and their thoughts during those experiences. The pertinence of the qualitative responses received for each question implies that the qualitative questions assessed the variables of interest well.

The above results suggest that the operational definitions of the variables used in the DRAQ to measure couples' joint religious activities are adequate, and that the construct validity of this research is therefore robust, based on the combined presence of convergent validity, criterion validity, and face validity in this study.

Characteristics of Couples' Religious Activity Experiences

The results of this study confirm the idea proposed in the Introduction that couples reap a wide range of benefits from engaging in religious activities together, and that couples integrate these benefits into their perceptions of their dyadic relationships as well as into their individual life experiences and perceptions. Data from this study indicate that members of couples experience both individual and conjoint benefits from engaging in religious activities together, and that they place value on both of these types of benefits.

Mean ratings by the couples in this study revealed that the six most frequently occurring joint religious activities couples engage in are celebrating holidays religiously, attending worship services, planning religious celebrations, expressing feelings during holidays, talking about religious or spiritual issues, and religious social activities. Of the fifteen items listed in question one of the DRAQ, these higher frequency items seem to be activities that commonly occur in everyday life. The results also indicated that couples reported the six most highly *valued* joint benefits of religious activities to be common values and beliefs, spiritual orientation, promoting healthy interaction, feeling connected, spiritual meaning and purpose, and moral compass as a guide. However, the most frequently occurring joint religious activity benefits reported by couples differ somewhat from the joint religious activity benefits that they most highly value. The eight most

frequently *occurring* benefits were: common values and beliefs, spiritual orientation, rituals and traditions, time spent together—tied with moral compass as a guide, and feeling connected—tied with both sense of spiritual meaning and purpose, and feelings that relationship will last.

Couples were asked to indicate the importance that they place on the various benefits they experience when engaging in religious activities together in two different ways in the DRAQ. In question seven, couples were asked to rate the level of importance of each joint religious activity benefit item individually. Pairs of the fourteen items in question seven correspond to the seven categories of joint religious activity benefits that the participants are asked to rank order in question nine (7c and 7h = 9a; 7e and 7n = 9b; 7a and 7j = 9c; 7b and 7g = 9d; 7l and 7f = 9e; 7d and 7m = 9f; 7i and 7k = 9g). It is interesting to note that, comparing the findings of the forced rankings in question nine with the mean importance ratings in question seven, as displayed in Table 20, the data indicate strong concordance between the two methods of assessing the importance that individuals place on types of joint religious activities. It is similarly interesting to observe that the rankings of importance placed on joint religious activity benefits differed minimally when computed for each gender separately. Rankings for males were identical to that of the total sample. For females, rankings of items two and three switched position due to a mean ranking difference of only 0.01, as did items five and six, by a difference of 0.09. These variations suggest that there is no meaningful difference between genders in the ranked importance that they attach to the benefits that they experience from joint religious activities.

Table 20

Comparison of Mean Rankings for DRAQ Questions 7 & 9

Question 9 Subscale Item	Question 9 Ranking (scored from 1 to 7; 1 is highest)	Question 7 Subscale Items Summed	Question 7 Ranking (scored from 1 to 5; 5 is highest)
Common values and beliefs (Question 7 Items b+g)	2.54	$(3.79+3.49)\div 2$	3.64
Spiritual meaning and purpose (Question 7 Items e+h)	3.27	$(3.63+3.51)\div 2$	3.57
Ritual and traditions (Question 7 Items l+f)	3.57	$(3.32+3.42)\div 2$	3.37
Healthy interactions (Question 7 Items a+j)	3.97	$(3.59+3.18)\div 2$	3.38
Time spent together (Question 7 Items c+h)	4.19	$(3.35+3.07)\div 2$	3.21
Social support structures (Question 7 Items d+m)	4.35	$(3.52+3.33)\div 2$	3.43
Feelings of intimacy (Question 7 Items i+k)	5.57	$(3.37+2.94)\div 2$	3.15

Consistent with symbolic interaction theory, it is important to determine the subjective feelings that individuals experience in relationships. Concerning individuals' reports of the affect that they experience from joint religious activities, the data reveal that study participants reported experiencing the following aspects of positive individual affect most frequently, in order of highest to lowest frequency: personally feeling secure, personally feeling happy, personally feeling emotionally close, personally feeling that they understood their partner, personally feeling understood by their partner, and personally feeling eager to communicate.

Tests of the Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that frequency of joint religious activities would be positively related to relationship satisfaction. It was also hypothesized that frequency of joint religious activities would be positively related to relationship stability. Findings confirmed that frequency of joint religious activities was positively correlated with relationship satisfaction, but it was not related to the index of relationship stability. As described in the Results chapter, correlations were also examined between relationship satisfaction and stability and each individual item of the frequency of joint religious activity question items listed in the DRAQ. Ten out of fifteen items had significant positive correlations with relationship satisfaction; two items correlate negatively with relationship instability. It is interesting to note that of the fifteen joint religious activity items, the seven that rank *least* common in frequency of occurrence (with the exception of the 13th item, which narrowly misses statistical significance) are those that correlate positively with relationship satisfaction. Perhaps couples who choose to include religious activities that are less common, or less typically practiced, in their lives are those couples

who are religiously active to a sufficient degree to be able to reap relationship benefits from their frequency of joint religious activities. For example, the data indicate that relatively few couples include prayer together (10th), talking about God's role (11th), reading religious material together (12th), attending religious classes (13th), studying scriptures together (14th), or attending spiritual retreats together (15th) in their joint religious activities. It could be that couples who do practice these activities together regularly are sufficiently steeped or engaged in joint religious involvement to a degree that in some way produces significant benefits.

It was suggested in the Introduction that, based on Call and Heaton's (1997) theory that marital conflicts of couples regarding religion most likely occur over "saliency of religion, religious activity, the priority they place on shared activities, and the significance they place on religious compatibility" (p. 383), it would follow that, conversely, relationship strength would be related to the existence of similar dimensions of religious unity within couples. Although couples were not specifically canvassed about "saliency of religion," and this item is not sufficiently specific to compare with any item of the current study, study findings did confirm that "religious activity" was associated with relationship satisfaction, and "the significance [couples] place on religious compatibility" (item 9d of the DRAQ) was ranked by couples as first priority of importance. "The priority place[d] on shared activities," or item 9a of the DRAQ, was ranked fifth priority of importance. Qualitative data also indicated that couples prize the priority their partners place on religion, religious activities, and religious beliefs. Responses to what partners think about while participating in religious activities included, "how blessed I am to have a faith and a mate who loves God," "the comfort and

security of doing religious activities together,” “how fortunate we are to share a strong faith in God,” “the benefits of sharing beliefs,” and “how grateful I am to have a partner who shares this aspect of life with me so readily.”

It was hypothesized that positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities would be positively related to relationship satisfaction. It was further hypothesized that positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities would be positively related to relationship stability. Results showed that positive individual affect was the DRAQ index most strongly correlated with relationship satisfaction. However, positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities was not significantly correlated with spouses’ reports of relationship stability, in terms of thoughts and actions that they have taken toward dissolving their relationships. Study findings also indicated that each of the six positive individual affect question items in the DRAQ were correlated with relationship satisfaction. The three items most strongly correlated were “feeling understood by my partner,” “feeling I understand my partner,” and “feeling emotionally close.” The other three positive individual affect items, though well correlated with relationship satisfaction, were slightly less so. These items were “feeling secure,” “feeling happy,” and “feeling eager to communicate.” It is interesting to observe that the three more highly correlated items refer to affect related to one’s partner, whereas the items less correlated refer more to individual affective states. This may underscore the importance of the joint, relational nature of the couples’ religious experiences in relation to relationship satisfaction. Given the strong association between the DRAQ affect items and relationship satisfaction, it is noteworthy that the DRAQ affect items were not correlated with the index of relationship stability. As noted earlier,

the sample for this study consisted of couples who were in stable long-term relationships, and an examination of the range and mean of scores obtained on the MSI-R revealed that the sample population of the present study was extremely strong in marital stability. The mean MSI-R score for study participants was .43, out of a possible range of 0-18, and 95.3% of respondents received a score of two or lower. Therefore, sufficient variability in relationship stability, as assessed by the MSI-R, did not exist to test the hypothesis adequately. Replication in a sample with greater diversity in relationship stability will be important.

It was hypothesized that *importance* of religious activity benefits would be positively related to *frequency* of religious activity benefits. Results revealed that the scores of frequency of religious activity benefits and importance of religious activity benefits are strongly correlated with each other, at .759 ($p < .001$). The importance that individuals attach to benefits from joint religious activities and the frequency with which such benefits occur are highly associated. The examination of these two measures has particular impact on the applicability of this study's theoretical grounding, in that it explores the relationship between the importance or meaning that couples place on certain experiences, and the actual occurrence of those experiences. These findings suggest that joint religious activities have symbolic significance for members of couples.

It was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits would be positively related to relationship satisfaction, and that frequency of religious activity benefits would be positively related to relationship stability. Findings confirmed that, for the total study sample, frequency of religious activity benefits was significantly correlated with both relationship satisfaction and relationship stability. These findings

are consistent with the study's theoretical premise that joint religious activities are associated with greater relationship satisfaction and stability because they provide meaningful benefits to the partners.

It was also hypothesized that the importance of religious activity benefits would be positively related to relationship satisfaction, and that importance of religious activity benefits would be positively related to relationship stability. Contrary to these hypotheses, importance of religious activity benefits was not found to be correlated with either relationship satisfaction or relationship stability. Perhaps these findings reflect a process in which individuals' relationship satisfaction and stability depend on a combination of considering the benefits of joint religious activities important *and* actually receiving a sufficient amount of those benefits in one's relationship.

Therefore, of the four indices comprising the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, three of them—frequency of joint religious activities, frequency of religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect—were associated with relationship satisfaction, and one of them—frequency of religious activity benefits—was found to be associated with relationship stability. When relationships between the four DRAQ measures and relationship satisfaction and stability are considered by gender, study results indicate some interesting variations. Only one DRAQ measure—positive individual affect—was significantly related to relationship satisfaction for female participants. In contrast, scores on two DRAQ measures—frequency of joint religious activities and positive individual affect—were each related to relationship satisfaction for male subjects. Although the differences in correlations are not statistically significant, these gender tendencies suggest the possibility that how females feel about their joint

religious activity experiences with their partners wields importance and influence over their experiences of partnership quality, whereas for males, both the feeling dimension and the behavior, or “doing,” dimension of religious activities contribute in influencing the quality of their relationships. It may be that engaging in religious activities together involves an area of interaction for couples that showcases some of the more conventional gender role tendencies. For instance, numerous research efforts refer to instrumentality and expressiveness as factors present in gender traits, roles, identity, values, and ideology (Melton & Thomas, 1976; Spence, 1993; Spence & Buckner, 2000; Wise & Stake, 2002). Expressive characteristics have been traditionally associated with female qualities, whereas instrumental characteristics have been thought to be more masculine qualities. Findings indicated that none of the DRAQ measures were significantly related to relationship stability for either gender. Again, the highly stable relationships in this sample made it difficult to detect any relationships between joint religious activities and relationship stability.

It was hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits would be positively related to frequency of joint religious activities. In fact, the data indicated that importance of religious activity benefits was strongly correlated with frequency of joint religious activities. Utilizing symbolic interaction theory, these results suggest the possibility that couples who place value or decide to derive meaning from experiencing religious activity benefits are, in fact, also choosing to engage in higher levels of religious activity behavior together than couples who do not subscribe to such values.

It was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits would be positively related to positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities.

The data again indicated that frequency of religious activity benefits was positively related to positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities. These results are consistent with the premise of symbolic interaction theory as it applies to this study, that because religious activity benefits embody certain desired and chosen significances for the participants, then a fluctuation in the degree of those benefits would have a direct and corresponding effect on the degree of meaning, import, or affect experienced by participants.

It was also hypothesized that importance of religious activity benefits would be positively related to positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities. Study results similarly confirmed that importance of religious activity benefits was positively associated with positive individual affect. This finding implies that, not only the degree of occurrence of benefits from joint activities, but also the degree of intensity of meaning or importance placed on religious activity benefit experiences relates to the affect that a participant experiences during joint religious activities.

In this study, it was hypothesized that frequency of religious activity benefits (question eight) would be positively related to the relative rankings of importance of religious activity benefits (question nine). It was of theoretical interest to examine whether or not any relationship existed between questions eight and nine of the DRAQ, because similarities could suggest whether or not the reality of couples' religious experiences, as measured by the degree of occurrence of benefits in question eight, was congruent with the couples' prioritizing of religious benefits, as indicated by their rankings in question nine. Study data did confirm that certain ranked items of religious activity benefits were related to the frequency with which religious activity benefits are

received. Table 21 displays these findings. “Spiritual meaning and purpose” and “healthy interactions” were significantly negatively correlated with frequency of religious activity benefits, whereas “rituals and traditions” and “social support structure” items of importance were positively correlated. A negative correlation was an indication of support for the hypothesis, because ranked scoring of question nine items was highest at lower values of received religious activity benefits.

These results seem inconsistent in meaning, until the sample is re-examined by gender. Data disclosed that, for males, “healthy interactions” was negatively correlated with frequency of joint religious activity benefits (supportive of the hypothesis), and “social support structures” was positively correlated. For females, “feelings of intimacy” and “spiritual meaning and purpose” items were negatively correlated (supportive of the hypothesis), and “social support structures” and “rituals and traditions” items were positively correlated with frequency of joint religious activity benefits. The prominence of “feelings of intimacy” for females and “healthy interactions” for males again suggests the possibility of a gender-related explanation for these findings—that how females *feel* about their joint religious activity experiences may exert more influence over their experiences than other dimensions of experience, whereas what males *do*—their moment to moment experience of their actions, or the accomplishment alone of a task, for its own sake—may be more influential in the nature and quality of their relationships. The examination of the relationship between questions eight and nine of the DRAQ investigates the suitability and validity of this study’s theoretical base in understanding and interpreting couples’ experiences of joint religious activities. It seems apparent that

Table 21

Correlational Relationships Among Frequency of Joint Religious Activity Benefits and Ranked Religious Activity Benefit Items

Ranked Religious Activity Benefit Item	Correlation with FREQBEN Total Study Sample	Correlation with FREQBEN Male Participants	Correlation with FREQBEN Female Participants
Time spent together n	.065 118	.093 66	-.014 52
Spiritual meaning and purpose n	-.365*** 116	-.158 66	-.641*** 50
Healthy interactions n	-.187* 116	-.206* 66	-.178 50
Common values and beliefs n	-.097 125	-.043 70	-.155 55
Rituals and traditions n	.220** 124	.176 71	.327** 53
Social support structures n	.223** 127	.199* 72	.245* 55
Feelings of intimacy n	-.078 104	.027 60	-.262* 44

*p<.05, one tail **p<.01, one tail ***p<.001, one tail

the use of symbolic interaction theory assists in bringing further understanding of the relationships between couples' joint religious activities and relationship quality to light.

Combined Religious Activity Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction and Stability

The degree to which the set of four religious activity variables assessed by the Dyadic Assessment Religious Questionnaire would produce incremental associations with relationship satisfaction and stability over the univariate correlations involving the

individual DRAQ construct subscales was examined with hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Frequency of joint religious activities, importance of religious activity benefits, occurrence of religious activity benefits, and positive individual affect were used to predict relationship satisfaction as the criterion variable and then relationship stability. All four predictor variables were used in this computation, to permit a determination of how well the set of religious activity predictor variables together would account for the variance in each criterion variable. Results of the analyses showed that frequency of joint religious activities, positive individual affect, and importance of religious activity benefits each accounted for unique variance in relationship satisfaction for the total study sample (see Table 16).

When this regression analysis was computed for each gender only, similarities and differences were observed. The degree of predictive power of each individual characteristic varied by gender. For males, frequency of joint religious activities showed the strongest predictive power, with an F change value of 8.425, greater than positive individual affect at 4.970, or importance of religious activity benefits at 4.000 (see Table 17). In contrast, for females, the F change value of 2.145 for frequency of joint religious activities was not significant, but was followed by positive individual affect with an F change value of 11.034, and importance of religious activity benefits with an F change value of 16.559 (see Table 18). Thus, when combined, frequency of joint religious activities, positive individual affect, and importance of religious activity benefits together accounted for 21.1% of the variance in relationship satisfaction for males, and 38.6% of the variance in relationship satisfaction for females.

Again, these study findings suggest that some classic gender differences may exist in the way males and females experience religious activities together. Specifically, for males, frequency of joint religious activities played the most influential role in predicting relationship satisfaction, whereas for females, positive individual affect and the importance of religious activity benefits carried the influential weight. In essence, it could be likely that the conventional terms of “task oriented” and “maintenance oriented,” or the classifications of “instrumental” and “expressive” for males and females are applicable in couples’ experiences of joint religious activities and relationship satisfaction. Although all three measures were active predictors of relationship satisfaction for both genders, females’ relationship satisfaction was predicted to a greater degree by the affect they experienced and the meaning they gave to religious activities than by the frequency of the religious activities, while males’ relationship satisfaction was predicted to a greater degree by the actual task or activity itself, than by the feeling or the meaning they attached to the activity. These possible gender implications could be more extensively examined in future research.

As Call and Heaton (1997) concluded, “shared participation in religious activities is a critical aspect of religious experience that can sustain marriages,” (p. 382), the multiple regression results of this study indicate that frequency of joint religious activities, positive individual affect, and importance of religious activity benefits may also be “critical aspects of religious experience” that can sustain relationships. Just as Call and Heaton found that when spouses attend church together, they experience the lowest risk of divorce, these findings suggest that spouses who engage in religious

activities together, feel positively about religious activities, and place importance on religious activity benefits will exhibit higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Study findings from a multiple regression analysis using relationship stability as the criterion variable showed that none of the DRAQ indices were predictive of relationship stability. Again, this lack of findings is likely due at least in part to the use of a highly stable sample of couples, as well as the possibility that the MSI-R may not tap relationship instability sufficiently in this area of study.

Predictors of Positive Individual Affect Associated with Joint Religious Activities

It was expected that frequency of joint religious activities, importance of religious activity benefits, and frequency with which benefits were received from joint religious activities would be positively related to positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities. The correlations for both genders (listed in Tables 12 and 13) strongly supported these hypothesized relations, indicating that affective responses in intimate couple interaction are associated with both cognition (importance attached to benefits) and behavior (frequency of joint religious activities; frequency with which benefits were received).

Findings from Qualitative Data

Appendix E displays the tabulation of the large array of responses received to the five qualitative questions of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire.

Question two of the DRAQ asks study participants to list the benefits they enjoy as a couple from participating in joint religious activities together, and question five asks participants to list the benefits they personally enjoy when participating in religious activities together. Post hoc review of participants' responses to question two and

question five offered leads on other possible sources of joint religious activity benefits that were not specifically listed and screened for in the quantitative questions of the DRAQ. For instance, question two responses categorized as “Other” fell into sub-categories such as “inner peace, or peace of mind,” “belonging to a group or community,” and “passing on religious identity or education to children” as benefits of joint religious activities. Participants often listed “family togetherness,” “relaxation,” “being at peace,” and “introspection or reflection time” as responses to question five, benefits personally experienced during joint religious activities.

Question three of the DRAQ asked members of couples to list the benefits they gain as a couple only through religious activities, but not from any other activity. Question four asked members of couples to list the benefits they enjoy from religious activities that they also gain from participating in other joint activities together. Responses to question three offered insight into the joint religious activity benefits that couples consider exclusive to joint religious activities, whereas responses to question four listed those that they also reap from engaging in other activities. Couples listed several benefits unique to joint religious activities that did not fall into the quantitative item categories used in the DRAQ. These benefits, grouped as sub-categories under “Other,” included “peacefulness,” “relationship with God,” and “teaching our kids to believe in God.” Responses given to question four were all encompassed in the nine areas used to categorize qualitative data.

Question six of the DRAQ asked participants to list topics they personally think about when participating in religious activities together as a couple. Responses to question six of the DRAQ serves to illuminate other dimensions of positive individual

affect not anticipated and screened for in the quantitative approach of question ten of the DRAQ. Respondents often indicated “gratitude” or similar expressions of fortunate life conditions, “how I can be the very best person,” desires for greater understanding of life, and expressions of desire to seek God’s help, as cognitions or affect that they experienced during joint religious activities. Overall, the qualitative questions of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire proved productive and illuminating in increasing the ability of the current research to illuminate couples’ subjective experiences as they engage in joint religious activities.

Summary

The results show that seven of the eleven study hypotheses were supported by the data obtained in this study using the total study sample. Five of the hypotheses were supported by the data obtained from male participants only, and four hypotheses were supported by the data obtained from female participants only. Some hypotheses were supported by the total sample data, but not by data pertaining to either gender alone, due to the total sample data being larger and providing greater statistical power. In response to Thomas and Cornwall’s (1990) call for “conceptual models, identification of relevant variables, and measurement methods” for continued research on relationships and religion, this study offers progress in each of these areas. The current results show the salience of positive personal feelings (positive individual affect such as feeling secure, feeling happy, feeling emotionally close, etc.) as a relevant variable in couples’ experiences and utilization of religious activities in their lives. Multiple regression analysis results present a new conceptualization of relevant variables, showing that frequency of joint religious activities, positive individual affect, and importance of

religious activity benefits act strongly and in concert with each other in couples' lives in their association with relationship satisfaction. And lastly, this study's first objective, to develop, test, and initially validate a new research instrument, furthers Thomas and Cornwall's criteria for new measurement methods needed in this field of study. This research effort has also demonstrated that the use of symbolic interaction theory as a frame of reference and theoretical foundation for research efforts regarding couples' dyadic religious experiences and relationship quality is pertinent, productive, and clarifying for study outcomes.

This study has brought to light some of the dynamics active in couples' relationships relating to relationship satisfaction as they participate in religious activities together. Mental health practitioners who serve clients reporting the presence of joint religious activities, positive individual affect associated with their joint religious activities, or importance placed on religious activity benefits in their lives, may now observe that the presence of such factors may indicate possible resources clinicians can tap into and accentuate in their work to help couples and individual clients striving to strengthen their relationships.

Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, the possibility of a methodological limitation may exist when considering the response rate of the number of Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaires received in relation to the number distributed. 875 questionnaires were distributed in person by the principal researcher; 175 completed responses, comprising 20% of the questionnaires distributed, were received by mail. It is possible that the nature of the topics of research, or the method of

presentation of the research topics, deterred more respondents from participating. On the other hand, the investigator's initial requests for participants stipulated that the participation of one's partner, usually not present at time of recruitment, was necessary. Difficulty in obtaining the consent and participation of one's absent partner may have contributed significantly to the low response rate of this survey. The page length of the questionnaire may also have discouraged some participants from completing the instrument and participating in the study.

Secondly, a weakness of the external validity of this study relates to the degree to which study results can be generalized to a larger population. The lack of diversity in race, socioeconomic status, education, age, and years of marriage, due to the characteristic makeup of the Rotarian sample population chosen and the economic affluence of PEP members, prohibits applicability of these study results to the general population, until further research is completed to verify the degree to which the present findings are more broadly applicable. The stable nature of relationships of this study sample limited the relevance of testing for predictors of relationship instability. It may also be possible that the measure chosen to assess relationship stability, the MSI-R, was limited in its ability to measure relationship stability in this area of research, and that another mode of assessment would prove to be more fruitful.

Future Research

The results of this study put forward several possible avenues of future research. Further research is necessary to verify whether the results of this study may be generalized to a more diverse population, and can be utilized to establish the validity and reliability of the DRAQ instrument when used with a larger, more diverse sample. It

should be noted that the findings of this present study may be culture-bound to the study sample surveyed. Future use of the DRAQ instrument cross-culturally could verify the validity of the DRAQ internationally and illuminate religious activity and relationship quality dynamics as they apply to couples of other cultures. Further research efforts could also highlight the utility of the DRAQ with a wide variety of different types of couples' relationships—heterosexual, gay, lesbian, cohabitating, legally married, and “living together apart” couples.

A detailed analysis of the items used in questions (construct subscales) seven, eight, and nine of the DRAQ was not possible given the sample size of this study. Further use of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire in larger scale research efforts would facilitate a continued exploration of how these aspects of religious activities may be associated with couples' relationship quality. Future research is needed to gain an increased understanding of the dynamics and salience of cohesion, meaning, positive relating, value consensus, ritual, social support, intimacy, and family cohesion as they relate to couples' joint religious experiences and relationship quality.

Future research using the DRAQ could also more finely examine the relationship between couples' degree of religious activity homogamy and other study variables, such as frequency of joint religious activities, importance of religious activity benefits, frequency of joint religious activity benefits, positive individual affect, and relationship satisfaction and stability, using paired data obtained from each of the respondent couples' questionnaires. This analysis was beyond the scope of the current study.

As mentioned earlier, previous research has found that religious affiliation is not associated with greater relationship satisfaction or stability. This study examined

cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of couples' religious activities, without regard for religious affiliation. The sample size of this study was not sufficient for an analysis of the relationship between the study variables and religious affiliation. However, because this study examined religious behavior using more specific criteria than previous research, the possibility now exists of discovering finer relationships between religious affiliation and relationship satisfaction and stability. For example, using the knowledge obtained from this study that frequency of joint religious activities is correlated with and is strongly predictive of relationship satisfaction, it may be fruitful for further research to examine whether or not certain religious affiliations show greater association with relationship satisfaction than others, based on the possibility that one affiliation might promote certain aspects of religious activity (such as frequency of joint religious activities, or positive individual affect) more than another religious affiliation. In other words, it is possible that certain denominations may promote the practice of religious activities that are more associated with increased relationship satisfaction than others. Certain affiliations may excel over others in fostering a climate conducive to positive individual affect during religious activities, an index shown in this study to be strongly correlated and predictive of relationship satisfaction. Further research is needed to establish whether or not this is actually the case. Such a research task requires a larger and more diverse sample size than this study could provide. It is hoped that future research will explore this area of interest.

Lastly, until the current study, exactly which aspects of church attendance and participation were related to a lower probability of separation and divorce were unknown (Call & Heaton, 1997; Larson & Munro, 1985). This study reveals that frequency of joint

religious activities, positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities, frequency of religious activity benefits, and importance of religious activity benefits are related to relationship satisfaction. More could be learned through future research that examines whether or not any of the individual joint religious activity behaviors listed as items in question one, or any of the specific states of positive individual affect listed as items in question ten, are predictive of relationship satisfaction or relationship stability.

Conclusion

This study was designed to overcome some of the weaknesses present in previous research and to close some of the gaps in the current knowledge of religious activities and relationship satisfaction and stability. As mentioned earlier, this research assessed a more complex array of facets of religious involvement, and actually tested for the existence of relationships between aspects of religious activities and relationship satisfaction and stability that were only suggested in previous studies. Furthermore, this study investigated the meanings that shared religious activities have for members of couples, and how those meanings related to partners' relationship quality.

The major purposes of this study were accomplished in that (a) the reliability and validity of the initial use of the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire were established, (b) the degree of relationship satisfaction that couples currently report in their relationship was examined in relation to the frequency of joint religious activities, the importance of joint religious activity benefits, the frequency of joint religious activity benefits, and the positive individual affect associated with joint religious activities in the couples' lives, and (c) how couples qualitatively characterize the dyadic role of joint religious activities in their lives was explored.

This study added to the limited number of extant studies exploring the specifics of how relationship satisfaction is related to the dyadic phenomena that couples experience as they engage in religious activities together. This research increased the current knowledge about variables at work in couples' dyadic religious experiences, and fostered researchers' abilities to study these variables in finer detail.

APPENDIX A

Couple's Questionnaire Information and Instructions Sheet

The purpose of this research, currently underway at the Department of Family Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, is to study the nature of couples' religious activities, and the importance and meanings that these religious activities have for members of couples. This research specifically examines couples' participation in and experience of various religious activities, and the relationship between these activities and partners' feelings about their relationship. The information gained from this research will help increase researchers' and clinicians' understanding of the nature of couples' relationships and their religious activities.

This survey is to be anonymous, so please do not write your name on any of the forms. If you choose to participate, none of your responses to the questionnaire can be identified or made public in any way. Your filling out the questionnaire will indicate that you consent to participate in this study. You are free to discontinue your participation at any point.

Instructions

Please complete this survey privately--independently from your partner. Please do not share or compare answers with your partner. Make sure you answer all the items in the questionnaire. If your survey is incomplete, it may not be usable in this research.

Please seal your completed questionnaire in one of the return envelopes provided, and return it by mail as soon as possible.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Thank you very much. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the research investigator, Karen Cooper, by telephone at (301) 405-3672, by e-mail at cooperka@wam.umd.edu, or by mail at:

Department of Family Studies
University of Maryland College Park
College Park, Maryland 20742

Attention: Karen Cooper

Couples' Questionnaire
Part 1 – Demographics

Date: _____
Home Zip Code: _____
Age: _____
Gender: _____

Highest Level of Education

Currently Achieved: _____

1-Grammar or Middle School	8-Masters Degree
2-Some High School	9-Doctoral Degree
3-High School Diploma	10-Trade School
4-Some College	
5-Associates Degree	
6-Bachelors Degree	
7-Some Graduate Education	

Current Employment Status: _____

1-Employed full time
2-Employed part time
3-Not employed outside the home/Unemployed
4-Retired
5-Disabled/Unable to be employed

Primary Occupation
(e.g., teacher, student, business owner, homemaker, etc): _____

Race: _____

1-African American
2-Asian/Pacific Islander
3-Caucasian
4-Hispanic/Latino
5-Native American
6-Other; please specify _____

Country of Origin: _____

Number of children in your household: _____ Number of adults in your household: _____

Total # of yrs in current relationship: _____ If currently married, # of yrs of marriage: _____

Married previously? Yes _____ No _____ Religious Affiliation: _____

Personal yearly gross income: \$ _____ Household yearly gross income: \$ _____

Couples' Questionnaire
Part 2 – Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire (DRAQ)

1. Please rate how frequently the following “religious activities” occur in your life together as a couple.

1- never 2- rarely 3-sometimes 4- often 5-regularly

- a) As a couple, we attend worship services _____.
- b) As a couple, we attend religious classes _____.
- c) As a couple, we attend spiritual retreats together _____.
- d) As a couple, we celebrate religious holidays (religiously rather than secularly)_____.
- e) As a couple, we discuss how to practice the principles of our religion _____.
- f) As a couple, we engage in prayer together _____.
- g) As a couple, we engage in religious rituals together _____.
- h) As a couple, we express our feelings and emotions to each other during religious holidays_____.
- i) As a couple, we participate in religious social activities _____.
- j) As a couple, we plan our religious holiday celebrations _____.
- k) As a couple, we read material together dealing with spiritual or religious topics _____.
- l) As a couple, we study the scriptures together _____.
- m) As a couple, we talk about God’s role in our relationship _____.
- n) As a couple, we talk about religious or spiritual issues _____.
- o) As a couple, we volunteer for religious activities _____.

Please answer questions 2-10 in reference to “religious activities” that occur in your life. Indicate N/A (not applicable) if such is the case. The phrase “religious activities” refers to ANY of the follow items done together as a couple:

Attending religious services together, celebrating religious holidays together—at home or elsewhere, attending religious events together, having spiritual conversations, praying together, participating in religious rituals together, religious planning or goal setting, etcetera.

2. As a couple, we enjoy the following benefits from participating in “religious activities” together:

3. As a couple, the benefits we gain only through “religious activities,” but not from any other activity, are:

4. As a couple, the benefits we enjoy from “religious activities” that we also gain from other joint activities include:

(Please list the benefit and the activity. For example: Time together—Gained by going out to eat together)

5. The benefits I personally enjoy when we participate together in “religious activities” are:

6. When we do participate in religious activities together as a couple, at those times I sometimes personally think about:

7. Please rate the following aspects of “religious activities” according to how important you want each one to be for you as a couple (how much you ideally would like this to be true for you as a couple).

1-unimportant 2-not very important 3-neutral 4-somewhat important 5-very important

- a) _____ Religious activities promote healthy ways to interact with each other, such as forgiving each other or managing our disagreements better
- b) _____ Religious activities provide common values and beliefs we share together
- c) _____ Religious activities give us time to spend together as a couple
- d) _____ Religious activities help us feel connected to other people
- e) _____ Religious activities provide a spiritual orientation that enriches our lives
- f) _____ Religious activities help us feel that our relationship will last
- g) _____ Religious activities provide us with a moral compass that guides our choices as a couple
- h) _____ Religious activities allow us to enjoy common tasks together
- i) _____ Religious activities draw us closer to each other emotionally
- j) _____ Religious activities help us communicate our thoughts and feelings more effectively to each other
- k) _____ Religious activities increase our feelings of intimacy with each other
- l) _____ Religious activities provide rituals and traditions that give continuity to our relationship
- m) _____ Religious activities provide us with social support structures, such as time with friends or relatives
- n) _____ Religious activities nurture a sense of spiritual meaning and purpose in our relationship

8. Please rate these same aspects of “religious activities” according to how frequently they actually occur in your relationship.

1- never occur 2-occur rarely 3-occur sometimes 4-occur often 5-occur regularly

- a) _____ Religious activities promote healthy ways to interact with each other, such as forgiving each other or managing our disagreements better
- b) _____ Religious activities provide common values and beliefs we share together
- c) _____ Religious activities give us time to spend together as a couple
- d) _____ Religious activities help us feel connected to other people
- e) _____ Religious activities provide a spiritual orientation that enriches our lives
- f) _____ Religious activities help us feel that our relationship will last
- g) _____ Religious activities provide us with a moral compass that guides our choices as a couple
- h) _____ Religious activities allow us to enjoy common tasks together
- i) _____ Religious activities draw us closer to each other emotionally
- j) _____ Religious activities help us communicate our thoughts and feelings more effectively to each other
- k) _____ Religious activities increase our feelings of intimacy with each other
- l) _____ Religious activities provide rituals and traditions that give continuity to our relationship
- m) _____ Religious activities provide us with social support structures, such as time with friends or relatives
- n) _____ Religious activities nurture a sense of spiritual meaning and purpose in our relationship

9. Please RANK the following aspects of “religious activities” according to how important each one is for you as a couple. **Use each number ONLY ONCE, unless zero applies.**

Most important (#1)

Second most important (#2)

Third most important (#3)

Fourth most important (#4)

Fifth most important (#5)

Sixth most important (#6)

Seventh most important (#7)

Not important at all (#0)

- a) _____ Religious activities give us time to spend together as a couple
- b) _____ Religious activities nurture a sense of spiritual meaning and purpose in our relationship
- c) _____ Religious activities promote healthy ways to interact with one another, such as forgiving each other or managing our disagreements better
- d) _____ Religious activities provide common values and beliefs we share together
- e) _____ Religious activities provide rituals and traditions that give continuity to our life together
- f) _____ Religious activities provide us with social support structures, such as time with friends or relatives
- g) _____ Religious activities increase our feelings of intimacy with each other

10. When we are participating in “religious activities” together as a couple, I PERSONALLY feel:

0-not applicable (does not occur) 1- never 2- rarely 3-sometimes 4- often 5-regularly

- a) ___ Eager to communicate with my partner
- b) ___ Emotionally close to my partner
- c) ___ Happy
- d) ___ Secure with our relationship
- e) ___ That I understand my partner
- f) ___ Understood by my partner

APPENDIX B

Couples' Questionnaire
Part 3 – Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Most persons have disagreements in their relationship. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list. Place a checkmark (✓) to indicate your answer.

	<i>Always Agree</i>	<i>Almost Always Agree</i>	<i>Occasionally Disagree</i>	<i>Frequently Disagree</i>	<i>Almost Always Disagree</i>	<i>Always Disagree</i>
11. Handling family finances						
12. Matters of recreation						
13. Religious matters						
14. Demonstrations of affection						
15. Friends						
16. Sex relations						
17. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
18. Philosophy of life						

19. Ways of dealing with in-laws					
20. Aims, goals, and things Believed important					
21. Amount of time spent together					
22. Making major decisions					
23. Household tasks					
24. Leisure time interests and Activities					
25. Career decisions					

	<i>All the Time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>More often than not</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
26. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?						
27. How often do you or your partner leave the house after a fight?						
28. In general, how often do						

you think that things between you and your partner are going well?					
29. Do you confide in your partner?					
30. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?					
31. How often do you or your partner quarrel?					
32. How often do you and your partner "get on each others' nerves"?					

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

Circle your answer.

33. DO YOU KISS YOUR PARTNER?

EVERYDAY ALMOST EVERYDAY OCCASIONALLY RARELY NEVER

34. DO YOU AND YOUR PARTNER ENGAGE IN OUTSIDE INTEREST TOGETHER?

ALL OF THEM MOST OF THEM SOME OF THEM VERY FEW OF THEM NONE OF THEM

35. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?

NEVER LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK ONCE A DAY MORE OFTEN

36. Laugh together?

NEVER LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK ONCE A DAY MORE OFTEN

37. Calmly discuss something?

NEVER LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK ONCE A DAY MORE OFTEN

38. Work together on a project?

NEVER LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK ONCE A DAY MORE OFTEN

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below causes differences of opinion or have been problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. Check “yes” or “no.”

39. Being too tired for sex. Yes No

40. Not showing love. Yes No

41. 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.



EXTREMELY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	A LITTLE UNHAPPY	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	EXTREMELY HAPPY	PERFECT
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42. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Check the statement that best applies to you.

- I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and I will do all I can to see that it does.
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and I will do my fair share to see that it does.
- It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

APPENDIX C

Marital Status Inventory-Revised (MSI-R)

We would like to get an idea of how your relationship stands right now. Within the past four months, have you...

- Yes__ No__ 1. Had frequent thoughts about separating from your partner, as much as once a week or so.
- Yes__ No__ 2. Occasionally thought about separation or divorce, usually after an argument.
- Yes__ No__ 3. Thought specifically about separation, for example, how to divide belongings, where to live or who would get the children.
- Yes__ No__ 4. Seriously thought about the costs and benefits of ending the relationship.
- Yes__ No__ 5. Considered a divorce or separation a few times other than during or shortly after a fight, but only in general terms.
- Yes__ No__ 6. Made specific plans to discuss separation with your partner, for example, what you would say.
- Yes__ No__ 7. Discussed separation (or divorce) with someone other than your partner (trusted friend, minister, counselor, relative).
- Yes__ No__ 8. Discussed plans for moving out with friends or relatives.
- Yes__ No__ 9. As a preparation for living on your own, set up an independent bank account in your own name to protect your interest.
- Yes__ No__ 10. Suggested to your partner that you wish to have a separation.
- Yes__ No__ 11. Discussed separation (or divorce) seriously with your partner.
- Yes__ No__ 12. Your partner moved furniture or belongings to another residence.
- Yes__ No__ 13. Consulted an attorney about legal separation, a stay away order, or divorce.
- Yes__ No__ 14. Separated from your partner with plans to end the relationship.
- Yes__ No__ 15. Separated from your partner, but with plans to get back together.
- Yes__ No__ 16. File for a legal separation.
- Yes__ No__ 17. Reached a final decision on child custody, visitation, and division of property.
- Yes__ No__ 18. Filed for divorce or ended the relationship.

APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board Application

1. Abstract

The purpose of this research is to develop a research instrument, the Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire, and to conduct an initial evaluation of its psychometric characteristics (reliability, validity). This questionnaire is designed to assist in the measurement of the nature of couples' religious activities, and the importance and meaning of those religious activities for the members of couples.

Specifically, this research is intended to obtain data on the frequencies of occurrence of various religious activities in couples' lives, to examine how couples experience religious activities in a dyadic context, to assess which facets of shared religious activities couples consider important and beneficial, and to determine the degree to which these aspects of religious involvement are associated with the degree of marital satisfaction that couples experience.

The strategies used in this research to protect human subjects include: (1) a verbal and a written explanation and description of the purpose and nature of this research, provided to participants at the time recruitment requests are extended, (2) informed consent procedures that emphasize that participation is completely voluntary, and (3) the use of a research instrument that involves anonymous responses, such that there is no chance that responses could be disclosed in any way could cause risk or harm to the participants.

2. Subject Selection

a. The subjects for this research will be couples who voluntarily choose to complete the research instrument anonymously. Subjects will be enlisted to participate in this research through verbal requests made in person by the student investigator through three different participant organizations. One hundred paired sets of questionnaires (200 questionnaires total) are sought for this study. No incentives to participate in this study will be offered to the participants.

Three source groups of survey participants are sought for this study. These groups have been chosen for this research because their composition includes significant numbers of couples and partnerships, and because membership in these organizations is not tied to any religious group, thus allowing for the likelihood that attendees will vary considerably in religious affiliation and involvement in religious activities. The three participating organizations include: (1) the Parent Encouragement Program, a non-profit parenting coaching organization headquartered in Kensington, Maryland that offers parenting classes to the general public; (2) several local Rotary Clubs, selected from the Beltsville, College Park, Greenbelt, Laurel, North Bethesda, Potomac, Rockville, Silver Spring, Takoma-Langley Park, and Wheaton-Kensington units of Rotary International

District 7620; and (3) several University of Maryland University College undergraduate or graduate classes held in College Park, Maryland.

After securing organizational consent to participate in this study from the above mentioned groups, verbal requests for subject participation will be made in person by the student investigator at regular gatherings of each organization. A copy of the verbal request for subject participants for this research is attached.

b. Subjects who wish to participate in this research must currently be part of a couple relationship of at least six months duration. Both members of the couple must be willing to complete the survey in order to participate in this study. No other criteria are used in this research to select participants for this study. Age, gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, degree of marital satisfaction, sexual orientation, and social and economic statuses are not used as criteria for participant selection in this investigation.

c. This research seeks to investigate the prevalence, importance, meaning, and influence of religious activities in couples' lives. For this reason, participants sought for this research endeavor are limited to members of couples only. Otherwise, the investigators' goal is to obtain a heterogeneous sample of couples, so the results can be generalized to the population of U.S. couples.

3. Procedures

Subjects who are part of a current couple relationship and interested in participating in this study will be asked to complete and return a study questionnaire themselves anonymously, and if their partner is not present at the meeting, to take a questionnaire for the partner to complete and return anonymously. Questionnaires will be numerically coded to allow the researchers to link the data received from the two members of each couple.

Following each verbal request for participation, packets containing two information and instruction sheets, two questionnaires, and two postage prepaid return mailing envelopes will be provided to any interested participants. Verbal instructions will be given directing couples to complete their forms independently, to seal completed questionnaires separately in the addressed envelopes, and to return them by mail to the researchers. The information and instruction cover sheets will contain these same written instructions.

4. Risks and Benefits

Risks to the subjects of this research are minimal. Subjects who complete the questionnaire will be asked to anonymously indicate the nature and frequency of religious activities they engage in as a couple, such as attending religious services together, celebrating religious holidays together, having spiritual conversations, praying together, working on religious planning or goal setting together, etc. Subjects will also be asked to anonymously indicate the current quality of their relationship as a couple (such as the

extent of agreement or disagreement with their partner on a variety of subjects, e.g., finances, recreation, religion, demonstrations of affection, philosophy of life, career decisions, etc.), by completing the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and their self-assessed likelihood of marriage dissolution, by completing the Marital Status Inventory-Revised. It is possible that participation in this study could cause slight increased awareness in subject participants of the nature and/or quality of their current relationship. However, such a result of participation is considered to be of minimal risk.

The above minimal risk to participants is deemed justifiable by the investigators in light of the potential benefits that this research is designed to produce. Participation in this study offers no direct benefits to the volunteer subjects. However, the survey cover sheet informs participants that the information gained from this research will help increase researchers' and clinicians' understanding of the nature of couple's relationships and religious activities. Recent literature on intimate couple relationships has indicated that although religion is a significant aspect of many couples' lives, researchers have failed to assess it in studies of factors affecting relationship functioning. The present research may help mental health clinicians assess religious activities as a pertinent issue in their work with couples, and may encourage clinicians to identify religious activities that may serve as a possible resource in their therapeutic work with some couples.

5. Confidentiality

The procedures of this research will protect the privacy of subjects participating in this research and maintain confidentiality of any identifiable information in the following ways.

(1) Responses received from subjects completing this study questionnaire are anonymous, and are not identifiable individually. Code numbers placed on each set of surveys before distribution will allow the researchers to link data received from both members of a couple, but will not be able to be linked to any identifying information. Return envelopes will bear the address of the University of Maryland, discouraging participants from placing a personal return address on the envelopes. All mailing envelopes received will be destroyed when responses are opened. No information concerning participants' names or addresses is collected in this research. In this way, the privacy and confidentiality of subjects of this study are protected.

(2) Questionnaire responses received from study subjects will be collected and opened only by the student investigator. Questionnaire responses obtained will be initially stored by the student investigator in locked file cabinets of the Graduate Assistants Office (Marie Mount Hall, Room 1311) of the Family Studies Department at the University of Maryland College Park, an office with access limited only to Family Studies research assistant graduate students. Only the principal and student investigators will have access to the stored study data, which will include no identifying information.

Questionnaire responses will be entered into a computer data file and will be analyzed using statistical software by the student investigator. The computer data will be stored on floppy diskettes only. The diskettes used in this analysis will be stored with the

original research questionnaires in locked file cabinets in Room 1311 of Marie Mount Hall, UMCP. At the conclusion of this research, both the written and electronic study data will be stored securely, either with the principal or student investigator, for the seven years required by the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association. After that period of time, data obtained through this study will be destroyed or electronically erased when it is of no further viable use to the researchers.

6. Information and Consent Form

Participants in this research will be provided with an Information and Instructions Sheet explaining the research questionnaire and aims of this study. A copy of the Information and Instructions Sheet is attached. None of the information provided is deceptive. Because the questionnaires are completed anonymously, no written informed consent form will be obtained from participants. The Information and Instructions Sheet will inform the participants that their decision to complete the research forms will be used as the criterion indicating their consent to participate. The Information and Instructions Sheet also will state that participation in the study is voluntary and anonymous.

Attached:

- (1) Request for Participants Announcement Text
- (2) Information and Instructions Sheet
- (3) Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire

(1) Request For Participants Announcement Text

Hello. My name is Karen Cooper. I am a Family Studies graduate student at the University of Maryland, pursuing my master's degree in Family Studies with a Marriage and Family Therapy specialty. I am here to request voluntary participants for a survey research study I am currently working on, which examines the nature of couples' experiences with religious activities, and how they relate to couples' feelings about their relationship.

This research can make a significant contribution to family researchers' and mental health professionals' understanding of the various roles that religious activities may play in couples' lives and experiences, and I am eager to find participants who are willing to anonymously fill out the study questionnaire. You must currently be in a committed relationship, married or unmarried, for at least six months, to qualify to participate in the study, and be willing to have your partner fill out and return a questionnaire also. The questionnaires are anonymous and can be returned by mail to me at the University of Maryland.

If you are interested in participating in this research, I will leave packets containing two sets of questionnaires, one for you and one for your partner, available here for you to pick up and return by mail to me anonymously. If you choose to participate, please complete a questionnaire independently of your partner (please do not compare answers, so you will not influence each other's responses), seal it in one of the return envelopes separately from your partner's, and mail it back to me as soon as you possibly can. The collection of these questionnaires will be completed within a few weeks.

Thank you very much for considering participation in this research. Your contribution will help further important research, and it will also aid me in completing the requirements for my degree at the University of Maryland at College Park.

(2) Information and Instructions Sheet

**Couple's Questionnaire
Information and Instructions Sheet**

The purpose of this research, currently underway at the Department of Family Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, is to study the nature of couples' religious activities, and the importance and meanings that these religious activities have for members of couples. This research specifically examines couples' participation in and experience of various religious activities, and the relationship between these activities and partners' feelings about their relationship. The information gained from this research will help increase researchers' and clinicians' understanding of the nature of couples' relationships and their religious activities.

This survey is to be anonymous, so please do not write your name on any of the forms. If you choose to participate, none of your responses to the questionnaire can be identified or made public in any way. Your filling out the questionnaire will indicate that you consent to participate in this study. You are free to discontinue your participation at any point.

Instructions

Please complete this survey privately--independently from your partner. Please do not share or compare answers with your partner. Make sure you answer all the items in the questionnaire. If your survey is incomplete, it may not be usable in this research.

Please seal your completed questionnaire in one of the return envelopes provided, and return it by mail as soon as possible.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Thank you very much. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the research investigator, Karen Cooper, by telephone at (301) 405-3672, by e-mail at cooperka@wam.umd.edu, or by mail at:

Department of Family Studies
University of Maryland College Park
College Park, Maryland 20742

Attention: Karen Cooper

(3) Dyadic Religious Assessment Questionnaire

SEE APPENDIX A

APPENDIX E

DRAQ QUALITATIVE DATA

DRAQ QuestionTwo -- “Other” comments (exact quotes)

PEACE (10 responses)

Harmony

Peace; peace of mind; inner peace (listed five times)

Stress free moments

A break from our daily routine

Fulfillment

Gratification

COMMUNITY (9 responses)

A sense of belonging to a group (listed five times)

A sense of grounding, belonging in a community of faith

Being part of a larger community

Being part of a religious community at Mass

Commitment

HAPPINESS (6 responses)

Happiness

Joy

Laughter

Love

Well-being

Comfort

GRATITUDE (5 responses)

Think about all we are thankful for in our lives

Realizing our blessings; serves as a regular reminder of how fortunate we are

Opportunity to offer expressions of gratitude for the abundance bestowed on us by God

Opportunity to express thanks for all we have

Opportunity to/appreciation of sacrifice

GENERATIONAL (5 responses)

Passing on values to our kids

Passing on Jewish identity to our kids

Educating our children in the values and principles of Christianity

Religious school for our children

Setting a Christian example for our children and grandchildren

REFLECTION (4 responses)

Time to reflect

Reflect on where we are in our lives and where we want to go

Focus

Focus on trying to do what's right

SERVICE (4 responses)

Serve God

Participating in a Christian meeting with people with special needs

An outlet and encouragement for charitable giving

Ways to be of service; contribute and help others

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (2 responses)

God answering prayer

Shelter from the storm-God's assistance with life's uncertainties

Only one vehicle required

Strengthens our commitment to each other

DRAQ QuestionThree -- "Other" comments
(exact quotes)

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (9 responses)

Joy in the Lord

Relationship with God

Feel closer to God (listed twice)

Develop greater faith in God and in ourselves

Actually feel the Spirit of the Holy Ghost to help us reach important decisions

Sharing anger at God for death of our son and comforting each other

Relying on God for help

Love of God

PEACE (7 responses)

Peace (listed four times)

True peace

Peacefulness

Calming

COMMUNITY (4 responses)

Community of faith with similar goals

Sense of commitment (listed twice)

A sense of a bigger world/broader perspectives

GENERATIONAL (3 responses)

Being a good example for our children

Feeling we are teaching our children good from bad

Teaching our kids to believe in God and not give up

SERVICE (2 responses)

Desire to serve

Love and compassion for others

Share daily meditation readings

Conscious contact with the Living Bible

Reading scripture

Church attendance

Free child care

Singing together (listed twice)

Helps keep any balance of power more equalized

Self-understanding

The knowledge that we are not alone

Sense that we/I are loved unconditionally

Knowledge we will be together forever

Confidence (listed twice)

To have hope

To think positively

DRAQ Question Four -- Activities Listed
(exact quotes)

COUPLE ACTIVITIES

Going to restaurants (listed 17 times)

Eating together at home (listed 3 times)

Movies (listed 10 times)

Watching Lord of the Rings trilogy

Trips together (listed 8 times)

Travel

Vacationing (listed 2 times)

Tennis (listed 4 times)

Taking a walk together (listed 4 times)

Playing golf (listed 3 times)

Sports

Hiking

Exercising together

Games and cards

Sailing
Working together (listed 3 times)
Household projects
Completing projects
Talking to each other (listed 4 times)
Time together shopping (listed 3 times)
Gardening (listed 3 times)
Music (listed 2 times)
Sex (listed 2 times)
Watching TV
Reading the newspaper
Watching war news together
Driving
Family photos
Bible study
Cultural Events
Cooking
Anniversaries, graduations, non-religious holidays
Laughing
Singing

TIME WITH FAMILY

Time with family
Family activities together (listed 4 times)
Kids' sports
Being with our kids
Teaching children together
Raising children (listed 3 times)
Reading dead son's journals noting his deep love of God

TIME WITH OTHERS

Time with friends (listed 10 times)
Social interaction with other families
Belonging to a social community of like-minded people
Time with church members socially (listed 2 times)
Church dinners (listed 2 times)
Social dinners and parties/events (listed 7 times)
Time with friends (listed 2 times)
Talking with others (listed 2 times)
Working with others
Belonging to civic organizations
Church Beach Camp
Retreats (listed 2 times)

SERVICE

Service to others

Being helpful
Giving and sharing our good fortune
Volunteering for jobs at the church
Supporting worthwhile projects in church and other groups
Service activity

DRAQ Question Four -- Other Benefits Listed
(exact quotes)

Family time
Quality time to ponder our family and the joy they bring into my life
Time to reflect
Learning new things
Education
Feeling the Spirit

DRAQ Question Five -- Benefits Personally Enjoyed
(exact quotes)

COHESION (time spent together)
Time together (listed 17 times)
The company of my husband; being together
Shared experience; sharing together
Being able to work together on church projects
The joy [of] having a spouse that participates with you in life
The joy of companionship (listed 2 times)
Comfort in being with my spouse and enjoying God together
I feel affirmed when my wife also participates
I feel that I'm sharing a deep commitment with someone who's important to me
Bringing my husband into something that is important to and of interest to me
We go out to eat after the service

MEANING (spiritual meaning or purpose)
Closeness to God
Keeping in touch with God
Connectedness with my God
Spirituality
Time to praise God [worship]
Attending the worship service (listed 2 times)
More faith
More belief in God
Stronger belief in God
A shared belief that God is present
Spiritual force and energy

Liturgy lifts the everyday
A sense of purpose, doing God's will (listed 2 times)
The fulfillment of serving the Lord
Increase in emotions as to specialness of Jesus
The reinforcement of religious beliefs
Sharing faith
I know we are on the same page spiritually
Believing but always searching for truth
Sermon experiences
Provides spiritual orientation that enriches our lives
Gaining new insight into spiritual things
Deeper relationship to God
Talking to God (listed 2 times)
Prayer (listed 2 times)
Hope in God
Praising God
Letting God know how thankful I am
Feeling God listens
Knowing God has blessed our union and is blessing our family

POSITIVE RELATING (healthy interactions)

Help understanding my own life and problems, and discussing them with my partner
Seeing my wife become more spiritual
We both grow spiritually and we learn mutual respect
We can talk about a shared experience
Stimulating intellectual thought and discussion
Discussing and sharing ideas (listed 3 times)
Discussions about our relationship and children (listed 3 times)
Increase in the potential for deeper discussion about ourselves and our lives
To renew our focus together
Understanding
Comforting my spouse
Comfort from spouse
Support
Support from spouse
Encouraging my spouse
I feel that it pleases my wife
More fun to do things together
Sense of acceptance
Feeling somewhat understood
Opportunity to appreciate my husband
Sharing information
Exchange of views and interpretations
Seeing a different side of my husband
Seeing talents of my husband that I respect and admire

VALUE CONSENSUS (common values or beliefs)

Common source of reference

A common language in which to talk about other experiences

Reminder of values we share; values shared with both families

Common goals

Staying true to what is right/moral

Similar interests and beliefs

A frame of reference for my values, lifestyle, habits, and activities

A check on my basic nature to be self-centered and small by providing a boost to my ethical framework and humanity

I appreciate the ethics, values, and identity provided to my son when we participate

RITUAL (traditions and rituals)

Collective memories

The history passed down to various generations via religious holiday celebrations (5)

A renewal and reaffirmation of a long family tradition and heritage

Sense of family cohesiveness

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Fellowship with others

Friendship

New friends

Interaction with my friends (listed 3 times)

Friendly conversation

Interaction with other people

Being accepted in society

Getting to know and appreciate other families

Meet people who share common interests

Sense of belonging (listed 2 times)

Connectedness to ancestors and current community

Commitment

Sense of larger whole

I feel more a part of a larger community

The joy of activities at church other than ceremonies-marriages, baptisms of my children

INTIMACY

Sense of solidarity

Sense of unity, oneness

Shared intimacy (listed 2 times)

Feeling of closeness (listed 5 times)

Togetherness

Additional closeness and comfort

Offering expressions of peace and love

Strengthening of our love

Connectedness (listed 4 times)

Sense of shared identity

Increased trust in each other
I am “friends” with my husband
I learn more about my husband and his beliefs. He’s very private with little exposure to church/religion/spirituality in his early life. Only in our spiritual activities does he open up and consider the world through a spiritual lens.

FAMILY COHESION

Family togetherness
Time with family (listed 2 times)
Having all of us together
Strengthening of love for family
Creating a stronger family bond (listed 2 times)
Sense of family (listed 2 times)
Communion during family meal
Quiet time with children
Good influence/God’s influence on children

OTHER

Reflection time
Introspection (listed 3 times)
Introspection and clarity
Time to reflect and meditate, look into myself and question how in the coming weeks I can be a better father and husband
Peaceful satisfaction
Reflecting on past holidays, family events
Being at peace with self and each other
Contentment (listed 2 times)
Feeling of peace
Peace
Inner peace
Peacefulness
Non-interference from outside
Feeling of security
A general good feeling
Relaxation
Relief from the normal pressures of everyday life (listed 4 times)
Opportunity to slow down and look within
Provides positive mindset
No one is at work
Peace of mind with my disability

Communion

Singing (listed 3 times)
Music (listed 2 times)
Choir

Self acceptance/growth (maturation)

I feel needed

I feel loved

I feel helpful

The solid standing we represent as a couple participating in doing the Lord's work upon
the Earth

Fulfilling religious obligations

Learning about the Bible and how we live our lives in today's world

Appreciating my good fortune in marrying my wife

Feeling proud of spouse's leadership at church

Contributing to the support of the church

Soul searching

Forgiveness

DRAQ Question Six -- Personal Cognitions During Joint Religious Activities
(exact quotes)

COHESION (time spent together)

The comfort and security of doing them [religious activities] together

Attending more often

How I'd like to participate more often in religious activities

MEANING (spiritual meaning or purpose)

God

My role in life

What I want for the remainder of my life

Spiritual values

God's great love

Our/My relationship with God (listed 2 times)

Our lives with Christ

God leading my life and our life together

What life is all about

Faith issues

Listening to God and his purposes in our lives

Our relationship to each other/the ways in which we are similar and the ways in which we
differ and what importance that has in our life

How special this moment is

POSITIVE RELATING (healthy interactions)

How very important it is to participate as a couple

Unity as a couple

Feeling as one

How we both love God in our own way
He's not so bad after all [husband]-there are some qualities in him that I admire
Appreciation of spouse
What is good for our marriage and personal relationship
More often the sense of companionship adds to the warmth of the spiritual occasion

VALUE CONSENSUS (common values or beliefs)

Sharing a common value
How lucky I am to have a partner to share common goals (listed 2 times)
Being fortunate in worshiping together and having similar values
How comfortable it is to share religious beliefs
How fortunate I am to have someone who shares the same faith
How grateful I am to have a partner who shares this aspect of life with me so readily
How wonderful it is to have a husband who loves the Lord
How fortunate we are to share a strong faith in God
How blessed I am to have a faith and a mate who loves God
The benefits of sharing beliefs

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Gladness to find a religious community that we participate in together
The fun, joy, camaraderie with other believers
Our friends
Community activities

INTIMACY

How we must have been destined to live together
Our love
Our mutual love
How great our love is
Our commitment to each other
Our long term relationship
My feelings and love for my wife
Our years of love and devotion
Early times together

FAMILY COHESION

Family (listed 4 times)
Other family members not with us
Family members I have lost; the family and friends that have died in my lifetime
Relatives, both alive and deceased
The mutual blessings of our children, conceiving and raising them together
Our family and our church family
My children and their involvement with God
Our children (listed 2 times)

Family values

How I can help each member of my family be their best

The family is all together

GRATITUDE

Gratitude

Our blessings and good fortune; our blessings

What I am thankful for

How lucky we are and how I desire others to share this blessing

How grateful I am for God's gift to me

How fortunate I am, despite losses, etc.

Gratitude for life's many blessings

Our blessings

How lucky I am to have such wonderful blessings

How fortunate we are

How thankful I am to have been given grace to help me through life

How fortunate we are to enjoy each other so much

How lucky we are to have each other

How grateful I am

How thankful I am for my wife and the miracle it is to have my daughter

How lucky I am to be married to a true soul mate

Appreciating my good fortune in marrying my wife

How lucky I am for my family

How lucky we are to have a beautiful family and children

The blessings which God has given us as a couple and a family

Gratitude that I have a strong background of moral and value driven experience and
religious grounding

How lucky we are to have one another and the security of knowing we will be together
when we depart from this earthly life

FUTURE

Future (listed 2 times)

The future and after death

Where do we go from here, how do we continue to grow

Our future together

WISHES

Wishing my husband were saved and hoping these activities will get him closer to that

How I sometimes wish he had more of his own development in this area prior to our
relationship

Praying for our family's good health

How I wish my husband enjoyed religious activities more

Wishing my husband would set aside more time for Bible study

I wish we could pray together more often

I wish he would discuss his faith and spiritual journey with me

I wish we could work together more often at church

I wish he would see the value of becoming Jewish for himself
I did not grow up in a Jewish household. How I wish I knew Hebrew.
What prayers I want God to answer

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT

My shortcomings and what I need to continually strive for to be a better person
I do think and question and try to think of how the religious messages apply to me
How can I correct my life?
How I can improve towards my family and community in the week ahead
How I can be the very best person
What I can do to become a better person
What I could do better
Becoming a better partner (listed 2 times)
How to practice these principles in all my affairs
How “off the track” my behavior is occasionally
Helps realign how I should live
“How am I doing in your eyes, God?”
I read the prayers and consider the application in my life.
I sometimes marvel at how far I’ve come in my journey; at other times I think I haven’t
gotten very far at all
Everything I have done wrong

OTHER

My personal/family sorrow from son’s death last August
Why did my son die?
How others without a religious “tie” manage
Days gone by
Work, my hobbies, world events
How simple life really is
We have a lot of obligations
Jewish holiday celebrations from my childhood
My religious past
Our relationship will last
Decisions we have made together and I have made on my own
The pride I develop by doing God’s work
Sometimes I feel pressure on us because our friends in these groups seem to see us as
having a relationship that is easier and more problem-free than it has been
How people get through [life] without a faith and a supportive community
How well the activity represents my concerns and mission
I often think about how the activity could be done differently
Historical developments that have resulted in these activities we practice
How seriously my spouse takes the service
The differences in our beliefs
Religious philosophy
Regret that we don’t have more of a spiritual dimension to our lives
Why our daughter was taken from her children and us

Not being Jewish/Wondering about the Christian religious beliefs that I practiced at
different times in my life/Feeling isolated and outside of the temple core members
who have been Jewish all their lives

Prayers of forgiveness

The difference between her Church of God religion and my Catholic background

Our lives together

Our mortality (listed 3 times)

Our mortality and spiritual well-being

The impact of our relationship on greater spiritual community

Those less fortunate than me

Those in need

My mind wanders

Distractions (listed 2 times)

I'd rather be doing something else

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