

RACIAL AND GENDER EFFECTS ON PERCEPTIONS OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS AMONG COLLEGE-EDUCATED YOUNG ADULTS*



Stephen F. Duncan, Gabrielle Box, and Benjamin Silliman**

Perceptions of marriage preparation programs were assessed among Black and White college students. Blacks reported a greater need for marriage preparation than Whites. Findings suggest that marriage preparation programs will reach more Black young adults if they demand fewer hours and weeks and are located near home. Implications are discussed in terms of how a program might be produced, priced, and promoted and where it might be held to attract a larger, more diverse audience.

The need for marriage preparation has been recognized by professionals for a long time (e.g., Foster, 1935). Studies of high school (Yarber, 1981) and college students (Martin & Martin, 1984; Silliman, Schumm, & Jurich, 1992) indicate a need for and interest in marriage preparation programs. There also is evidence that marriage preparation programs are effective (Guerney & Maxson, 1990); however, such programs are notoriously underattended. Olson (1983) estimated that only 30% of couples who marry have participated in even 1-2 hours of formal marriage preparation. One reason for low participation may be that client needs are not assessed when programs are developed (Schumm & Denton, 1979).

Marketing emphasizes understanding the target audience of family life educational programs through empirical research, as a prelude to or concomitant with program development, in order to tailor the programs to the needs of the audience and, thus, facilitate their acceptance (Kotler & Bloom, 1984, cited in Levant, 1987). Some studies have been conducted to assess young adult perceptions of marriage preparation programs (Koval, Emery, & Wong, 1991; Koval, Wong, Emery, & Granoff, 1992; Silliman & Schumm, 1989; Silliman et al., 1992). However, previous research has not been guided by a marketing perspective and has been conducted with predominantly White samples. In addition, the influence of gender on perceptions of programs has not been systematically assessed. Comparing perceptions between groups might reveal a need to alter program structure and marketing strategies in order to attract larger segments of the target audience for marriage preparation programs.

Using the "4 Ps" of marketing (product, price, place, and promotion; Katz, 1988) as a conceptual guide, the current study assesses the influence of race

(Black and White) and gender on young adults' perceptions of marriage preparation programs. The findings give developers and providers a thorough, consumer-based look at marriage preparation that is important to consider in the development and dissemination of programs. Specifically, the findings provide clues as to how a program might be developed, priced, and promoted, as well as where it might be held in order to attract more educated Black and White males and females.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A Marketing Perspective and Prevention Programs

Marketing research links the 4 Ps as the framework for data collection on which marketing decisions are subsequently based (Katz, 1988). Marketing research quantifies and qualifies the nature of client needs and monitors the effectiveness of the process of satisfying those needs. If clients' needs are not satisfied, revisions begin with the 4 Ps (Katz, 1988).

Product is the total package of professional services that is delivered to the client. The quality of these services may be an important factor in the client's decision to participate in a program. *Price*, the fee charged for services rendered, is determined after examining several interacting factors, such as competitor pricing, objectives of the organization (profitability vs. market penetration), and capacity to supply services. *Place* describes the physical location where services are offered to users. Convenience for clients may be a key issue in attendance of programs. *Promotion* is the method of bringing awareness of the service to the service user. Promotional activities, including advertising and word of mouth, must sustain an image

of propriety and respectability in order to expand services to a larger target audience (Katz, 1988).

Recent theoretical developments in the field of primary prevention (Dumka, Roosa, Michaels, & Suh, 1995) support the importance of a marketing perspective in program development and implementation. Dumka et al. (1995) present a five-stage conceptual model for the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programs. During Stage 2, the Program Design stage, these authors recommend consulting the target audience through focus groups in order to enable program developers to adapt "program content and processes to the conditions, value systems, and beliefs" of the groups (p. 80). Focus groups are a "consumer-oriented marketing strategy . . . to inform the design and sale of new products" (p. 81). The expressed needs of the focus groups are taken into account in various elements of program design, such as selection of change objectives, length and breadth of program, topics, cost, and recruitment and retention strategies (Dumka et al., 1995).

Of course, it would be inappropriate to use marketing as the sole consideration in designing and disseminating a marriage preparation program. Research already exists that suggests that longer

*An earlier version of this article was presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Baltimore, MD, November, 1993.

**Stephen F. Duncan is an Extension Family and Human Development Specialist and Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717. Gabrielle Box is a primary therapist with adolescents at David Lawrence Mental Health Center in Naples, FL. Benjamin Silliman is an Extension Family Life Specialist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Home Economics, University of Wyoming, Box 3354, Laramie, WY 82071.

Key Words: family life education, marriage preparation, race, young adults.

(Family Relations, 1996, 45, 80-90.)

marriage preparation programs are more effective than shorter ones (Giblin, Sprenkle, & Sheehan, 1985) and that certain formats may be more effective in bringing about behavior change (Fournier & Olson, 1986). Shorter programs may attract more interest because they may be less expensive and appear less daunting for participants, but programs need to be "long enough to produce resilient behavior change" (Dumka et al., 1995, p. 82). In addition, there is a wealth of literature that provides considerable theoretical and empirical support for targeting particular factors during marriage preparation programs that are related to marital quality (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Wholesale substitution of critical content with topics peripheral to the enhancement of marital quality may increase the popularity of the program but reduce the likelihood that the program will change the factors that promote marital quality. Effective marketing does not necessarily lead to enhanced relationship quality, but high quality, effective programs that are sensitive to consumer desires are likely to attract more participants (e.g., Dumka et al., 1995). A marketing perspective helps developers tap into client perceptions as they work to develop or adapt a program to achieve a balance between empirically and theoretically derived content and processes and the stated desires of the intended audience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several major factors can be categorized under the 4 Ps of marketing that may influence client interest in marriage preparation programs. These are time and format, instructional methods, source of information, program foci and topics, title, leadership, volition, cost, location, travel distance, promotional source, and target audience.

Product

Time and format. In an exploratory study of 185 Midwestern college students, Silliman et al. (1992) reported that respondents had an equally high interest in programs that involved 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6 hours of training. Interest levels were consistently lower for 7-20 hours of training. They also found that a format involving the trainer and one couple attracted the highest levels of interest. In the Koval et al. (1992) study of 456 West Coast college students, 63% of respondents indicated 1-9 hours as a reasonable length of time for the program, with 60% preferring to attend without other couples. These descriptions imply that young adults may prefer shorter, private

marriage preparation programs. In contrast, programs developed by clinicians and researchers have lasted a minimum of 8 hours, with some exceeding 20 hours (Silliman et al., 1992). No study has addressed the schedule preferences of participants.

Examples of various schedules within existing programs in the literature do not reflect the format preferences reported in the studies discussed above. The Couples Communication Program (CCP) has 3-hour sessions one night a week for 4 weeks, in groups of 6-8 couples (L'Abate, 1981). Premarital Relationship Enhancement (PRE) was investigated by Schlein (1971) who used a small-group format in which 3-4 couples met for 2.5 hours per week for, on average, 10 weeks (Guerney, Guerney, & Cooney, 1985). The Guerney Relationship Enhancement Program for Premarital Couples (RE) was implemented by Avery and colleagues (Avery, Ridley, Leslie, & Milholland, 1980) and consists of eight weekly 3-hour sessions, with groups composed of 3-4 couples. Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson, and Polane (1984) studied Premarital Education and Training Sequence (PETS), which consists of six weekly, 2-hour training sessions, in groups of 3-4 couples. Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, and Conway (1980) designed a premarital preparation program in Canada that had eight sessions (hours not reported), five prior to marriage and three after, with no more than six couples in each group. The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP; Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992) uses two formats: six weekly 2-2.5 hour sessions with 4-8 couples each, or a weekend format with 20-40 couples, who usually meet in a hotel.

Instructional methods. In the Silliman et al. (1992) study, a combination of interactive methods, including instruction, discussion, question-answer, and skill development, attracted the greatest interest among young adults. Instruction on communication and conflict resolution skills critical to marital interaction was also appealing to this audience (Silliman et al., 1992). Thus, a combination of interactive methods, including an emphasis on skill development, appear to be the preferred instructional method for marriage preparation programs with college-educated young adults.

Existing marriage preparation programs appear to use instructional methods similar to ones reported as preferred by college-educated young adults in the Silliman et al. (1992) study. For example, the CCP uses role play to increase

awareness of communication skills (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). PRE couples develop skills to allow for the discussion of emotionally charged topics (Guerney et al., 1985). RE leaders explain and demonstrate skills, as well as respond to participants' concerns and questions (Avery et al., 1980). The Canadian program developed by Bader et al. (1980) uses a small group discussion supplemented by film segments. In PETS, live and videotaped models are used to present the skills to be learned each week (Bagarozzi et al., 1984).

Source of information. In the Silliman et al. (1992) study, young adults rated parents as the highest quality source for information about marriage, ranking them significantly higher than premarital counseling; learning from experience; or learning from friends, school, or the media. This finding suggests that the role of parents is important to consider in the design and marketing of a marriage preparation program for young adults. Existing programs reviewed do not identify a parent involvement component.

Program foci and topics. Results from the Silliman et al. (1992) study emphasize young adults' interest in the interactive dimensions of relationships. Self-awareness and awareness of partners' concerns attracted the highest level of interest, followed closely by skill building (Silliman et al., 1992). Koval et al. (1992) found that the five most cited topics desired in a marriage preparation program were communication skills, problem solving strategies, having children, preventing violence, and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses in the relationship. The most desired topics identified by Silliman and Schumm (1989) included parenting skills, resolving differences, and effective listening; least desirable topics included spiritual development, in-law relations, and time management. Females expressed greater interest than men in exploring all 13 topics, except parenting. However, overall interest in all topics was high and differences among mean rankings for topics were either small or nonsignificant.

There is some overlap of foci and topics desired by prospective participants and those currently offered by existing programs. Participants in the PETS program are asked to consider, discuss, and negotiate differences in each of the following areas: (a) marital roles and tasks, (b) finances and financial decision making, (c) sexual relations and relationships, (d) in-laws, (e) friends and friendships, (f) recreation, (g) children and parenting, and (h) religion (Bagarozzi et al., 1984). Bader et al. (1980) included the



following topics in their program: (a) communication in marriage, (b) family influences, (c) finances, (d) sexuality, (e) the law and the ceremony, (f) conflict in marriage, (g) changing roles in marriage, and (h) building a better relationship. Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) note that with CCP and PRE, the couples themselves choose issues to explore. Relationship Enhancement (RE) couples discuss the topic, "What I would like to change in my partner" (Avery et al., 1980). PREP focuses on communication issues in a variety of contexts, including problem-solving, destructive and constructive styles of communication, commitment, and gender issues (Renick et al., 1992).

Title, leadership, and volition. A prospective audience may be turned off by the title of a program and, therefore, may not investigate further. No research has addressed what a marriage preparation program should be called. However, the majority of Levant's (1987) parent education sample preferred the titles "discussion group" or "workshop." In terms of leadership, Silliman et al. (1992) found that a combination of providers was desired by most young adults. Clergy were preferred next, followed by trainers, teachers, mental health workers, lay people, and medical doctors. With regard to provider characteristics, young adults were most attracted to providers whom they perceived to be well-trained, respectful, and well-known. Silliman et al. (1992) found that interest in marriage preparation was highest among persons who voluntarily chose to participate in programs, in contrast to those who were required or recommended to attend.

Price

Silliman et al. (1992) found a significantly higher interest in no-cost programs than cost options. However, 73% of students were "quite interested" or "extremely interested" when costs of \$1 to \$50 were mentioned and 33% expressed high interest with costs of \$51 to \$100, which indicate some willingness to invest in premarital education. Koval et al. (1992) reported that 81% of their respondents said they would be willing to pay between \$1 and \$20 per hour if their place of worship required a marriage preparation program. Taken together, these findings suggest that there may be a preference for marriage preparation programs with relatively low costs.

Costs of existing programs vary, depending on a number of factors, including who is conducting the program and where it is held. For example, PREP and CCP respectively cost approximately

\$30 and \$35 per couple for materials alone and can be offered quite inexpensively in church or community settings. On the other hand, the same programs offered by professionals can be quite costly. When offered by its developers, PREP costs \$550 per couple; instructors of one CCP program charged \$100 per contact hour.

Place

Location. No information regarding preferred location for marriage preparation programs has been found in the literature. However, in Levant's (1987) investigation of marketing techniques for a parent education program, respondents rated a university location as the preferred place to hold a program, with a religious setting coming in second. Perhaps young adults seeking marriage preparation would prefer these more traditional educational settings, as well. Alternatively, given that most marriage preparation takes place within religious settings and that participants have not been asked regarding location preferences, it is possible that religious settings may drive away as many as (or more than) they attract.

Distance to travel. Koval et al. (1992) reported that 63% of respondents indicated a willingness to travel up to 15 miles if the premarital program was required by their religious organization. These results suggest that young adults would be more likely to participate in premarital preparation programs if they were within a reasonably short distance from their home. No information was available in the literature regarding distances to travel as related to attendance at current marriage preparation programs.

Promotion

Promotional source. The preferred promotional source or sources of marriage preparation programs have not been the subject of systematic research. With regard to the sources of information that were more likely to result in attendance in parent education programs, Levant (1987) found that friend/relative received the highest rating, followed by family doctor, counselor/therapist, and religious group. Sources not likely to result in attendance, in order of least preference, were business/workplace, newspaper, mailed brochure, and television. For the parents in Levant's study, it appears that personal sources of information were more highly valued than impersonal sources of information (Levant, 1987). Guernsey et al. (1985) stated that the segments of the population now

most likely to seek positive marital/family education, without first experiencing some degree of problem, were those that have been educated about such programs by organizations such as religious groups and colleges. Silliman and Schumm (1993) reported that support from significant others, especially parents and friends, strengthened young adults' intentions to participate in marriage preparation. It is likely that young adults would prefer familiar and personal sources of information about premarital preparation programs over impersonal sources.

The majority of the studies on existing programs in the literature contain college samples and, traditionally, most marriage preparation has been conducted through religious organizations (Schumm & Denton, 1979). Thus, the university setting and religious organizations appear to serve as the main sources of promotion for these programs. When evaluating PETS, Bagarozzi et al. (1984) used a variety of community sources, such as clergy, radio announcements, and advertisements in local and university newspapers, to recruit their sample. Avery et al. (1980) obtained their sample from a university undergraduate population through the use of posters, local radio and newspaper announcements, and an informational table at class registration. Bader et al. (1980) recruited their sample through various religious denominations. PREP uses leaflets and other announcements to inform the public of seminars.

Target audience for promotion. Respondents in the Silliman et al. (1992) study indicated that their interest in marriage preparation would be highest when they were engaged, but interest would also be high when they were cohabiting or seriously dating. This result suggests a need to design or adapt promotional strategies that would attract those closest to marriage commitment.

Based on the above review, it appears that marriage preparation programs most attractive to young adult audiences would be inexpensive; private; within close proximity to their home; of short duration; staffed with a combination of skilled, respectful, and well-known providers; offered at a traditional educational setting; freely chosen; and promoted through personal sources among those involved or intending to be involved in extended relationships. They would also use a combination of instructional methods, address self and other awareness and relationship skill topics, and involve parents.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study seeks to integrate, replicate, and extend previous investigations and assess whether the factors cited earlier are viewed in a similar or different fashion by college-educated Black and White young adults and males and females. Specifically, our research questions were:

1. What is the interest and motivation to participate in marriage preparation programs among college-educated young adults?
2. What aspects of formal marriage preparation programs are most appealing to potential young adult clients (anticipating their first marriage)?
3. What, if any, are the differences in intensity and pattern of preferences by race (Black and White), gender, and their interaction?

METHOD

Sample Description

Participants were 310 college students selected as a convenience sample from two public universities in a South-eastern state. Students were recruited from family and child development, psychology, and sociology classes. The sample included 187 students from a traditionally White university (all but 7 students were White) and 123 students from a traditionally Black university (all were Black).

The sample was 58% White and 42% Black, 62% female, 38% male, and averaged 21 years of age. The majority (67%) were in their junior or senior year of college. Most respondents had lived the longest in urban (53%) and town (36%) settings. Most (73%) came from two-biological parent homes and most parents (56%) had incomes of over \$48,000. The majority of respondents (54% and 64%, respectively) reported that their mother's and father's education was at the college graduate level or beyond (see Table 1 for additional information).

Questionnaire

Respondents were asked questions that corresponded to the 4 Ps of marketing in regard to several factors likely to bear on their decision to participate in marriage preparation.

Product. Respondents were asked questions regarding time and format, preferred source and quality of information, preferred title of program, instructional

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 310)

Age			Parental Income		
Mean	20.80		Under \$20,000	20	(7%)
Standard deviation	1.53		\$20,000-\$29,999	31	(10%)
Range	18-27		\$30,000-\$47,999	82	(27%)
Gender			Over \$48,000	168	(56%)
Male	117	(38%)	Place of Longest Residence		
Female	191	(62%)	Urban	165	(54%)
Race			Town	109	(35%)
Black	129	(42%)	Rural	28	(9%)
White	177	(58%)	Farm	6	(2%)
Year in College			Father's Education		
Freshman	36	(12%)	Junior high	11	(4%)
Sophomore	67	(22%)	High school	96	(32%)
Junior	104	(34%)	College	123	(42%)
Senior	101	(33%)	Graduate school	66	(22%)
Graduate student	2	(1%)	Mother's Education		
Family of Origin			Junior high	4	(1%)
Two-parent biological	224	(74%)	High school	135	(45%)
Stepfamily	33	(11%)	College	108	(36%)
Single parent	38	(13%)	Graduate school	56	(18%)
Adoptive parent/Other relative	10	(3%)			

Note. Percentages may add up to greater than 100% due to rounding.

tional methods, program topics, preferred leadership, and participation volition. Respondents were asked to indicate what they considered to be a reasonable length of time for a marriage preparation program. The six choices ranged from 1-2 hours to over 15 hours. Respondents were asked three questions to assess the preferred format. The first question asked respondents to indicate their level of interest in a marriage preparation program if it involved formats varying from individual sessions with a trainer to a large group, a series of classes taught by a family life educator, and self-help materials. Seven response choices were provided, with possible answers ranging from 1 = *extremely interested* to 7 = *extremely opposed*. The second item asked respondents what type of schedule they would prefer, in a forced choice format. Five possible arrangements were outlined, such as "an eight week program, meeting one evening a week for three hours each evening," as well as a sixth, open-ended "other" selection. The third question asked respondents' preference for weekday or weekend evenings, if they preferred an evening schedule.

Preferred sources were assessed by asking respondents to rate the quality of 14 different sources of marriage preparation on a 5-point scale, with response choices ranging from 1 = *poor quality* to 5 = *excellent quality*. Examples of sources were talking with parents, talking with recently married couples, and premarital classes. Respondents were asked to indicate, in a forced choice format, which term best described a marriage preparation program: course, workshop, class, discussion group, seminar, skills training, or some other term.

The instructional method item asked respondents to indicate their level

of interest in a marriage preparation program if it used one of the following methodologies: primarily instruction, primarily question and answer, primarily training in "how to" skills, primarily discussion of concerns about expectations of marriage and some combination of above methods. Interest in specific topics was assessed by an item for each of 18 possible topics for discussion in a marriage preparation program; each item asked respondents to indicate their level of interest in exploring the particular topic. Topics were drawn from reviews of theoretical, empirical, and clinical literature on correlates of marital quality (Glenn, 1990; Gottman, 1993; Larsen & Olson, 1989; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Olson, Druckman, & Fournier, 1989; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987) and prominence in current marriage preparation programs (e.g., Renick et al., 1992; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Three items were used to assess interest if the focus of the program was primarily informational, awareness building, or skill building. The two leadership items assessed levels of interest in marriage preparation if the program was led by clergy, university faculty, mental health workers, or others, as well as interest in participation based on certain qualities of the professional (e.g., well-trained). Finally, interest in participation if the program was required, recommended, or at one's request, was assessed. The seven response choices for all of these items ranged from 1 = *extremely interested* to 7 = *extremely opposed*.

Price. Respondents were asked to indicate what they considered to be a fair price to charge for a marriage preparation program. The six choices began with \$0 and continued in \$50 increments (e.g., \$1-50) to over \$200.

Table 2
Factors, Item Loadings, and Internal Consistencies of Scales and Subscales

Category	∞	Category	∞
<i>Format</i>		Factor 2: Intrapersonal topics	.92
Factor 1: Group/Self Education	.76	Spiritual development	
Large group, with trainer		Husband/wife roles	
Classes with family life educator		Religious activities	
Self-help materials		Personality issues	
Small group with trainer		Characteristics of strong families	
Factor 2: Personalized	.72	Examining each other's family	
Couple, with trainer		Readiness for marriage	
You, with trainer		Steps to avoid divorce	
Individual and couple, with trainer		<i>Leadership</i>	.86
<i>Sources of Information</i>		Extension agent with family life training	
Factor 1: Personal media	.86	Combination of two or more leaders	
Home use video/materials		Professor	
Computer program		Mental health/social worker	
Extension service program		Private counselor	
Newsletter		Doctor	
Factor 2: Counseling/Education	.78	Club leader/lay person	
Premarital counseling		Clergy	
Marriage preparation classes		<i>Leader Characteristics</i>	
Classes in school		Factor 1: Favorable	.79
Factor 3: Significant others	.64	Respected opinions	
Talking with parents		Well-trained	
Talking with friends		Friend and acquaintance	
Talking with married couples		Factor 2: Undesirable	.67
Minister/church		Not open to questions	
Factor 4: Public media	.57	Divorced	
Magazines, books		Asks you to reveal "secrets"	
TV/Radio		<i>Promotional Source</i>	
<i>Instructional Methods</i>	.85	Factor 1: Trusted and available	.85
How-to skills		Recently married couple/individual	
Combination of methods		Parent	
Discussion of concerns		Family doctor	
Question and answer		Friend	
Instruction (lecture, films)		Counselor/therapist	
<i>Foci</i>	.74	Church/temple	
Awareness building		Newspaper	
Skill building		Television/radio	
Informational		University/college	
<i>Topics</i>		Factor 2: Impersonal or unknown	.74
Factor 1: Interpersonal topics	.93	Mailed brochure	
Commitment		Business/workplace	
Communication		University/college	
Stress management			
Children and marriage			
Sexuality			
Leisure activities			
Dealing with conflict			
Assessing compatibility			
Family and friends			
Budgeting/money management			

Note. ∞ = Cronbach's Alpha.

Place. Respondents were asked how far they would be willing to travel to attend a marriage preparation program. The five response choices ranged from 0-1 mile to over 20 miles. A second item asked respondents to rate their preference for six different locations: church/temple, university/college, professional's office, business, community center, and your own or a friend's residence. An "other" category was also included. Five response choices were available, ranging from 1 = *strongly prefer* to 5 = *strongly do not prefer*.

Promotion. Preferred promotional sources were assessed by asking respondents to indicate how likely they would be to attend a marriage preparation program if they heard about it from sources

such as a friend, university/college, church/temple, television, and recently married couple. Eleven sources were listed. Response choices ranged from 1 = *very likely* to 5 = *not likely*. To assess the potential targeted audience at which to direct promotion, respondents were also asked how interested they would be in participation if they were at various dating statuses, ranging from casual dating to engaged yet acknowledging that marriage preparation could lead to a change in marriage plans. Response choices ranged from 1 = *extremely interested* to 7 = *extremely opposed*.

Descriptive items. In addition to factors related to the 4 Ps of marketing, respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the importance of and

their need for marriage preparation as well as their interest in and intentions of attending a program. They were also asked to check any factors that would keep them from attending a marriage preparation program.

Data Analysis

Prior to the major analyses, it was believed important to assess whether there were factors underlying the individual items within the categories that could provide a more parsimonious summary of the data. If, in fact, there were underlying dimensions within the categories, this could help program designers achieve greater efficiency in how they deal with the 4 Ps than would be possible if all responses were treated as

single items. It was hypothesized that the continuous items within the following categories were interrelated: Format, Sources of Information, Instructional Methods, Foci, Topics, Leadership, Leadership Characteristics (all Product variables), Location (a Place variable), and Promotional Sources (a Promotion variable). The correlation matrix consisting of the items within each category was first examined. All but the Location category had a substantial number of correlations greater than .3, which indicated that the variables within the categories shared common factors. Principal components analysis (PCA) with VARIMAX rotation was performed on items within the remaining categories. All items that were associated with particular extracted factors loaded at .5 or above. However, one item that loaded on the factor titled Public Media (learning by experience) and one item that loaded on the factor titled Favorable (has different values) did not seem to fit conceptually with the remaining items. These items were deleted and, in both cases, internal consistency improved. Leadership, Instructional Methods, and Foci items loaded on only one factor and could not be rotated. Results of the PCA, including factors extracted and rotated, item loadings (in order of size of loadings), and reliability estimates of the resulting scales are shown in Table 2. All scales showed good reliability except the Public Media subscale, which produced only a moderate reliability of .57. These scales were used in the analyses.

To help ensure that observed differences by race and gender were not an artifact of some other demographic variation between the groups, additional preliminary analyses were conducted. These analyses showed that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females on the other demographic variables assessed, but there were differences between Blacks and Whites in reported parental income (Whites reported greater income than Blacks), father's education (more White fathers had been educated at the college level and beyond), place of longest residence (more Blacks were urban residents), school class (there were more seniors and juniors among Whites), and family of upbringing (more Blacks than Whites grew up in single-parent families). These demographic variables were used as covariates in race analyses involving continuous variables, and they were controlled in race analyses involving categorical variables.

A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using Pillai's criterion (SPSS, 1990), chi-square,

and a 2 (race) X 2 (gender) analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for assessing group differences. To control for Type I error due to multiple comparisons, p values were set by dividing .05 by the number of tests within each category.

RESULTS

Descriptive Findings

Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations for all of the continuous variables. Ninety-three percent of the respondents reported that conscious preparation for marriage is very or extremely important, and only 7% indicated that it was moderately important to not important. Fifty-eight percent of the sample reported a high to very high need for information, 28% reported a moderate need, whereas 14% reported low or no need.

The effects of race and gender on respondents' perceptions of the importance of and need for marriage preparation and their interest in and intentions of attending a program were assessed by a 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA. There were no main or interaction effects on the importance item. However, there was a significant main effect for race on the need for marriage preparation, with Blacks reporting a significantly greater need than Whites [$F(1, 270) = 7.8, p < .01$]. There were no gender or interaction effects.

Only 32% of respondents indicated that they were very or extremely interested in programs, 29% were moderately interested, and 39% were slightly or not at all interested. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect on the interest item [$F(1, 302) = 7.5, p < .01$]. To determine the source of the interaction, one-way ANOVAs were conducted at each level of the independent variables. Analyses revealed that White females had significantly greater interest in programs than Black females [$F(1, 189) = 7.02, p < .01$] and White males [$F(1, 175) = 29.0, p < .001$]. Only 32% of respondents indicated they were quite or extremely likely to attend programs, 41% were slightly likely or neutral, and 27% were slightly to extremely unlikely to attend. There were significant main effects by race and gender on the intention item, but no interaction effects [Race: $F(1, 271) = 4.6, p < .05$; Gender: $F(1, 302) = 18.3, p < .001$]. Females and Whites reported stronger intentions to attend than males and Blacks.

The greatest percentage of respondents (67%) checked that a lack of time

would keep them from attending marriage preparation courses, 39% said the high expense of a program would keep them away, and 28% noted a lack of interest as a barrier (see Table 4). Chi-square analyses showed that race was significantly associated with a lack of time for marriage preparation programs [$\chi^2(1, N = 309) = 7.7, p < .01$], with Whites more likely to report time as a barrier to attendance. Further chi-square analyses, controlling separately for gender and for each of the demographic variables, showed that this association was maintained only among males [$\chi^2(1, N = 116) = 5.0, p < .05$] and those reared in biological parent or stepparent families, sophomores, and those with college-educated fathers. Gender was significantly associated with time [$\chi^2(1, N = 310) = 6.5, p < .05$], interest [$\chi^2(1, N = 309) = 14.5, p < .001$], and usefulness barriers [$\chi^2(1, N = 310) = 8.5, p < .01$]. Females were more likely than males to report time as a barrier and males were more likely than females to report a lack of interest or skepticism that the program would be useful as barriers. Further chi-square analyses, controlling for race, showed that the association of time and interest with gender was maintained only among Blacks [Time: $\chi^2(1, N = 130) = 4.5, p < .05$; Interest: $\chi^2(1, N = 130) = 4.1, p < .05$], while the association between gender and the usefulness barrier was maintained only among Whites [$\chi^2(1, N = 176) = 11.1, p < .001$]. White males were significantly less likely than White females to report too much expense as a barrier [$\chi^2(1, N = 176) = 6.3, p < .05$].

Product

Time and format. There was a preference for shorter programs: 57% of the sample indicated a preference for programs of 4 hours or less, 29% favored programs from 5 to 10 hours, and 14% favored programs 11 hours or longer. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for race, with Whites more likely than Blacks to indicate that longer programs were reasonable [$F(1, 271) = 25.4, p < .001$] (see Table 3). The gender and interaction effects were not significant.

Respondents reported a greater interest in programs with group formats than private ones (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the two formats: group/self education and personalized. Format was significantly affected by gender [$F(2, 269) = 3.6, p < .05$], but not by race nor their interaction. Females reported a greater interest than males in attending



Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations on Continuous Variables

Variable	Sample		Blacks		Whites		Males		Females	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Descriptive Variables</i>										
Importance of preparation	4.51	.73	4.55	.79	4.47	.69	4.41	.77	4.57	.71
Need for information	3.70	1.11	3.96***	1.09	3.51***	1.09	3.68	1.11	3.72	1.11
Interest in participation	2.93	1.24	2.81	1.27	3.00	1.20	2.53	1.14	3.17	1.23
Intentions to attend	4.38	1.81	4.16*	1.86	4.55*	1.76	3.84***	1.81	4.73***	1.72
<i>Product</i>										
Time	2.61	1.63	2.17***	1.61	2.96***	1.58	2.58	1.57	2.64	1.67
Format										
Group/self	16.60	4.93	16.39	5.43	16.83	4.53	15.72*	4.86	17.12*	4.94
Personalized	15.35	3.78	15.07	4.21	15.62	3.44	14.68*	3.83	15.75*	3.71
Sources of information										
Significant others	15.60	2.99	15.50	2.99	15.72	3.02	15.77	3.04	15.51	2.99
Counseling/education	10.00	2.87	9.54	3.10	10.36	2.67	9.21*	2.96	10.47*	2.73
Personal media	9.31	3.42	9.40	4.08	9.22	2.86	9.28	3.55	9.31	3.37
Public media	8.81	2.28	8.92	2.53	8.75	2.10	8.82	2.30	8.79	2.28
Instructional methods	24.81	5.92	24.00*	6.83	25.45*	5.16	24.00*	6.01	25.34*	5.81
Foci	16.13	3.37	15.62	3.97	16.53	2.87	15.14*	3.71	16.73*	3.01
Topics										
Interpersonal	51.72	9.10	50.07**	10.81	52.86**	7.54	49.68**	9.84	52.94**	8.45
Intrapersonal	44.50	8.95	45.33	9.93	44.05	8.26	42.45**	9.81	45.75**	8.20
Leadership	39.36	7.87	38.71	9.36	39.83	6.64	37.62**	7.75	40.37**	7.82
Leader characteristics										
Favorable	20.98	4.02	20.90	4.83	21.11	3.38	20.24*	4.07	21.42*	3.93
Undesirable	8.33	3.82	9.66***	4.57	7.41***	2.88	8.79	4.10	8.05	3.67
Volition										
At your request	5.81	1.44	5.43*	1.64	6.07*	1.25	5.44*	1.57	6.03*	1.32
Recommended	5.05	1.48	4.78	1.69	5.25	1.29	4.81	1.94	5.21	1.47
Required	4.18	1.99	4.31	1.97	4.08	2.01	3.84*	2.03	4.41*	1.93
<i>Price</i>										
Cost	2.35	1.01	2.28	1.04	2.40	.98	2.49*	1.10	2.28*	.95
<i>Place</i>										
Distance to travel	3.11	1.18	2.69*	1.19	3.43*	1.08	3.03	1.19	3.17	1.18
Location										
Church/temple	3.80	1.26	3.91	1.26	3.73	1.26	3.71	1.32	3.86	1.22
University/college	3.66	.99	3.53*	1.11	3.76*	.88	3.61	.94	3.70	1.02
Professional's office	3.52	1.14	3.66	1.19	3.45	1.09	3.56	1.14	3.50	1.14
Your own or friend's residence	3.39	1.29	3.21*	1.35	3.50*	1.25	3.44	1.27	3.34	1.31
Community center	3.28	1.05	3.47*	1.13	3.14*	.97	3.24	1.02	3.30	1.06
Business/workplace	2.43	1.11	2.50	1.28	2.39	.98	2.61	1.09	2.34	1.12
<i>Promotion</i>										
Promotional source										
Trusted and available	31.20	6.28	31.37	6.91	37.14	5.85	29.45	5.98	32.32	6.25
Impersonal or unknown	8.36	2.41	8.66	2.71	8.17	2.17	8.03	2.36	8.57	2.43
Target audience										
Engaged	5.79	1.42	5.56	1.65	5.96	1.21	5.47*	1.52	5.98*	1.32
Engaged and satisfied	5.32	1.54	5.27	1.67	5.35	1.46	5.09	1.65	5.46	1.46
Acknowledging that attendance										
could change marriage plans	5.10	1.63	4.75*	1.84	5.33*	1.45	4.91	1.66	5.23	1.62
Cohabiting	4.84	1.61	4.85	1.63	4.83	1.60	4.70	1.57	4.92	1.63
Seriously dating	4.68	1.66	5.03**	1.67	4.44**	1.63	4.37*	1.72	4.85*	1.61
Casually dating	3.18	1.73	3.76***	1.95	2.81***	1.45	3.27	1.88	3.15	1.63

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

programs with either educational or private counseling formats.

The preferred schedule among respondents was a 6-week program that would meet one evening a week for 3 hours each evening, with two meetings after marriage (33%); most respondents (73%) preferred weekday evening sessions (see Table 4). Schedule preference was significantly associated with race [$\chi^2(5, N = 305) = 27.19, p < .001$], with a greater percentage of Blacks preferring a 4-week schedule and a greater percentage of Whites preferring a 6-week schedule. This pattern remained consistent across all levels of the control variables. More Whites than Blacks (86% versus

56%) preferred a weekday evening schedule and more Blacks than Whites (44% versus 13%) preferred a weekend schedule [$\chi^2(1, N = 302) = 33.99, p < .0001$]. This preference difference disappeared among middle income respondents. Gender was not associated with schedule preference.

Sources of information. Significant others were rated as the highest quality source of marriage preparation (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the four categories of information sources. Sources of information was significantly affected by gender [$F(4, 229) = 4.6, p = .001$], but not by race nor their interaction. Fe-

males rated counseling/education significantly higher in quality as a source of marriage preparation information.

Title. These young adults were fairly evenly divided in their preference for the title *discussion group* (28%) *workshop* (27%) and *seminar* (26%; see Table 4). Preferred title was associated with race [$\chi^2(4, 304) = 15.1, p < .05$], with more Blacks preferring *seminar* and more Whites preferring *discussion group*. This preference pattern was maintained across different levels of the control variables, except among those with college educated fathers, where *workshop* was the preferred title for

both Blacks and Whites. Gender was not associated with title preference.

Instructional methods and foci. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for race on instructional methods [$F(1, 269) = 4.3, p < .05$] and gender [$F(1, 269) = 4.4, p < .05$], but not their interaction. Specifically, Whites and females reported more interest than Blacks and males in attending programs, regardless of instructional methods used (see Table 3).

A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for gender on foci [$F(1, 269) = 20.0, p < .001$] but not for race nor their interaction. Females reported greater interest than males in attending programs, regardless of foci (see Table 3).

Program topics. Respondents indicated that they were more interested in interpersonal topics than intrapersonal ones (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the two program topic categories. There was a significant main effect for race [$F(2, 258) = 7.1, p < .001$] and gender [$F(2, 258) = 5.1, p < .01$] but not for their interaction. Females and Whites were more interested than males and Blacks in the interpersonal and intrapersonal topic areas (see Table 3).

Leadership. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for gender on leadership [$F(1, 271) = 7.6, p < .01$], but not for race nor their interaction. Females were more interested than males in attending programs re-

gardless of who led them (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the two leader characteristic categories. There was a significant main effect for race [$F(2, 270) = 16.7, p < .001$] and gender [$F(2, 270) = 6.7, p < .001$] but not their interaction. In particular, Whites were significantly less interested than Blacks in programs led by leaders with undesirable traits, such as not being open to questions. Females were more interested than males in attending programs led by those with favorable traits (see Table 3).

Volition. Respondents were most interested in programs that were attended at their request (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the three volition variables. There were significant main effects for race [$F(3, 264) = 5.0, p < .01$] and gender [$F(3, 296) = 6.3, p < .001$] but not their interaction. Specifically, Whites and females were more interested than Blacks and males in programs attended at their request (see Table 3).

Price

Seventeen percent reported that \$0 was a fair price for a marriage preparation program, 48% reported that \$1 to \$50 was fair, 23% indicated that \$51-\$100 was fair, and 12% reported that \$151 and above was fair. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect for gender [$F(1, 301) = 3.9, p < .05$] but not for race nor their interaction. Specifically, males reported being more willing than females

to spend more money on programs (see Table 3).

Place

Travel distance. Fifty-three percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to travel between 6 and 15 miles to attend a marriage preparation program, 39% would be willing to travel from 16 to over 20 miles, and only 8% said they would travel 0-1 miles. A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect for race [$F(1, 305) = 32.1, p < .001$] but not for gender nor their interaction. Whites were more willing to travel farther distances than Blacks (see Table 3).

Location. Respondents rated church/temple as the preferred location for marriage preparation programs, followed by the university/college (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the six location variables. There was a significant main effect for race [$F(6, 254) = 4.3, p < .001$] but not for gender nor their interaction. Although only marginally significant, Whites reported a greater preference than Blacks for university/college settings and their own or friends' residences, whereas Blacks reported a greater preference than Whites for community centers.

Promotion

Promotional source. Trusted and available promotional sources were strongly preferred over impersonal or unknown sources (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the two promotional sources variables. There was a significant interaction effect [$F(2, 255) = 3.2, p < .05$]. To determine the source of the interaction, one-way ANOVAs were conducted at each level of race and gender. These analyses showed that White females were more likely than White males to attend a program regardless of whether they heard about it from trusted sources [$F(1, 170) = 26.1, p < .001$] or impersonal/unknown sources [$F(1, 174) = 8.3, p < .01$].

Target audience. Respondents indicated they were most likely to attend marriage preparation programs if they were engaged (see Table 3). A 2 (race) X 2 (gender) MANOVA was performed on the six target audience variables. There was a significant main effect for race [$F(6, 240) = 4.5, p < .001$] and gender [$F(6, 265) = 2.6, p < .05$] but no interaction effect. Specifically, Blacks were significantly more interested than Whites in programs when casually dating. Although marginally significant, females were more interested than males in pro-

Table 4
Frequencies on Categorical Variables

Barriers to Attending Marriage Preparation Programs		
Lack of time	210	(67%)
Lack of interest	89	(28%)
No relationship problems	81	(26%)
Course not specific enough	61	(20%)
Not useful	65	(21%)
Too expensive	122	(39%)
Preferred Schedule		
8-week program, meeting one evening a week for 3 hours each evening	57	(18%)
10-week program, meeting one evening every other week for 3 or 4 hours each evening	12	(4%)
A 2-weekend program, meeting Saturday and Sunday on 2 consecutive weekends	34	(11%)
A 4-week program, meeting 4 consecutive Saturdays for 4 weeks	67	(21%)
A 6-week program, meeting one evening a week for 3 hours each evening, with 2 meetings after marriage	102	(32%)
Other	38	(12%)
Time of Week		
During the week	224	(73%)
Weekend	83	(27%)
Title		
Course	13	(4%)
Workshop	84	(27%)
Class	20	(6%)
Discussion group	87	(28%)
Seminar	80	(26%)
Skills training	16	(5%)
Other	9	(3%)



grams when seriously dating or when engaged.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

It was believed that attention to the 4 Ps of marketing—product, price, place, and promotion—would be useful in helping to guide the design and implementation of marriage preparation programs in order to attract larger, more diverse audiences. The findings of this study give some ideas as to how a marriage preparation program might be produced, priced, promoted, and where it might be held.

With regard to product, respondents indicated that the preferred program would be brief (4 or fewer total hours), voluntary, held over a 4- to 6-week period (weekday evening sessions), and called a discussion group or workshop. In addition, it would involve a group educational setting and leader with favorable leadership characteristics; involve significant others, such as parents; and focus on interpersonal topics, such as commitment, communication, and dealing with conflict using a variety of foci and methods. The preferred program would be priced at less than \$50. With regard to place, the preferred program would be offered within 15 miles of the participant's residence and be held in a religious or college setting. It would target those in committed relationships and be promoted through trusted sources, such as parents and recently married couples/individuals. Respondents reported high levels of interest in marriage preparation, with females reporting the strongest intentions to attend marriage preparation programs. These findings are largely similar to previous investigations (Koval et al., 1991; Koval et al., 1992; Silliman & Schumm, 1989, 1993; Silliman et al., 1992), suggesting that preferences are similar across geographic regions.

In relation to the 4 Ps, some differences were noted by race and gender. Slightly more differences were found by race than by gender, and the magnitude of the differences by race were generally greater. However, the magnitude of the differences, although statistically significant, were often small. In addition, although the intensity of preferences between groups may have differed, the pattern of preferences within groups was largely similar. For example, although there were statistically significant differences between males and females and between Blacks and Whites

on leader characteristics, respondents were more interested in attending a program led by leaders with favorable characteristics *regardless* of gender and race. When differences between groups were found, it was often in areas of less preference. This result suggests that many of the elements of product, price, place, and promotion can equally suit college-educated young adults regardless of race (Black or White) or gender if they are based upon the perceptions of such young adults *in general*. However, some of the findings have special implications for program developers who wish to reach specific subgroups of the potential audience.

Whites were more willing to travel farther distances and devote more time in hours and weeks to a program. This result suggests that program providers will reach larger segments of educated Black young adults if their marriage preparation products demand fewer hours and weeks and are placed close to home. However, a mean score of 3.4 for Whites indicates only a moderate willingness to travel. Thus, program developers will want to place their programs at a convenient location for all targeted groups.

Blacks reported a greater need than Whites for marriage preparation. This finding suggests that Black college students are more concerned about their chances for a successful marriage. Perhaps this concern arises from awareness of the high divorce rate among Blacks (White, 1990) or from respect for traditional family values (Billingsley, 1993).

Given that they reported a greater need, why would Blacks show apparent lesser willingness to travel farther distances and to commit more time to marriage preparation? Given their lower participation in adult education (U. S. Department of Education, 1993) and especially in college, where many young adults learn about marriage education (Guerney et al., 1985), it is possible that Blacks have less awareness of marriage preparation programs in general and of the norms surrounding them. Thus, they may have less of an idea about what to expect. Also, kinship and community ties (i.e., loyalty to local resources; Gary, Beatty, & Berry, 1983; Hill, 1971), as well as relatively fewer economic resources (i.e., access to transportation) or economically-related barriers (i.e., time-off restrictions), may account for Black students' reluctance to travel as far as Whites to attend a program. Even so, Blacks appear to be more flexible than Whites with regards to location (e.g., community centers) and when sessions

might be held (either weekday evening or weekends).

White females expressed the greatest interest in marriage preparation programs, and females reported greater interest than males in attending a program regardless of its format, foci, instructional method, volition, topics, leadership, promotional source, or level of commitment in a relationship (except casual dating). The higher interest among females likely arises from their greater sensitivity to affective dimensions of relationships (Feldman, 1982). As a consequence, females are probably more concerned about the welfare of intimate relationships, which translates into greater motivation to attend programs designed to enhance interpersonal skills. Given their greater relationship sensitivity, females also may be more aware than males of the emotional and economic costs of distressed and dissolved marriages, some of which are borne more heavily by women. Either of these factors would provide stronger incentives for women to learn more about marital success. It should be noted, however, that the differences in interest levels between males and females were not great, which suggests that shifting gender roles are promoting a greater concern for relationships among men. In addition, men were willing to pay more than females for marriage preparation, which suggests that it holds some value to them, such as the promise of enhancing what they get out of marriage (Lewis, 1986).

Nevertheless, because females report having greater intentions of attending programs, marriage preparation providers would be advised to design their products to maximize appeal to men. Although males show strong interest in marriage preparation, they may be less clear about its purpose and potential. An invitation or orientation that offers a straightforward presentation of procedures and benefits, with opportunity for discussion, may increase understanding and enthusiasm for males. Promotional literature provided through trusted outlets might emphasize information (i.e., How to Have a Quality Marriage), as a lead-in to awareness and skills components typically valued by females. Males may be more receptive to building quality than avoiding divorce, although the product (program) should clearly address marriage potential. Recommendations from recently married male participants emphasizing that a program is "worth the time and money" could also be used, after first acknowledging that such testimonials are not necessarily representative of each per-

son's experience with a program. Relating training to practical concerns such as balancing work (school) and marriage, finances, or enjoying leisure interests may increase its appeal to males. A marriage preparation product with gender-specific sessions that features engaged peers and more experienced husbands may reduce the coercion and inferiority perceived by some males with their partners. Emphasizing greater benefits of programs for males, as found by Renick et al. (1992), would accentuate positive aspects of participation.

The findings of this study are limited in several ways. First, a convenience sample was used. Randomly selected national or regional samples are necessary before the findings can be generalized beyond the scope of this study. Second, like previous investigations, college students were sampled. College students may be prone to respond to the items in idiosyncratic ways. For instance, students may answer questions about time, schedule, price, promotion and other variables in ways that would be different from other yet-to-be married groups such as young professionals, young adults not attending a university, or individuals choosing to marry for a second time. More research is needed to address the marriage preparation needs of a wider variety of young adults and among different ethnic groups.

Notwithstanding these limitations, there are some general implications evident from the results of this study. Program effectiveness is linked to expert trainers (e.g., Renick et al., 1992) and longer programs (Giblin et al., 1985) than are preferred by this and other samples. How can program developers be responsive to the empirical literature and still be true to the expressed needs of the potential consumer? It is possible that increased community and couple awareness, together with community sponsorship, may lead to a better match of preferences with ideals. A variety of marketing and educational approaches (e.g., varied timing, self-directed learning) might also expand the use of program materials.

Preferences for shorter programs just prior to marriage may be compensated by training experiences offered throughout the dating cycle. Promotional materials that reinforce both traditional values and skills for new roles (i.e., strengths from the past, strengths for the future) may enhance a program's appeal. "Building a stronger marriage" would hold more appeal than "avoiding divorce" for all young adults. Because the divorce rate among Blacks is higher, exposure to positive role models and

provider expertise regarding marriage and culture may be even more critical for Black couples than for Whites. In multiracial training settings, educator sensitivity to diversity can result in sharing a variety of marital strengths with all couples present and, thus, increase their options for success.

The preference for shorter, less costly programs suggests a recommendation for evaluation research. Longer programs might be evaluated in terms of what elements are producing the greatest variance in program outcomes and be streamlined to get the most "bang for the buck." For instance, recent research suggests that communication factors, especially how couples deal with conflict, are the major predictors of marital success (Gottman, 1994; Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994). Perhaps it is the focus on the acquisition of communication and conflict management skills that is actually producing the positive observed or self-reported outcomes in the longer programs, whereas other elements contribute relatively little to the variance. David and Vera Mace remarked that three elements are necessary for marital success: commitment, quality communication, and a system for managing conflict (Mace & Mace, 1986). Perhaps a focus on these bare necessities in a 4- to 6-session workshop may provide couples with enough dedication, skill, and resilience to steer through the storms of marital life.

Some of the most effective programs (Renick et al., 1992) can cost as much as \$550 per couple. Young adults who could benefit most from marriage preparation may find such costs prohibitive. Programs offered at lower cost or with some form of sliding scale or scholarship program may reach more educated young adults, especially those with limited financial resources.

Given that the current study found that young adults rate significant others as the highest quality source of marriage preparation, programmers need to consider how to involve them more. For instance, providers might seek ways to include parents in sessions or supply them with information for informal sharing, in recognition that the home is the most significant place for marriage preparation. Parents might receive a "marriage supporters" copy of the self-study materials provided for the couples. During the course of a program, providers might make homework assignments designed to get couples involved with other members of their support network. For example, couples could be assigned to visit with clergy for a spiritual context, and with recently married

friends for practical ideas on what to expect during the first year.

REFERENCES

- Avery, A. W., Ridley, C. A., Leslie, L. A., & Milholland, T. (1980). Relationship enhancement with premarital dyads: A six-month follow-up. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 8, 23-30.
- Bader, E., Microys, G., Sinclair, C., Willett, E., & Conway, B. (1980). Do marriage preparation programs really work?: A Canadian experiment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 6, 171-179.
- Bagarozzi, D. A., Bagarozzi, J. I., Anderson, S. A., & Pollane, L. (1984). Premarital education and training sequence (PETS): A 3-year follow-up of an experimental study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 63, 91-100.
- Bagarozzi, D. A., & Rauen, P. (1981). Premarital counseling: Appraisal and status. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 9, 13-30.
- Billingsley, A. (1993, November). *Family values reconsidered*. Address to the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations, Baltimore, MD.
- Dumka, L. E., Roosa, M. W., Michaels, M. L., & Suh, K. W. (1995). Using research and theory to develop prevention programs for high risk families. *Family Relations*, 44, 78-86.
- Feldman, L. B. (1982). Sex roles and family dynamics. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes* (pp. 354-379). New York: Guilford.
- Foster, R. G. (1935). A device for premarital counselors and teachers of courses on marriage. *Journal of Home Economics*, 27, 575-576.
- Fournier, D. G., & Olson, D. H. (1986). Programs for premarital and newlywed couples. In R. F. Levant (Ed.), *Psychoeducational approaches to family therapy and counseling* (pp. 194-231). New York: Springer.
- Gary, L. E., Beatty, L. A., & Berry, G. L. (1983). *Stable Black families: Final report*. Washington, DC: Howard University, Institute for Urban Affairs & Research, Mental Health Research & Development Center.
- Giblin, P., Sprenkle, D. H., & Sheehan, R. (1985). Enrichment outcome research: A meta-analysis of premarital, marital, and family interventions. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 11, 257-271.
- Glenn, N. D. (1990). Quantitative research on marital quality in the 1980s: A critical review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 818-831.
- Gottman, J. M. (1993). *What predicts divorce*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Guernsey, B. G., Jr., Guernsey, L., & Cooney, T. (1985). Marital and family problem prevention and enrichment programs. In L. L'Abate (Ed.), *The handbook of family psychology and therapy* (Vol. II, pp. 1179-1217). Belmont, CA: Dorsey Press.
- Guernsey, B. G., Jr., & Maxson, P. (1990). Marriage and family enrichment research: A decade review and look ahead. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 1127-1135.
- Hill, R. B. (1971). *The strengths of Black families*. New York: Independent Publishers Group.
- Katz, B. (1988). *How to market professional services*. New York: Nichols Publishing.
- Kotler, P., & Bloom, P. N. (1984). *Marketing professional services*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Koval, J. E., Emery, B., & Wong, K. (1991, November). *How do young adults view premarital counseling?* Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations, Denver, CO.
- Koval, J. E., Wong, K., Emery, B., & Granoff, T. (1992, November). *Marketing strategies of premarital counseling/enrichment programs*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations, Orlando, FL.
- L'Abate, L. (1981). Skill training programs for couples and families. In A. S. Gurman (Ed.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 631-661). New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Larson, A. S., & Olson, D. H. (1989). Predicting marital satisfaction using PREPARE: A replication study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 15, 311-322.
- Levant, R. F. (1987). The use of marketing techniques to facilitate acceptance of parent education programs: A case example. *Family Relations*, 36, 246-251.
- Lewis, R. A. (1986). Introduction: What men get out of marriage and parenthood. In R. A. Lewis & R. E. Salt (Eds.), *Men in families* (pp. 11-25). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Lewis, R. A., & Spanier, G. B. (1979). Theorizing about the quality and stability of marriage. In W. R. Burr, R. Hill, F. I. Nye, & I. L. Reiss (Eds.), *Contemporary theories about the family* (Vol. 1, pp. 268-294). New York: Free Press.
- Mace, D. R., & Mace, V. (1986). The history and status of the marriage and family enrichment movement. *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*, 2, 7-18.



Markman, H., Stanley, S., & Blumberg, S. L. (1994). *Fighting for your marriage*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Martin, D., & Martin, M. (1984). Selected attitudes towards marriage and family life among college students. *Family Relations*, 33, 293-300.

Noller, P., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1990). Marital communication in the eighties. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 832-843.

Olson, D. H. (1983). How effective is marriage preparation? In D. R. Mace (Ed.), *Prevention in family services: Approaches to family wellness* (pp. 65-75). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Olson, D. H., Druckman, J. M., & Fournier, D. G. (1989). *PREPARE/ENRICH* (Rev. ed.). Minneapolis: PREPARE/ENRICH.

Renick, M. J., Blumberg, S. L., & Markman, H. J. (1992). The prevention and relationship enhancement program

(PREP): An empirically based preventive intervention program for couples. *Family Relations*, 41, 141-147.

Schlein, S., (1971). *Training dating couples in empathetic and open communication: An experimental evaluation of a potential preventive mental health program*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University.

Schumm, W. R., & Denton, W. (1979). Trends in premarital counseling. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 5, 23-32.

Silliman, B., & Schumm, W. R. (1989). Topics of interest in premarital counseling: Clients' views. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 15, 199-206.

Silliman, B., & Schumm, W. R. (1993). Influences on young adults' intentions to attend a premarital preparation program. *Family Perspective*, 27, 165-177.

Silliman, B., Schumm, W. R., & Jurich, A. P. (1992). Young adults' preferences for premarital preparation program de-

signs: An exploratory study. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 14, 89-100.

SPSS, Inc. (1990). *SPSS reference guide*. Chicago, IL: Author.

Stahmann, R. F., & Hiebert, W. J. (1987). *Premarital counseling*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

U.S. Dept. of Education (1993). *Digest of education statistics, 1993*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

White, L. K. (1990). Determinants of divorce: A review of research in the eighties. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 904-912.

Yarber, W. L. (1981). Student perceptions of need for family life and sex education. *Education*, 101, 279-284.



INSTANT REPLAY! HAVE THE CONFERENCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Purchase Video and Audio Tapes of the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conferences

National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) offers a collection of conference events on video and audio cassettes. Contact the NCFR office for more information and order forms for audio and video tapes from the 1993, 1994, and 1995 conferences.

Video Tapes Only \$39.95* each for NCFR members! \$49.95* for Non-members.
Audio Tapes only \$9.50 each.

New Videos from the 1995 Conference!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>95V2. <i>Strengths and Resiliency of Black Families: Implications for Practitioners</i>, Velma McBride Murry, Univ. of Georgia</p> <p>95V4. <i>Families in Later Life: Dilemmas and the Decisions</i>, Vicky L. Schmall, Consultant, Portland, OR</p> <p>95V5. <i>Celebrating the Strengths of Diversity: Meeting the Challenges of 20th Century Families</i>, Constance Ahrons, Univ. of Southern California</p> <p>95V6. <i>Utilizing Family Life Education to Enhance Courage, Strength, and Responsibility in Minority Families</i>, Gladys J. Hildreth, CFLE, Texas Woman's Univ.</p> | <p>95V7. <i>The Intergenerational Perspective: A New Paradigm for Healthy Families</i>, James Gambone, Points of View, Inc.</p> <p>95V8. <i>Assisted Suicide: Issues for Families, Health Care Providers and Communities</i>, Virginia Tilden, Melinda Lee, Oregon Health Sciences Univ., Norbert Novak, Providence Portland Medical Ctr., & Sisters of Providence Health System</p> <p>95V9. <i>Family Life Education: What Works?</i> Margaret Arcus, CFLE, Univ. of British Columbia</p> <p>95V10. <i>Couples Watching Television: Gender, Power, and the Remote Control</i>, Alexis J. Walker, Oregon State Univ.</p> |
|---|---|

*Prices include U.S. postage. Non-U.S. orders add \$7.00 per tape postage. Make checks payable to NCFR. U.S. funds drawn on U.S. banks only. MN residents add 6.5% sales tax. Canadian orders add 7% GST (123-830-465).



National Council on Family Relations
3989 Central Ave. NE, #550 • Minneapolis, MN 55421
(612) 781-9331 • FAX (612) 781-9348 • E-mail: ncf3989@sihope.com

