

NON-CONVENTIONAL GENDER ROLES IN RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION
CURRICULA FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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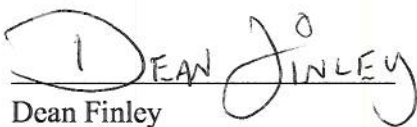
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ABSTRACT

Empirical evidence shows that successful marriages among African Americans are often more egalitarian than hierarchical; however, there was no known research that explored how curricula developers depict non-conventional gender roles in relationship education designed for African Americans. This content analysis involved exploration of non-conventional gender roles in three relationship education curricula developed for African Americans. Analyses included both the manifest (explicit) and latent (implicit) messages of the curricula to determine whether portrayals of gender roles were conventional or non-conventional. The PIES (Political/Intercultural/Economic/Social) model of marital dimensions allowed analysis of marital gender roles using an organizational analysis model that included the political (power structures and decision-making), intercultural (values and beliefs about manhood and womanhood), economic (employment and education of the couple), and social (domestic roles and responsibilities) dimensions of marriage. Results of the study revealed that the intercultural dimension tended toward conventional characteristics, even when the political, economic, and social dimensions were non-conventional. The results suggested that curricula developers design curricula based on conventional contexts of marriage that do not include African Americans' historical context of marital gender roles in the United States. Two of the curricula described titular type leadership that combines aspects of conventional and non-conventional gender roles in the PIES model and is most effective when husbands practice servant leadership. Explicit instruction about gender roles through the PIES model was a suggestion to help resolve the cognitive dissonance created by conflicting ontological perspectives, especially in Biblical contexts.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my *legacies*: Eugene IV, Imani Joseph, Andreu Noa, and Omari Malik. My parents showed me the value of education as first generation college graduates coming from homes where neither of their parents attended school beyond the 6th grade. Opportunities for education and access to information have always been the greatest source of wealth for our family. I have endeavored to impart additional wealth to you through this work. I hope to pass along our family's values about partnership, mutual respect, and creating "harmonic connections" in marriage. Your father and I have based our marriage upon these ideals for almost 20 years. My desire is that this work will be an addition to your education about your relationships and enlighten your decisions about your choices in developing your own healthy marriages.

This work is also dedicated to the *legacy builder* with whom I am partnered in marriage, Eugene Mason III. As I have transitioned from a homeschooling mother to a professional mother you have been gracious and willing to adjust to the changes necessary for me to see this doctoral process to its completion. My life changing experiences with you in marriage have inspired me to do this work. As you continue your educational pursuits, I hope to provide you the same support, encouragement, and forbearance you have offered me over the past four years. I love you always.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Gender role expectations affect African Americans decisions to marry (Holland, 2009). Over the first decade of the 21st century, relationship education curricula developers began to focus on creating curricula to meet African Americans' unique needs. Marks et al. (2008) suggested that relationship education targeted towards African Americans emphasize evidence-based research of known strengths of relationships among African American. Researchers agree that egalitarian gender roles are characteristic of stable and enduring marriages among African Americans (Cook, Brashier, & Hughes, 2011; Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner, & Bryant, 2011; Dixon, 2009; Hill, 2006; Marks et al., 2008).

Relationship education curricula developers model one-size-fits-all approaches to marriage after research on conventional models of traditional Caucasian middle-class marriages (Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty, & Willoughby, 2004; Markman & Rhoades, 2012) that were based on hierarchical Victorian values of manhood and womanhood from the 1960s. These conventional models do not emphasize the researched strengths of African Americans in marriage that differ from the conventional marriage model (Kelly, 2001). Markman and Rhoades (2012) acknowledged the need for research that focused on how relationship education addresses the needs of diverse populations.

This content analysis allowed exploration of how relationship education curricula developers depict non-conventional gender roles within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. The findings from this study were a contribution toward a growing body of literature that informs relationship education efforts toward the unique

concerns of African Americans in marriage. The theoretical and conceptual contexts for this study involved considering relationship curricula for heterosexual, monogamous African American couple relationships through a framework of postmodernism and constructivism.

Chapter 1 contains a review of the problem and the purpose of this study relevant to the gender roles in the United States and relationship education. This chapter also includes the rationale for the significance of the study and the benefits of analyzing relationship education curricula for African Americans as well as the research questions that guided this study. The definitions include information that clarifies the focus of this study and Chapter 1 concludes with the assumptions, scope, limitations, and delimitations of the research.

Background

Decreases in marriages and increases in divorces and single parenting have been prevalent in the United States since the middle of the 20th century; however, the trends for African Americans have surpassed those of other races (National Marriage Project & the Institute for American Values [NMP & IAV], 2011). Bryant, Taylor, Lincoln, Chatters, and Jackson (2008) acknowledged that race and culture could be powerful lenses through which people construct their beliefs about "marriage, family, work-family task enactment and expectations, and economic relations within the context of marriage and family" (p. 241).

Utley (2010) suggested that constructs that perpetuate traditional relationships undermine many of the principles of *black love*—portrayed as a healthy, stable, and enduring couple relationship between an African American man and an African American

woman. Research supports the assertion that African Americans as a whole have not exhibited characteristics that would support conventional marital gender roles (Hill, 2006; National Marriage Project [NMP], 2007). Studies suggest that distinctions about traditional marital roles (i.e. husbands as the breadwinner or women staying home to care for children) may not be transferable to all races and cultures, especially among African Americans (Hawkins et al., 2004; Hawkins & Ooms, 2010).

African American's visual and written depictions of African American men and women in relationships often contradict negative stereotypes that are prevalent about African American men and women. African Americans create images of positive perceptions about African American relationships, describe African American relationships as tributes to black love, exhibit them through artistic mediums (graphic art, sculptures, photography, poetry, etc.), and share them within internet communities established to uplift marriage among African Americans.

Photographs that adorn the black love label have been of fictional characters like the Heathcliff and Claire Huxtable from the sitcom *Cosby Show* as well as celebrity couples like Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, Denzel and Pauletta Washington, and Terry and Rebecca Crews. These couples share several commonalities such as both spouses being of African American descent, having dual-careers, and exhibiting longevity in marriages ranging from 15-35 years. Since the 2008 presidential election, the most prominent couple that has dominated images of black love is U.S. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. Many African Americans comment that the couples' adoration for one another is palatable and revel in seeing an example of black

love that highlights both spouses support for one another's ambitions throughout their careers (Wanzo, 2011).

Black love images depict African American couples where both the man and woman have careers and support one another's aspirations. Through black love depictions of African American couples, African Americans feature visuals and written portrayals of happy African American couples that counteract negative images and stereotypes about African American men and women's interactions (Hill, 2006; Holland, 2009) prevalent in American society.

According to Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2008) it is still unknown whether relationship education curricula developed primarily for Caucasian middle-class married couples are effective with diverse racial and ethnic groups. Harnois (2010) affirmed that when people share meaningful experiences with one another, they often cultivate a shared perspective of the social world. While African Americans are not a monolithic group, there are shared experiences in United States history that may unite them to constructs of successful marriages of African Americans more than Caucasian middle-class models upon which curriculum developers base marriage models and relationship education curricula (Hawkins, et al, 2004; Markman & Rhoades, 2012).

Traditionally, educational approaches utilize deficit models to focus on how African Americans differ from Caucasian Americans, describing how African Americans' non-marriage and cohabitation rates continue to surpass the general population. However, many decisions not to marry are increasingly by choice. For instance, Holland (2009) studied college-educated single mothers who had made decisions not to marry because they perceived marriage as oppressive to women based on conventional gender role

expectations. In this instance, individuals' perceptions of marriage as oppressive and restricting have the greatest influence over decisions to marry. Marriage research is increasingly available that provides insight into stable, satisfying and enduring marriages among African Americans (Cook et al., 2011; Cutrona et al., 2011; Dixon, 2009; Hill, 2006; Marks et al., 2008), and allows curricula developers to incorporate relationship education approaches and instruction that clarify misconceptions individuals may have about marriage.

Problem Statement

Historically, marriage in the United States was based on prescribed gender roles for males and females (Erchull, Liss, Axelson, Staebell, & Askari, 2010; Giele, 2008). However, obstructed access to education, employment, and economic opportunities often hindered African American's capacity to function in conventional gender roles (Hill, 2006). Instead, many successfully married African Americans labored together in non-conventional gender roles to establish and stabilize their families (Dixon, 2009).

As conventional gender roles have become less practical because of changing cultural and socioeconomic conditions in the U.S., egalitarianism has become increasingly important to American families of all races (NMP & IAV, 2011). Yet, negative stereotypes propagated about African American's non-conventional marital roles have influenced many African Americans' perceptions of marriage (Bryant et al., 2008; Holland, 2009; Utley, 2010).

More than three decades ago, Willie and Greenblatt (1978) noted the differences in power relationships within African American couples compared to conventional marital structures. Willie and Greenblatt asserted that there was an assumption from the dominate

culture and race that “any divergence from the family structure that predominates among members of the majority race is inherently inferior and a danger to minorities and to society as a whole” (p. 691). Willie and Greenblatt further asserted that the development of negative African American marital stereotypes that were prevalent in American society were a result of the comparisons that were made to the majority group that had experienced vastly different sociocultural interactions in U.S. history.

Fine, Schwebel, and James-Myers (1987) asserted that research comparing African Americans and Caucasian Americans socially, politically, and economically serve to portray African Americans as deviant, while not acknowledging historical strengths within African American families. Bryant et al. (2009) asserted that often African American women do not view African American men as financially attractive. However, historically African American women have often earned higher incomes and educational levels than African American men (Hill, 2006) and they were still able to have successful marriages. Holland (2009) expressed how role ambiguity in contemporary families greatly contributed to frustrations about marriage and that, unless African Americans are socioeconomically in need, there is unlikely to be services available to help navigate unique family dynamics. Many relationship education curricula are silent about these concerns.

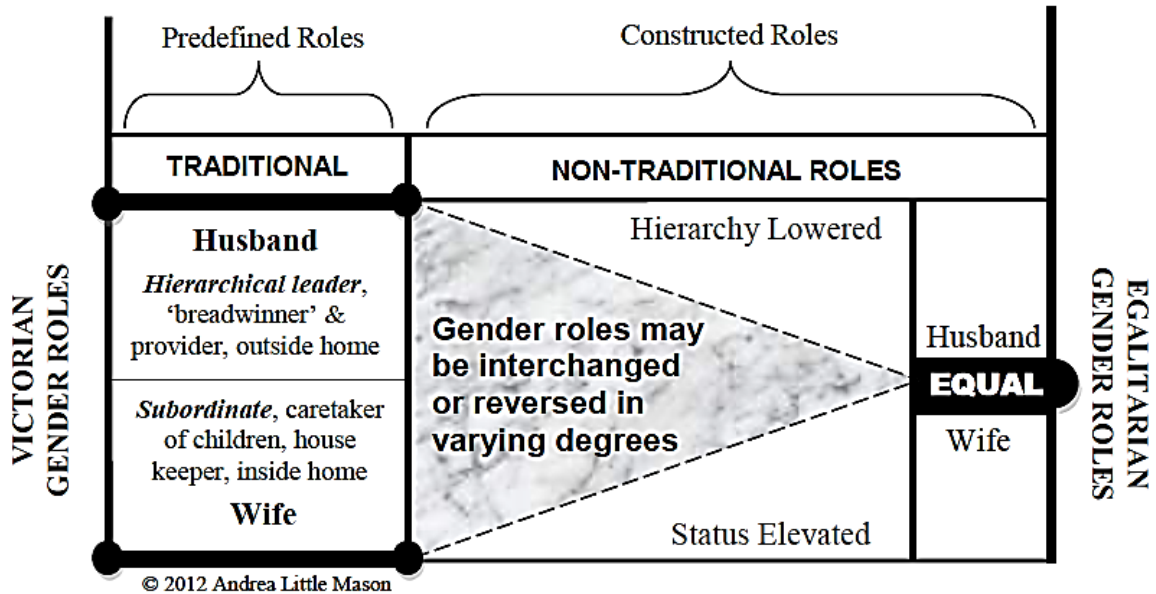
Marriage practitioners have legitimized egalitarianism as beneficial to many marriages (NMP & IAV, 2011). Egalitarianism has long been an indicator of happy and satisfying marriages among African Americans (Marks et al., 2008; Cutrona et al., 2011). However, there was no known exploration of gender roles within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans; and it was unclear how relationship education

curriculum developers depict non-conventional gender roles in these curricula. This study was a content analysis that allowed exploration of how curriculum developers depict gender roles explicitly and implicitly in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this content analysis study was to explore three relationship education curricula targeted toward African American communities and consider how curricula developers explicitly and implicitly depict non-conventional gender roles within the curricula. Research conducted since the latter part of the 20th century has shown that egalitarianism is a characteristic of healthy, stable Marriages among African Americans (Cook et al., 2011; Cutrona et al., 2011; Dixon, 2009; Hill, 2006; Marks et al., 2008; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). In fact, among African Americans, National Healthy Marriage Resource Center [NHMRC] (2009) affirmed that gender roles are not negligible. However, there has been no formal analysis to date as to how curriculum developers have incorporated egalitarian concepts into relationship education for African Americans. Many current societal expectations for marriage do not support conventional gender roles as they have throughout U.S. history when gender roles expectations provided clarity for marital roles (Figure 1). Currently, gender roles are obscure and established by individual couples. Additionally, declines in marriage rates and increases in divorce rates among African Americans are a major concern for 21st century relationship education curricula developers because marriage is now deemed optional and not a necessity for adult life (Holland, 2009; IAV, 2011).

GENDER ROLES SPECTRUM



Note: This graphic illustrates the diversity of gender roles. Traditional gender roles are distinct, while non-traditional gender roles are unique to each individual couple and may be irregular or interchangeable and fluid.

Figure 1. Gender roles spectrum.

Significance of the Study

Historically, there has been scarce information about how successful African American families operated; however, in recent decades, researchers have provided more evidence of diverse gender role structuring in stable African American families (Bryant et al., 2008; Cutrona et al., 2011). Awosan, Sandberg, and Hall (2011) asserted that race and culture diversity have not been fully integrated into mainstream literature. Additionally, many researchers have failed to understand the cultural contexts of African Americans (Hill, 2006). Investigating accepted discourses in society through texts and media allowed insights about how people circulate and maintain ideologies within culture (Wanzo, 2011). Relationship education curricula developers adapt relationship education curricula for specific groups by adding symbolism and artifacts representative of that race or culture

(Halford & Wilson, 2009). This research was an opportunity to examine how curricula designers integrate race and culture diversity about gender roles into relationship education curricula designed for African Americans.

Relationship education curricula developers have begun to focus their efforts toward religious institutions to gain African American support for relationship education (Beach et al., 2011). According to Cutrona et al. (2011), "religiosity and church attendance are associated with attitudes favorable to commitment and family stability [for African Americans]" (p. 816), however, both conventional and egalitarian advocates use religious principles to support their Biblical convictions (Frey, 2008) about gender roles. African Americans with ancestry in the United States likely view their religious beliefs in different historical contexts than other races (Frey, 2008). For example, during slavery in the United States, Christianity "offered an ideology of submission that served the interests of slave owners, [but also became] an instrument of revolt" (Frey, 2008, p. 99) for the oppressed. Similarly, in marriage, Christianity holds tenets that espouse the submission of wives to their husbands' authority (Gelfer, 2011), while also supporting egalitarian principles that suggest mutuality and equity (Jeffries, 2010) within couples relationships during communication, problem solving and conflict resolution.

Curricula developers and relationship education practitioners cannot assume the religious or monolithic spirituality of all African Americans and should not expect universal Christian attitudes or consensus toward marriage among African Americans. It has become increasingly important to consider how curriculum developers reconcile conventional gender role expectations with non-conventional gender roles necessary for daily function in households. This research is beneficial for curriculum developers to

determine whether additional or supplemental materials about gender roles would be useful for curriculum instruction. Providing perspectives about gender roles also informs the way relationship education facilitators mitigate generational differences between perceptions of marital gender roles and responsibilities within relationship education classes.

Finally, relationship education emphasizes program evaluations and outcomes from curricula implementation (Hawkins & Ooms, 2009), and marriage researchers have produced minimal information about relationship education curricula development. Relationship education curricula developers seldom use concepts common to curriculum development from the education field, known to increase learning outcomes. For example, conflicting explicit and implicit messages within the curricula are counterproductive to instruction and affect learning (Phillips, 2009; Yüksel, 2007). Content analysis, which is useful in the education field, may provide insight into inconsistencies and misalignment within the explicit and implicit curricula and provide opportunities for greater effectiveness in relationship education.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this content analysis was to explore relationship education curricula designed for African Americans and consider how curricula developers depict non-conventional gender roles within relationship education curricula. Three relationship education curricula designed for African Americans were the focus of this content analysis. Each of the curricula was available for purchase through relationship education resource sites and curricula developers published them between 2001 and 2010, during the first decade of the 21st century when relationship education received its greatest focus. In

addition, in selected curricula, developers and marriage practitioners have targeted relationship education curricula toward African Americans without regard to socioeconomic status and African Americans have been entirely or partially responsible for the development of the curricula. Additionally, each of the curricula states its usefulness in religious settings.

According to Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003), a population involves people or objects with common characteristics. In this content analysis, the population was six relationship education curricula materials promoted for African Americans promoted on marriage resource websites. Of the six curricula found on the sites, three were involved in this study.

Curriculum materials are important to analyze because they help create the framework for teaching and learning. Curriculum materials represent social artifacts developed by those who design the curricula, and research involving curricula often include all curricula artifacts (Sidek, 2010). With the analysis of content, social scientists can make inferences about subject matter within texts. The curriculum materials used in this study involved written text and video presentations, which made a content analysis appropriate for this research. Acceptable documents for content analysis include written textual materials (i.e. textbooks, archived documents, reports, transcribed documents, and articles) and audio-visual materials (i.e. photographs, illustrations, videos, and films) (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002; United States General Accounting Office, 1989).

Content analyses allow the evaluation of explicit messages and implicit messages within the curricula (Sidek, 2010). This study considered the explicit and implicit

messages within the curricula, which correspond to explicit and implicit concurrent curricula that are a part of all curricula. Explicit messages are the manifest messages that are visible at the surface level within the text, while latent messages are the deeper, underlying meanings within the text and graphics that represent the implicit messages within curricula (Kondracki et al., 2002). Examination of each lesson allowed identification of language and expressions relative to gender roles.

Curriculum documents allow for “analysis of the intentions of the program, the decisions that led its implementation, and the inherent values that were the basis of the decision to implement the program and carry it out” (DiGiorgo, 2010, p. 283). Analysis of curricular texts and documents is important because learners construct their paradigms through educational materials (Durrani, 2007). Curricula designed for African Americans are expanding; however, there were no known documented content analyses of relationship education curricula. This research showed the underlying assumptions and values about gender roles that underpin relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Data analysis allowed analysis of the relationship education curricula artifacts that included instruction guides, workbooks, video teachings, and other instructional materials. Document analysis allowed insight into the varying approaches that each curriculum developer used to moderate the topic of gender roles.

Research Questions

This study involved an analysis of relationship education curricula designed for African Americans to consider how curriculum developers depict non-conventional gender roles within the curricula involved in relationship education instruction. Three relationship education curricula designed for African Americans were involved in this

study. Only the materials available to the facilitators and learners were included in the study.

Research questions guide research and reveal how the research will address the research problem (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011). The central research question of this study was:

How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?

The research sub-questions that guided this study were based on the concurrent curricula—explicit and implicit curricula—that are a part of any curriculum. The following sub-questions guided this study:

Research Sub-question 1: *Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?*

Research Sub-question 2: *Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?*

First, Question 1 allowed an investigation of manifest or overt messages about non-conventional gender roles within the curriculum materials of the written lesson materials. The study included an exploration of curriculum documents, artifacts, and lessons to determine whether there were direct references to non-traditional gender roles. Question 2 involved additional analysis of curriculum materials considering latent gender role

messages through the video lessons. Analysis of video lessons included with each curriculum elucidated the implicit curriculum through the identification of latent messages.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Fine et al. (1987) affirmed that one's values are intricately connected to one's research. While objectivity is the goal of research, efforts to separate oneself completely from one's life experiences and biases are not likely successful (Fine et al, 1987). Fine et al. further explained that an explicit explanation of the context from which one is working helps readers identify one's values and perspectives. Theoretical considerations are essential to communicating the context of empirical inquiry. Perry and Tor (2008) asserted that a study's theoretical perspective is "grounded in a particular set of assumptions and world-views, and offers a different way of understanding, explaining and predicting" (p. 513). Similarly, Glatthorn, Boschee, and Whitehead (2009) asserted that theories are useful to describe, explain, and predict outcomes within scenarios, and in an educational context, also provide perspective and guiding practice. The posturing of this study's conceptual framework allowed exploration of the portrayal of gender roles within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Postmodernism and constructivism underscored the variability of marital gender roles and allowed multi-dimensional exploration of marital gender roles, while the deficit model underscored the importance of considering the diverse perspectives of marriage when developing relationship education curricula.

Postmodernism. The United States is a conglomeration of many heterogeneous subcultures. Because American society is a blend of many cultures, many people

reference the United States as a postmodern society (Forzani, 2011). Yilmaz (2011) asserted that postmodernism was not a “fixed body of ideas [or] a clearly worked out position... neither a systematic theory characterized by a single coherent framework nor a unified movement but ‘an intellectual trend’ or ‘a loose alliance of intellectual perspectives’” (pp. 780-781). While, formerly, the parameters of modernism were clearly defined toward marriage, postmodern marriage ideals for a husband and wife are more fluid in nature, allowing marriage gender roles to become the construct of individual married couples.

Postmodern philosophers posit that individuals construct their realities based on their experiences and the world around them (Hodge & Derezotes, 2008). Although for many African Americans conventional gender roles were never a reality (Dixon, 2009; Woodson, 1925), postmodern paradigms promote diverse beliefs that undergird various gender role traditions among the United State’s heterogeneous population (Coleman & Franiuk, 2011). Changes brought about by the women’s and Civil Rights movements have had the most dynamic impact on African American women (Goff et al., 2008; Holland, 2009), redefining the American experience for African American women. Previously, African American women had been in the most disempowered positions when ranked alongside Caucasian men, Caucasian women, and African American men (Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008; Harnois, 2010; Rodriguez, 2008). Postmodern considerations have been the catalyst for societal changes for African Americans, allowing greater influence within society and power balancing within relationships.

Constructivism. Postmodern philosophy has influenced constructivism (Hamdani, Gharbaghi, & Sharifuddin, 2011). Jerome Bruner (1996) extended the work of John

Dewey and Piaget positing that constructivism “is about ways of thinking, ways of constructing meaning, and ways of experiencing the world is to be judged, by what standards, and by whom” (p. 68). From a constructivist perspective, instructors expect to expand and develop new knowledge and skills by using their existing understanding and experiences (Barrett & Long, 2012). Constructivism supports individuals' internal construction of reality rather than predetermined and established by external forces (Hamat & Embi, 2010).

Ruggie (1998) asserted, “identities and interests of actors [are] socially constructed” (p. 856). Constructivism is relevant to current marriage trends because, less people are choosing to construct their relationships based on traditional standards (Cutrona et al., 2011). With economic uncertainties for Americans of all races and genders in the 21st century, traditional gender roles have become one of many options Americans consider within marriage. During the 20th century, marriage researchers acknowledged African Americans ability to be adaptive in gender roles and construct functional household environments, but they have rarely heralded non-conventional marital gender roles as acceptable in American life.

Currently, husbands and wives are constructing their roles in their marriages in a manner that best suits their family’s needs (Goff et al., 2008) and studies confirm that egalitarian styles of gender role sharing stabilize marriage and increase marital satisfaction for African Americans (Cutrona et al., 2011; Gray-Little, 1982; Marks et al., 2008). However, the expectation of parental roles for the spouse that works outside the home and the spouse that cares for the children are often still based in traditionally stereotypical

paradigms (Coleman & Franiuk, 2010), even when it may be more advantageous for couples to construct flexible gender roles for their families.

Deficit model. The deficit model holds that "there is knowledge 'deficit' that can be fixed by giving the public more information" (Brown, 2009, p. 609); there is a single standard toward which all are expected to aspire; and that environmental causal factors have minimal effect on learning, perception, or understanding of material (Welch, 2011). On the contrary, literature has shown that new information alone does not necessarily change peoples' views and decision-making processes, which are comprised of religious beliefs, culture, history, and personal experience (Brown, 2009). According to Welch (2011), those who have the power to make judgments about the meanings of diversity also determine what variety of diversity is superior or subservient to another. These individuals also determine whether society recognizes diversity as a difference or a deficit (Welch, 2011).

The alternative to the deficit model is a philosophical view that focuses on diversity and identity, where different is not deficit (Welch, 2011), that supports postmodernism and constructivism. Brown (2009) suggests that engaging the target population of concern to determine the peculiarities and needs of those individuals is the best alternative to the deficit model. Welch (2011) acknowledged that in the education field, there are often state mandated objectives which require the inclusion of materials that address the cultural diversity of students. While relationship education curricula developers are not mandated to include culturally diverse content, Welch (2011) maintained that culturally responsive instruction and curriculum materials are necessary to help learners become more successful; other relationship education practitioners agree

with Welch's assertions that cultural diversity is important when dealing with cultural diversity (Hawkins, et al, 2004; Markman & Rhoades, 2012).

Definitions

African American: In this research, “*Black or African American* refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery, 2011, p. 1).

Conventional gender roles: In this study, conventional gender roles are synonymous with *traditional gender roles* and interchangeable in this study. Traditional gender roles are based on Victorian value distinctions between men and women.

Regarding marriage, “traditional division of labor in the heterosexual home involves wives doing a majority of the household tasks and child care while husbands assume a larger portion of paid work outside the home” (Erchull et al., 2010, p. 253). In traditional roles, marriage is patriarchal; the “husband [is] the principal authority and chief provider [with greater privilege] and the wife [is] second in authority as manager of child care and household provision” (Giele, 2008, p. 393). See figure 1.

Curriculum: The curriculum includes “the learning goals that underlie instruction and curriculum materials as the materials that help the teacher address the learning goals. Curriculum materials include all of the books, guides, and kits that influence the planned and enacted curriculum” (Schwarz et al., 2008, p. 346).

Deficit model: In education, the deficit model focuses on knowledge and skill deficits based on dominant sociocultural constructs and beliefs that leaders can remedy problems by providing more information to those considered to be in need, the deficit model may not reflect causal factors in solutions (Brown, 2009; Welch, 2011).

Egalitarian gender roles: Egalitarian gender roles are constructed responsibilities for males and females in marriage that are equitable and often based in individual strengths (Cook et al., 2011). See Figure 1.

Emerson's theory of social exchange: The power-dependence relationship between individuals (actors A and B) where "the power of A over B equals the dependence of B on A" (Hall, Widéen, & Paterson, 2010, p. 239).

Explicit curriculum: The explicit curriculum (overt or the written) curriculum and consists of what is included in curriculum materials (Glatthorn et al., 2009).

Gender roles: Gender roles are "social constructs or labels given to people based on behavior, societal and cultural norms, and expectations" (Abrams, 2010, p. 1) that shape and influence individuals experiences.

Implicit curriculum: The implicit curriculum is fraught with symbolism. Many relationship education curricula do not formally address symbolism within the curricula; however, learners will perceive it through facilitator tones and body language in artifacts and images in the learning environment (Glatthorn et al., 2009).

Latent messages: Latent messages represent symbolic, underlying meanings and are the implicit messages within curricula. Manifest content allows analysis of what a text explicitly states (Ali et al., 2011).

Manifest messages: Manifest messages are visible at the surface level within a text and represent explicit messages within curricula. Latent content allows the interpretation of the meanings in communications (Ali et al., 2011).

PIES model of marital dimensions: The four dimensions of the PIES model are political (decision making), intercultural (values about manhood/womanhood), economic

(educational and employment opportunities), and social (domestic roles and responsibilities). This model is based on the SPELIT Power Matrix environments that also include a legal environment and a technological environment (Schmieder-Ramirez and Mallette, 2012).

Relationship education: Relationship education consists of “fairly intensive, face-to-face, multi-session educational interventions [designed to help] couples enhance positivity and decrease negativity, improve handling of conflict and solving problems, enhance communication skills, and increase relationship satisfaction” (Duncan, Steed, & Needham, 2009, p. 164).

Assumptions

Some marriage researchers delineate between marriage as a traditional institution that ensures the posterity of American society and marriage based in egalitarian concepts and soul mate connections between a husband and wife (NMP & IAV, 2011). NMP and IAV (2011) asserted that in the 21st century, "the best path for forming and sustaining a family is a hybrid marriage that incorporates features from the newer [non-conventional] soul-mate model with features from the older [conventional] institutional model" (p. 49). An assumption of this research was that it is more effective to provide relationship education instruction that includes perspectives about non-conventional marital gender role constructs (as well as conventional) than it is to presume that individuals and couples hold common constructs of gender roles upon which marriage is based. An additional assumption was that analysis of relationship education curriculum materials was sufficient to provide insight into gender role portrayals within the curricula because curricula represent what facilitators and learners will experience in a classroom setting.

A final assumption was that marriage researchers use the term *African American* to reference people with ancestry linked to the "Black racial groups of Africa" (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery, 2011) without acknowledging other races of their ancestry. Race is a constructed concept and often used to classify individuals into presumed homogenous groups with common beliefs, values, customs, and behaviors (Rastogi et al., 2011). Beginning in 2000, the federal government allowed census respondents to identify more than one race and as a result, current and previous delineations of single race are incompatible (Office of Minority Health, 1997). While the U.S. Census bureau does not endorse the use of previous single race categorizations, reporting agencies are at liberty to use their own standards when reporting data (Rastogi et al., 2011). Currently, determination of race categories is the responsibility of individual organizations and therefore incompatible with previous censuses (Office of Minority Health, 1997; Rastogi et al., 2011).

Scope

The scope of this content analysis included the analyses of three prominent relationship education curricula designed for use with African Americans. While this study involved relationship education curricula designed for African Americans, civil rights and technological advancements have allowed recent generations of Americans to expand traditional constructs of marriage, making precise race-based cultural distinctions less distinct. The NMP and IAV (2011) asserted that both conventional and egalitarian concepts of gender roles in marriage could lead to marriage stability (NMP & IAV, 2011). This research focus on gender roles in marriage underscored the need for instruction on a

continuum of marital gender roles (Figure 1) that may help create stability within marriages among African Americans.

Limitations

One of the greatest limitations of this study involves the use of content analysis as a methodology. Krippendorff (2004) asserted, “the context of [a text] is always someone’s construction, the conceptual environment of the text, the situation in which it plays a role” (p. 33). According to Krippendorff, texts do not have single meanings conceptualized in the same manner by all readers. Texts are context sensitive and can be interpreted differently by different people (Krippendorff, 2004).

This research was an acknowledgment of the instability of racial distinctions and categorizations to determine uniform characteristics among people. Race is not an accurate monolithic identity. Perspectives about race are an amalgamation of unique individual traits based on age, sex, family dynamics, geography, economics, and experiences; but "race is not a 'scientific' or biologically coherent category" (Williams, n.d., p. 1). The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) affirmed that references to race are intended to "reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and are not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically" (p. 2) as previous references to race did.

Peery and Bodenhausen (2008) posited that the way people categorize others affects and determines social exchange. In historical references to race, Peery and Bodenhausen's assertion may be the basis of controlling various demographics of American citizens. In the 21st century, however, legislation helps enforce equity and equality among American citizens. Globalization also influences the exposure and

opportunities individuals have to individuals of different races. With the changes to racial identifications on the U.S. Censuses, multiracial individuals representing diverse races are one of the fastest growing demographics in the United States of America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

This study involved relationship curricula intended for heterosexual, monogamous African American relationship and does not address same-sex marriages and partnerships. Additionally, peer influence in classroom sessions underscored the importance of analyzing how curricula developers present gender roles in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Most marriage practitioners use relationship education curricula in-group sessions with multiple couples (Hawkins et al., 2004). Within many group sessions, peer responses are welcome additions to the instruction and marriage practitioners encourage mentorship from older couples. Peer influence is a major contributor to couples experiences in relationship education classes; hence, the information gathered from relationship education is not solely dependent upon the material presented in the curricula.

Delimitations

In this study, the term *African Americans* referred to individuals, not couples. The terms *African American couples* and *African American marriages* implied the use of hypodescent practices—the automatic assigning of race based on the race considered to be of lower status (Peery & Bodenhausen, 2008)—and the assumption that African Americans will only marry African Americans. Hypodescent ideologies are prevalent in societies that assign racial superiority or inferiority to their citizens. The basis of original delineations of race in the United States were based on hypodescent (Jefferson, 1785);

however, in the modern United States, miscegenation—interbreeding or interracial marriage between individuals of different races—is no longer prohibited (Legal Information Institute, 2010b) and racial diversity is more prevalent in marriage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Some marriage research includes information about *Black* or *African American* race categories, which also includes an *other* race category (NMP & IAV, 2011). Still, most marriage researchers do not include an explanation of the attribution of *Black* to individuals who indicate they are of mixed race; neither do they offer explanations about how miscegenation has affected marriage practices and customs in the United States or made primary categorizations by race unreliable. While this study involves references to the diverse historical backgrounds of Caucasians and African Americans, it was not intended to support the use of these racial identifications in marriage research. Rather, the intent of this research is to inform discussions that can expand attributes of race and gender role expectations within marriage research.

Summary

Chapter 1 was a synopsis of the research study and highlighted how racial differences have the ability to influence experiences and perceptions about marital gender roles. Conventional marital gender roles, which are based on Victorian values, are less practical for many Americans in the 21st century. Throughout history, however, political leaders and social scientists identified non-traditional marital roles as contributors of maladies in African American families (Hill, 2006; Moynihan, 1965). Based on references to suitability to conventional gender roles, some African Americans believe marriage is more suitable for Caucasians than African Americans (Holland, 2009; Uteley,

2011). Perspectives about the ability of African American men and women to function in conventional roles have contributed to negative perspective about marriage. While many relationship education curricula do not include gender role topics, the importance of depicting non-conventional gender roles becomes increasingly important. Currently, women comprise more than 50 percent of the labor force and, in many instances; African American women earn higher incomes and have more education than African American men (Shiver & CAPS, 2009). It is important to explore how curricula developers that develop curricula for African Americans have mitigated the importance of conventional marital roles as an indicator of successful marriage through their curricula.

Chapter 2 includes a discussion of relevant literature pertaining to educational curricula as well as relationship education that is relevant to African Americans. In the literature review, the PIES model of marital dimensions and historical perspectives of African American gender roles are introduced. By situating gender role constructs in PIES dimensions—political (decision making), intercultural (values about manhood/womanhood), economic (educational and employment opportunities), and social (domestic roles and responsibilities)—the literature review will show differences in African American gender role experiences that support the need for instruction about diverse marital roles in marriage of African Americans.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The National Center on African American Marriages and Families [NCAAMP] (2012b) at Hampton University disagreed that “African Americans or their marriages are inherently conflicted, pathological, or dysfunctional” (p. 7). Chambers and Kravitz (2011) further emphasized that “African Americans are a heterogeneous population, and to paint all African Americans with the same brush would be incorrect and culturally insensitive” (p. 7). Not much is known about subcultural differences in African American marriages (Bryant et al., 2008); however, researchers know that gender role expectations influence marriage (Abrams, 2010; Hill, 2002) and that many African Americans have not functioned in the traditional, hierarchical, Victorian gender role context of historical societal marital standards (Bryant et al., 2008; Hill, 2006; Woodson, 1925,).

Race and culture affect how African Americans construct their ideas of marriage expectations and family life (Bryant et al., 2008). Social scientists often view African Americans in comparison to Caucasians; however, because of the divergent social and cultural contexts, historical gender roles of African Americans and Caucasians are not comparable (Abrams, 2010). Moreover, although African Americans have common experiences, it is increasingly challenging to view them as a homogeneous group (Hill, 2002).

There are fundamental differences between the historical references of traditional gender roles in marriage between Caucasian and African American men and women; however, most social science research categorizes African Americans as a uniform, monolithic group (Bryant et al., 2008). Abrams (2010) pointed out that gender roles

without context are not a reliable determinant of behavior. One may also make the same assertion about how society and media portray gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted towards African Americans. Throughout United States history, African Americans have maintained flexible gender roles (Abrams, 2010). However, in discussing African American households, the focus is often based around "the extent to which [African Americans] embrace the traditional gender norms of American society, use them to organize family responsibilities, and/or teach them to their children" (Hill, 2002, p. 493). Abrams (2010) asserted that gender roles of African Americans are diverse, multifaceted, and dynamic, advising that "knowledge of gender role views can help provide a better understanding of human behavior and assist in the development of culturally specific interventions" (p. 8).

This literature review included an examination of literature related to educational curricula, relationship education, race, and gender role attitudes. The heterogeneous nature of African Americans is often unrecognized in research and only in the past four decades have researchers made concerted efforts to involve African Americans in research (Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). Intentionality is necessary to construct relevant messages for African Americans that are essential for the success of relationship education efforts (Hurt, 2009). This literature review contributed to work within the relationship education field, particularly as it involves developing curricula for African Americans. Bryant et al. (2008) asserted that more research is needed that investigates "the impact of broader contextual factors, institutions, and environments (e.g., neighborhood, community) on [African American] marriage[s]" (p. 251). At the end of the 20th century, Blee and

Tickamyar (1995) suggested further investigation was necessary to understand how race contributes to gender role attitudes.

This research addressed African American research needs and explored how curriculum developers depict gender roles within curricula designed for African Americans. Because marriage and gender roles are complex and multidimensional, the PIES model of marital dimensions—political (power and decision-making), intercultural (values about manhood and womanhood), economic (educational and employment positioning), and social (domestic roles and responsibilities)—explicated the constructs of marriage and gender roles. The central research question was:

How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?

The research sub-questions guiding this study and relevant to the exploration of the explicit and implicit curricula were:

Research Sub-question 1: *Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?*

Research Sub-question 2: *Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?*

Documentation

This study involved intersecting African American gender roles in families, relationship education, and educational curricular development. Information for this study included 115 books, peer-reviewed articles and dissertations, government documents, historical texts and research reports published between 2008 and 2013. The search for relevant sources included Google searches of historical documents and references older than five years are included to underpin theoretical historical frameworks. EBSCOhost[®] database, the ProQuest[®] Dissertation and Theses database and Google Scholar allowed access to peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Search topics included: African American families, African American marriages, shared roles, gender roles, marriage roles, traditional marriage roles, egalitarian marriage roles, marriage education, relationship education, couples relationship education, curriculum, hidden curriculum (implicit/covert), written curriculum (explicit/official/formal), content analysis, women's rights, labor rights, civil rights, power, exchange theory, postmodernism, and constructivism. Historical documents from government websites that undergirded historical understanding about African American families were Library of Congress, Department of Labor, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, United States Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, Administration of Children and Families [ACF]. Additionally, the following websites of organizations that support relationship education efforts were sources of research reports National Survey of Family Growth, Institute of American Values, The National Marriage Project, African American healthy Marriage Initiative, National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, Program for Strong African American Marriages, National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network, the

National Marriage Project, the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, and Alabama Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Initiative.

Educational Curricula

Curriculum text constructs inform learners' beliefs about life and their self-perception (Durrani, 2007). Teachers are dependent upon curriculum materials and unseasoned instructors rely on curriculum materials to guide their instruction, especially in the absence of a broad scientific knowledge base in an area (Schwarz et al., 2008) as is common with relationship education facilitators. Analysis of curricular texts is important because through them learners construct aspects of their paradigms (Durrani, 2007). Although the analysis of explicit curricula can be ascertained from the curricular texts, analyzing the concurrency of the explicit and implicit curricula allows clarity about the alignment of the concurrent curricula which effects instruction in the learning environment.

Concurrent curriculum types. When analyzing a curriculum, there are several distinctions to consider that place diverse aspects of the curriculum into context. Clarification about the focus of curricula appears through concurrent curricula, which are a part of every curriculum (Posner, 2004). The following are examples of concurrent curricula:

- The *recommended curriculum* is the curriculum that professional organizations, policy makers, and stakeholders suggest be taught (i.e. what ought to be taught). Societal trends and culture affect the recommended curriculum.
- The *explicit curriculum* is the official, formal, overt, or written curriculum that communicates intended educational goals.

- The *supported curriculum* is the curriculum based on the support and resources allotted to deliver the curriculum.
- The *taught curriculum*, operational, or enacted curriculum that is actually implemented and delivered during a classroom lesson; it is the curriculum that one can observe.
- The *tested curriculum* involved the aspects of the curriculum that curriculum evaluators formally assess to show the difference between what portions of the taught curriculum are actually learned.
- The *learned curriculum* describes all of the changes that occur because of total learning experiences, whether changes in beliefs, perspectives, or behaviors of learners.
- The *intentional curriculum* represents the learning experiences that teachers plan for learners.
- The *implicit curriculum* is every other aspect of the learning environment that the curriculum developer and instructor did not intend, also called the unstudied or the hidden curriculum.
- The *null curriculum* is the curriculum that curriculum developers and instructors exclude from lessons and do not teach about a subject or a part of the curriculum.
- The *extra curriculum* includes all of the planned experiences that occur aside from school subjects. (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008; Glatthorn et al., 2009; Posner, 2004)

There is no governing organization for relationship education curricula. While there are guidelines (representing the recommended curriculum) suggested by the Hauer et

al. (2009), they are only mandatory for organizations seeking federal grants. The taught curriculum will vary based on chosen formats for relationship education curricula and instruction. The constructive approach to relationship education does not facilitate testing of content mastery. In addition, the assessment of what has been learned and content mastery is not synonymous with changed behavior based on learned skills—a goal of relationship education. The null curriculum and the extra curriculum are challenging to measure without very specific criteria. The null curricula is challenging to surmise, yet may be identifiable based on criteria excluded from the explicit and implicit curricula. This research allowed analysis of the explicit and implicit concurrent curricula within the selected relationship education curricula based on the gender roles of the PIES model marital dimensions.

Curriculum analysis. Ensuring curriculum alignment has become the most popular way to improve learning outcomes (McNiel, 2009, p. 216) and content analysis provides clearer picture of the instruction learners are receiving (Posner, 2004). No centralized organization regulates relationship education curricula; and less emphasis has been on studying criteria for constructing curricula, particularly when considering curriculum alignment. Content analysis is useful to examine trends and patterns within curriculum documents to describe and make inferences about the content therein (Sidek, 2010). Levander and Mikkola (2009) asserted that an important goal of curriculum analysis is to collect information that supports the redesign of a curriculum, as is relevant with curricula designed for African Americans. The results of curriculum analyses become documentation of information about a curriculum (Levander & Mikkola, 2009).

Hawkins et al. (2008) noted that curricula developers have not fully incorporated educational components of curriculum development into relationship education targeted toward couples. In relationship education, researchers use curricula evaluations that involve outcomes based protocols to determine the effectiveness of relationship education curricula (Hawkins et al., 2004). However, educational curricula developers place emphasis on curriculum development and analysis as a mechanism to ensure curriculum reliability and enhance learning outcomes (Sidek, 2010).

The curriculum includes "the learning goals that underlie instruction and curriculum materials as the materials that help the teacher address the learning goals" (Schwarz et al., 2008, p. 346). Schwarz et al. (2008) pointed out that teachers incorporate personal knowledge, skills, values, objectives, and identities to participating with curriculum materials, thus curricula often serve as learning materials for teachers. Curriculum development is essential in fields like relationship education where there are varying approaches to instruction. Curriculum based relationship education programs focus on training couples in essential relationship skills and promote relationship knowledge (Halford et al., 2010). Preliminary curriculum analysis during the development of curricula is beneficial to effectiveness in any field.

Relationship Education

A goal of relationship education is to promote healthy marriages (Hawkins et al., 2004; Markman & Rhoades, 2012; NHMRC, 2009), and most relationship education proponents focus their efforts toward teaching communication, commitment, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills in relationship education curricula (Hauer et al., 2009). Relationship education advocates seek to affect marriage by providing additional

education about marriage and relationships. However, there is no definition of a healthy marriage and marriage professionals agree that the definition of a healthy marriage can differ in various populations and ethnic groups (NHMRC, 2009). The Administration for Children and Families [ACF] (2012) suggests characteristics of a healthy marriage, idealizing marriage that is mutually enriching where both spouses respect one another and mutually satisfying to both the husband and the wife. Gender role perceptions are a fundamental element of and influence in marriage; however, relationship education leaders consider gender roles an optional topic in relationship education curricula (Hauer et al., 2009).

Relationship education curriculum guidelines. There are no centralized guidelines and learning objectives by which relationship education curricula developers must design their curricula. However, the Marriage Education Curriculum Assessment Guide (MECA) is useful to provide guidance for relationship education professionals that seek curricula to help best serve couples and individuals, allowing them to review and compare various curricula (Hauer et al., 2009). Hauer et al. (2009) indicated that the MECA allows curricula developers to “systematically analyze a curriculum or compare curricula... to select the marriage education curriculum that includes topics critical to the needs of [the] audience" (p. 2). The guidelines used in the MECA guide resemble the *minimum required content*, *advised content*, and *optional content* espoused by Levander and Mikkola (2009) that classified the following dimensions:

- Must know: Essential theories, concepts, models, principles;
- Should know: Complementing knowledge that expands and brings details to the ‘must know’ elements;

- Nice to know: Special knowledge that can be mentioned or that the student can pursue if interested. (p. 278)

According to Hauer et al. (2009), communication, problem-solving and conflict management are minimum required criteria for relationship education curricula, especially those which are grant funded and targeted toward disadvantaged low-income, low skilled individuals. Other topics may be included to address the gender roles, such as:

- Beliefs about marriage or family (cultural and/or faith-based)—attitudes, ideas, values about marriage or family life related to couple relationship
- Roles and responsibilities in couple relationships—manage basic household, family and relationship tasks, boundaries, duties
- Gender roles, issues, male-female differences—beliefs [and] behaviors about man or womanhood; gender-based role expectations. (Hauer et al., 2009, pp. 8-9)

In the MECA guide, gender role topics are a part of the advised content and optional content areas.

Gender and race in relationship education. The focus of many relationship education curricula is to improve communication and enhance relationship skills (Markman & Rhoades, 2012). Seldom do outcomes data inform gender roles topics, and many do not include large African American samples. For example, Larsen-Rife and Early (2012) reported the results of a four-year research project with California couples. The study involved more than 17,000 participants, and is one of the largest studies to date conducted in the relationship education field. The curricula taught in the programs included skills training for couples based on communication and conflict resolution. Larsen-Rife and Early found that communication, a common measure of relationship

education research, improved for participants after the intervention and maintained six months after the intervention. While these findings suggest the effectiveness of relationship education and are encouraging for those who promote in relationship education, less than 8% of their participants were African Americans. Additionally, it is unclear how the curricula affected gender role perceptions because researchers did not discuss gender role attitudes in the findings.

High school expectations. Studies support the differing views of marriage by African Americans and Caucasians. Researchers collected data based on the results of the *Monitoring the Future High School Seniors Questionnaire*, from 1975 to 2001 (NHMRC, 2007). The sample size was approximately 16,000 high school seniors from 133 schools and findings differentiated race and sex of participants. Both Caucasians and male high school seniors increased 4.3% in confidence that "most people live happier and fuller lives if they choose to marry rather than staying single" (NHMRC, 2007, p. 3). In sharp contrast, female confidence shown through the statement decreased dramatically over the 25 years by 17.7% and African American senior high school students, confidence decreased by 10.6%. These findings suggest that women and African Americans view marriage differently than Caucasians and men. In this context, both African Americans and women represent groups who had experienced disenfranchisement in American society. African American women were likely to experience marriage in less traditional contexts, even though societal expectations continually reinforced traditional roles.

Auburn University studies. In 2011, researchers at Auburn University reported the overall findings for adults enrolled in relationship education programs from 2007-2011 based on several different curricula (Adler-Baeder et al., 2011b). Of the 3,302 sample of

participants, 46.5% were African Americans and 73.4% of the sample was female. While both males' and females' perspectives about gender roles changed after relationship education, researchers found that African American women's attitudes tended more toward conventional gender roles. African American men's changes at post-test were not significant; however, African American men's traditional gender role beliefs were higher than females on both the pre and post-tests. These findings affirm Hill's (2002) assertion that, African Americans often have more conventional views of domestic gender roles than Caucasians and are less likely to experience gender equality in the home (Hill, 2002). The researchers did not make inferences about the reasons for the differences between African American men and African American women.

The same Auburn University researchers reported the results of a study with a sample size of 456 participants, with almost 70% African Americans (Adler-Baeder et al., 2011a). Of the sample, 58.8% were female and 41.2% were male. The relationship education curriculum, *Basic Training for Couples*, was a part of the Black Marriage Education Classes and is a curriculum designed for use with African Americans. The report provided pre- and post-test *gender role attitude* outcomes by gender and race. Historically, African American men and CA men hold different beliefs about gender roles (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995). Participants showed significant changes in gender role beliefs after participation in the relationship education programs based on race. Caucasian's gender role beliefs increased significantly towards egalitarian beliefs, while African Americans showed significant increases toward traditional gender roles. Males shows significantly higher levels of gendered attitudes at pre-test that remained unchanged at post-test, however, women showed significant increases toward traditional gender roles.

A quiz regarding gender role perceptions allowed measurement of changes in gender role perceptions in the two studies (Larson, 1988). Constant in both studies, men had higher expectations toward traditional gender roles and post-tests related unchanged beliefs after completing relationship education curricula, while women's traditional gender roles beliefs increased after completing the relationship education curricula. The findings do not suggest a preference for or against conventional or egalitarian gender roles and it is not clear whether the relationship education curricula endorsed traditional gender roles in marriage relationships. In addition, it is unclear whether addressing gender role topics was a part of the relationship education curricula or only a measured outcome in pre- and post-test evaluations.

Conflict styles. In the relationship education field, “the examination of changes by race and gender is... unique in the research on relationship/marriage education programs” (Adler-Baeder et al., 2011b). Gender roles is an optional topic for relationship education curricula that service ethnic groups and socioeconomically challenged couples (Hauer et al., 2009), and is seldom included in relationship education curricula. According to Matthews (1997), unrealistic expectations and inflexible gender roles can be a root cause of marital conflict that can exacerbate personal power struggles in the relationship. As part of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program at North Carolina State University, Matthews developed a resource document entitled *Marriage Enrichment: Conflict Resolution* and identified three relationship styles that influence conflict management:

- Conflict Excluding Style: only one spouse's vote counts
- Conflict Avoiding Style: two-way voting system
- Conflict Resolving Style: three-way voting system (Matthews, 1997)

Mathews (1997) lists pros and cons to each style. The *conflict excluding style* can work when both spouses agree to use that style, because conflicts are often eliminated because one person makes all of the decisions. Hierarchy is involved in this style. Mathews does warn, however, that the decision maker can become overwhelmed with the task of making all of the decisions and, "the two become one often means that [the subordinate spouse's] identity is absorbed by the dominant spouse" (p. 2).

The conflict excluding style represents conventional hierarchical, patriarchal gender roles. With this conflict style, recognition for competency in the workplace does not always translate to their private relationships within women's homes (Shiver & CAP, 2009). Hill (2002) asserted that African American women are still encouraged to "dumb down" so that their male partners will not feel intimidated. Shiver and CAP (2009) commented about the challenges African American women face because of the dichotomy of roles they face in their between their public and private lives (Hill, 2002). These dual roles can produce stress and additional conflict in relationships (NHMRC, 2009).

Mathews (1997) suggested pros and cons for the *conflict avoiding style* as well. With the conflict avoiding style, both spouses have a voice, agree to perform certain roles, and avoid conflict as long as each person fulfills their expected roles. However, this construct may encourage unrealistic expectations between spouses, which ultimately increases conflict (NHMRC, 2007). There is often idealism involved in relationships where individualism influences soul-mate connections with spouses (IAV, 2011).

In conflict avoiding style relationships, each person's opinion is valued; however, partners offer no flexibility when one cannot or does not meet expectations. This expectation among African Americans has been observable when African American men

and African American women are not able to meet the conventional gender roles dictated by societal expectations. For several decades, studies have shown that African American's failure to meet unrealistic societal gender role expectations causes conflict between African American men and African American women who are in relationships (Holland, 2009; NHMRC, 2007).

Finally, with the *conflict resolving style*, each spouse has a vote and the relationship has a vote (Matthews, 1997). The couple not only considers how a decision will affect one another, but they also consider how decisions will affect their relationship. The focus of the conflict resolving style is sustaining and cultivating the health of the couple's relationship and often the relationship vote will influence the final decision the greatest.

No single construct of marital roles ensures a healthy marriage (NHMRC, 2007). Often, couples will need to construct their gender roles in marriage to accommodate their life situations. The conflict resolving style undergirds the perspective necessary to assist individuals in their efforts to form healthy, enduring relationships when gender roles create conflict in their marriages, which would be especially helpful for African Americans.

Instruction in conflict resolution is a standard part of most relationship education curricula. Halford, Markman, and Stanley (2008) affirmed that it is beneficial to couples to have knowledge about how relationship constructs affect communication in conflict resolution. The beliefs individuals have effect interpersonal satisfaction, positive expectancies, and partners' willingness to work toward mutual change (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Providing couples with information about how they position themselves

in conflict resolution may allow insight into why attempts to resolve conflict and solve problems fail, while also providing a common framework from which to build relationship skills.

Gender Roles among African Americans

Leaders from many disciplines regard marriage and family life as the foundation of society in the United States (NMP & IAV, 2011). Race and culture affect how African Americans construct their ideas of marriage expectations and family life (Bryant et al., 2008). Social scientists have often viewed African Americans in comparison to Caucasians (Moynihan, 1965); however, because of the divergent social and cultural contexts, historical gender roles of African Americans and Caucasians are not comparable (Abrams, 2010). Moreover, although African Americans have common experiences, it is increasingly challenging to view them as a homogeneous group (Hill, 2002). There are fundamental differences between the historical references of traditional gender roles in marriage between Caucasian and African American men and women; however, much social science research categorizes African Americans as a uniform, monolithic group (Bryant et al., 2008). Abrams (2010) pointed out that gender roles without context are not a reliable determinant of behavior.

Throughout United States history, African Americans have maintained flexible gender roles (Abrams, 2010). However, in discussing African American households, the focus is often based around "the extent to which [African Americans] embrace the traditional gender norms of American society, use them to organize family responsibilities, and/or teach them to their children" (Hill, 2002, p. 493). Abrams (2010) asserted that gender roles of African Americans are diverse, multifaceted, and dynamic,

advising that “knowledge of gender role views can help provide a better understanding of human behavior and assist in the development of culturally specific interventions” (p. 8).

The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC) provided a document that describes views of gender roles. NHMRC (2009) asserted, “traditional gender roles and behaviors have typified men as autonomous, powerful, controlling, assertive, aggressive, and self-determined. Within the family, the traditional male role has been one of authority and financial responsibility” (p. 1). Traditional male roles afforded men more power in the household. Women's influx into the workforce influenced gender role expectations and distinctions in the home, although distinct gender roles of individuals in African American communities have been in large part negated throughout United States history.

Historically, Wallace (2007) suggests that African Americans and Caucasians are socialized into different gender roles constructs, but in the past half century, American culture has been moving toward marriages that are more egalitarian and away from patriarchal household structures (Appendix A). However, non-traditional gender roles have been characteristic of African American families throughout United States history. African Americans receive conflicting gender roles ideologies throughout their lives (Wallace, 2007). For example, Abrams (2010) identified these characteristics as traditional masculine traits: "acts as a leader, aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, athletic, competitive, defends own beliefs, dominant, forceful, has leadership abilities, independent, individualistic, makes decisions easily, masculine, self-reliant, self-sufficient, strong personality, willing to take a stand, and willing to take risks" (p. 10). In contrast, traditional feminine characteristics are: "affectionate, cheerful, childlike,

compassionate, does not use harsh language, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, flatterable, gentle, gullible, loves children, loyal, sensitive to the needs of others, shy, soft spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding" (Abrams, 2010, pp. 10-11).

Throughout United States history, African Americans and Caucasians held different beliefs and experiences concerning gender roles (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995). In contrast with conventional societal roles, the primary roles of African American women were “workers inside and outside of the home, caretakers, mothers, and sometimes wives, [while] African American men were workers, caretakers, fathers, and sometimes husbands” (Abrams, 2010, p. 20). Counter-factual phenomena that negatively influence relationships occur when individuals compare reality with what could have occurred (NHMRC, 2009).

Hill (2002) posited that marriage social scientists implicate gender in many concerns about African Americans. Hill asserted that social scientists often place emphasis on socioeconomic issues, which disregards the diversity that African American males and females experience when living in different classes of society. Individual perspectives about marriage vary (Larson, 1988) and African American's evolving class diversity is making gender ideologies and behaviors more diverse (Hill, 2002). Individuals socially and culturally construct perspectives about gender based on societal structures of predetermined gender roles (Hill, 2002).

The PIES Model of Marital Dimensions

When considering marriage in the context of gender roles, research confirms that while both men and women continue to value marriage and hold marriage in high esteem,

decreasing numbers of individuals choose to marry (NMP & IAV, 2011). Still, companionship continues to be important and is evidenced by high rates of cohabitation, especially among African Americans (Lepkowski, Mosher, Davis, Groves, & Van Hoewyk, 2010). Scholars cite selfishness and unwillingness for commitment and responsibility toward family as a primary reason for marital declines (NMP & IAV, 2011). However, these considerations do not acknowledge the constructs of marriage that underpin gender role expectations and inequities that influence decisions to marry as well (Holland, 2009).

Before seeking to reframe an environment, researchers should conduct a systematic evaluation of its current state. According to Schmieder-Ramirez and Mallette (2007), before attempting to affect change in a situation, one must approach it in a diagnostic manner to determine its immediate condition. The PIES model used in this research allowed the establishment of an historical context of gender roles in marriage and provided a method to show changes in each dimension as each evolved to its current state.

The PIES model focuses on male and female relations within marriage; and includes four of the six dimensions of the SPELIT Power Matrix (Schmieder-Ramirez and Mallette, 2007). In this study, the term *dimension* replaced the original term *environment*. The political dimension involves how couples distribute power and make decisions. The intercultural dimension includes influences that affect the values and beliefs about manhood and womanhood in marriage. The economic dimension is a description of economic, educational, and employment opportunities within marriage. Lastly, the social dimension includes descriptions about the domestic roles and responsibilities of

individuals within marriage. The PIES dimensions provide clear categories upon which this content analysis was based.

Political dimension. The political dimension concerns the decision-making processes within a group relative to power and influence (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007). Within the context of marriage, the political dimension concerns decision making paradigms between a husband and wife. The intercultural, economic, and social dimensions each influence the political dimension within marriage. According to Beach, Fincham, Hurt, McNair, and Stanley (2008a), “decision-making equality is one of the strongest correlates of positive marital quality, not only for wives, but also for husbands” (p. 661). In the U.S., shared and equitable decision-making is prevalent in contemporary households and helps stabilize and improve marital quality (Beach et al., 2008a).

Changes in any of the other dimensions of the PIES model appear in the political dimension in the way couples distribute power and make decisions within their relationships. Emerson’s theory of social exchange provides perspective about power within relationships. Power balancing operations are appropriate when considering how changes in other dimensions have influenced decision making in marriages between a husbands and wives.

Power and dominance. Throughout United States history, marriage has portrayed an unsymmetrical relationship, granting more power and freedom to men than women (Giele, 2008; Nicolosi, 2010). Hierarchy positioned wives as subordinates to husbands who were dominant in power and decision-making. It was a common belief that men were the head of a household and were entitled to have more power than wives when making decisions (NHMRC, 2009a). The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition

against Domestic Violence (2007) asserted that domestic violence is based on power and control, and reported that 85% of domestic violence victims are women. Adams (2012) emphasized how "socially sanctioned inequality of power between men and women [has allowed men to secure] a position for themselves in the home where male dominance and one-sided male privilege continues unchallenged" (p. 459).

Types of power. Shah and Inamullah (2011) defined power as "that force which [is] able to control the environment around itself as well as the behavior of [an] other entity" (p. 516). Carter (2009) emphasized the need for individuals to be mindful of the negative aspect of the use of any type of power, since its persuasive force can change the behavior of others. Carter further asserted that power is neither inherently positive nor negative. Two types of power that appear in marriage structures are social power and interpersonal family power.

Social power. French and Raven's Taxonomy of Power describe five social powers:

- Coercive—the power to force individuals to comply against their will.
- Reward—the power to dispense rewards for followers' compliance.
- Legitimate—the power that comes from the formal authority of a leader related to his/her role or position. [Authority is the right an individual has to exercise power over another person]
- Expert—the power that comes from the specialized knowledge and ability of the leader and the desire of followers to benefit from this
- Referent—the power that comes from the attractiveness of the leader and the follower's desire to be like the leader. (Carter, 2009, p. 188)

During the 20th century, legislative reforms influenced traditional hierarchical gender roles that were supported by laws that had previously given husbands authority over their wives, thereby attributing each of these types of power to husbands.

Interpersonal family power. According to Bokek-Cohen (2011), Blood and Wolfe first introduced the resource theory of family power in 1960 as a context of power between husbands and wives. Blood and Wolfe theorized that “power is apportioned between husbands and wives based on the relative resources [—education, income, occupational prestige, knowledge, skills, and rewards —] that each contributes to the family” (p. 149). Similar to Emerson’s balancing operations, Bokek-Cohen (2011) suggested that primary power gains occur from outside the household causing each spouse’s external resources to affect the marital power balance internally. Bokek-Cohen identified the basic premise of exchange theories of marriage to be that “marital relationships are maintained by a balanced exchange of resources controlled by each partner and needed by the other” (p. 149), also identifying “love, status, information, money, goods, and services” (p. 151) as other essential forms of interpersonal resources.

Emerson’s theory of social exchange. The exchange theory is based in economics (Hall, Widéen, & Paterson, 2010), but has been used in social sciences to describe interaction within relationships to describe social exchanges (Long, 2011). Social exchange theory “analyzes how the structure of rewards and costs in relationships affects patterns of interaction” (Molm, 1991, p. 475). Molm explained that in a relation the two individuals are dependent on one another for valued outcomes and the individuals in the relation “engage in recurring exchanges with specific partners over time” (p. 476).

Emerson's theory of social exchange was structurally based on the relationship between power and dependence (Molm, 1991) and the premise that "power is based on other's dependence" (Emerson, 1964, p. 298). Power can be defined as "that force which [is] able to control the environment around itself as well as the behavior of [an]other entity" (Shah & Inamullah, 2011, p. 516). Carter (2009) defined power as the ability of a person to influence another, hence every person has power. Emerson described the power-dependence dynamics in relationship between individuals (actors A and B) by postulating, "the power of A over B equals the dependence of B on A" (Hall et al., 2010, p. 239).

Emerson's social exchange theory is visible in marriage trends in the United States over the past 50 years. As the conventional model of marriage was changing, Ericksen, Yancey, and Ericksen (1979) asserted that "decision making, like the family division of labor, is an effect not a measure of marital power and that marital power, like power in any role relationship is best measured by the relative status of the actor involved" (p. 303). The power, dominance, and authority husbands traditionally asserted over wives diminished when wives were no longer economically dependent on husbands. Postmodernism and constructivism are lenses through which one can observe power balancing operations for women, more specifically African American women. In efforts to balance the power and leverage men had in marriage, Caucasian women pursued (and eventually gained in the 1920s) legislative reforms that would grant equal status and citizenship with Caucasian men and the same was true of African Americans efforts and fight for equality in the United States during the 1960s (Lefkowitz, 2010). Currently, there are many cultures and marital customs, from which men and women construct their

roles in marriage to support their lifestyles in marriage (Bryant et al., 2008). The result is a postmodernist blending of cultures and a constructivist view of gender roles in marriage that are relevant to each individual couple. Addressing gender roles within relationship curricula designed for African Americans may help stabilize marriages and equip couples to construct necessary roles within their marriage, while teaching them to make equitable adaptations in their relationships as dynamics within their households change.

Emerson based his theory of social exchange on the relationship between power and dependence between individuals (Molm, 1991). Emerson identified power-dependence dynamics between individuals (actors A and B) by postulating, “the power of A over B equals the dependence of B on A” (Hall et al., 2010, p. 239). According to Emerson (1964), an unbalanced power relation is unstable and sets power balancing operations into motion. Similarly, the balancing of dominant power does not neutralize the power of the individual.

Some marriage advocates assert that power-balancing behaviors have weakened the context of healthy marriage structures and marital stability (NMP, 2007). Resistance toward marriage equity may have prompted a counteractive resistance toward marriage; and rigid, unyielding concepts of gender roles in marriage may have further weakened the status of marriages in the United States, particularly among African Americans. Concerning the decline in marriages in the US, Lefkowitz (2010) pointed out “in refraining from marrying, couples rejected not only marriage’s gender prescriptions... [but] the breadwinner model of the political economy (p. 41). Efforts to reframe marriage as a partnership, where males and females can share in power and decision-making, are useful to relationship education.

Power balancing in African American households. Historically, the importance of power in American society has been evidenced by the frequent use of words like authority and submission (Emerson, 1964), especially when referring to marriage. Emerson also posited that power is a property of one's social relations, not an attribute of individuals. Understanding how power within social relations related to race and sex may have influenced marriage, especially among African Americans. Considering power-balancing operations that have occurred among African Americans provides insight into another possible contributor to the rapid decline in marriages among African Americans from an African American female power balancing perspective. Power balancing not only balances power in a relation, but it also diminishes the dependence of the dependent individual (Emerson, 1964).

According to (1964) Emerson's theory, balancing power does not neutralize one's power; rather Emerson placed the balance of power as a goal of the social exchange theory suggesting four balancing operations: withdrawal, network extension, status giving, and coalition formation. When the A actor is the stronger (dominant) actor and the B actor is the weaker (submissive) actor, the power balancing operations are:

1. Withdrawal: Decreased motivational investment on the part of [B]
2. Network extension: Increased availability of goals for [B] outside the relation
(extension of the "power network" through formation of new relations)
3. Status giving: Increased motivational investment on the part of [A]
4. Coalition formation: Decreased availability of goals outside of the relation for [A]

(p. 289)

Among African Americans, for whom marriage was once unrecognized (Woodson, 1925), both men and women could be viewed as disempowered actors, because African American men rarely held dominant positions in marriage before emancipation. However, after the 13th amendment abolished slavery (LII, 2010a) and the 15th amendment that should have guaranteed African American men citizenship rights (LII, 2010b), many African Americans sought to structure their households as CAs did in the majority culture, with African American men dominant in power and decision making (Abrams, 2010; Hill, 2002). However, economic structures did not support African American men's employment and dominance in their households (Woodson, 1925). Still an inability to provide financial support did not prevent African American men from seeking to dominate African American women in the household as a right of husbands in their households (Hill, 2002). Regardless of the unavailability of African American men's employment opportunities and a tendency for more employment opportunities for African American women, societal expectations still supported and encouraged African American male dominance in African American households (Moynihan, 1965). Thus, the African American male represents the dominant A actor, while the African American female represents the subordinate B actor.

In relation to marriage among African Americans, power-balancing operations are reflective of the relationships between African American men and African American women (Appendix B). First, through *withdrawal*, women have decreased their dependence on men in marriage and do not expect men to lead from a dominant, patriarchal power position in marriage, although that expectation may sometimes be an unrealistic and sometimes unattainable goal of African American men in marriage

(Wallace, 2007). Unlike earlier generations when woman's worth was in large part based on her ability to be a wife and mother, women in the 21st century have expanded career options (Shiver and CAP, 2009).

African American women have less intended pregnancies than any other race (Mosher, Jones, & Abma, 2012) and marry less than any other race (NMP & IAV, 2011). Sixty-six percent of African American graduates who earned bachelor's degrees in 2010 were women, compared to 56% of among Caucasians (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010). The ratio of African American women to African American men college graduates is 2:1 (NCES, 2010), indicating that African American women are more likely to aspire toward post-secondary education. Additionally, the ratio of African American females to males may also reflect an increased determination of African American women to withdraw themselves further from the ideal power and dependency model of marriage that has been oppressive to women in the past.

The second power balancing operation is *network extension*. By extending networks through educational, employment, and economic opportunities outside of the household, African American women have further divested from conventional, patriarchal marriage structures. Higher education, expanded employment opportunities, and increased wages often require a reallocation of power and decision making within households (Shiver & CAP, 2009). These changes also suggest that African American women who have created broader networks are less dependent on and more likely to disconnect from a failed networks with a husband.

In contrast to the previous power balancing operations, *status giving* involves African American males adjusting themselves to give more status to African American

females. Recognizing the contributions that African American women make to households, some African American husbands have chosen to collaborate with their wives using egalitarian constructs to share power and decision making with their wives. Females prefer African American husbands giving status above the use of reward or coercive powers to gain power, which may create greater conflict within marriage (NHNRC, 2009).

Finally, *coalition formation* involves external forces that create power-balancing operations within the marriage. Examples of coalition formation are marriage reforms of the 20th century. Divorce is less financially beneficial to men who were once disproportionately compensated in divorce settlements, as courts ensured that males could rebound from divorces (Lefkowitz, 2010), while women who had often forgone education and employment for marriage suffered the most (Hill, 2002). Courts also enforced mandates that required divorced fathers to pay child support for their children. Other legislation like the 19th amendment that supported equity in work and pays for women and reinforced equality for African Americans (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012), also influenced power dynamics in households and empowered women in abusive situations.

These dynamics of power balancing throughout African Americans history in the United States helped make African American households more egalitarian than Caucasians in power and decision-making. According to Hill (2002), both African American women and African American men are likely to be active in decision-making. Additionally, African American women are less likely to be latent in power (Hill, 2002).

Intercultural dimension. Barnacle and Abbott (2009) emphasized the *collective narrative* involved in marriage that includes combining cultures, rituals, and traditions from two different family backgrounds and coming to a consensus on topics like marital gender roles. One of the greatest challenges to acceptance of traditional constructs of marriage is the belief that marriage necessitates specific gender role distinctions. Even within racially homogeneous marriages, individuals must learn how to handle differences based on their backgrounds and prior experiences.

Religious influences. Some maintain traditional beliefs about gender roles even though these gender role distinctions are seldom realistic in practice. However, Beach et al. (2011) admonished consideration for racial and social characteristics necessary ensure successful implementation of relationship education. According to Beach et al. (2011), “the need for relationship enhancement targeted to African American couples is great and the need for culturally sensitive programs designed to enhance engagement of [African Americans] is acute” (p. 1).

Religion has played a dynamic historical role in defining marriage in American culture as patriarchal, where there was an expectation that men would dominate external affairs while women governed inside of home and were subservient to men (Cutrona et al., 2011; Hawke, 2003; Hill, 2006). Traditional marriage vows supported hegemonic patriarchy within marriage. The precepts represented in traditional marriage vows also informed legal guidelines within marriage. Although John Adams (1797), the second president of the United States, stated that “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion” (article. 11), Christian beliefs influenced legislative decisions made by men. The 1549 Book of Common Prayer was the

first book written that contained the marriage vows of the Church of England. Religious leaders transported a later revision of this book was to the United States during its colonial period, and the marriage vows contained therein became the basis of men and women's roles in marriage and American society.

Traditional marriage vows underpinned the hierarchy of males' authority over women as well as women's servitude to men in American society (Shiver & CAP, 2009). These vows also supported traditional, patriarchal ideals about marriage and the needs of the agrarian society upon which they were based (Ericksen et al., 1979). Traditional vows not only reflected, and sometimes dictated, a hierarchy of authority and leadership, but also designated responsibilities in the home and society (Hawke, 2007) in a manner that sustained hegemonic masculinity in American society (Coleman & Franiuk, 2011; Doucet, 2004). While patriarchal gender roles are no longer the standard among Americans, and were scarcely the expectation among African Americans, it is unclear how relationship education curricula geared towards African Americans address changes in conventional gender roles.

Most relationship education interventions do not include spiritual components (Beach et al., 2008a). Beach et al. (2008a) asserted that incorporating spirituality into interventions is risky and psychologists questioned which religious teachings curricula designers should include and which they should ignore, acknowledging the dichotomous nature of biblical references to marital gender roles. Beach, Fincham, Hurt, McNair, & Stanley (2008b) warned against encouraging couples to ignore scriptures' traditional depictions and instead encouraged focus on "enhancing marital relationships [rather than] try to introduce new beliefs or make religious choices for the couple" (p. 699).

Relationship education practitioners acknowledge that religious texts can be interpreted from diverse ontological contexts, especially when considering biblical portrayals of marriage.

Individual's ontological perspectives largely influence gender role expectations and often cultural gender expectations affect how individuals read and interpret the Biblical texts (Haddad, 2008). Ontology is "the study of being, nature, or essence, necessarily assessed through comparisons... [and] to assume the ontological inferiority of any group is to assert that their being, nature, or essence is less moral, rational, or powerful compared to another group's being, nature, or essence" (Haddad, 2012, p. 18). Whether considering race or sex, the ontological perspectives of curriculum developers shape how they construct relationship education curricula.

Psychologists have suggested that "prayer be added as a spiritual component that focuses on reign[ing] perspective, break[ing] negative thought patterns, promot[ing] relaxation, and dialog[ing] with [God]" (Beach et al., 2008a, p. 647). Incorporating prayer in this manner, however, would not address ontological views individuals have about marital gender roles upon which many biblical views of marriage are based. Prayer may reinforce the strength of individuals' beliefs about marital gender roles, which may or may not contribute to the goals of relationship education. Beach et al. (2008a) acknowledged that "the content of a prayer may be relevant to its effects on relationship functioning, and, if so, not all prayer-related activity will have the same effects on a relationship" (p. 654). Prayer as individualized personal communication with God may be difficult to manage as an relationship education tool when ontological beliefs about biblical gender roles vary from person to person.

According to the Barna Group (2009), divorce rates among Christians are indistinguishable from the public. Disillusionment about marital commitment within a lifelong relationship that seems to validate their continued subordination to men has influenced African American women's retreat from marriage (Holland, 2009). Christ modeled servant leadership and was not oppressive, but instead provided a means for His followers to grow and excel to their greatest potentials (Manala, 2010; Vinod & Sudhakar, 2011).

Religion and gender roles. Religion influences gender role expectations in the home (Abrams, 2010). For example, African American men who attend church regularly are less likely to support egalitarian values (Abrams, 2012). Research suggests that religion and spirituality are pillars in African American women's lives and African American women are the most religious of all women (Shiver & CAP, 2009). Religion and spirituality often provide an outlet for African American women to cope with stress (Shiver & CAP, 2009). Religious institutions continue to undergird societal norms that held the ideal model of the family as one where men are the financial providers and women care for the home and children (Shiver & CAP, 2009); however, African American families have seldom reflected this model.

Haddad (2008) asserted that there is a tendency to view one's cultural values about gender roles as biblical absolutes and these values shape our ontological paradigms. According to Padgett (2008), "egalitarian scholars have argued for mutual submission between husband and wife in a Christian home as a vision of biblical equality" (p. 24). On the other hand, modern traditional view of Biblical gender roles made popular in the 1970s maintained that "women and men are equal but that their roles are different [and] in the

roles they take at home and in church, women always submit to men" (Padgett, 2008, pp. 23-24). For individuals that believe that marriage is sacred and a covenant established by God, both of the previous statements represent fundamental beliefs about marriage. These dual perspectives illustrate the dichotomous portrayal of appropriate gender roles and shows possible limitations of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans in religious institutions that address spiritual concepts without addressing gender role perceptions.

Economic dimension. The economic dimension is concerned with the "production and consumption of resources" (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2012, p. 5). Within marriage, the economic dimension involves considering from whence economic resources come. Educational attainment influences the economic dimension of individuals and their gainful employment. The intercultural dimension influences the economic dimension, which contributes to the political and social dimensions within marriage.

The economic dimension within marriage has shifted since the latter part of the 20th century. Traditionally, husbands were expected to be responsible for provision of home and wives were dependent on husbands' income. Following the first half of the 20th century, major societal shifts prompted the reconceptualization of women in marriage (Nicolosi, 2010). As women have taken advantage of increased educational opportunities, dual careers have become more common within families (Shiver & CAP, 2009). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012a), since 1971 the percentage of women in the workforce has grown by more than 12% while the percentage of men in the workforce has decreased by 11%. Among African Americans in 2011, 50.8% of African American women are a part of the workforce and African American women make up

53.8% of the workforce among African Americans (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012b). As a result, conventional gender roles that delineate husbands and wives' roles within their marriage are less distinctive among African Americans. In the 21st century, dual-career families have become the norm in families and there is less negativity about husbands and wives who work and parent (Giele, 2008).

Hill (2002) emphasized society's influence on African American men's and African American women's roles. According to Hill, African American women needed to be strong, independent, and prepared for economic security rather than depend on marriage for economic stability. Additionally, life circumstances deprived many African American men of opportunities to support their households through inequitable employment practices. African American women have additionally faced other challenges because of their gender, and race has interacted with gender to create distinct differences in expected roles for African American women (Hill, 2002). Hill further asserted that gender still affords privilege to men while devaluing women. Nonetheless, African American women's roles in society have helped redefine and broaden concepts of womanhood (Hill, 2002) and contributed to the perception of strength of women in the US.

Hill (2002) asserted that throughout American history, African American's family norms were divergent from societal norms because of informed deprivation of economic structures condoned by the U.S. government concerning African Americans (Hill, 2002). Underemployment and low wages have perpetually been a challenge to African American men, especially when employment opportunities were scarce for the general population (Dixon, 2009; Woodson, 1925). African American women, unlike Caucasian women,

have had to work outside of the home and contribute to the family finances, even when married with children (Dixon, 2009; Gray-Little, 1982; Thomas, 1990). Both the experiences of slavery and American culture and society informed gender roles among African Americans (Abrams, 2010). Abrams (2010) asserted that differences in class and race affect how gender norms intersect; however, the effects of race and gender vary based on social class. Restrictions imposed by discriminatory laws often prevented African Americans, especially African American men, from securing gainful employment needed to provide for their families. Discriminatory acts also perpetuated gender differentiated opportunities (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995, p. 21).

During slavery, African American women's primary role was that of a worker (Abrams, 2010; Hill, 2002) and African American males and females often worked alongside one another (Abrams, 2010). African American women have always been more likely to work outside the home than women of other races and ethnic groups (Shiver & CAP, 2009). Slavery altered the manner in which African American men and women related to one another, still African Americans embraced Caucasians gender roles expectations (Wallace, 2007). During slavery, the U.S. government did not legally recognize African American husband and wife dyads, still African American men and women worked alongside each other in slavery, after emancipation, and Civil Rights movements (Abrams, 2010). According to Abrams (2010), African American men and women forfeited conventional patriarchal domestic structures to counteract the limitations imposed by economic opportunities. Not only have African American women worked to support their households with men, they have often earned more than African American men and gained employment, educational and economic opportunities because they

represented a double minority—through sex and race—while America’s labor force was dominated by Caucasian men (Rodriguez, 2008).

Education and employment opportunities. Abrams (2010) commented about efforts to educate African American women. Since the formation of historical black colleges and universities, African American women were encouraged to prepare for careers through higher education rather than look toward marriage for sustenance (Abrams, 2010, Hill, 2006). When educational opportunities became available, African American families often chose to educate their daughters (Dixon, 2009; Moynihan, 1965) often to prevent them from degradation and possible sexual abuse they may have encountered as domestic servants of Caucasians (Abrams, 2010; Dixon, 2009). Educational attainment was especially important prior to the Civil Rights Act when labor inequality caused almost half of African American women to seek employment in private household service jobs for low and undocumented wages (Shiver and CAP, 2009). According to Abrams (2010), the establishment of historically black colleges and universities influenced gender role delineations by socioeconomic status. In efforts to eliminate negative social impressions people had about African American family structures, some African American women sought to withdraw from the labor market and adopt a more conventional family structure. However, limited employment opportunities and low wages for African American men made it necessary for African American women to continue to work and help support their families (Abrams, 2010).

Women continued to assert their economic power through education and continued to become economically self-sufficient. Twice as many females successfully complete bachelor degrees than African American men (NCES, 2010) and one-third of African

American women begin college after they are 25 years old (Shiver & CAP, 2009). In 2010, African American men comprised only one-third of recipients of bachelor's degrees recipients among African Americans and 3.4% among all undergraduates in the United States (NCES, 2010). Without advanced educational and vocational training, African American men continue to be challenged to earn enough money to be the sole provider of their homes and, in some cases, challenges to employment are still based on discriminatory economic and employment behaviors (NHMRC, 2009).

Abram (2010) posited that “gender role beliefs of African American women in the United States should be investigated in a manner that considers their unique experiences and the distinct background of her cultural sharing group” (p. 7). Conventional gender roles are based on men being the breadwinners in their homes, however, in 2008, 51.5% African American wives made more than their husbands—more than any other race (Shiver & CAP, 2009). In fact, African American women often see traditional gender roles of women as a privilege rather than an oppressive state (Hill, 2002), just as for many African American men, *man as the provider* is a luxury (Wallace, 2007) and not the norm. Because of societal expectations of manhood and masculinity, African American men express desires to fulfill conventional manhood roles that have the potential to affect male-female relationships (Wallace, 2007).

Background influences. When educational opportunities became available, African American families often chose to educate their daughters, often to prevent them from degradation and possible sexual abuse they may have encountered as domestic servants in Caucasians’ households (Abrams, 2010, Dixon, 2009). Although African American males are less likely to exceed African American women educationally (NCES,

2010), African American women are very loyal to African American men and are least likely to marry outside of their race (Abrams, 2010). To counteract negative African American gender stereotypes, African American women often attempt to modify their behaviors to become more submissive to African American men in marriage (Abrams, 2010) in traditional gender role frameworks. Still, some accuse African American women of emasculating their male partners and contributing to the negative pathologies attributed to African Americans (Shiver & CAP, 2009).

African American women have always assumed both public and private roles (Abrams, 2010) and, during the 20th century, African American men were more likely to have experienced a household where their mother worked (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995). Blee and Tickamyer also asserted that African American men tend to be more liberal about their gender roles views in some areas, while more recent studies show African American men are less liberal, having more traditional views of gender roles than Caucasian men and African American women (Adler-Baeder et al., 2011a).

Hill (2002) provided further insight into delineations of gender role beliefs among African Americans socioeconomically. According to Hill, African Americans who are secure in the middle class have the broadest views of non-conventional gender roles, while those seeking to enter the middle class hold more traditional gender role ideas and strive toward that end. Hill asserted that, while less educated and lower income parents desire equality for their daughters in the workplace, they still endorsed conventional roles in the home (Hill, 2002). The diversity among African American subcultures supports the need for relationship education that provides information to help African Americans make decisions about effective gender role structures in their households.

Social dimension. The social dimension concerns how people interact in groups through work, play and recreation (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007). In this study, the social dimension involves the roles individuals play domestically within their homes. The social dimension involves consideration of domestic roles and responsibilities within the marriage relationship, while considering how they are related to traditional gender roles and have changed over time.

Abrams (2010) provided context for gender roles when stating “gender roles are social constructs or labels given to people based on behavior, societal and cultural norms, and expectations” (p. 8) and are shaped by one's experiences. Gender roles, like race, are unavoidable in American society and determine what we believe about "how we should behave, where we should work, what we should wear, how we should speak, and how we should perceive others" (Abrams, 2010, p. 9). According to Abrams, gender roles have not only shifted in American society, but gender roles also differ based on one's ethnicity and background.

Gender roles are constructed (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995) and individual perspectives about marriage vary (Larson, 1988). According to Abrams (2010), "gender role literature was developed out of studies of Western cultural norms and conceptualizations of White Americans” (p. 58). Abrams also surmised that “distinct socio-historical and cultural experiences may influence [African Americans'] conceptualization of gender roles resulting in gender role expectations that may significantly differ from those of Western or White female populations" (p. 59).

Larson (1988) asserted that gender beliefs are often based in marital myths—widely held beliefs that facts do not support. Gender ideologies are informed by family

processes and structures that assign rights and responsibilities based on sex (Hill, 2002) and attitudes and expectations about marriage are affected by the sex of the individual (Larson, 1988). In African American families, despite traditional gender ideologies, children's assigned household chores are often gender neutral (Hill, 2002) which influences perceptions of gender roles. Relationship education can also influence beliefs about marriage.

Gender role expectations affect couples interaction and how individuals perceive satisfaction in marriage (NHMRC, 2009). Males and females have had different attitudes and expectations about marriage (Larson, 1988; NHMRC, 2007), and the attitudes that each sex holds toward appropriate gender roles have a significant influence on many aspects of marital and family dynamics (NHMRC, 2009). For example, Some African American women play dual roles by modifying their assertive personalities to make their male partners more comfortable and confident (Abrams, 2010), but the conundrum created by these dual roles can be counterproductive to the relationship (NHMRC, 2009). Eidelson and Epstein (1982) emphasized a fundamental understanding that "disagreements regarding values, attitudes, goals, or preferences are threats to a secure, loving relationship" (p. 715). Eidelson and Epstein further asserted that the beliefs individuals have effect interpersonal satisfaction, positive expectations, and spouses' willingness to work toward mutual change in marriage.

Traditional American expectations were that husbands had public responsibilities outside home, while wives had domestic responsibilities for the home and children Shiver & CAP, 2009). Among African Americans, however, it has not been uncommon for both African American women to function both outside both inside home. Historians agree

that the American historical context of African Americans is not comparable with CAs (Awosan et al., 2011; Hill, 2006); but broader social norms and expectations contribute to and hinder the health of marriages (Bryant et al., 2008). Fine et al. (1987) asserted that research comparing African Americans and Caucasians socially, politically, and economically serve to portray African Americans as deviant while not acknowledging historical strengths within African American families. These strengths include “a strong achievement orientation and work ethic, flexible family roles, strong kinship bonds, and a strong religious orientation” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 244).

Other researchers credit matriarchal households with dominant African American women as the cause for a reversal in male leadership in African American communities (Moynihan, 1965). However, Gray-Little’s (1987) research findings showed no evidence of prevalent patterns of wife dominance among African American couples studied. Traditional marriage roles placed men as the breadwinners and leaders of their homes and women as caregivers of children and keepers of the home Shiver & CAP, 2009). However, during centuries of slavery, U.S. laws forbade marriages between African Americans, nonetheless African American men and women worked alongside one another in manual labor (Woodson, 1925). African American males were not positioned as the leaders and African American women were given more leadership roles making them less dependent on African American male leadership and protection. Gray-Little (1987) further commented that social scientists have likely interpreted African American couples’ tendencies toward egalitarianism as weakness in African American males and deviance away from normative American family values.

Conclusion

Gender roles and spouses' ability to function within those prescribed Victorian-style gender roles were once the foundation of marriage in the United States. Whether couples ascribe to those traditional gender roles or construct non-traditional gender roles practices, efforts to facilitate the accommodation of changing roles in marriage are important for consideration in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Many African Americans relate to negative historical references to race differences in the United States that did not accommodate expectations for conventional marital roles. When social scientists portray differences in African Americans as pathological challenges to normalcy, these stereotypes can negatively influence African Americans marital behaviors (Fine et al., 1987; Gray-Little, 1987; Utley, 2011).

The ACF (2012) referred to a healthy marriage as one that is mutually enriching and satisfying where both spouses have deep respect for one another and are committed to continual growth in their relationship. However, marriage professionals agree that the definition of a healthy marriage can differ within diverse populations and ethnic groups (NHMRC, 2009). An alternative to relationship education based on deficit models which compare African Americans to Caucasian middle-class models of marital stability is to develop relationship education curricula based on the strengths observed in successful marriages of African Americans. One social dynamic that has been characteristic of many African Americans is their functionality in non-traditional marriage roles. As relationship education curricula developers seek to develop relevant and culturally relatable curricula targeted toward African Americans, understanding how to navigate non-conventional gender roles in marriage will continue to be important.

Summary

Chapter 2 showed the usefulness of educational curricular considerations when designing relationship education curricula for African Americans. Marriage practitioners agree that culturally relevant development curricula are important to the success of relationship education efforts. While most relationship education curricula include instruction about commitment, communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution, scarce instruction involves clarification of how gender role ideologies can influence one's ability to be committed in marriage or communicate effectively while exercising problem solving and conflict resolution skills.

Traditional gender role expectations allow individuals to function within prescribed roles, which are useful to solving problems and resolving conflict. On the other hand, non-traditional gender roles require mutual respect and greater flexibility to consider how marriage partners can form stable marriages. Within marriage relationships, gender role expectations influence power structures, concepts of manhood and womanhood; economic perpetuity based on education and employment opportunities; and domestic roles and responsibilities. While traditional gender roles have been an expectation toward which Americans strived, African Americans were less likely to function in tradition roles in marriage. The PIES model of marital dimensions is useful to distinguish the various aspects of gender roles during data collection and content analysis of relationship curricula designed for African Americans. Chapter 3 will include a detailed explanation of the content analysis of relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. The curriculum materials allowed collection and analysis of data from the written curricula and video presentations through content analysis.

Chapter 3

Method

A rise in non-married cohabitation and divorce has increased among African Americans faster than other races, prompting the development of relationship education curricula that could meet the specific needs of African Americans (Halford et al., 2010; NHMRC, 2007). Happily married African American couples in satisfying relationships have consistently indicated that they share non-traditional gender roles within their households (Dixon, 2009). However, there has been no known exploration of gender roles within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans.

The purpose of this content analysis research was to explore relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans and consider how curriculum developers address non-conventional gender roles within the PIES marital dimensions of the explicit and implicit curricula. This study involved analyzing relationship education curricula designed for African Americans by considering non-conventional gender role references and portrayals present within the curricula. Chapter 3 presents the appropriateness of the content analysis design for this research as well as a description of the sample of curriculum materials included in this study. Gender role categories for coding are delineated by the PIES model of marital dimensions. This chapter included explanations of the data collection and analysis procedures necessary for curriculum content analysis. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the PIES model to describe gender roles are discussed.

Appropriateness of Design

Quantitative research is based on condensing information into numerical data, while qualitative studies are based on non-numerical descriptions of situations (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011). This study concerned *how* gender roles appear in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Numerical data gathered from tabulating the number of occurrences of certain gender role dynamics only elucidates one aspect of gender roles within the curricula. Additional expressive data is also necessary to identify and vividly describe diverse depictions of gender roles within the curricula.

Qualitative approaches are useful for detailed descriptions of the curricular content, however, most involve human subjects. For example, according to Christensen et al. (2011), researchers who conduct phenomenology research seek to understand and describe individuals' lived experiences, while ethnography involves submerging oneself into a culture to observe, understand, and describe the values and behaviors of individuals. Case studies are similar to the aforementioned designs in that they allow detailed descriptions of one or more individual cases (Christensen et al., 2011); on the other hand, grounded theory is appropriate for developing theories based on data analysis that lead to the development of concepts (Willis, 2007). While content analysis can accompany any of these qualitative designs during data collection and analysis, content analysis is a viable method without the involvement of human subjects.

Content analysis. Content analysis is a “unique research method in that it uses written or recorded documents rather than human subjects to shed light on humans, their beliefs, and their actions” (Forrest, 2002, p. 34 as cited in Nagle, 2004). Curriculum texts

are nonreactive, stable, and able to be accessed easily (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis of documents is cost effective and allows social scientists to bypass challenges of using surveys, which reduces bias that can influence data if survey participants are hesitant or neglect to include personal information (Bean, 2008; United States General Accounting Office, 1989) as is common in marriage research. This research method is appropriate because systematic analysis of curriculum content provides exploration of the complete record of the intended curriculum. Content analysis allowed exploration of non-conventional gender role depictions based on what was included within curricula and not rely on subjective interviews of curriculum developers about their perceptions or intentions to portray egalitarian gender roles in these relationship education curricula,.

Klaus Krippendorff is a pioneer in developing content analysis methodology that allows systematic evaluation of recorded communications. Krippendorff posited that content analysis should consider the context and environmental factors that influence curriculum developers' curricular designs (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis allows examination of symbolic written documents and recorded works. Additionally, this research design allows consideration of the context and perspective that informs documents and works under examination (Nagle, 2004). Understanding the circumstances that lead to the development of relationship education curricula developed for African Americans is necessary to draw appropriate conclusions from the content analysis. Krippendorff's work with content analysis informed Nagel's (2004) understanding of content analysis. Nagel posited that "content analysis is the only method to offer sound findings from data alone" (p. 51). In content analysis, the researcher in the primary

research instrument for inquiry and brings his or her tacit knowledge and experiences to form judgment (Bean, 2008; Krippendorff, 2007).

Issitt (2004) described content analysis of texts as a research tool that allows the configuration of social values and prevailing ideas within curricula. Social scientists have used content analysis to evaluate written material and elucidate issues surrounding diversity (Nagle, 2004), which was relative to this study. Often the developers of relationship education curricula include explanations of the motivation behind the curricula within their curricula materials. Analyzing the developers' explanations of the purpose and intentions of the curricula through content analysis allowed insight into their curriculum development process. A content analysis design allowed unique exploration of the relationship education curricula involved in this study.

The most effective content analyses allow for use of both deductive quantitative approaches and inductive qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Content analysis is an emergent design, allowing inductive flexibility, while at the same time; content analysis can be deductive and characteristic of quantitative methods (Nagle, 2004) necessary for a priori coding. In content analysis, researchers can conceptualize coding categories deductively or inductively, with the possibility that categories may overlap one another once the analysis begins (United States General Accounting Office, 1989). Qualitatively, researchers can also generate emergent categories during data collection as they identify important themes and categories within the text (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This research involved qualitative analysis of explicit and implicit messages utilizing quantitative deductive approaches to predetermine

coding categories—the political, intercultural, economic and social dimensions of marriage. When possible, results include data displayed through descriptive statistics.

Research Questions

The central research question of this study was:

How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?

Reflected in the central research question was the purpose of the study, which was to investigate how curricula developers address gender roles within the PIES marital dimensions—political, intercultural, economic, and social—in the explicit and implicit curricula of relationship education curricula designed for African Americans through analysis of curriculum materials. The explicit curriculum reflects the manifest content within communications and includes the overt or written text within the curriculum contents (Kondracki et al., 2002). The implicit curricula involves the latent messages in communications that include hidden symbolism within artifacts and images that may be perceived by learners but not formally addressed in the written text (Kondracki et al., 2002). The research path flow chart is included in Appendix C. The research sub-questions that guided this study were:

Research Sub-question 1: *Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?*

Research Sub-question 2: *Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African*

Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?

Sample and Population

The population of curricula developed for African Americans was a subset of the more than 100 curricula promoted in the relationship education field. Selection of curricula for the study's sample was based on the inclusion of these curricula on marriage resource sites, like Smart Marriages, the Administration of Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative, and the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. These sites promote research-based relationship education curricula and programs. There were six widely publicized relationship education curricula designed to meet the needs of African Americans. The three curricula selected for the sample of this study included both written and video components of curricula and were accessible and available for purchase by the public. Curricula developers granted permission for use of their curricula in this study (Appendix D) and provided complete curriculum material for the curricula upon request.

The data for this content analysis originated from the three selected curricula that represent the research-based marriage curricula relative to African Americans found on marriage research sites. The curricula included in this study were *Program for Strong African American Marriages* (ProSAAM) (Christian PREP, Inc., 2009), *Basic Training for Couples* (BTC) (Slack, & Muhammed, 2007), and both the weekly and monthly versions of *For Christian Lovers Only* (FCLO) (Walker & Walker, 2009) (see Table 1). The selected curricula included the complete curricula materials provided for both facilitators and participants, included both written lessons and video lessons, were developed between 2001 and 2010, involved African American contributors in

Table 1
Overview of Relationship Education Included in Study

Curriculum Materials	Year of Publication	Number of Lessons	Leader Manual	Overview provided	Video lessons
Program for Strong African American Marriages (ProSAAM)	2009	9	yes	yes	yes
Basic Training for Couples (BTC)	2007	8	yes	yes	yes
For Christian Lovers Only-Weekly (FLCO-W)	2009	8	yes	yes	yes
For Christian Lovers Only-Monthly (FLCO-M)	2009	12	yes	yes	yes

Note: The *For Christian Lovers Only* curriculum materials include a curriculum for weekly sessions (FLCO-W) as well as a curriculum for monthly marriage enrichment sessions (FLCO-M). Both curricula were analyzed in this study.

development, expressed intent for use in religious environments, and did not target African Americans based on low socioeconomic status. Content analysis of these curricula allowed research that reflects trends in society about gender roles in both the explicit messages and the implicit messages within curriculum materials.

Durrani (2007) asserted that curriculum developers should not impose one homogenous identity on individuals. Curricula developers provided copies of their curricula upon request (See Appendix E) and the curricula used in this study approach African American culture from different perspectives and fields of study. BTC was a collaboration between relationship professional and a lay citizen who sought to influence Marriages among African Americans. ProSAAM is based in psychology and adapted from the oldest relationship education program, PREP. ProSAAM incorporated tenets of prayer into activities; however, FCLO was the only curriculum in this study that was

overtly Christian. A husband and wife team developed the FCLO curricula based on Christian principles and intended for Christian audiences.

Curricula developer of the *African American Marriage Enrichment Program* curricula also provided a sample of their curriculum; however, because it does not include video lessons, it was not included in this study. Another curriculum available on the marriage education websites was *10 Great Dates for Black Couples*, however, it was not included because the developer of that curriculum also co-developed the BTC curriculum and there was more emphasis on dating and less on the instructional curricular component. Additionally, *Exploring Relationships and Marriage with Fragile Families*, was not included in this study because of its emphasis on urban, low-income, and low-skilled individuals. The curricula included in this study targeted African Americans and not based on socioeconomic status.

Instrumentation

The researcher is the primary instrument in content analysis that involves interpretation of messages (Bean, 2008; Krippendorff, 2004). Krippendorff (2004) asserted that “the context of [a text] is always someone’s construction, the conceptual environment of the text, [and] the situation in which it plays a role” (p. 33). According to Krippendorff, texts do not have single meanings conceptualized in the same manner by all readers. Texts are context sensitive and can be interpreted differently by different people (Krippendorff, 2004). The bias of the researcher was mitigated by the structure provided through the PIES gender role descriptions. Additionally, traditional gender role constructs epitomize distinct characteristics and behaviors that are confirmed through research (Erchull et al., 2010; Giele, 2008). See Table 2 for gender role descriptions.

Table 2

PIES Dimensions Descriptions

PIES Dimensions	Description	Conventional gender roles	Possible non-conventional male gender roles	Possible non-conventional female gender roles
Political Dimension	Positioning in power and decision making	Husband is the leader and decision maker, wives support husbands decisions	Symmetrical partnership in power; flexible decision making	Symmetrical partnership in power; flexible decision making
Intercultural Dimension	Views about manhood and womanhood attributes	Innate characteristics of men and women; complement one another in specific roles	Ex. affectionate, sympathetic, compassionate, soft spoken, or yielding	Ex. independent, decisive, risk taker, ambitious, assertive, or dominant
Economic Dimension	Attainment of education and employment	Husbands are financial providers, have higher education, and have employment outside of the home	Work in the home; unemployed or lower income than wife	Pursing or attaining higher education, working outside the home, making highest income
Social Dimension	Contributions to domestic roles and responsibilities	Husbands handle business of home; Wives responsible for housekeeping, meals, and childcare	Housekeeping, cooking, and childcare	Home repairs and maintenance, handles household business and financial matters

Data Collection

Researchers use content analysis to make inferences about identified topics in a communication medium. Utilizing the PIES model in this content analysis allowed systematic exploration of political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions within the explicit and implicit dimensions of the selected relationship education curricula (See Appendix C). In this research, the political dimension involved how couples distribute power amongst themselves and make decisions. The intercultural dimension included the values and beliefs about male masculinity and female femininity. The economic dimension involves the employment, educational, and income situations of the husband

and wife in marriage. Finally, the social dimension included the domestic roles and responsibilities of married couples.

These four PIES dimensions provided the a priori coding for this study and represent the categories involved in the content analysis, which allowed exploration to determine the explicit, manifest messages and the implicit, latent messages of the curriculum materials. Through analysis of manifest messages within curricula, summarization of explicit written content material was possible. Analysis of latent messages produces descriptions of attitudes and perceptions (Bean, 2008) about gender roles in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans.

The central research question was:

How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?

The research sub-questions incorporate the aspects of two concurrent curricula involved in any curriculum—the explicit curriculum and implicit curriculum. These *curricula within the curriculum* influence every aspect of learning and conflict or misalignment between these internal curricula can cause a curriculum to be less effective (Allan, Smith, & O'Driscoll, 2011). In content analyses, the explicit and implicit curricula are synonymous with the manifest and latent messages, respectively.

Explicit curricula. Analysis of the explicit curriculum informed Research Question 1: *Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?*

The manifest messages from the explicit, overt, or written curriculum represent the curriculum as it appears in formal course materials (Posner, 2004). Curricula designers develop relationship education curricula to be *teach-out-of-the-box* curricula that allow individuals to teach curricula with the materials provided in curriculum packages (Hauer et al., 2009).

Relationship education curricula materials commonly show couples in neutral gender situations that do not situate husbands and wives in gender roles associated with the PIES model. Many curriculum developers do not include gender role topics in curriculum documents. These curricula referenced the need for communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills, without mentioning how hierarchal gender role structures may influence decision-making. Curricula designers often refer to participants as *couples*, *spouses*, or *mates* (Slack, & Muhammed, 2007), remaining gender neutral throughout course materials about how gender roles influence marital dynamics. For manifest coding and analysis of the explicit curricula, this study considered sentences that contain the words *man*, *woman*, *husband*, *wife*, *male*, and *female* where the use of gender specific terms are included.

Written text consisted of instructional content, activity instruction, and homework assignments. Video lessons lessen the volume of written content, making curricula more accessible and more appealing to different kind of learners while providing supplemental information not included in the written text. Examining the written text involved analyzing sentences including the words *man*, *woman*, *husband*, *wife*, *male*, and *female* (and their plural forms). Further analysis of the context of sentences allowed coding based on PIES dimensions.

Implicit curricula. Analysis of the implicit curriculum informed Research

Question 2: *Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?* The implicit curriculum, also referred to as the hidden curriculum or latent messages is often based on interactions with experienced mentors and role models; intended to socialize learners into specific behaviors and practice (Allan et al., 2011). The implicit curriculum includes “the unplanned experiencing of things such as the taken-for-granted rules, rituals, and regulations” (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 11) that are not always apparent in the learning environment (Posner, 2004).

The implicit curricula is a major concern in relationship education learning environments because each learning experience varies from site to site, depends on course facilitators, influenced by the input of peers in the group, and confined to the values systems of the sponsoring organization or institution. The implicit curriculum is also influenced by what participants observe in the video lessons included in the *out-of-the-box* curricula. While it was not possible to gauge a consistent perspective about the implicit curriculum within each learning environment, it was possible to analyze the dimensions presented in the teaching videos. The video lessons show commentaries from professionals, couple teams’ lectures, and video vignettes of couples dealing with problem solving and conflict resolution. The analysis of the implicit curricula involved reviewing video lessons for the inclusion of gender role symbolism to explicate latent messages based on the PIES dimensions.

Power structures are often noticeable in hierarchical relationships within organizations (Giele, 2008). Symmetrical partnerships are indicative of egalitarian relationships. In analysis of the video lessons, political dimension was identified by demonstrations of symmetrical partnership in power and flexibility in decision-making. The intercultural dimension in the PIES dimension represented the values and perspectives individuals have about manhood and womanhood in marriage. While masculine and feminine characteristics once attributed concrete personality traits to either males or females, research now supports flexibility in personal characteristics for men and women (Sadeghi & Kasim, 2012). The intercultural dimension of the PIES model considered how video lessons depict non-conventional male and female character attributes. The economic dimension allowed analysis of non-conventional economic activities and behaviors that were depicted in the video lessons, including how education or employment of a spouse affects household economics. Additionally, the social dimension included consideration of non-conventional roles and responsibilities concerning household chores and care for children.

Data Analysis

Analysis of gender role messaging of the explicit and implicit curricula within each curriculum was the focus of this content analysis. Exploring curriculum documents allow “analysis of the intentions of an educational program, the decisions that led its implementation, and the inherent values that were the basis of the decision to implement the program and carry it out” (DiGiorgo, 2010, p. 283). To situate the data analysis in a context similar to that experienced by facilitators and learners, data collection only involved the curriculum materials provided in the teach-out-of-the-box curriculum

packages. Analysis of curriculum materials allowed insight into the varying approaches that each curriculum developer used to moderate the topic of gender roles. Data analysis included an investigation of the relationship education curriculum materials and artifacts that include instruction guides, workbooks, video teachings, and other instructional documents. Analysis of these relationship education curriculum materials designed for African Americans centered on the PIES model—political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions of marriage—the various dimensions that described the organization of marital gender roles in this study.

Triangulation. Triangulation involves the use of two or more methods, data sources, investigators, methodologies or analyses to strengthen the outcome of a study (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Hussien, 2009; Olienik, 2011). While triangulation is often used to ensure internal validity, it is also used to allow deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Denzin, n.d.). This study combines theoretical triangulation, data triangulation, and methodological triangulation to gain a more comprehensive view of the depictions of gender roles in the selected curricula.

Theoretical triangulation. This study involved theoretical triangulation—the use of two or more theoretical perspectives to research a phenomenon (Guion et al., 2011; Hussien, 2009; Olienik, 2011). There are various theories used to discuss marriage theories in literature (Aarseth & Olsen, 2008; Ali et al., 2011; Becker, 1974; Finlay & Clarke, 2003; Hill, 2006; Gudhlanga, Chirimuuta, & Bhukuvhani, 2012; Humble, 2009). The PIES model of gender roles employed in this research allows analysis of gender roles within marriage based on multiple theories of marriage that involve the political aspects of marriage regarding power and decision making, the intercultural values about manhood

and womanhood, economic dynamics influenced by spouses' education and employment, and social domestic responsibilities within the household.

Data triangulation. This study involved data triangulation—the use of two or more data sources to research a phenomenon (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Hussien, 2009; Olienik, 2011). The curriculum materials under investigation in this study contain written lessons and video lessons included in curricula materials. Each of these data sources provided insight into how gender roles are portrayed in the full curricula based on the PIES model. The PIES dimensions provide the a priori coding for the written text and gender role interactions for descriptions of the video lessons.

Methodological triangulation. The population of curricula developed for African Americans was relatively small amidst the more than 100 curricula promoted in the relationship education field. Selection of curricula was based on the inclusion of these curricula on marriage resource sites, like Smart Marriages, the Administration of Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative, and the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. These sites promote research-based relationship education curricula and programs. There were six widely publicized relationship education curricula designed to meet the needs of African Americans. The three curricula selected for the sample of this study were accessible and available for purchase by the public. Curricula developers granted permission for use of their curricula in this study (Appendix D) and provided complete curriculum material for the curricula upon request.

Explicit curriculum analysis. The explicit curricula represents the manifests messages expressed in the curricula. Often curricula developers use the words spouses, mates, or couples to refer to participants (Slack & Muhammed, 2007). When gender

curricula developers included gender specific references—*man, woman, husband, wife, male, and female*—the context of the reference was determined based on surrounding words, phrases, and sentences based on the PIES dimensions as shown in Table 2.

Reporting of the findings involved frequency charts that show whether gender references are conventional or non-conventional in each lesson of the curricula and, also, allowed comparisons between curricula. Additionally, the descriptive reporting allowed descriptions based on the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions of the PIES model.

Implicit curriculum analysis. The implicit curriculum is often elusive because it involves diverse influences from the learning environment that are not able to be determined

from learning environment to learning environment. The video lessons were a consistent aspect of the learning environment. Because curricula developers are often scant in their use of gender specific roles in the written texts, the video lessons provided necessary insight into perspectives about gender roles that are communicated through the curricula. The results were reported as detailed descriptions of relevant communications.

Additionally, frequency tables showed descriptions of types of non-conventional gender roles exhibited in the video lessons based on PIES criteria (Table 2 & Appendix F).

Reliability and Validity

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) explained that rigor is the expectation of all sound research and insures quality research, which in quantitative research refers to reliability and validity. According to Roberts, Priest, and Traynor, (2006), reliability refers to the consistency with which one can expect to arrive at the same

findings if the research was repeated, while validity "describes the extent to which a measure accurately represents the concept it claims to measure" (p. 43). This content analysis used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, by deductively developing categories and reporting descriptive data, while inductively collecting and coding data. Some researchers question the appropriateness of reliability and validity for research involving qualitative measures and assert that in qualitative research "reliability and validity have been subtly replaced by criteria and standards for evaluation of the overall significance, relevance, impact, and utility of completed research" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 3).

Trustworthiness. In the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln suggested a parallel concept of trustworthiness compatible with validity and reliability, by which to address rigor in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Morse et al., 2002; Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Morse et al., 2002, p. 2). Rigor in this content analysis involves:

- credibility (in reference to internal validity [reproducible]);
- transferability (in reference to external validity [generalizable]);
- dependability (in reference to reliability [consistent]);
- confirmability (in reference to objectivity). (Shenton, 2004, p. 63-64)

The systematic use of the PIES model to describe gender roles reinforced efforts to ensure that this research was reproducible, generalizable, consistent, and involved an objective framework for exploration of the relationship education curricula.

Credibility. Credibility is a reference to internal validity—the capacity of research to be reproduced (Shenton, 2004). Content analysis does not require sophisticated

technology and bypasses the challenges of survey research "including non-probability sampling; small sample sizes; poorly constructed questions and the time invested in data gathering" (Guidera, 2009, p. 17). The PIES model allowed systematic exploration upon which analyses was based. Descriptions of gender role dynamics within political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions informed data analysis. The instrument used to determine reliability also provided constructs within the PIES dimensions that allow reproduction of the research to confirm internal validity (Table 2 & Appendix F).

Transferability. Transferability is a reference to the external validity—the generalizability of research findings (Shenton, 2004). This study included three relationship education curricula. McEachin (2011) asserted the advantages that multiple research studies have toward establishing validity and generalizability. Exploring three curricula allowed comparisons that provided further insight about whether gender role constructs are characteristic of one curriculum or generally characteristic of curricula designed for African Americans.

Although the relationship education curricula involved in this study were targeted toward African Americans, issues surrounding gender roles in marriages are generalizable. Besides applicability to other African American curricula, many marital constructs identified through the PIES model may also be relevant to general populations in the 21st century. Because most relationship education curricula for African Americans are adaptations of generalized relationship education curricula, transferability of the research findings is plausible. While this study involved relationship education curricula targeted toward African American individuals, components of these courses are also effectively used with other races and ethnic groups (Christian PREP, Inc., 2009; Slack & Muhammed,

2007; Walker & Walker, 2009). Additionally, interracial and multicultural blending of values may make the findings of this research applicable to general relationship education curricula.

Dependability. Dependability is related to the consistency and reliability of the research. This study involved analyses of manifest and latent messages in curriculum materials that consist of written text and video lessons. To determine the reliability of characteristics and behaviors considered conventional and non-conventional based on the PIES model, reliability procedures were conducted with the assistance of a social work professional that has a background in psychology and provides marriage counseling in religious settings. The professional was the second coder who helped establish the inter-coder reliability along with the primary researcher. The diverse experiences the second coder has in fields that undergird relationship education are beneficial to understanding the gender role perspectives involved in relationship education.

The primary researcher and the second coder categorized descriptions of conventional and unconventional marital gender roles to determine agreement and disagreement about the classification of gender role descriptions (See Appendix F). There was 97% agreement representing 32 of the 33 statements about conventional and nonconventional marital gender roles. Krippendorff (2004) identified 0.8 as the minimum acceptable inter-coder reliability co-efficient. Krippendorff's alpha (agreement co-efficient) for the conventional and nonconventional marital gender roles was high, .937.

Confirmability. Confirmability is a reference to the objectivity of research. While content analysis introduces potential bias in that the researcher is the instrument (Krippendorff, 2004), other bias that is typical of research designs that employ qualitative

approaches and use human subjects for primary data collection is reduced (Bean, 2008). The researcher's experiences are important because the researcher is the primary instrument in content analysis (Nagle, 2004). This research involved the perspective of an African American woman who grew up in a home where dual-career and college degree attainment was the expectation. Yet, she chose a career that included spending much of her adult life as an educator—first in public schools and later as a homeschooling, stay-at-home mother. Despite having earned her master's degree and having entrepreneurial experiences, her husband has provided the primary financial support for the household for over fifteen years.

The dichotomies of these experiences allowed a perspective that values and respects both conventional and non-conventional gender roles. The viewpoints of Christianity relevant to gender roles were also represented within this perspective. Additionally, there was an opportunity to approach gender roles in a manner that acknowledges both conventional and non-conventional gender roles from an African American female perspective that is valuable to research for African Americans (Abrams, 2010; Hill, 2002).

Summary

Chapter 3 included an explanation of the methodology employed in the current study. The purpose of this content analysis research was to explore how curriculum developers depict non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. Content analysis and its relevance to curriculum analysis of explicit and implicit concurrent curricula were included in this chapter. The population of the study is six relationship education curricula designed for African Americans

available from marriage resources websites. The sample consisted of three curricula created from 2001 to 2010 that African Americans fully or partially developed for use in religious settings.

Elements of both quantitative and qualitative designs were involved in this content analysis and allowed for exploration of manifest and latent messages of communication materials. Theoretical triangulation, data triangulation, and methodological triangulation were involved in this study for comprehensive exploration of gender roles in the selected curricula. The PIES model of marital dimensions allowed deductive a priori coding categories that involved counting occurrences of gender roles expressions explicitly and implicitly in the written and video texts text, respectively. Data collection sheets included categories that allowed the recording of descriptive data to communicate the frequency of occurrences as well as details about the occurrences of non-conventional gender role depictions. Collected data allowed comparisons between explicit and implicit messages of curricula to identify consistencies and inconsistencies within concurrent curricula.

Chapter 4

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this content analysis research was to explore explicit and implicit concurrent curricula within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans, and consider how curricula developers depicted non-conventional gender roles through the PIES model of marital dimensions. The study involved three relationship curricula: *Basic Training for Couples*, *For Christian Lovers Only*, and *Program for Strong African American Marriages*. Analysis of these curricula, provided information about how curricula developers addressed gender roles in curricula designed for African Americans.

Chapter 3 detailed the research approach of this content analysis study, which involved the consideration of both manifest (explicit) and latent (implicit) messages included within the curricula. Chapter 4 includes descriptions of the sample of curricula involved in the study. Reviews of the PIES model, conventional and non-conventional gender roles, and data collection procedures precede the research findings and analyses.

Curricula Sample and Descriptions

The number of curricula developed specifically for African Americans was a small subset of the more than 100 curricula promoted in the relationship education field. Selection of curricula for the study's sample was based on the inclusion of these curricula on marriage resource sites, like Smart Marriages, the Administration of Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative, and the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. These sites promote research-based relationship education curricula and programs. There were six widely publicized relationship education curricula designed to meet the needs of

African Americans. The three curricula selected for the sample of this study included both written and video lessons and were accessible and available for purchase by the public. Curricula developers granted permission for use of their curricula in this study (Appendix D) and provided complete curriculum materials for the curricula upon request (Appendix E).

ProSAAM developers referred to their written texts as instructor and participant manuals. FCLO developers referred to their texts as the leader's guide and the participant's workbook, while BTC did not use specific language for their texts. In this study, the general terms *leader manual* and *participant manual* delineated facilitator and learner texts, respectively, for each curriculum. Additionally, within each curriculum, different terms identified chapter sections (i.e. sessions and modules). These sections are titled *lessons* for all curriculum materials in this study. An overview of the curricula is included in Table 3.

Basic Training for Couples. The *Basic Training for Couples* (BTC) (Slack, & Muhammed, 2007) curricula was collaboration between a male specialist in couples and family issues, and a female advocate for marriage in African American communities. She is the founder of the Wedded Bliss Foundation and is the creator of annual Black Marriage Day events. The BTC curriculum includes eight lessons, written texts, and video lessons featuring the authors.

Curricula developers stored the curriculum materials on a compact disc and two DVDs. There were 51 pages and 77 pages in the leader and participant manual, respectively. The written text included much of the same lesson content expressed verbally on the video lessons, with additional activities for the participants to complete

during video breaks. The video lessons accompanied the lesson texts, and there were two

Table 3

Overview of Curricula

Curriculum	Manual	No. of Pages	Full Lesson Text	Activities/ Exercises	Stand Alone Text	Video	Stand Alone Video
BTC	Leader	51	yes	yes	yes	Full	yes
	Participant	77	yes	yes	yes		
FCLO-M	Leader	98	yes	yes	no	Intro	no
	Participant	107	yes	yes	no		
FCLO-W	Leader	75	yes	yes	no	Intro	no
	Participant	62	yes	yes	no		
ProSAAM	Leader	56	no	yes	no	Full	yes
	Participant	29	no	yes	no		

small vignettes included on the DVD.

For Christian Lovers Only. The *For Christian Lovers Only* (FCLO) (Walker & Walker, 2009) curriculum included both the FCLO-M monthly (twelve lessons) and FCLO-W weekly (eight lessons) curricula materials in this study. Data collection and analysis occurred separately for FCLO-M and FCLO-W curricula. A husband and wife co-developed the FCLO curricula to contain an expressly Christian perspective, replete with Biblical scriptures and examples to support each lesson. The FCLO-W focused on communication skills, while the FCLO-M lessons centered on general marriage enrichment based on problem solving life situations, through knowledge and skills deemed necessary for a successful marriage. There were a total of 183 pages in the leader

manual and 174 pages in the participant manual from the FCLO curricula included in this research. The written texts contained detailed explanations of lessons. Conversely, the videos provided only video introductions presented by the authors on DVDs for written lesson text. The FCLO-M video introductions included video vignettes of a couple illustrating the topics of each of the lessons, while the FCLO-W provides a simple overview by the authors.

Program for Strong African American Marriages. *Program for Strong African American Marriages* (ProSAAM) (Christian PREP, Inc., 2009) was developed by the oldest recognized producer of relationship education curricula, PREP. Curricula developers adapted ProSAAM curricula from the PREP and Christian PREP curricula, with the assistance of African American scholars in the relationship education field. Written and video leader and participant materials were included in the curriculum packets and there were nine modules in the curriculum. There were 56 pages in the leader manual and 29 pages in the participant manual. The video presentations included footage from PREP's *Fighting for Your Marriage* videos that included psychologist commentaries and couples' vignettes of conflict resolution and problem-solving situations. Additionally, the Seventh Day Adventist Church produced video segments titled *From This Day Forward*, which featured presentations by leader couples in front of an audience of couples. The ProSAAM curriculum emphasized the importance and usefulness of prayer in marriage. The curricula developers designed the ProSAAM DVD as continuous play videos. The video included visual countdown timers on the screen for breaks and activity sessions, which ensure uniformity in the presentation of the curriculum in the learning environment.

Instrumentation

This content analysis involved exploring the *explicit* and *implicit* curricula of three relationship education curricula designed for African Americans, which represented the *manifest* and *latent* messages of the curricula, respectively. There were four phases involved in the data analysis procedures. The first phase involved conceptual analysis that included tallies of gendered terms—*man*, *woman*, *husband*, *wife*, *male*, and *female*—within each curriculum. In Phase 2, the gendered terms were coded based on the PIES model. In Phase 3, each gendered reference was coded as *conventional* or *non-conventional* and phase 4 involves written narrative descriptions of video presentations based on PIES dimensions.

PIES Model of Marital Dimensions. While the context of a text is based on individuals' construction of the conceptual understandings of the environment within the text (Krippendorff, 2004), the PIES model of marriage dimensions helped create the contexts within which data could be collected and analyzed systematically in Phase 2. The PIES is based on the SPELIT Power Matrix, an analysis methodology that allows diagnostic benchmarking prior to a planned intervention in an organization (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007). Variations of SPELIT have been included in organizational market analyses (PEST, 2012). Furthermore, organizational leaders have used SPELIT in conjunction with SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) analyses and educators in higher education incorporate this method into graduate level comprehensive examinations (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2013). The adapted PIES model was appropriate for this study as a method to analyze the depiction of gender roles in the curricula involved in this study.

When considering gender roles, the PIES model represents four dimensions of marriage—*political, intercultural, economic, and social*. The political dimension represents how couples wield power and make decisions in the relationship, while the intercultural dimension represented the values and ideological beliefs about male masculinity and female femininity. Additionally, the economic dimension involves the educational and employment influences within the household and the social dimension represents the domestic roles and responsibilities of married couples. The PIES model allowed analysis of various aspects of marital gender roles that may have otherwise been indistinguishable (Appendix B). Phase 3 focused on classification of the gendered references as conventional or non-conventional based on predetermined characteristics.

Validity and Reliability. The PIES model of marital roles provided distinct criteria to analyze data and increase internal validity, so that the study is reproducible (Shelton, 2004). The PIES model also influences the external validity that involves the generalizability of the study (Shelton, 2004) to the population of six relationship education curricula designed for African Americans, which are included on marriage enrichment websites: African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network, the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, and Alabama Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Initiative. Furthermore, the PIES model supported triangulation with two or more theories [traditional and egalitarian marriage theories], data sources [written and video lessons], and methods [manifest and latent messaging] to study the phenomenon (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Hussien, 2009; Olienik, 2011) of gender roles in a heterosexual marriage context.

The reliability of the conventional and non-conventional gender roles instrument was included in chapter 3. In addition to the primary researcher, a social work professional with a background in psychology and marital counseling in religious settings helped establish inter-coder reliability. There was a 97% agreement between coders about the classification of non-conventional and conventional gender roles (See Appendix F). The inter-coder reliability was high and Krippendorff's (agreement) coefficient was .937, showing the consistency with which conventional and non-conventional gender role behaviors and characteristics are likely to be characterized in the same manner.

Biblical references to gendered terms. Two of the curricula included Biblical scriptural gendered terms; however, Biblical gendered terms were not included as tallied gendered references. The interpretations of those scriptural passages were included within the curriculum text provided by curricula developers. Excluding scriptural passages from data analysis reduced researcher bias. Furthermore, excluding gendered terms within scriptural passages allowed the content analysis to remain focused on the context in which the curriculum developers used scripture texts, and decreased the likelihood of incorporating external interpretations about the scriptures that informed the curricula texts.

Data Analysis Procedures

Content analysis of texts involved both conceptual analysis and relational analysis. Conceptual analysis informed Phase 1 of the data analysis by providing tallies of gendered terms. Relational analysis facilitated exploration of the relationships between identified gendered terms, based on the PIES model (Phase 2) to determine whether gender role depictions were conventional or non-conventional (Phase 3). Biblical gender references were not included in data counts. Analysis of the explicit curricula included both

conceptual and relational analyses. Narrative descriptions of gender roles, based on the PIES dimensions, were included for analysis of the explicit curriculum text and the implicit messages communicated through the video lessons (Phase 4). The four phases of data collection were as follows:

- Phase 1: Conceptual analysis of written text—counting gendered terms
- Phase 2: Relational analysis of written text—coding gendered terms using the PIES model, including written descriptions of manifest messaging of the gendered references (Appendix B)
- Phase 3: Relational analysis of written text—coding gendered terms based on conventional and non-conventional gender role descriptions (Appendix F)
- Phase 4: Content analysis of video presentations—writing narrative descriptions of latent messaging in videos based on the PIES model

The central research question of this study was: *How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?* The four PIES categories provided a priori coding categories for the content analysis and allowed exploration of the explicit and implicit concurrent curricula within each of the relationship curricula involved in this study. Two sub-questions guided the exploration of conventional and non-conventional gender roles within the explicit and implicit curricula.

Explicit curricula. Sub-question 1 informed data analysis of the explicit curricula: *Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?*

Because relationship curricula most often refer to husbands and wives in neutral gender contexts (i.e. couples, mates, or spouses), the study centered on the occurrences of the gendered terms man, woman, husband, wife, male, and female (and their plural and possessive forms) within the written text. Analysis of the explicit curricula involved conceptual and relational analysis.

Conceptual analysis. In Phase 1, data collection for conceptual analysis of the explicit curricula involved reading through each text manual, including printed copies of the BTC manuals. Highlighting the terms—*man, woman, husband, wife, male, and female*—identified the gendered terms within the manuals. The plural and possessive forms of the terms were also included, while combined terms (i.e. males and females, men and women, or husbands and wives) were excluded and considered substitutes for *mates, couples, or spouses*. The total of gendered terms were tallied for each page and written on a post-it note affixed to each page of the manuals. The sums on the post-it notes were totaled, showing the number of references in each curriculum.

To prevent duplicate data within the curricula, data that was represented in both the leader and participant manuals were included only once. The BTC leader manual, which served as an overview for facilitators, contained only three gendered terms and was a duplicate from the BTC participant manual. The FCLO-M participant manual contained duplicates of the FCLO-M leader manual, with no new gendered terms introduced. Similarly, the FCLO-W participant manual contained duplicates of the FCLO-W leader manual, with no new gendered terms introduced. The ProSAAM curriculum contained no duplicate gendered term references between the leader and participant manuals. Data

collection for this study included the BTC participant manual, FCLO-M leader manual, FCLO-W leader manual, and the ProSAAM leader manual.

Relational analysis. Performing the relational analysis required revisiting the pages of each manual to document each occurrence on a spreadsheet. A spreadsheet file held the record of the tallies of the gendered terms. The spreadsheet headings allowed documentation of the curriculum and leader or participant manual identification, the lesson, the page number, the gendered term used, and the relevant PIES dimension described. Descriptions of the gendered references that were also included on the spreadsheet facilitated further coding of the occurrence as *conventional* or *non-conventional*.

Descriptions about the gendered terms that appeared in lists or bulleted form were separated and counted as individual cases. In Phase 2, the contexts of the gendered terms within sentences or paragraphs were coded based on the PIES model. Each gendered term was coded with P, I, E, or S based on whether it exemplified the political (P), intercultural (I), economic (E), or social (S) dimensions of the PIES model. References that represented multiple dimensions were included as individual cases on the spreadsheet, so that each case represented one PIES dimension entry. Each case was then coded, in Phase 3, as conventional (C) or non-conventional (NC). When labeling as conventional or non-conventional, was not possible, NA showed that the C and NC labels were not applicable to that case. Eventually, the terms man, woman, husband, wife, male, and female (plural and possessive forms included) were consolidated and coded as male (M) or female (F) to show the sex that each gendered term referenced.

Implicit curricula. Sub-question 2 guided data collection from the implicit curricula presented through the videos: *Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?* The implicit curricula involved the aspects of the learning environment not explicitly stated in the overt curricula, representing the symbolism, artifacts, and other unintentional aspects of the learning environment. Phase 4, analysis of the latent messages, also involved examination of the presenters' words, tone, and body language. Content analysis of the video involved consideration of the gender role symbolism in the video messages based on the PIES model, including the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions. Descriptions and narratives were identified and recorded in writing while viewing the video lessons, based on the PIES dimensions displayed in the messaging. Data included the presenters' interactions as well as the verbal content and context of the video presentations.

Findings

Sub-question 1–Explicit curricula. The explicit curricular analysis of manifest messages within the written text was based on the PIES model. The *political* dimension represented the power and decision-making dynamics displayed in the explicit curricula of the written text. The *intercultural* dimension represented how beliefs and values about masculinity and femininity are shown in the explicit curricula of the written text. The *economic* dimension represents the educational and employment influences in the household apparent in the explicit curricula of the written text. The *social* dimension

represents how the domestic roles and responsibilities distributed in the household are included in the explicit curricula of the written manuals.

Conceptual analysis. Phase 1, the conceptual analysis of the explicit curricula, involved the written text provided in the curriculum materials. In the ProSAAM curricula, the term "men" was used one time in the ProSAAM leader manual. There were two scripture references in ProSAAM participant manual not included in data analysis. The BTC participant manual contained 88 gendered terms. The FCLO curricula developers employed extensive use of Biblical scripture references throughout the curricula as a foundation for their lessons. The FCLO-W leader manual contained 51 occurrences of gendered terms. Excluding scriptural references, the FCLO-W contained 48 gendered terms. The FCLO-M contained 184 gendered term references. Many of the occurrences of gendered terms were within Biblical scriptural references, which were not included in data analysis. While the gendered term occurrences in the FCLO-W manuals were minimal, the FCLO-M manuals showed a greater incorporation of Biblical references into the curriculum that decreased the number of gendered terms by almost half of the original tallies. There were 103 occurrences of non-Biblical terms in the FCLO-M, 56% of the total 184 occurrences of gendered terms in that text.

Data collection involved the BTC participant manual, FCLO-M leader manual, FCLO-W leader manual, and the ProSAAM leader manual for the remainder of data analysis Phases 2 and 3. It was necessary to consider a relational analysis that incorporated the PIES dimensions of marital roles and conventional and non-conventional coding to determine how the curricula developers depicted non-conventional roles within

the curricula. The relational analysis of data from the explicit curricula involved only the non-scriptural gendered terms.

Relational analysis. The relational analysis expanded the number of cases beyond those included in the conceptual analysis. The relational analysis that related gendered references to the PIES dimensions required the creation of individual cases when the context of a gendered term represented more than one PIES dimension. Narrative descriptions of the written text based on the PIES model informed the descriptive statistics detailed below as part of the relational analysis. Detailed narrative descriptions of the relational analysis are located in Appendix G. Appendix H shows the cross tabulations of the curricula, the PIES dimensions and conventional and non-conventional classifications.

Descriptive statistics of PIES dimensions. After indicating the PIES dimensions represented by each gendered reference and separating each occurrence into separate cases on the spreadsheet, there were 276 (N=276) cases involved in the descriptive statistics data analysis of the explicit curricula. Over all the curricula combined, FCLO-M contained the most gendered references at 52.5% (145), while BTC curriculum included 38.4% (106) of the PIES references, FLCO-W included 8.7% (24), and ProSAAM included 0.4% (1) PIES reference. See Figure 2.

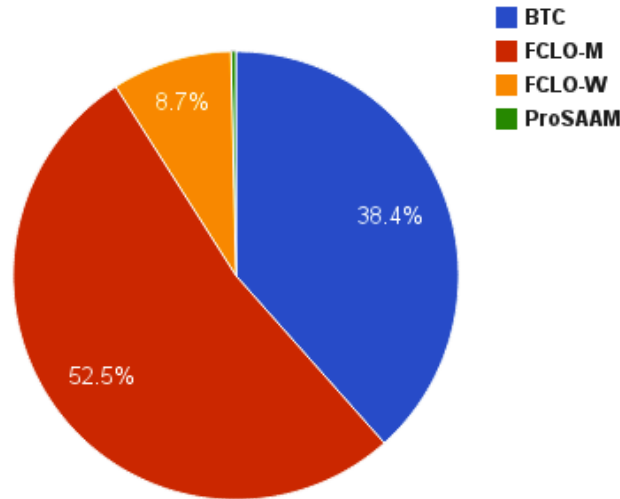


Figure 2. Gendered references within all curricula.

For all curricula, the percentages of gendered references in each P, I, E, and S dimension were 8.7% (24), 69.9% (193), 4.0% (11), and 17.4% (48), respectively. The BTC curriculum contained P, I, E, and S references from each dimension, 10, 83, 7, and 6, respectively as shown in Figure 3. The FCLO-M curriculum contained P, I, E, and S references from each dimension, 11, 89, 4, and 41, respectively. The FCLO-W curriculum

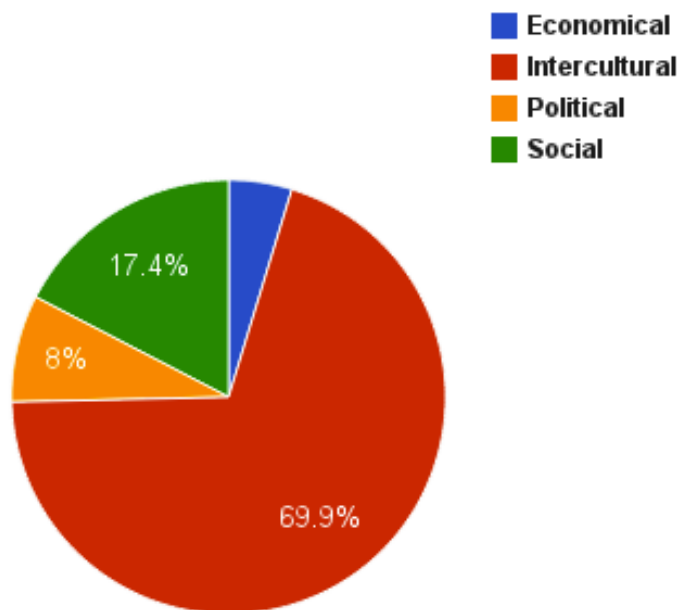


Figure 3. PIES dimensions across all curricula.

included the P, I, and S dimensions, 3, 20, and 1, respectively (Figure 4), while the ProSAAM curriculum only included one PIES reference from the I dimension.

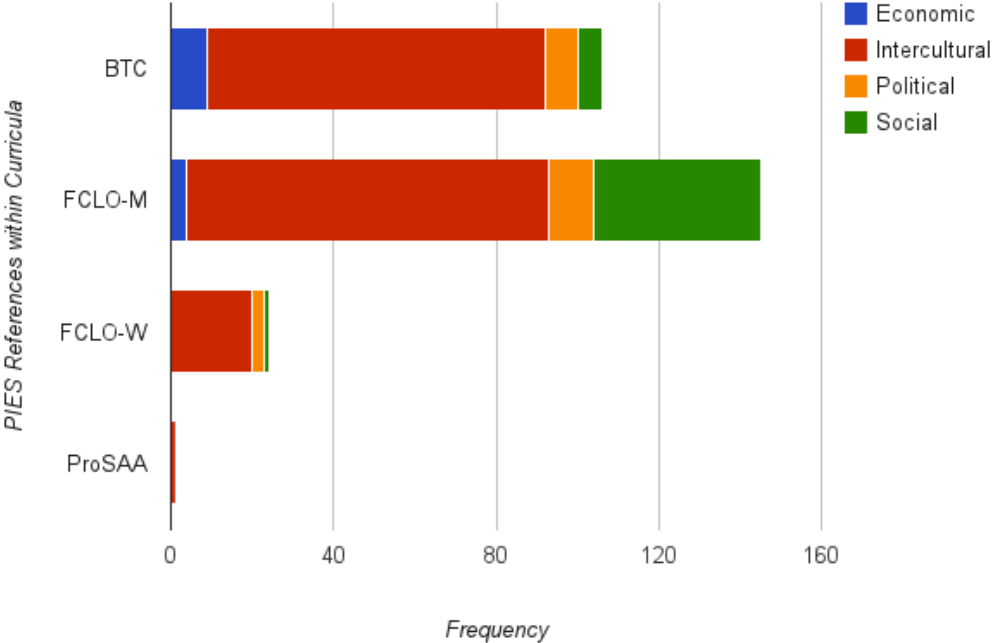


Figure 4. PIES dimensions occurrences within curricula.

Two hundred five (75%) of the PIES references were conventional, 30 (10.9%) were non-conventional, and 14.9% (41) could not be classified as conventional or non-conventional based on the predetermined criteria. The BTC curriculum contained 69 conventional references, 9 non-conventional references, and 28 not assigned to the either category. The FCLO-M curriculum contained 117 conventional references, 16 non-conventional references, and 12 not assigned to the either category. The FCLO-W curriculum contained 18 conventional references, 5 non-conventional references, and 1 not assigned to the either category. The one PIES reference from the ProSAAM curriculum represented a conventional reference.

The majority of the PIES references in each curriculum were conventional (see Figure 5) and indicative of the I dimension as shown in Figures 6, 7, and 8. Of the 193 I

dimension references, 149 were conventional, 9 were non-conventional, and 35 were not assigned to either

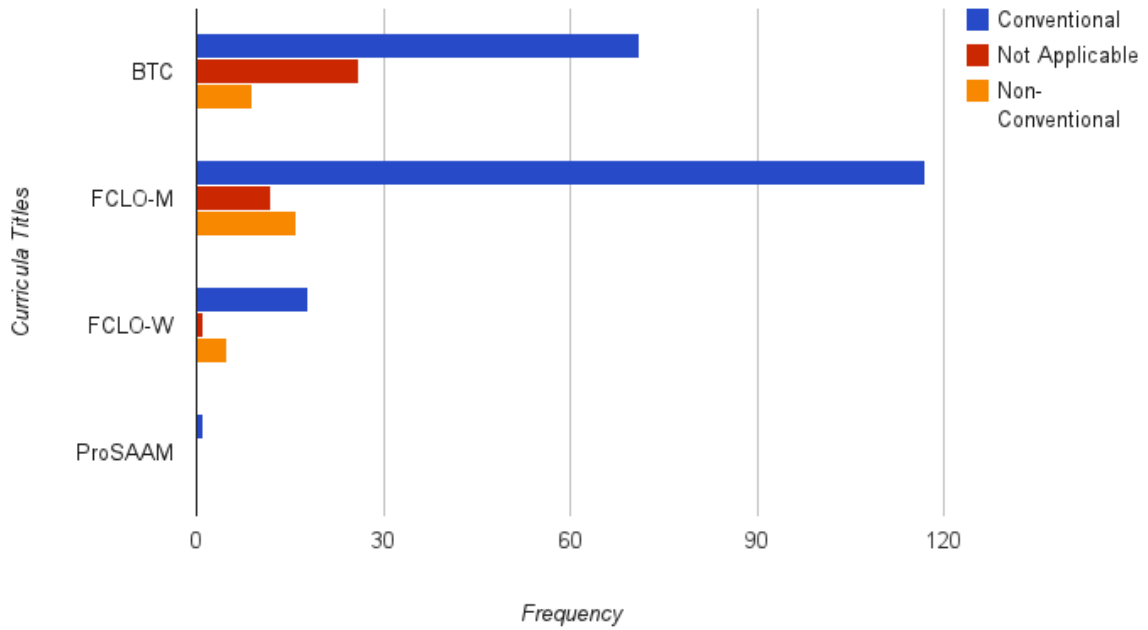


Figure 5. Conventional and non-conventional references in all curricula.

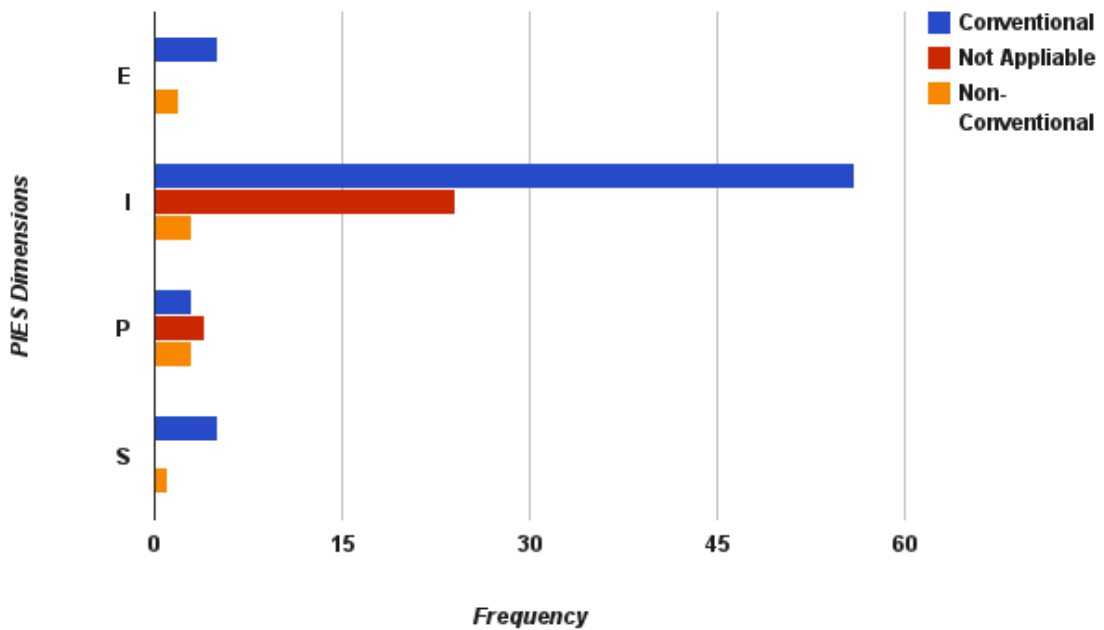


Figure 6. BTC curriculum PIE S occurrences.

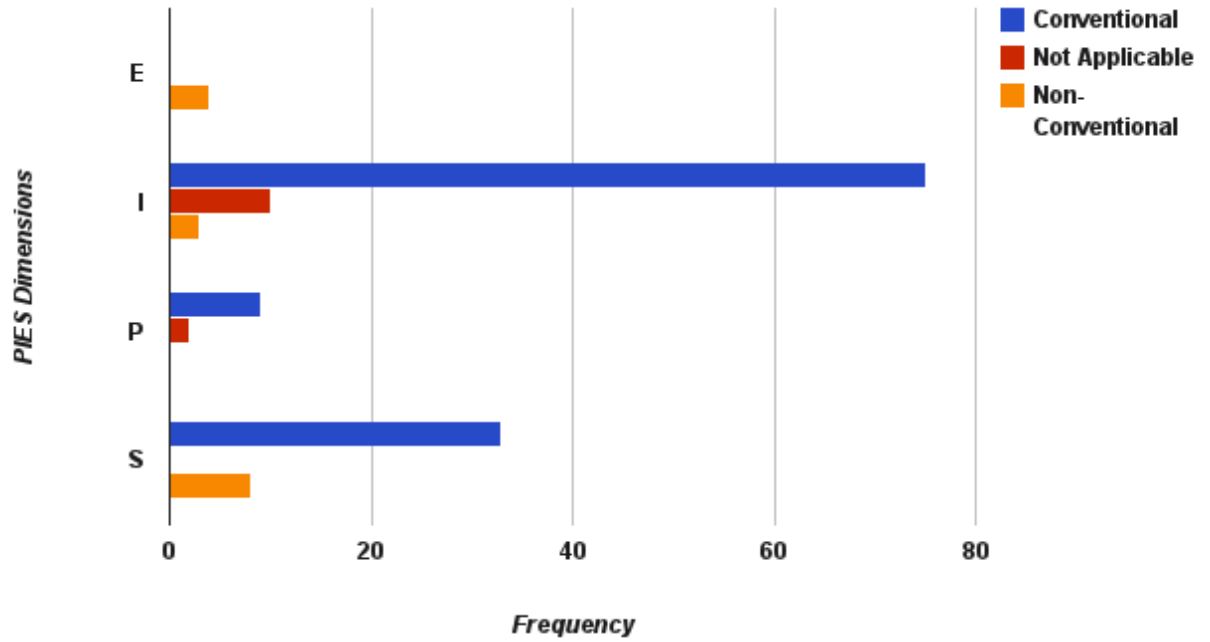


Figure 7. FCLO-M curriculum PIES occurrences.

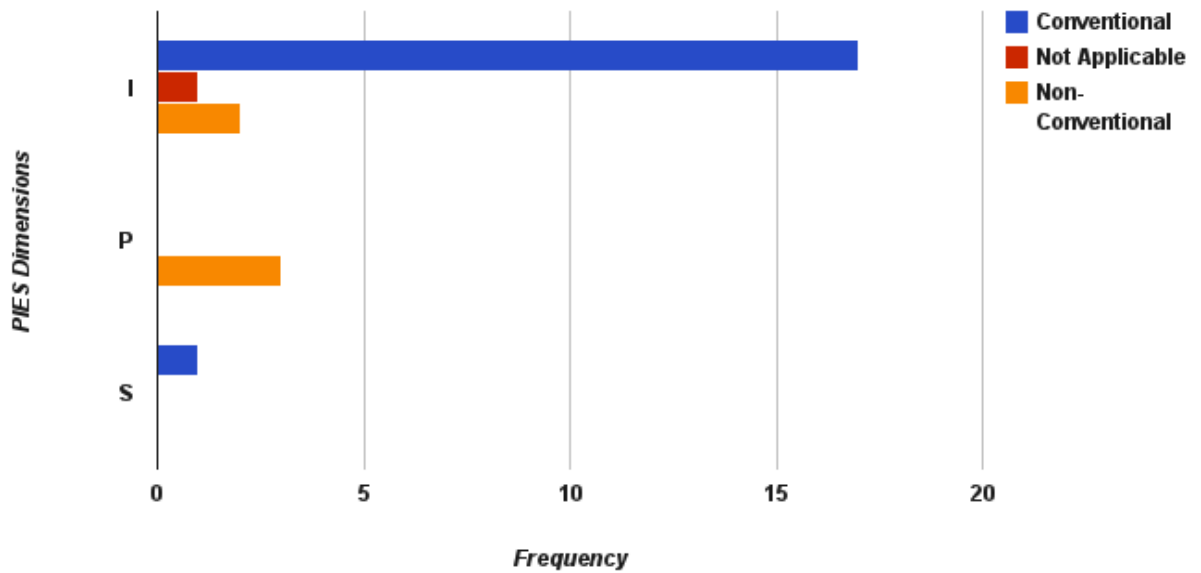


Figure 8. FCLO-W curriculum PIES occurrences.

category. Within the I dimension of each curricula, the majority of gendered references were conventional or could not be classified in any available category. Very few gendered references were explicitly non-conventional within the written curriculum (see Appendix H & Figure 9).

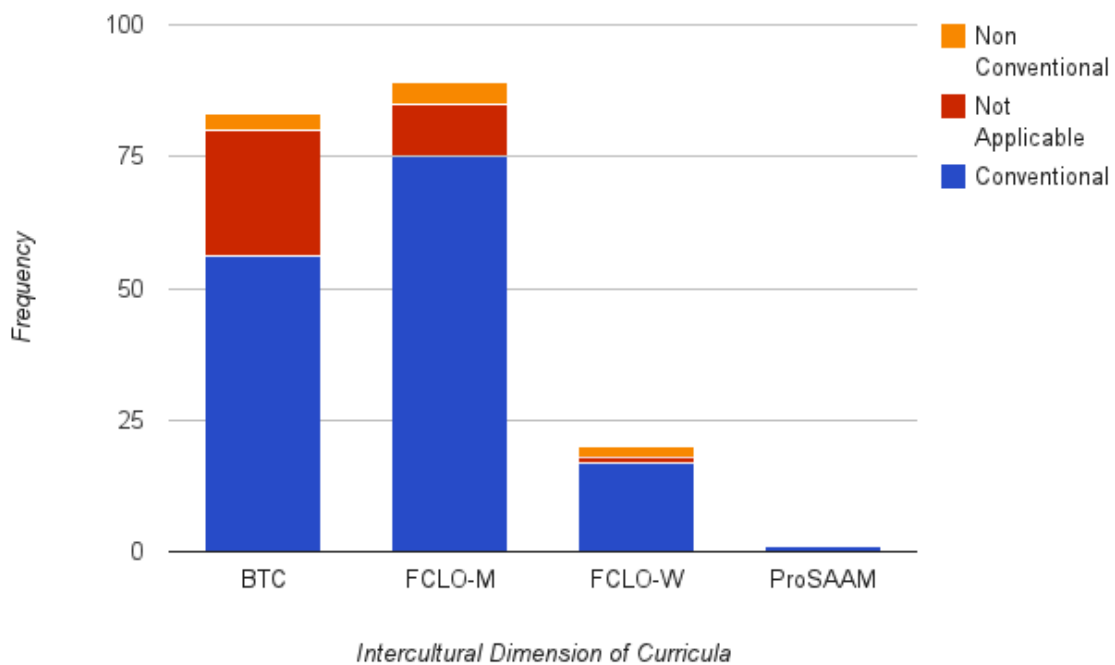


Figure 9. Conventional references in the intercultural dimension of each curricula.

Sub-question 2–implicit curricula. Implicit curricular analysis of latent messages within the video curricula was based on the PIES model. The *political* dimension represents the power and decision making dynamics displayed in the implicit curricula exhibited through the video messages. The *intercultural* dimension represents how beliefs and values about masculinity and femininity show in the implicit curricula exhibited through the video messages. The *economic* dimension represents the educational and employment influences in the household apparent in the implicit curricula exhibited through the video messages. The *social* dimension represents how the domestic

roles and responsibilities distributed in the household are portrayed in the implicit curricula exhibited through the video messages.

The BTC video presentations accompanied the lesson texts and was the only curriculum involved in this study that included both detailed text lessons and video lessons. The male and female presenters were co-presenters, presenting conventional and non-conventional concepts. Conventional ideals were dominant in the video presentations.

The FCLO videos provided two to three minute video introductions to very detailed written lessons. The FCLO-M video introduction vignettes of the couple depicted conflict based on conventional ideals about marriage. Curricula developers left vignette scenarios were resolved and used them to introduce the lessons. The FCLO-W video introductions, on the other hand, provided only short introductions by the presenters and included no gendered references.

The ProSAAM curriculum was dependent on video messaging, while the written text only included participants' activities and exercises. Unlike the other two curricula, there were several presenters and couples representing diverse backgrounds. Similar to the FCLO-M video, the couple scenarios depicted couple conflict based on conventional aspects of marriage, especially regarding the social dimension. However, the ProSAAM curricula included no explicit references to gender roles. Detailed descriptions of the implicit curricular analyses are in Appendix I.

Curriculum Analyses

The central research question of this study was: *How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted*

toward African Americans? By answering this question, through data analysis of explicit written text and implicit video curricula materials, this research intended to show how curricula developers portray non-conventional gender roles within curricula. Analyzing the results of the explicit and implicit curricula analyses for each curriculum provided insight to answer the central research question.

Basic Training for Couples. The BTC curricula developers conveyed the lesson topics and objectives in a manner that was relatable to their intended audience of African Americans. The BTC curriculum developers portrayed the PIES dimensions as both non-conventional and conventional and sometimes appeared contradictory. Curriculum developers emphasized the importance of mutual surrender between husbands and wives, while also prioritizing male headship in the household, although the dynamics of what male headship entailed was not explicitly stated. The curriculum developers seemed to rely on universal understandings of leadership without framing leadership around a leadership theory or ideology. For example, the male presenter mentioned that the “head” did not mean being “in charge” or “the boss,” but one who is “response able” or “able to respond,” based on the word *responsibility*. Still, some may argue that responsibility is necessary for both a husband and a wife in marriage and expectations of responsibility alone cannot delineate the leadership role of husbands. The authors stated, “Anything with two heads is a monster. Someone has to be the leader. Someone has to be in charge.” However, contemporary leadership theories support less conventional leadership styles such as *shared leadership* or *co-leadership* (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Sally, 2002).

In the BTC curriculum, the hierarchal role of the husband in marriage was partially based in traditional expectations for gender roles, without the responsibilities that were traditionally related to the husband's role. The male presenter mentioned knowing that his wife would earn more money than he would, but that his wife's earning capacity would not affect his leadership role in the home. The presenters also asserted women's desire have men lead the household, while showing a husband caring for the children while his wife worked late as a realtor. Leadership and headship did not seem affixed to specific gender roles within the economic or social dimensions of marriage, as they would be from a traditional perspective. The perceptions of male headship and leadership were linked to the intercultural dimension as a part of the values and beliefs about the intrinsic characteristics of men and women.

For Christian Lovers Only. The FCLO-W curriculum included information about communication skills deemed important for effective communication and problem solving based on mutuality and egalitarian constructs. The written lessons contained minimal gender references compared to the FCLO-M; however, most of the gendered references were conventional and aligned with the intercultural dimension. The presenter couple introduced the lessons, with no noticeable hierarchal positioning based on gender roles.

The FCLO-M curriculum included video introductions of vignettes of a couple working through common marital scenarios. While the participants involved in group sessions most likely viewed the 12 vignettes over a 12-month period, this research involved consecutive viewing of the video vignettes. The video vignettes served as preludes for lesson discussions by presenting the husband and wife in roles that depicted

marital roles in various scenarios. The couples' conventional power dynamics and decision making practices (representative of the political dimension) were evident in several situations where the husband asserted his power as the man and the wife defended her personal power. The husband asserted his power based on his identification as a man (associated with the intercultural dimension) and because he earned more money than his wife (based on the economic dimension). The wife asserted her power because she contributed money to the household as well (representing the economic dimension). The husband used his role as husband to defend his privilege to make decisions (political and intercultural dimensions) for the family. When the wife was tired and wanted to order takeout food, the husband protested that she had not been cooking for the family lately (social dimension). The wife pointed out that she had worked all day as well and was also tired (economic dimension).

Throughout the vignettes, constructs from each of the PIES dimensions were intertwined in the couples' interactions, from both conventional and non-conventional contexts. When the wife had fixed dinner and the husband needed to stay at work late or wanted to go out after work with coworkers, he made comments about how he had been coming home most nights or was working late to support the family, even though the wife worked as well. On the other hand, when the wife was offered the lead role in a church production at church, the husband stated that the opportunity would take her away from her family. From a conventional perspective, it is acceptable that the husband functions more outside the home and that the wife's responsibilities are to the home.

The vignettes presented common conflict between couples and placed couples interaction within a context, without resolution. The scenarios were based in conflict that

revolved around marital roles. Most often, the conflict showed the husband with conventional expectations and the wife with non-conventional expectations for their marriage. This dynamic of conventional expectations toward the marital gender roles were reiterated in the written curriculum and supported with Biblical scriptures. Most of the contexts of conventional characteristics within the PIES dimensions were based on Biblical scripture contexts. Non-conventional contexts of gender roles were also included in the written texts. Still, the conventional contexts of the lesson seemed to create the parameters within which the non-conventional dynamics of gender roles should operate. For instance, in the FCLO-M written text (Walker & Walker, 2009) stated:

The Bible clearly communicates the responsibility of the wife as the keeper of the home. A woman can be encouraged to focus on these seven steps towards accomplishing her God-given position. (p. 155)

Later in the same chapter, the text stated:

Scripture doesn't indicate who does the dishes or fixes the plumbing. The key is for the two of you to come up with a system that you can both work with. Pray, talk, negotiate and use all of your options—children, a dishwasher, a cleaning service—as long as it gets done. Think as a team and work together to make and keep a lovely home. (p. 157)

The two passages were in the same chapter, communicating both conventional and non-conventional perspectives. It is not clear how these dichotomous perspectives are reconciled for the participants throughout the curriculum.

Program for Strong African American Marriages. The ProSAAM curriculum only included one conventional gender reference regarding men's comfort in conflict

resolution. The curricula developers used written texts for activities, while using ProSAAM lessons in the video lessons. The video lessons showed a variety of presenters, including couples, commentaries by psychologists, and couples' problem-solving scenarios. The couples presented very egalitarian portrayals of gender roles with no noticeable hierarchy between the husband and wife presenters. Similarly, the psychologist commentators did not reference gender roles as they explained communication skills.

Gender roles were more evident in the couple's problem solving scenarios and many of the scenarios dealt with the roles and responsibilities in the home indicative of the social dimension of the PIES model. The attire of the individuals in the video problem-solving sessions seemed dated from the late 20th century when domestic roles and responsibilities were beginning to evolve based on women's increased participation in the workforce. Some of the focus on traditional household dynamics and power in decision-making shown in the couples' conflict resolution segments showed a perspective of helping the individual couples work well together from traditional gender roles perspectives. There were no identified judgments or values from presenters to show support or disapproval for either spouse in problem solving scenarios based in conventional and non-conventional view of gender roles.

Summary

Three relationship curricula targeted toward African Americans were involved in this study of how curricula developers portrayed gender roles. The PIES model provided categories used to illustrate various dimensions of marital gender roles. When considering the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions within the marriage curricula, the intercultural dimension that identifies beliefs about masculine manhood and feminine

womanhood showed the majority of references within each curriculum. Additionally, the intercultural perspectives portrayed were overwhelmingly conventional. In each of the PIES dimensions, a majority of the gender references portrayed were conventional.

Chapter 5 includes a review of chapter 4, the conclusions and implications of the study based on the data presented in chapter 4, along with limitations of the study based on the use of the PIES model. Chapter 5 will also include insights regarding the predominance of conventional perspectives in the intercultural dimension of the analyzed curricula as well as recommendations to resolve possible incongruences that can influence instruction regarding gender roles. Furthermore, recommendations for further research are included to suggest ways to improve curricular alignment within relationship education curricula utilizing the PIES model of marital dimensions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Marriage statistics among African Americans have caused much concern for those committed to increasing the number of successful marriages to decrease the rise in divorce and cohabitation. Over the first decade of the 21st century, relationship educators have used federal grant funding to increase the availability of relationship education to African Americans. Relationship educators acknowledge that the long-term effects of marriage relationship education among African Americans are still unknown. While some relationship education outcomes data show a sustained increase in marital satisfaction, among African Americans the results were not sustained over time (NMP & IAV, 2012).

Hawkins et al. (2009) asserted the need for "basic knowledge about the institutional features and benefits of marriage, or to the virtues that sustain healthy marriages" (pp. 2-3), and NHMRC (2009) noted the cultural and racial differences of in marital roles. The model upon which relationship education is based—Caucasian, middle-classed couples from the 1960s (Lefkowitz, 2010; NMP & IAV, 2012)—does not address unique aspects of historical African American gender roles constructs that influenced male and female interdependence among African Americans.

Whereas traditional male and female roles characterized the normative expectations for many Americans (Abrams, 2010, NMP & IAV, 2012), African Americans often practiced more egalitarianism where joint decision-making (Beach et al., 2008a), dual incomes (Cutrona et al., 2011), and shared domestic responsibilities (Marks et al., 2008) were and continue to be stabilizers in marriage. Still, it is not clear how relationship education curricula designed for African Americans address non-conventional

gender roles characteristic of African Americans. The purpose of this content analysis was to research three relationship curricula designed for African Americans and explore how curricula developers depict non-conventional gender roles within the explicit and implicit curricula.

This study was an analysis of marital gender roles as they appear in relationship education based on the PIES model, a modification of the SPELIT Power Matrix (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007). This study allowed analysis of marriage from four dimensions of the PIES model: *political* (power and decision making), *intercultural* (values about manhood and womanhood), *economic* (educational and employment opportunities), and *social* (domestic roles and responsibilities). Mutuality in communication skills is often a focus of relationship education, hence the terms *couples*, *mates*, and *spouses* are most prevalent. Exploration of the curriculum texts included the gendered terms *man*, *woman*, *husband*, *wife*, *male*, and *female*.

In Phase 1 of data analysis, conceptual analysis emphasized the number of gendered terms allowing comparison between curricula that showed how differently curricula developers included gendered terms in their curricula. In Phase 2, relational analysis allowed the coding of each term from P, I, E, and S perspectives with written descriptions. Phase 3 involved additional coding to determine how each gender reference aligned with the *conventional* and *non-conventional* gender role identifications. Phase 4 involved recording written narrative descriptions of the video presentations based on the PIES dimensions.

Chapter 4 presented the research findings and analyses based on a priori themes from the PIES model of marital dimensions in both the explicit and implicit curricula.

Chapter 5 includes the conclusion and implications of the research in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks from chapter 1 and the literature review in chapter 2. Recommendations for curriculum developers and future research, and limitations of the study precede the summary of the research.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the research reinforced the notion that curricula developers should focus specific attention to depict non-conventional gender roles when targeting African Americans that reflect the reality of most African Americans. The results reflected the postmodern constructivist nature of marriage ideologies within these curricula based on the PIES model. Additionally, the results reflected through the intercultural dimension suggested that the curricula were based on a deficit model that may not recognize diverse ontological perspectives about gender roles. Also, the findings indicated that male hierarchy within households was important in instruction, but not necessarily based on alignment between the traditional constructs of the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions of the PIES model.

Deficit model. The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (2009) suggested that "practitioners should understand that an African American's individual upbringing and internal view of gender roles will influence the shaping of marital expectations regarding these roles" (p. 3). Based on the results of this study, curricula developers of curricula designed for African Americans have not fully incorporated empirical evidence into educational curricula that supports egalitarianism among happily married African American. These results showed aspects of the deficit model that suggest fixing knowledge deficits by providing additional information (Brown, 2009), that there is a

single standard toward which all should aspire, and that constructive social and environmental experiences have minimal effect on learning (Welch, 2011).

The curricula involved in this study addressed the need to counteract the deficit model when engaging African Americans through inclusion of African Americans in curricular development, and through imagery and colloquialism; but not as explicitly when considering the depiction of gender roles. Although scholars suggest, "African American women are taught to be independent and strong and to prepare for careers rather than to rely on marriage for economic security" (NHMRC, 2009, p. 3), the curricula developers involved in this study referenced conventional gender role standards as the basis of their research. Each of the curricula mentioned a traditional reference of marriage from the context of women being in the home and husbands providing for the household. However, historically conventional gender roles are less likely to characterize African Americans (Cutrona et al., 2011; Dixon, 2009) and were not universally transferrable to African American couples of heterogeneous backgrounds (Bryant et al., 2008). The PIES model suggests diversity within marital roles that may address contingent roles found among non-conventional couples, but also add seemingly to incompatible perspectives about gender roles.

Cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) theorized that cognitive dissonance occurs when there are contradictions between "any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about oneself, or about one's behavior" (p. 3). Allahyani (2012) asserted that dissonance provokes individuals to seek additional information to relieve dissonance. The PIES dimensions revealed opportunities for creation and dissolution of cognitive dissonance within the curricula involved in this study.

The curriculum developers of the FCLO curriculum included many references to gender roles based in Biblical references. Acknowledgement of other interpretations of the Biblical scriptures and egalitarian scriptures about marriage and gender roles were not included in the written text. Those with conventional beliefs about manhood and womanhood are likely to embrace the constructs in the FCLO curricula; however, those who differ in ontological perspectives or function in non-conventional gender roles within manhood and womanhood contexts (intercultural dimension) may experience cognitive dissonance that obstructs the learning process.

The BTC curriculum primarily contained conventional references from the intercultural dimension as well. The curricula developers presented many ideals about men and women; however, unlike the FCLO curriculum, there was no explicit theoretical basis upon which the gender roles were based. The curriculum developers addressed the gendered terms as normative expectations for marriage and made many generalizations about what men and women preferred.

Another way to decrease cognitive dissonance when considering gender roles in relationship curricula is to express spousal differences beyond gender characteristics and provide additional insight and resources for those who do not comfortably fit into stereotypical traditional gender roles. About one of every four gendered references in the BTC curricula was not applicable to conventional or non-conventional gender role descriptions. Further analysis showed that curricula developers could have also explained some of the gendered descriptions through *individual personality characteristics*, such as levels of extraversion and agreeableness (Decuyper, DeBolle, & DeFruyt, 2012); or *love*

languages, like the desire for love to be shown through acts of service, quality time, affirming words, receiving gifts, or physical touch (Egbert & Polk, 2006).

The cognitive dissonance created in the classroom often challenges the instructor as much as the students (Grieve, 2009). As curricula developers seek to improve outcomes through problem-solving and conflict resolution skills, considering the challenges that couples face because of gender role expectations may be beneficial to expanding the effectiveness of relationship education curricula. The PIES model was an effective instrument to reduce the complex organizational structure of marriage to manageable constructs to allow investigation and analysis of conventional and non-conventional gender role references. The four PIES dimensions provided a structure by which conventional and non-conventional dynamics could be delineated in marriage and compared to determine congruency of conventional and non-conventional messages within curricula. The PIES model was an effective tool to determine areas within the curricula and across the curricula that may contribute to cognitive dissonance. Creating and resolving cognitive dissonance can influence motivation for learning (Guzzetti, Snyder, Glass, & Gamas, 1993), which is a concern for relationship education.

Constructivism and postmodernism. The constructivist and postmodern perspectives were evident in the relationship education curricula involved in this study and became more noticeable through use of the PIES model. The blend of heterogeneous cultures and perspectives indicative of postmodernism (Forzani, 2011) were evident and constructivism was shown through the diverse depictions of gender roles within curricula. The PIES dimensions showed the incongruous alignment between conventional and non-conventional gender roles depictions within and across the curricula. However, the

incongruent depictions of gender roles reinforced the notion that curricula developers constructed gender role contexts and included or excluded contexts based on the messages conveyed.

The constructivist nature of relationship education was evident in that each of the curricula designed for African Americans involved in this study approached connecting to African Americans in a different manner. BTC incorporated language and concepts of African American contexts into their curricula, while the FCLO curricula developers infused Biblical text into the lessons that historically relate to the religious context of African Americans, and ProSAAM added African American couples' representation to presentations. Each of the curricula developers approached areas of the PIES dimensions differently and developed relationship education curricula for African Americans from unique perspectives.

Cognitive and social constructivism. Cognitive constructivism deals with how individuals construct ideas in the mind, while social constructivism concerns how social settings influence the way people make meaning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Both cognitive and social constructivism are relevant to gender roles in relationship education.

Relationship education participants and instructors are not monolithic, but bring diverse gender role experiences and beliefs to the learning environment. The PIES model showed specific areas where cognitive constructivism (in the intercultural dimension) and social constructivism (more evident in the political, economic, and social dimensions) might be contradictory.

Powell and Kalina (2009) asserted that constructivist educational models are considered to be most effective model for instruction, even though these models

incorporate cognitive dissonance into the basic process of learning, specifically when instruction involves ethics and morality (Peters & Filipova, 2009). Additionally, people often resist new learning that differs from what they know (Kretchmar, 2008). Instructors help learners develop new skills by expanding existing understandings of reality within individuals, which are not regulated by external forces (Barrett & Long, 2012; Hamat & Embi, 2010).

The curricula developers of the curricula involved in this study encouraged exploration of communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution techniques that could benefit couples. However, the BTC and FCLO curricula developers often precluded content with explicit guidelines and parameters within which couples should operate based on conventional gender roles, which limit constructive instruction and exploration. Educational environments that base instruction on the knowledge the instructor provides to learners are exemplary of pedagogical learning, whereas andragogical learning environments are more appropriate for adults (Krajnc, 2011).

Andragogical perspectives. Andragogy is relevant as an educational approach to relationship education with adults because andragogical educational approaches involve tenets based on constructive ideologies. In many educational environments, children and adults receive the same type of instruction. However, there are distinctions between pedagogy and andragogy. Pedagogy is learning that focuses on the teacher's knowledge and ability to instruct students effectively (Krajnc, 2011). However, andragogy, focuses on adults in the learning environment, presumed to have *self-actualization, background experiences, an orientation to learn, a motivation to learn, a readiness to learn, and the*

need to know which children do not have (Krajnc, 2011; Sang, 2010; Taylor & Kroth, 2009).

Including only a conventional perspective in the BTC and FCLO curricula, limits the influence the curricula may have to help resolve gender role conflicts with African American adult audiences of diverse backgrounds, experiences, or religious experiences. Similarly, by not providing curricular content about gender roles, the ProSAAM curricular did not explicitly contribute to the constructive context of gender roles in relationship education learning environments.

Ontological perspectives. As explained in the literature review, the ontological perspective individuals hold influences how they interpret contexts. Haddad (2012) explained ontology as "the study of being, nature, or essence, necessarily assessed through comparisons" (p. 18) and that ontological perspectives affect gender role perspectives. The ProSAAM curricula developers avoided the topic of gender roles by presenting a neutral position that did not favor or oppose conventional or non-conventional gender roles.

The developers of the ProSAAM curriculum commented on the fragility of gender roles perspectives in Biblical contexts. Beach et al. (2008b) admonished against encouraging couples to ignore scriptures about traditional depictions and instead encouraged focus on "enhancing marital relationships [rather than] try to introduce new beliefs or make religious choices for the couple" (p. 699). However, when couples function in competing theories of Biblical gender roles, it may benefit them to receive additional information and objective educational tools with which to effectively structure their unique household situations.

Lupovici (2012) referred to dissonance (or contradictions) within collective organized entities as ontological dissonance when discussing when "various distinct identities [are] threatened, but the solutions to ease these threats are contradictory, forcing [a choice] between different cherished values" (para. 1). Lupovici further noted that in these situations avoidance is often the preferred course of action, but often further complicates the situation. Not addressing gender roles in relationship education or only expressing a perspective that involves conflicting thoughts and behaviors may cause greater dissonance and affect individuals' willingness to commit to marriage and achieve marital success. The PIES model allows exploration of divergent views of gender roles in marriage.

Titular leadership within the PIES model. Both the BTC and the FCLO curricula showed high frequencies of conventional gendered references in the intercultural dimension, suggesting an alternate perspective of gender roles within households surrounding headship or leadership of the household. Based on these curricula, headship of the home may not be associated with the duties one performs. Leaders who hold titles and honors of a position without the duties and responsibilities are *titular* leaders (Dictionary.com Unabridged, n.d.). The curricula described titular leadership that maintains the honor of the male in hierarchal leadership of the household without the traditional roles, duties, and/or powers associated with the role. Titular roles may be associated with non-conventional mutual decision-making in the political dimension, as the curricula described, and also with non-conventional domestic responsibilities and roles from the social dimension. The duties, responsibilities, and powers within the political,

economic, and social dimensions are flexible in households where husbands hold titular leadership and often shaped to meet the needs of the household.

Through the PIES model, distinctions in gender roles throughout the BTC and FCLO curricula were more evident where headship and leadership were major topics within the curricula. In these curricula, the husband remained the nominal leader in the household, regardless of his role in the political, economic, and social dimensions. Neither of the curricula described the head of the household as the one responsible in the economic dimension or asserted the responsibility of the male to be the sole financial provider of the home, even when discussing the male as the final authority in the home.

NMP and IAV (2011) suggested a *hybrid* marital framework as an approach that may best support the expectations of contemporary marriage as well as traditional ideals that emphasize the commitment and responsibility involved in an enduring marriage. The concept of a hybrid marriage supports the notion that couples in successful marriages are more likely to construct marital roles to suit the ideals of individual couples. Titular leadership involves hybrid constructs that may support contemporary gender roles constructs; however, additional instruction may be necessary to show the distinctions in responsibilities and characteristics of titular leadership based in service.

Servant leadership. Traditional leadership theories focus on leaders' actions that influence followers to serve them and help leaders achieve their own goals (Carter, 2009) without emphasizing the personal benefit of leaders' service to those who follow (Greenleaf, 1977; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). The servant leader's focus is on trying to discover what the people within the organization need to be successful (Vinod &

Sudhakar, 2011). Because participation in titular leadership structures is voluntary, leadership based on service is beneficial to strengthen the influence of titular leaders.

The British monarchy is an example of titular leadership based on service. Titular leadership is an honorary position because it does not entail responsibilities traditionally expected of a person in a leadership role (British Monarchist League, 2013). In England, the hierarchy and power of the monarchy is largely ornamental, wielding no actual political power. In the British monarchy, the leadership role has transformed from its previous medieval context of domination into one where the monarchy is a *servant of the people* (Jones, 2012). The monarchy maintains the image of power, but lacks the substance and structure associated with power (Reflections on Monarchy, 2011).

Much like the British monarchy where the will of the citizens allows maintenance of their position, in households that practice titular headship, the wife most likely reinforces of that position because her consent is necessary to maintain that marital context. Servant leadership is closely linked to Biblical contexts of marriage because of admonishments given for husbands to model their roles after Christ's leadership. Christ modeled servant leadership that was not oppressive, but instead provided a means for His followers to grow and excel to their greatest potentials (Manala, 2010; Vinod & Sudhakar, 2011).

Gender roles in Biblical context. Both traditional and egalitarian couples support their Biblical beliefs with religious principles (Frey, 2008). Beach et al. (2008b) cautioned about seeking to make religious choices for people through relationship education. Individuals' ontological perspectives and cultural gender expectations greatly influence gender role expectations and how people read and interpret Biblical texts

(Haddad, 2008). Ephesians 5:21-31 (New International Version) is an example of a foundational Biblical text about marriage interpreted differently by individuals based on their ontological perspectives. The scripture passage states:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

After the exhortation about husbands' and wives' mutual submission toward one another, there are admonitions that wives submit to their husbands and respect them. There are also instructions that husbands model the headship Christ shows to the church, love like Christ loves the church, and sacrifice themselves as Christ did for the church—his wife.

Traditional hierarchal. In a traditional hierarchal context, the head refers to the husband being the leader, decision maker, and financial provider, while the wife operates in a supportive role maintaining the household and the children. Historically, United States legislation and social structures supported this paradigm as the model for marriages (Lefkowitz, 2010). All of the PIES dimensions are conventional in this gender role construct. From a traditional perspective, the headship is hierarchal leadership.

Interdependent egalitarian. On the other hand, Christian egalitarians' ontological views about the equality of men and women with equity in gender roles emphasize each partner's submission to one another as a foundational principle of marriage, upon which these individuals contextualize all other marital references. For some egalitarians, this passage is a literal metaphor relating the husband to a physical head and the wife to a physical body (Fincher, 2008). Egalitarians reject the concept of hierarchical headship of the husband based on anatomical differences between men and women. Instead, this perspective highlights the interdependence of a head and a body to show the collaborative relationship husbands and wives could have as they partner their strengths together in marriage as *one flesh*. Egalitarians assert that Christ did not position Himself as a superior, boss, supervisor, or manager of the church—the body of Christ—while pointing out other scriptures that suggest equality between men and women (Christians for Biblical Equality, 1989).

The principle of the number 11. One Flesh Ministries (OFM) (2013), an organization committed to providing enrichment for married couples, explained marital roles in marriage based on the symbolism found in the number *11*. To teach the principles of lateral positioning between interdependent spouses represented in Ephesians 5:21 and 31,

OFM approached marriage as the joining of two "1s" that connect and synergize to create a new entity represented by the number 11. Figure 10 illustrates the symmetry in the principle of the number 11 in marriage. In the book, 11:11, Watts & Watts (2011) explained:

The beauty of 11 is this, if necessary the digits can switch places and the number remains the same. It does not change its appearance or value. The same is with [a husband and wife]. There are times when [the] wife appears to be in the front and at times it appears it is [the husband]. But, we reflect oneness, standing together and supporting each other... There is no competition in being One Flesh. (p. 104)

Through the number 11, OFM emphasized the uniqueness of the marriage relationship that exemplifies the mystery of *two becoming one flesh*, and how spouses can reflect one another as they partner together to lead and support one another based on each spouse's personal strengths. Shared leadership or co-leadership would be characteristic of this leadership structure. In an interdependent egalitarian context, each of the PIES dimensions is non-conventional in their gender role constructs; however, the spouses may also display conventional gender roles based on their personal strengths.



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Figure 10. The principle of the number 11.

Hybrid titular. The titular model is a hybrid of the traditional and egalitarian models in that hierarchal leadership is involved, meaning the intercultural dimension of the PIES model is conventional. Still, a husband and wife are more likely to work together interdependently to satisfy the needs in their household, representing non-conventional aspects of the political, economic, and social dimensions. As explained previously, servant leadership is most fitting for the hybrid titular gender role construct, based on the co-existence of dual conventional and non-conventional gender role constructs in the PIES dimensions.

Introducing couples to diverse gender role constructs may cultivate cognitive dissonance in couples, but also provide exposure to alternate ways a husband and wife can function in marriage. Matthews' (1997) three constructs of conflict resolutions are examples of how exposure to diverse perspectives is feasible. Matthews' three conflict resolutions types highlighted the distinctions in each conflict style and also showed positive and negatives aspects of each style.

The PIES model can add structure to curricula that developers can utilize in instruction to show how diverse gender roles constructs like traditional hierarchal, interdependent egalitarian, and hybrid titular can work well in households. Instruction with the PIES model can equip couples to create alternative gender role constructs where conventional and non-conventional gender roles ideals co-exist. Appendix J shows the three previously described gender role constructs in reference to leadership constructs.

Recommendations for Curricula Developers

Reframe discourse about gender roles within relationship curricula. Curricula developers should consider placing more emphasis on non-conventional gender role

discussions within relationship curricula designed for African Americans. In conjunction with lessons within curricula that currently focus on communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution (Beach, Fincham, Hurt, McNair, & Stanley, 2008b; Hauer et al. 2009), there can also be considerations about how conventional and non-conventional interactions may differ. Additionally, curricula developers of relationship education designed for African Americans can explore additional ways to communicate other reasons for spousal differences by considering personal differences (i.e. personality types, love languages, etc.) as well as gender differences.

Use the PIES model in curricular development. Gender roles continue to influence marital dynamics and couples could benefit from understanding the dynamics of gender roles based on the PIES dimensions. NMP and IAV (2102) suggested that "a strategic, integrated set of marriage and relationship education services across the early life course is more likely to yield positive results than a scattershot of uncoordinated, free-standing programs" (p. 28). Curricula developers should consider the articulation of youth and singles' relationship education curricula leading to their marriage curricula. It is unlikely that a heterogeneous group of individuals will accept a monolithic perspective based on male hierarchy; however, constituents of diverse ages and background may appreciate an objective presentation of diverse gender role ideals. Curricula developers should consider incorporating the PIES model into the explicit curricula.

Additionally, curricula developers could contribute curricula based on empirical data about African American contexts of gender roles that support healthy marriages. Curriculum developers can use the PIES model during curricula development to support curricular alignment when considering gender roles within curricula to show diverse

descriptions of gender role constructs. Curricula developers could also offer systematic views of diverse models, such as *traditional hierarchical*, *interdependent egalitarian*, and *hybrid titular* gender role constructs utilizing the PIES model, to provide a platform upon which couples can develop unique gender role constructs for their marriages.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conduct content analyses of other curricula based on the PIES model.

Egalitarianism is not exclusive to African Americans. Using the current study's research PIES model to conduct content analyses would allow exploration of conventional and non-conventional gender roles in other curricula designed for African Americans. Additionally, content analyses could be conducted on relationship education curricula that are designed for the general public to consider how other curricula are designed to address changing gender role constructs within the United States.

Conduct survey research based on the PIES model. There are studies conducted that use surveys to explore changing gender role constructs. While those studies inquire about gender role constructs included in the PIES dimensions, there was no systematic analysis of gender roles found within those studies. The PIES model would be useful for systematic exploration of gender roles.

Conducting a survey of couples based on the PIES dimensions would help determine how African Americans identify themselves based on the PIES model of marital roles. This data could support the accurate portrayal of marriages among African Americans through available research on sustainable practices among marriages of African Americans based on the PIES dimensions. Survey research utilizing PIES model of marital dimensions may also be helpful to expand investigations about how gender role

similarities and differences between diverse groups of people vary by race, socioeconomic levels, educational backgrounds, and geography. Curricula developers may incorporate data findings into general relationship education curricula.

Limitations and Exclusionary Criteria for Curricula

While this research was intended to inform discourses about curriculum development that can expand race and gender roles discussion within marriage research, there were limitations to the study. Content analyses involve context sensitivity and although use of the PIES model with conventional and non-conventional classifications reduced researcher bias, contextual biases are inherent in content analyses and investigators cannot eliminate biases entirely (Krippendorff, 2004). This research is limited in that African American, as a race is not a monolithic classification by which all individuals of African descent can be easily classified (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Additionally, this study's emphasis on gender roles is not transferable to couples of the same sex.

The PIES model only references the hierarchical and egalitarian gender role constructs and excludes other possible gender role constructs, such as matriarchy. The PIES model provides structure to show the organizational constructs within marriage, but does not include physiological differences between men and women (i.e. physical differences, hormonal differences, etc.) that also influence marital roles. Additionally, results of this study showed that conventional and non-conventional classifications were not adequate to describe the gendered references in the intercultural dimension of the PIES model because some of the gendered references described more personal attributes of individuals than gender characteristics. For example, spontaneity, respectful

communication, spending time with other couples, and receiving gifts are attributes representative of both males and females.

Gender roles through the PIES model is not based in the Biblical context of male hierarchal leadership. The intention of this research was to contribute educational expertise to the relationship education field through the PIES model, which describes the presence of manifested gender roles that are managed, and sometimes measurable, within households. Spiritual contexts of innate gender roles may not easily translate into the PIES model. In addition, non-conventional references do not denote the exclusion of conventional behaviors in marriage. For example, a couple may decide that a husband will work outside the home, and the wife will stay at home with their children for reasons that do not include traditional beliefs that a woman's role is in the home or a husband's role is provider.

Researcher's Reflections

Legislative changes continue to change the landscape of gender roles for heterosexual couples. Many scholars accredit women's advancement in the workforce as the greatest contributor to changing marital roles. As suggested in chapter 2 through Emerson's social exchange theory, power balancing is evident in that women gained opportunities in education and employment that increased their economic capacity. Economic changes prompted a balance in power between African American men and women many years before the changes occurred in society. However, these changes have not necessarily changed ideological perspectives about how or if gender roles are a part relationship education for African Americans. When considering the PIES model

construct, traditional gender roles were more feasible when males' responsibilities and opportunities outside the household were undergirded by social constructs.

Initial assumptions about PIES model were that the economic dimension would influence the social and political dimensions and, ultimately, the intercultural dimension. It was presumed that non-conventional behaviors in the economic dimension (i.e. wife earning equal or more money than husband, wife achieving higher education than husband, etc.) would influence the beliefs and values in the intercultural dimension of the curricula. It was also presumed that curricula developers would focus explicitly on instruction that helped mediate those changes in gender roles. However, the results support prior research that asserts that traditional expectations and beliefs about men and women do not change, even when traditional gender roles do not easily accommodate their households (Dixon, 2009). This research has labeled this gender role phenomenon found in the BTC and FCLO curricula that is neither *traditional hierarchical* nor *interdependent egalitarian*, but a *hybrid titular* gender role construct.

Research Summary

Currently, women comprise almost 50% of the United States' workforce, influencing husbands' increased involvement in the household (Parker & Wang, 2013). Furthermore, the number of women in the United States who earn higher salaries than their husbands do continues to increase (Wang, Parker, & Taylor, 2013). Among African Americans; however, these household dynamics are not new. African American women have historically achieved higher education levels and earned higher salaries than African American men (Hill, 2006). Holland (2009) asserted that the ambiguity about gender

roles often contributes to frustrations African Americans experience, necessitating services to help them navigate their non-conventional marriage dynamics.

This content analysis research was purposed to bring awareness about how curricula developers depicted non-conventional gender roles through exploration of three relationship education curricula designed for African Americans. To accomplish this task, the PIES model was useful to code gender references based on whether it represented the political dimension (power and decision making), the intercultural dimension (values and beliefs about manhood and womanhood), economic dimension (education and employment dynamics), or the social dimension (domestic roles and responsibilities). There were four phases to the study that included tallying of gendered terms through conceptual analysis (Phase 1), relational analysis that involved coding based on the PIES model (Phase 2), additional coding based on whether the gendered references were conventional or non-conventional (Phase 3), and narrative descriptions of the video presentations (Phase 4).

Most of the gendered references were conventional. In addition, the results of the study suggested a supplemental view of gender roles that incorporated traditional ideals about male headship (titular leadership) in the household through the intercultural dimension that may not be traditionally acknowledged in the political, economic, or social dimensions. The effectiveness of titular leadership necessitates further exploration by curricula developers when included in curricula because of the incongruous nature of conventional and non-conventional gender roles involved. Within the curricula involved in this study, the intercultural dimension often showed conventional manhood and womanhood ideals, even when the political, economic, and social dimensions were non-

conventional. This current research supported the need for non-conventional depictions of gender roles among African Americans in relationship education curricula. Usefulness of the PIES model in the curricular development to explicitly and objectively address gender roles was shown to be feasible.

While chapter 1 outlined postmodernism, constructivism, and deficit model as conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study, the results of this study also showed the relevance of cognitive dissonance, andragogy, and servant leadership to this research. The literature review in chapter 2 included historical backgrounds about the PIES dimensions among African Americans. Recommendations included the addition of the PIES model to relationship education curricular development along with a reframing of gender role discourse within relationship education curricula through the incorporation of the PIES model. Additionally, recommendations for future research included conducting content analyses on other relationship education curricula using this study's methodology and conducting survey research based on the PIES model to gain additional insight into diverse couples' gender role structures. More emphasis can be on marital partnership and team efforts to exemplify current views of marriage that are aligned with data provided about African Americans who have satisfying marriages.

For relationship education to maintain relevance in the 21st century, relationship education curricula must meet the needs of couples in a postmodern society. In the United State's postmodern society, constructivism is important to help resolve diverse marital challenges and resolve cognitive dissonance based on non-conventional gender roles in couples' relationships. Instruction about gender roles and the concerns that surround the construction of gender roles in marital relationships may benefit explicit instruction in

relationship education. The addition of the PIES model to relationship education curricular development would address a need for relationship education to provide instruction that equips couples to study their mates, learn one another's strengths, and uniquely construct gender roles to fit their families' needs.

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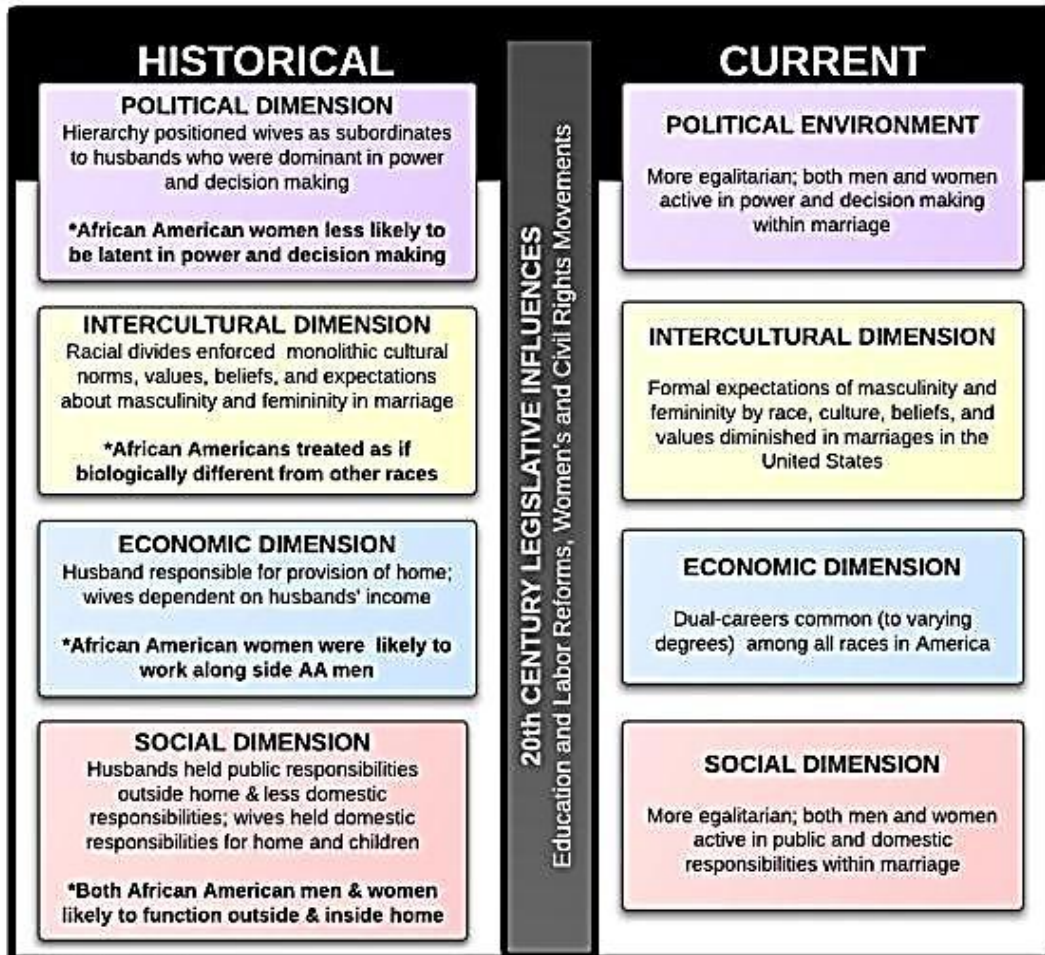
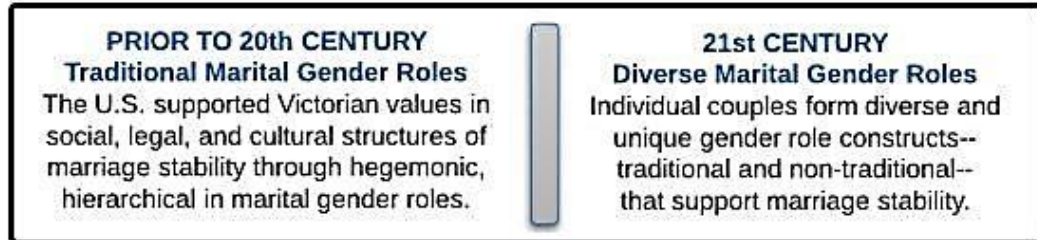
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Appendix A

PIES Model of Gender Role Evolution

PIES Model of Gender Role Evolution of Marriages in the United States



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PIES Model of Gender Role Evolution with Marriages in the United States. The PIES model allows categorizing of various dimensions within marriage for the past and the present.

Appendix B

Marital Power Balancing Operations of the 20th Century

Marital power balancing operations of the 20th century

Balancing operations	Motivational orientation	Actors	Postmodern marital power balancing	Evidence of African American marital power balancing
WITHDRAWAL	Internal (psychological)	Weaker actor (woman)	Decreased dependence on men in marriage for leadership	African American women not dependent on marriage for economic stability or childbearing.
NETWORK EXTENSION	External influences and internal (psychological)	External forces (laws, public policy, societal influences) and weaker actor (woman)	new education, employment, and economic opportunities outside of household	African American women attend college at higher rates than African American men
STATUS GIVING	Internal (psychological)	Stronger actor (man)	Men and women balance power.	Dual-careers in marriage; non-traditional gender roles
COALITION FORMATION	External influences	External forces (laws, public policy, societal influences)	Economic shifts in employment opportunities; marriage reform; divorce less financially beneficial to men; child support enforcement.	Less education of African American males, lower wages and salaries, African Americans rely on marriage to achieve and maintain middle class status.

Note: The following are the definitions of the balancing operations:

Withdrawal—Decreased motivational investment on the part of the weaker member

Network extension—Increased availability of goals for the weaker member outside the relation (formation of new relations; extension of the "power network")

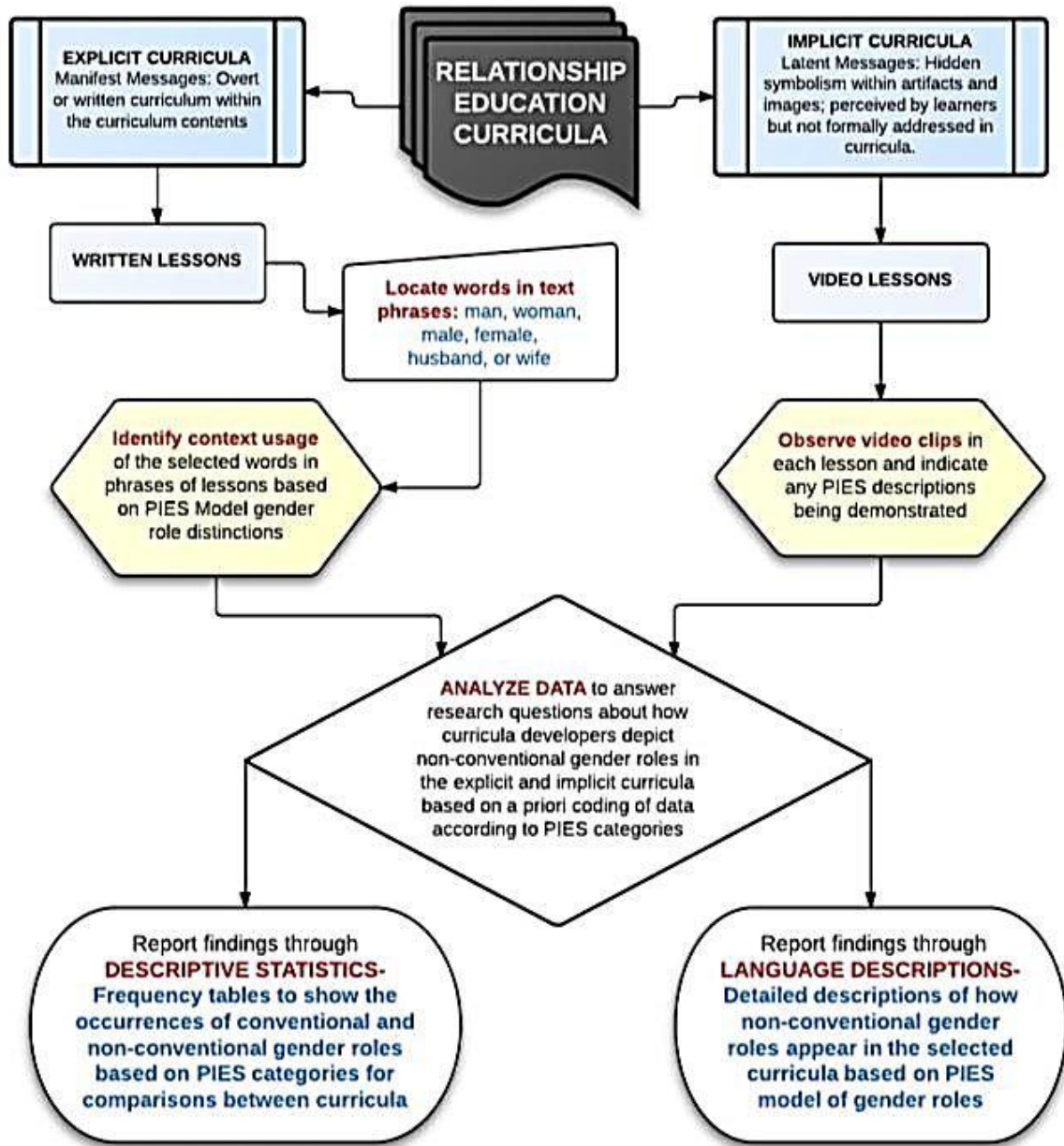
Status giving—Increased motivational investment on the part of the stronger member

Coalition formation—Decreased availability of goals outside of the relation for the stronger member (Emerson, 1964, p. 289)

Appendix C

Research Path Flow Chart

RESEARCH PATH



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Appendix D

Premises, Recruitment and Name (PRN) Use Permission



PREMISES, RECRUITMENT AND NAME (PRN) USE PERMISSION

Program for Strong African American Marriages

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

Please complete the following by check marking any permissions listed here that you approve, and please provide your signature, title, date, and organizational information below. If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

I hereby authorize _____, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the premises (facility identified below) to conduct a study entitled (insert title of research study or a brief description of research study)

I hereby authorize _____, a student of University of Phoenix, to recruit subjects for participation in a conduct a study entitled (insert title of research study or a brief description of research study).

I hereby authorize Andrea Little Mason, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the name of the facility, organization, university, institution, or association identified above when publishing results from the study entitled Non-Traditional Gender Roles in Relationship Education Designed for African Americans: A Content Analysis .

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S M Stanley".

Signature

Scott M Stanley

Name

President, Christian PREP, Inc.

Title

Address of Facility

12/5/12

Date

12/5/2012

7600 E Orchard Rd, Ste 300S

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

303-692-8932



PREMISES, RECRUITMENT AND NAME (PRN) USE PERMISSION

Basic Training for Couples

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

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12/07/2012

Signature

Date

Rozario Slack

Name

CEO Rozario Slack Enterprises

Title

Address of Facility

P.O. Box 11204, Chattanooga, TN 37401



PREMISES, RECRUITMENT AND NAME (PRN) USE PERMISSION
For Christian Lovers Only

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

Please complete the following by check marking any permissions listed here that you approve, and please provide your signature, title, date, and organizational information below. If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

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Signature

Date December 12, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Jeffrey Wright", written over a horizontal line.

Name

C. Jeffrey Wright

Title – Chief Executive Officer

Address of Facility

UMI, 1551 Regency Court, Calumet City, IL 60409

Appendix E

Issuance of Curriculum Materials Confirmation

ISSUANCE OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS CONFIRMATION

I acknowledge that my organization/company owns rights to distribute the PROGRAM FOR STRONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGES curriculum materials which have been provided to Andrea Little Mason, a doctoral learner at University of Phoenix, free of charge for use with the dissertation research study entitled *Non-Conventional Gender Roles in Relationship Education Curricula for African Americans: A Content Analysis*.



Signature

3, 1, 13
Date

Todd Boyd

Name

General Manager

Title in Organization/Company

Name and Address of Organization/Company

PREP Inc
7600 E Orchard Rd # 300 S
Greenwood Village CO 80111

ISSUANCE OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS CONFIRMATION

I acknowledge that my organization/company owns rights to distribute the BASIC TRAINING FOR COUPLES which has been provided to Andrea Little Mason, a doctoral learner at University of Phoenix, free of charge for use with the dissertation research study entitled *Non-Conventional Gender Roles in Relationship Education Curricula for African Americans: A Content Analysis*.



Signature

03 / 01 / 2013

Date

Dr. Rozario Slack

Name

Executive Director

Title in Organization/Company

Name and Address of Organization/Company

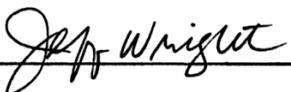
Rozario Slack Enterprises

P.O. Box 11204

Chattanooga, TN 37401

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Signature 

March 1, 2013
Date

C. Jeffrey Wright
Name

Chief Executive Officer
Title in Organization/Company

Name and Address of Organization/Company

Urban Ministries, Inc. (UMI)

1551 Regency Court

Calumet City, IL 60409

Appendix F

Inter—Coder Reliability of Gender Role Descriptions

The descriptions below are the basis for classifying gender roles as conventional or non-conventional in this content analysis research based on the PIES Model. The primary researcher and a second coder agreed on 32 of the 33 classifications of the gender roles descriptions as conventional (C) or non-conventional (NC), which represents 97% agreement. The red **X** represents the area of disagreement. Inter—coder reliability calculated using Krippendorff's alpha was .937, showing high inter—coder agreement.

CONVENTIONAL AND NON-CONVENTIONAL MARITAL GENDER ROLES

PIES	C	NC	DESCRIPTIONS
S		x	The husband cooks the meals.
I		x	The wife may be independent and/or dominant.
S	x		The wife is the primary caretaker of children.
E		x	The wife pursues and attains higher education.
I		x	The husband may be affectionate or sentimental.
E	x		The wife is not employed outside the home.
E		x	The wife works outside the home.
I		x	The husband is sympathetic and compassionate.
S	x		The husband and the wife have predetermined responsibilities in the household.
S		x	The husband cares for the children.
I	x		The wife is more emotional and nurturing than the husband.
S		x	The wife is handy around the home (i.e. paint or maintenance).
E		x	The husband is not employed outside the home.
P		x	The husband and the wife share decision making.
I		x	The wife may be decisive and a risk-taker.
I	X	X	The husband is more logical and analytical than the wife.
S	x		The husband is primarily responsible to maintain responsibilities outside the home.
P	x		The wife is subordinate to the husband.
S		x	The wife deals with family business matters.
I		x	The husband may be soft-spoken and/or yielding.
S		x	The husband is a stay-at-home-dad.
S		x	The wife deals with household financial matters.
P	x		The husband is the decision maker in the home.
S		x	The husband cleans and maintains the home.
P		x	The husband and the wife share equal power.
E	x		The husband is the financial provider of the home.
I	x		The husband and the wife have distinct predetermined marital roles.
S	x		The wife is responsible to cook for the family.
I		x	The wife may be ambitious and assertive.
S	x		The wife is responsible to maintain domestic household responsibilities.
S		x	The husband keeps the house clean.
S	x		The wife is a stay-at-home-mother.
E		x	The wife earns the higher income in the family.

Appendix G

Explicit Curricula Relational Analysis Narrative Descriptions

Basic Training for Couples

The BTC text contained six references to power constructs. One of the references was included in the overview was related to domestic violence. Two of the references concerned who is "in charge" when women are in the workforce earning more money than their husbands. Additionally, there were gendered terms included in the discussion that followed about how a husband "guides his wife" and how husbands and wives are to "surrender" to each other.

The BTC text included 88 gendered term references, most of which pertained to the intercultural dimension of marriage. These references referred to innate characteristics about men and women, which included differences in intrinsic needs, sexual needs and preferences, expectations for intimacy, love expressions, and what is valued by each sex. There was also a mention about role confusion, which referenced both men and women and was based around internal characteristics of men and women rather than external dynamics related to the economic and social dimensions. Fourteen of the gendered terms connected husbands and wives to perceived intrinsic strengths and abilities with their domestic roles and responsibilities. The BTC text contained two gendered terms in reference to how men and women's roles have changed. One referred to the inclusion of women in the workplace and the other referenced men earning less than their wives. The BTC emphasized the benefits of marriage available to women because of financial security and safety perceived in marriage.

For Christian Lovers Only

The FCLO contained 11 gendered term occurrences. Lesson 9 contained all of the references included in the FCLO manuals related to power. The FCLO manuals shared the same gendered term occurrences. Only two of the gendered terms related to the economic dimension when referencing a scripture text where the woman both stayed at home and earned a considerable amount of money.

Lesson 3 seemed devoted to the social dimension of marriage and contained 33 occurrences. There was one reference of the male as the initial keepers of the home, from a Biblical perspective. There were also two references that pointed out highlighted the possibility that men may enjoy cooking and women may be more prone to make the electrical repairs around the home. The other 35 occurrences supported scriptural references about the wife depicted as the keeper of the home. Of the 35 gendered terms, 14 connected the domestic roles of husbands and wives to the intrinsic strengths and abilities. Additionally, there were two occurrences on a chore chart that presented domestic roles and responsibilities in the home in an egalitarian manner.

Program for Strong African American Marriages

ProSAAM manuals did not contain any references to gendered terms relevant to the political dimension. The text stated, "Feeling safe together, even when we are talking about things that are difficult... Men especially seem to do better in these situations if there are ground rules to follow." In the ProSAAM text, the word *men* was used once in the leader manual to reference men's preferences for dealing with conflict based on conventional characteristics. The ProSAAM text did not contain any references to gendered terms relevant to the economic dimension. The ProSAAM text did not contain any references to gendered terms relevant to the social dimension.

Appendix H

Curricula, PIES Dimensions, and Conventional/Non-conventional Cross Tabulation

CURRICULUM * C or NC * PIESDIMENSION Crosstabulation						
Count						
PIESDIMENSION			C or NC			Total
			C	NA	NC	
P	Curriculum	BTC	3	4	3	10
		FCLO-M	9	2	0	11
		FCLO-W	0	0	3	3
	Total		12	6	6	24
I	Curricula	BTC	56	24	3	83
		FCLO-M	75	10	4	89
		FCLO-W	17	1	2	20
		ProSAAM	1	0	0	1
	Total		149	35	9	193
E	Curricula	BTC	5	0	2	7
		FCLO-M	0	0	4	4
	Total		5	0	6	11
S	Curricula	BTC	5	0	1	6
		FCLO-M	33	0	8	41
		FCLO-W	1	0	0	1
	Total		39	0	9	48
Total	Curricula	BTC	69	28	9	106
		FCLO-M	117	12	16	145
		FCLO-W	18	1	5	24
		ProSAAM	1	0	0	1
	Total		205	41	30	276

Curricula Titles: BTC—Basic Training for Couples curriculum, FCLO-M—For Christian Lovers Only curriculum (Monthly), FCLO-W—For Christian Lovers Only curriculum (Weekly), ProSAAM—Program for Strong African American Marriages

PIES Model: E-Economic Dimension, I-Intercultural Dimension, P-Political Dimension, S-Social Dimension,

C-Conventional, NA-Not Applicable, NC-Non-conventional

Appendix I

Implicit Curricula Narrative Descriptions

Basic Training for Couples

Political dimension. In the BTC curriculum, Lesson 7 contained a dialogue that encompasses all of the PIES dimensions indirectly; however, it deals directly with the political dimension. The presenters asserted that men want to be the head of the household and acknowledged that for some that meant being the boss. The male presenter did not agree with the notion of men being "the boss" or "in charge." The female presenter agreed with the notion of males as leaders of the household and further stated that "anything with two heads is a monster" and would cause problems. The male presenter stated the importance of spouses understanding marital roles and implied that often men have to "rip" the responsibility out of the hands of women in order to be the head of their households and lead their families, which he defined as being "response able" or having "the ability to respond." The presenters suggested that affirming the male's role in the household prevents "role confusion," which was suggested to contribute to increased divorces.

Intercultural dimension. The BTC curricula contained many direct references to beliefs about the character of men and women; however, others were suggested in dialogue such as, stating that husbands were being "dragged to couch by wives" to participate in the relationship education program. There was also dialogue about surrender and submission, and how challenging those words are for women, because of a belief that women are required to do all of the surrendering. The male presenter mentioned how "tough" it is for men to "come off of the market" and choose to get

married because they have so many options. The presenters suggested that agreeing to marry and submit to marriage is proof of men's requirement to surrender.

In Lesson 5, the presenters mentioned the differences between men and women's sexual needs, while acknowledging that all gender characteristics are not relevant for all men and women. In Lesson 7, when asked about how the women earning the greater income influenced the woman's ability to be "in charge," the male presenter stated that a woman's income does not influence or change her role in relation to a man. He emphasized that money should not cloud the issue of who is the head of the house and stated that money does not influence who is the head of the household.

The male presenter also presented the analogy of the husband being "the head" and the wife being "the neck" that turns the head. The female presenter referenced a friend who spoke of herself in relation to her husband in this manner: "My name is _____ and I am the wife of _____" to honor him. The male presenter further asserted that "women marry men hoping they will change but they don't; men marry women hoping they won't change but they do."

Economic dimension. The BTC curriculum presenters indicated how women benefit financially from marriage and how single and divorced women experience more poverty in Lesson 1. In Lesson 7, when asked about how the women earning the greater income influenced the woman's ability to be "in charge," the male presenter stated that a woman's income does not influence or change her role in relation to a man. He emphasized that money should not cloud the issue of who is the head of the house and stated that money does not influence who is the head of the household. Lesson 8, the presenters suggested that women wanted men to advance in employment to benefit the

household and that the husband should desire the same for the wife. Also, a small vignette showed a father at home with his child, while the wife worked late as a realtor showing houses.

Social Environment. In Lesson 1 of BTC curriculum, the presenters asserted that marriage gives women options about how to raise kids and be a mother. In Lesson 8, the presenters asserted that women want a "home," which includes the security of husbands who help the family advance. Additionally, the vignette showed a father at home caring for the children while the wife worked late as a realtor.

For Christian Lovers Only–Monthly

Political dimension. In the lesson 6 of the FCLO-M curriculum, the presenter couple asserted that major decisions should be made together through compromise and respect for one another. After the vignette about the husband's decision to refinance, the presenter couple asked about decisions made as couples and alone, and asked, "Who gets the final say?" In lesson 11, the husband in the couple vignette makes a decision to accept a new job position and relocate the family without consulting his wife. In lesson 3 of the FCLO, the presenters mentioned how women say that men do not listen to them. Also, there was an example of women being concrete thinkers and needing explicit communication.

Intercultural dimension. In lesson 7 of FCLO, the husband suggests that his maleness is part of the reason he is able to make a decision about the family.

Economic dimension. The FCLO-M video introductions involved couples scenarios that involved the couple in the economic dimension throughout and were used to illuminate possible areas for conflict in marriage. In Lesson 1, the scenario was based

around the wife spending unaccounted money on shoes. In Lesson 2, the husband was working late and planning to go out with co-workers before going home. The husband commented that he had come home all of the other days of the week after work. In Lesson 3, the presenters mentioned how roles have changed from what they traditionally were. The presenters referenced a time when men worked outside the home, but further explained that women are now positioned outside the home and often both spouses are working. In Lesson 6, the vignette presents the couple having a discussion about refinancing their home, where the husband has discussed refinancing their home, the wife preferred to move forward with their plan to use money they saved for a family vacation. The wife commented, "the money is just as much mine as yours." In Lesson 7, the scenario seemed to be continued and the husband stated that because he made more money the decision to refinance should be his decision. In Lesson 9, when the wife complains about the husband not being home for a meal, the husband in the couple scenario asserts that he is working early and late hours for the betterment of the family. In Lesson 11, the husband receives a promotion that requires them to move out of town and the viewer is left believing that the husband has accepted the new position without discussing the decision with his wife.

Social Environment. The FCLO-M video introductions included a couple's scenarios that involved the couple in the social environment throughout. In the FCLO-M curricula, there were several instances where the couple's vignettes addressed challenges surrounding domestic roles and responsibilities. In Lesson 2, when the husband informed the wife that he would be working late and then going out with co-workers, she was disappointed because she had fixed dinner for the family and was expecting him to come

home. Lesson 3 included dialogue between the presenters about traditional contexts of women being responsible for the home. The presenters also pointed out how fathers now stay at home with the children and shares responsibilities with of the household. In the vignette associated with Lesson 2, the husband and wife both work outside of the home, however, the husband still has expectations that the wife will prepare meals, care for their child and take care of household duties. In Lesson 4, the couple featured in the vignettes experienced conflict about whose responsibility it was to ensure that their son did his homework. Both the husband and wife were home, but the husband asserted that the wife should have made sure their son's homework was completed. In Lesson 5, the wife served her husband and seeks to make him comfortable when he comes home hoping he will support her friend coming over for a visit. In lesson 8, the wife needs help picking up son after school; however, the husband says he has other things planned. Additionally, the husband breaks date night commitment with his wife to take care of other business. In Lesson 9, the wife has once again prepared dinner and is waiting for him to arrive home late from work. In Lesson 10, the wife was selected for a solo at church and was excited about the opportunity. The husband responded that it considered it a time commitment that would require her to spend "too much time at church, and not enough time at home with the family."

For Christian Lovers Only–Weekly

The FCLO curricula video presentations were introductions to the curricula text lessons. The FCLO-W video presentations did not include gender role references to the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions.

Program for Strong African American Marriages

Political dimension. In lesson 2 of the ProSAAM curricula, the presenter couple expressed caution about exerting control and manipulation in marriage. The couple shared the importance of discussing "Who's in charge?" and considering "Do you feel controlled?"

Intercultural dimension. In the ProSAAM curriculum, there were no explicit references to gender roles; however, in Lesson 2 there was lengthy discussion by the presenter couple about unmet expectations that include expectations of roles and responsibilities in marriage. The couple referenced expectations that the man be "the knight and shining armor." Both the husband and the wife admitted that although they had grown over more than 30 years of marriage, neither of them initially fit the other's expectations for the roles they would play, such as which spouse would be the pursuer or the pursued in the sexual relationship. The presenter couple mentioned the influence of family backgrounds and how they create different marital expectations as well as how roles as pastor, father, and husband are distinctly different in their scenario. In Lesson 4 of ProSAAM, there was mention of how men have a tendency to want to fix problems in order to help their wives.

Economic dimension. There was reference made in Lesson 2 of the ProSAAM curriculum about the economic dimension when discussing expectations about whether money is considered "yours, mine, or ours." Additionally, the presenters mentioned women not being at the level of men professionally and not being adequately cared for and valued in the workplace or in the home.

Social dimension. In lesson 2 of the ProSAAM curriculum, the couple stated that the decisions about assigning roles and responsibilities in the home is often the greatest

challenge and offers much potential conflict for couples. The wife of the presenter couple referenced her husband's expectation that she would be a "domestic goddess" when she first married although she did not fit the role at the time. The couple also emphasized the necessity of showing appreciation and women as domestic caregivers and acknowledging them as individuals of worth and value. Additionally, many of the video vignettes seemed to reference concerns couples had with the social dimension (i.e. deciding who would pick up the child from school and housekeeping challenges).

Appendix J

PIES Model Based in Leadership Contexts

<i>PIES Model Based in Leadership Contexts</i>			
	Traditional Hierarchal	Hybrid Titular	Interdependent Egalitarian
Headship Construct	Headship means leader, commander, supervisor; the one who is "in charge"	Nominal headship that may exclude duties; husband perceived to have innate and intrinsic leadership abilities	Independent; flexible; head viewed anatomically as a metaphor for the husband as the "head" and the wife as the "body"
Leadership Style	Hierarchal leadership	Servant leadership	Co-leadership or Shared leadership
Political Dimension	Husband makes decision	Decisions may be made together with greater weight on the husband's perspective	Both husband and wife are decision makers
Intercultural Dimension	Man and women innately created to fulfill predetermined roles	"God-given" or innate characteristics of male headship/leadership	Emphasizes mutuality and partnering that highlights spouses' strength while acknowledging physical differences
Economic Dimension	Husband holds economic responsibility for the household	Husband may or may not be the financial provider	Male and/or female may contribute to household finances
Social Dimension	Husband focuses outside home, wife in charge of domestic	Husband may or may not assist with household responsibilities	Domestic responsibilities likely based on the strengths, abilities, time, etc. of spouses
Pros	Hierarchal leadership pre-established and fixed gender roles; when both spouses willingly accept roles conflict about marital roles may be reduced	Reduces conflict about leadership positions in the home	Allows each spouse to operate in his or her strengths to function within the household; allows compromise and flexibility about marital roles
Cons	Husband and/or wife may not naturally fit or be equipped to fulfill the traditional expectations of the gender role	Potential conflict about expectations for leadership duties; dependent upon wife's compliance to view husband as the leader of the home	Requires continual communication and problem solving to maintain agreement and make adjustments to marital roles

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Appendix K

Letter of Collaboration between Institutions

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX
LETTER OF COLLABORATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

Date: 12/16/2012

To: Office of the Provost/Institutional Review Board
University of Phoenix

This letter acknowledges that

Harmonic Connections PLUS is collaborating with
(Name of the agency)

Mrs. Andrea Little Mason
(Name of the student)

enrolled in the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Curriculum and Instruction program at the University of Phoenix in conducting the

proposed research. We understand the purpose of this research

is to explore three relationship education curricula targeted toward African American communities and consider how curriculum developers explicitly and implicitly depict non-conventional gender roles within the curricula

and will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Josephine Hauer
(Faculty Name)

This project will be an integral part of our institution/agency and will be conducted as a collaborative effort and will be part of our curriculum/research/data/service delivery model.

Sincerely,



Eugene Mason III
President and CEO
Harmonic Connections PLUS

Appendix L

Confidentiality Statement



NON-CONVENTIONAL GENDER ROLES IN RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION
CURRICULA FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS
Andrea Little Mason

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

As a researcher working on the above research study at the University of Phoenix, I understand that I must maintain the confidentiality of all information concerning all research participants as required by law. Only the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board may have access to this information. "Confidential Information" of participants includes but is not limited to: names, characteristics, or other identifying information, questionnaire scores, ratings, incidental comments, other information accrued either directly or indirectly through contact with any participant, and/or any other information that by its nature would be considered confidential. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the information, I hereby agree to refrain from discussing or disclosing any Confidential Information regarding research participants, to any individual who is not part of the above research study or in need of the information for the expressed purposes on the research program. This includes having a conversation regarding the research project or its participants in a place where such a discussion might be overheard; or discussing any Confidential Information in a way that would allow an unauthorized person to associate (either correctly or incorrectly) an identity with such information. I further agree to store research records whether paper, electronic or otherwise in a secure locked location under my direct control or with appropriate safe guards. I hereby further agree that if I have to use the services of a third party to assist in the research study, who will potentially have access to any Confidential Information of participants, that I will enter into an agreement with said third party prior to using any of the services, which shall provide at a minimum the confidential obligations set forth herein. I agree that I will immediately report any known or suspected breach of this confidentiality statement regarding the above research project to the University of Phoenix, Institutional Review Board.

<u>/s/ Andrea Little Mason</u> Signature of Researcher	<u>Andrea Little Mason</u> Printed Name	<u>12/20/2012</u> Date
<u>/s/ Josephine Hauer, Ed.D.</u> Signature of Witness	<u>Josephine Hauer</u> Printed Name	<u>12/20/2012</u> Date

Current version 032012

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Andrea Little Mason's professional goals are to:

- advocate for couples being empowered in their marriages through relationship education and curricula
- support mothers and their families as a Full Circle Doula in pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum
- influence consideration of cultural differences, with relevancy, in social issues

Andrea earned her undergraduate degree in Mathematics from Tuskegee University and her Master's Degree in Secondary Education from St. Xavier University in Chicago. She earned her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Phoenix.

As an educator, Andrea's motto is: "An educated individual is an empowered individual." This motto is foundational to the various dimensions of Andrea's life-long personal and professional endeavors.

Andrea taught high school in the public school system before deciding to homeschool her children, which she did for 13 years. During this time, she and her husband Eugene, began recording music they call Sounds for the Soul. Andrea received most of her vocal training at Tuskegee University, where she sang in the notable Tuskegee University Golden Voices Concert Choir and various other music ensembles. After college, she also served as a worship leader for many years, but most enjoys creating music with her husband, Eugene. Along with listeners who have embraced the uniqueness of Sounds for the Soul through live performances, songs from the five CD projects have been heard on the radio, on television and in productions.

Andrea has written and edited for several publications and writers, and also penned her first publication, *Soul Soil: The Good, the Bad and the Dirt that Makes Up Relationships*, in 2009. Her second publication was her dissertation titled: *Non-Conventional Gender Roles in Relationship Education Curricula Designed for African Americans - A Content Analysis*. Through her research, Andrea recognized the need for cultural relevancy in education surrounding African American marital roles and other social issues surrounding the marriage and family relationship education. Her dissertation research was done in collaboration with Harmonic Connections PLUS (HC+).

Andrea and her husband founded HC+ in 2008. HC+ is a 501c3 non-profit organization through which she advocates for individuals to make relationship connections that will help them purposely LEAD and actively participate in decisions that impact their lives. She creates curricula for couples and families for use in HC+'s Connectshops and classroom forums. As a doula birth professional, Andrea's advocacy and push for education extends to expectant mothers and their families as well.

Andrea has been trained through the International Center for Traditional Childbearing as a Full Circle Doula®/Birth Companion. She is a proponent of evidenced based practices in maternity care. As a Full Circle Doula®/Birth Companion, she assists women and their families by providing informational, physical, and emotional support during pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum. Her work allows mothers to have their best birthing experiences and to bond with their babies.

Andrea married her college sweetheart on her graduation day in 1994, has four sons and lives with her family in the south suburbs of Chicago.