SHARED MONEY, LESS CONFLICT, STRONGER MARRIAGES:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONEY OWNERSHIP PERCEPTIONS, NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION, FINANCIAL SATISFACTION, MARITAL SATISFACTION AND MARITAL INSTABILITY

by

JEREMY BOYLE

B.S., Brigham Young University, 2005
M.S., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2007

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Family Studies and Human Services
College of Human Ecology

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

The current study tests a conceptual model exploring the relationship between perceived money ownership (PMO) in marriage, negative communication, financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction and marital instability. Relying on a cross-sectional, convenience sample (N=345) of social media users, structural equation modeling was used to analyze the relationship between these variables. The results indicate that individuals who perceive money as shared in their relationship experience greater marital satisfaction and financial satisfaction and less marital instability, and that the relationship between PMO and these outcome variables are mediated by negative communication. Thus, having a shared money ownership perception is associated with lower levels of negative communication which in turn is associated with higher levels of financial satisfaction and marital satisfaction and lower levels of marital instability. These findings add to the literature on couples, finances, and relationships by showing that PMO is a potentially important variable in understanding relationship processes and outcomes in marriage.

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Approved by:

Co-Major Professor
Jared Anderson, Ph.D.

Approved by:

Co-Major Professor
Kristy Archuleta, Ph.D

Abstract

The current study tests a conceptual model exploring the relationship between perceived money ownership (PMO) in marriage, negative communication, financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction and marital instability. Relying on a cross-sectional, convenience sample (N=345) of social media users, structural equation modeling was used to analyze the relationship between these variables. The results indicate that individuals who perceive money as shared in their relationship experience greater marital satisfaction and financial satisfaction and less marital instability, and that the relationship between PMO and these outcome variables are mediated by negative communication. Thus, having a shared money ownership perception is associated with lower levels of negative communication which in turn is associated with higher levels of financial satisfaction and marital satisfaction and lower levels of marital instability. These findings add to the literature on couples, finances, and relationships by showing that PMO is a potentially important variable in understanding relationship processes and outcomes in marriage.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the four most important people in my life. Amelia, Everhett, Florence and Vivian, you have helped me to accomplish my goals and dreams. Now it is your turn.

Chapter 1 - **Introduction**

An old adage states, “Money makes the world go around.” Freud is attributed to having said, “Money [matters] will be treated by cultured people in the same manner as sexual matters, with the same inconsistency, prudishness, and hypocrisy” (cited in Poduska, 1993, p. 24). Money has also been called a taboo topic (Trachtman, 1999), even the “last emotional taboo in our society” (Krueger, 1986). These are just a few of the many significant statements that have been made about the role of money in society. Because few people seem to talk about the potential impact of money on individuals and relationships, it has lead researchers to claim that the subject of money is one of the most neglected topics in psychology and family therapy (Furnham & Argyle, 1998; Klontz Poduska & Allred, 1990). Couples and researchers alike seem to view finances as being separate from relationships (Poduska, 1993). Because of this, very little is known about the psychology behind why individuals and couples act the way they do around money (Furnham & Argyle, 1998).

Statement and Significance of Problem

In the United States, talking about money openly is not typically considered appropriate and many people see it as offensive or intrusive (Shapiro, 2007). Money has been placed in the same category as sex and religion as things we should not talk about (Stanley & Einhorn, 2007). Stanley and Einhorn suggested that money and sex are the only two areas where individual behavior can occur separate from the other person in the relationship and still ruin the other partner’s life. Behaviors surrounding money and sex can be damaging because they can involve complex issues, such as shame, fear, identity, and fear of blame. It is because of these issues that individuals involved in intimate relationship are sometimes motivated to hide their money behaviors and sexual behaviors from one another (Stanley & Einhorn, 2007). When it comes to money behaviors in a relationship, how married individuals perceive money ownership is an area that needs further research (Ashby & Burgoyne, 2009). However, there is no research to date investigating how money ownership perceptions impact financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes. If a link between money ownership perceptions and financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes is found, it would suggest that money is not just a tangible possession in a relationship but it is also a non-tangible construct that can have a psychological impact on how individuals function in a relationship. Bringing these issues out into the open will help researchers and clinicians focus on financial variables, which have the greatest impact on relationships

Summary

This research study adds understanding to the fields of Marriage and Family Therapy and Financial Counseling and Planning and comes at a time when there is a collaborative movement occurring where researchers, relationship therapists, and financial planners and counselors are beginning to work together to better understand couples' finances. This new interdisciplinary area of practice and research is being called "financial therapy" (Archuleta & Grable, 2011). The establishment of the Financial Therapy Association in 2010 gives credence to the need for research in this area. As this new field progresses, developing an understanding of the "why" and "how" of couple financial problems and couple financial success is increasing in its necessity. Heimadal and Houseknecht (2003) suggested that a couple's choice to keep money together or separate is an area that needs to be explored further. Ashby and Burgoyne (2009) suggested that the best way to do this is to move beyond Pahl's (1995) typology of money management and instead begin to collect data on perceptions of money ownership. Instead of looking at a couple's actual money management practices, the present study focuses on married individuals perceptions of money ownership and its relationship with negative communication, financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability

Based on a review of the literature and using social exchange theory as a guide to explain the relationships among the concepts, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed.

RQ1: Is perceived money ownership (PMO) related to financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability? It was hypothesized that there would be a positive, direct relationship between PMO and both marital satisfaction and financial satisfaction and a negative, direct relationship between PMO and marital instability.

RQ2: Does negative communication (i.e., negative interaction and ineffective arguing) mediate the relationship between PMO and the outcome variables of financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability? In addition to the hypothesized direct relationship between PMO and the outcome variables (RQ1), it was also hypothesized that PMO would be related to the outcome variables indirectly via the prior effect of PMO on negative communication. Thus, the higher the degree of shared money ownership perceptions the lower the negative communication would be. Lower levels of negative communication would be associated with higher marital satisfaction, higher financial satisfaction, and lower levels of marital instability.

RQ3: Is financial satisfaction related to marital satisfaction and marital instability and is the relationship between financial satisfaction and marital instability mediated by marital satisfaction? It was hypothesized that financial satisfaction would be positively related to marital satisfaction and negatively related to marital instability and that the relationship between financial satisfaction and marital instability would be partially mediated by marital satisfaction.

Thus, the greater the financial satisfaction the greater the marital satisfaction and the lower the marital instability. Finally, the relationship between financial satisfaction and marital instability would evidence both direct and indirect associations.

Chapter 2 - **Literature Review**

Couples Money Management Systems and Perceptions of Shared Ownership

One question that has been asked over time by researchers is, “how do couples manage money?” The money management system a couple uses is important because married couples are more likely to fight about how money is spent or managed than they are about how much money they make (Blumestein & Schwartz, 1983). Recently, research on money management systems has led to another relevant question about the relationship between the way couples manage money and how they perceive who actually owns the money (Ashby & Burgoyne, 2009). To overview the current research in this area, the literature review will address money management systems, perceptions of money management, factors that influence money management systems and money ownership perceptions, and the impact of money ownership perceptions on financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes.

Money Management Systems

In order to explore perceived money ownership (PMO), it is necessary to first understand the research on money management systems from which the research on money ownership was derived. Researchers have identified five categories for organizing household money. Vogler, Lyonette, and Wiggins (2008) placed money management strategies into a typology with two subsections. The first subsection is money management strategies that operate mostly as a single economic unit. The second subsection is money management strategies, in which couples apprise autonomy and individual freedom as most important and then exchange goods and services between them. The two different types of systems are described below:

Systems that operate as a single economic unit:

- *Female whole wage:* The woman manages all or nearly all of the family income with the husband only getting a small amount of pocket change.
- *Male whole wage/Housekeeping allowance system*: In this system, the man either manages all of the money or he manages most of the money except for the housekeeping allowance.
- *Joint pooling system:* Couples pool money in a joint bank account and manage it together, each taking money out of the account as needed.

Systems which focus on autonomy and individual freedom:

- *Partial pooling:* Couples pool some of their money for joint expenses, but keep the rest for themselves to spend as they choose.
- *Independent management:* Both partners have their own independent incomes from earnings or state benefits, which are kept separately. Each partner is usually in charge of paying for different expenditures for the household.

The research on prevalence of money management strategies in the general population is sparse. Two studies conducted by Burgoyne and colleagues (see Burgoyne, Clark, Reibstein, & Edmunds, 2006; Burgoyne, Reibstein, Edmunds, & Dolman, 2007) on the transition to marriage and couple money management strategies provides a glimpse into the possible frequency of various types of management strategies. In Burgoyne et al.'s (2006) longitudinal research, the prevalence of each of the money management systems appeared to change with time and as the relationship changed. In a sample of 42 heterosexual couples who were preparing to marry, most (81%) of whom were cohabiting, 48% were using an independent money management system and most anticipated there would be a change in their money management system (to partial pooling) once married (Burgoyne et al., 2006). After one year of marriage, only 35% of independent managers at time one of the longitudinal study were still using the independent management system. Most had moved to a partial pooling system (41%) and the rest (23%) moved to a joint pooling system (Burgoyne et al., 2007). For those couples who were using a partial pooling system at time one (about 36%), 70% still continued to use the partial pooling system while 30% had moved to a joint pooling system at time two. All who were using a joint pooling system at time one were still using that system at time two of the study.

At time one, prior to marriage, individual ownership of money was more important to the participants than pooling resources, with some couples having the mindset that their money would be available to the other person if needed (Burgoyne et al., 2006). However, after one year of marriage, the trend changed towards combining finances (Burgoyne et al., 2007). Two areas that were identified as having the greatest impact on whether or not a couple decided to move towards a pooling system included a mortgage and starting a family. Thus, life changes appeared to encourage the couples to move towards a management system that allowed for better management of a home and raising a family (Burgoyne et al.). Burgoyne and colleagues' research was consistent with earlier research (Blumestein & Schwartz, 1983; Pahl, 1995), which also found that the longer couples were together the more likely they were to favor pooling their money.

In time two of the Burgoyne et al.'s (2007) study–one year after marriage–they explored couples' attitudes toward the ownership of money and how those corresponded to the management systems they used. The authors divided the participants into three groups: a) shared ownership (i.e., the couples felt strongly that marriage is a place where you share resources collectively); b) individual vs. joint ownership (i.e., the couples distinguished a line between personal and collective resources); and c) transitional ownership (i.e., this group did not have a clear sense of who owned what and appeared to be more worried about having an independent financial identity while at the same time had thoughts that the money is "ours"). Couples in the shared ownership group appeared to have more trust in one another and felt that it was odd for couples to split the bills and pay for separate things (Burgoyne et al., 2007). These couples felt a strong need for both partners in the relationship to "pull their weight" financially. Couples in the individual vs. joint ownership group were characterized by being worried about who had paid for what in the relationship and expressed the need to have some control over their money. They were also more worried about having a sense of individuality in the relationship. Most couples, but not all, fell into an ownership category that was congruent with the type of money management system they were using. For instance, the majority of couples who pooled resources were categorized as having shared ownership. The majority of those in the partial pooling system were described as having individual vs. joint ownership (Burgoyne et al., 2007).

Perceptions of Shared Money Ownership

In further analyzing Burgoyne and colleagues' (2006, 2007) qualitative research, Ashby and Burgoyne (2009) realized that couples did not always fall into an ownership category that was congruent with the type of money management system they were using. They determined that money ownership was related to money management systems but that money ownership appeared to be a more useful construct than money management systems because tangible management of the finances does not always match up with an individual's perception of who actually controls the money. For instance, if one person in the relationship is managing all of the money and paying the bills, it does not necessarily mean the other person will feel like they do not have equal access to the money. Thus, two different couples could manage money the exact same way, but have very different perceptions about the degree to which the money is shared or distinct. Using Burgoyne and colleagues (2006, 2007) qualitative research, Ashby and Burgoyne created a quantitative measure for shared vs. distinct money ownership perceptions. Ashby and Burgoyne's (2009) research validated Burgoyne and colleagues' (2006, 2007) research in that they found that couples money management system did not always match up to ownership perceptions. Further, individuals with shared money ownership perceptions were less worried about the specific amounts of money each person paid toward expenses, whereas those in the distinct ownership category were more worried about each partner making specific contributions. Regardless of what type of money management system was used, those with shared perceptions of money were not concerned as much about who paid for things. The most recent research has suggested that the way in which couples perceive shared vs. distinct money ownership provides a clearer picture of how individuals feel about the way money is used in the relationship. The present study focused primarily on perceptions of money ownership.

Gender and Money Ownership

Couples often strive to live up to the ideal of equal sharing of finances, but in practice it is often difficult to achieve (Burgoyne & Lewis 1994). Using longitudinal data that spanned from 1980 to 1992, Zuo (1997) found that men's beliefs about women sharing the provider role has moved towards an egalitarian attitude, but that men still desire to make more money than their wives. In a later study Zuo and Tang (2000) found that women of higher earning status and men of lower earning status tend to have more non-conventional gender roles where men of higher earning status and women of lower earning status tend to have more conventional (less egalitarian) gender ideologies (Zuo & Tang, 2000).

Gender differences have been also been found to impact money ownership perceptions. Men were more likely to see money ownership in the relationship as shared and women were more likely to see it as distinct. This was particularly true when a male partner earned more money (Ashby and Burgoyne's, 2009). Although women have been found to see money as less shared, studies have shown that women were more likely than men to make personal sacrifices and sacrifices that benefit the entire family when money was lacking, such as spending more of their earnings on their children (Zagorsky, 2003). Further, women have been found to exhibit more of a sense of deprivation and envy when it comes to having money to obtain things and have the experiences they want in the present (Prince, 1993).Wives have also been found to be more likely than husbands to have experienced financial cuts in things like clothing and meals (Pahl, 1995).

Money Ownership Perceptions and Relationship and Financial Satisfaction

How money impacts couple relationships has been a popular topic among researchers in recent years. However, research on PMO and its impact on financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes is sparse. As previously reported, Ashby and Burgoyne initially introduced the concept of money ownership perceptions in 2009. In the current study, Ashby and Burgoyne's money ownership perceptions are studied in association to financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes, which include marital satisfaction and marital instability. Because the research on the association among PMO, financial satisfaction, and relationship outcomes is lacking, a brief overview of how PMO impacts financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes is presented.

Money Perceptions, Financial Satisfaction and Relationship Outcomes

Research conducted by Einhorn, Stanley, and Markman (unpublished manuscript as cited in Stanley & Einhorn, 2007) found that how the person perceived his or her financial situation was more important in determining financial satisfaction than how much money the couple actually earned. In a study of couples who had been married an average of three years and had one child, researchers found that 13% of the variance in marital satisfaction was explained by perceived quality of financial management and financial problems (Kerkmann, Lee, Lown, & Allgood, 2000). To date, there is no specific research linking PMO and couples' relationship outcomes.

There is very little research on financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes, but the few findings that are available appear to be consistent. Research by Aniol and Snyder (1997) suggested that husbands were more affected by concerns about finances and that husbands' relationship satisfaction was strongly related to his own concerns about finances. Grable, Britt, and Cantrell (2007) examined data from a survey administered in one Midwestern state of the United States. Grable and colleagues found that respondents with a high level of financial satisfaction were less likely to have thought about divorce in the past three years. In their study, financial satisfaction was the most important variable in determining who was more likely to have thought about divorce. Archuleta, Britt, Tonn, and Grable's (2011) study built upon Grable et al.'s study and discovered a link between where one spouse wanted to stay married or wanted to leave the relationship and an interaction effect between financial satisfaction and financial stressors. In other words, when couples experienced increased financial satisfaction and a lower number of financial stressors, they were more satisfied in their marriage.

Negative Communication

In the present study negative communication in made up of two observed variables: Negative interaction and Ineffective arguing. Ineffective arguing is identified as an interaction pattern that is characterized by fighting about perpetual problems, being able to predict the way an argument is going to end before it is over, stopping arguments without resolution (Kurdek 1994). Negative interaction is characterized by the degree to which couples communicate in a way that escalates the situation, invalidates the other person, or causes one person to withdraw from the situation (Stanley, Markman and Whitton, 2002).

There has been no research examining the relationship between money ownership perceptions and negative communication. However, research has found that financial matters influence communication and that these variables are associated with marital satisfaction and marital instability. Studies have suggested that around 40-50% of couples fight about financial matters (Britt, Huston, & Durband, 2010; Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, Prawitz, 1993). Other studies have shown that money is the number one source of marital tension (Oggins, 2003) is the number one source of stress in America (American Psychological Association, 2011) and is even predictive of divorce (Amato & Rogers 2007). Two main themes that emerge from the research on communication and finances that are of importance to being unified in communication about finances and the negative effect of financial conflict on the relationship.

Unified communication

The ability to consult one another and make joint decisions on financial matters has been shown to have a great impact on relationship satisfaction. Amato and Rogers (1997) found that for the 1,341 participants in their study, communication about finances, keeping the other spouse informed about finances, and discussing major purchases were important factors in the couples' relationship satisfaction. Communicating about finances was also found as an attribute of couples who reported being happily married (Skogrand, Johnson, Horrocks, & Defrain, 2011). Drawing on data from the 2002 British International Survey Programme, Vogler, Lyonette, and Wiggins (2008) wanted to see how money management patterns influenced equality between partners and how this related to overall relationship satisfaction and happiness with life. They found for the 591 male and 701 female participants that when members of the relationship made financial decisions by communicating or getting the input from the other partner, they were more satisfied with family life and life in general (Vogler, et al.).

In a study that sought to examine financial behaviors that lead to financial arguments, researchers looked at 133 married adults (Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, & Prawitz, 1993). These researchers found that when couples worked together on certain management strategies, such as goal setting, record keeping, and planned savings, they were less likely to argue about finances. The importance of couple unity in managing finances has also been found in other studies. Using a nationally representative sample, Blumestein and Schwartz (1983) found that couples who reported having equal control over spending money were more likely to report having less conflict in the relationship. When couples did not work together on financial matters, relationship satisfaction was poor.

Conflict

In a sample comprised of 104 married couples of conservative protestant religious background, researchers studied the impact of materialism, financial satisfaction, shared financial decision making, shared task implementation and conflict over finances on a couple's marital satisfaction. The results from this study indicated that even when controlling for other financial behaviors and demographics, conflict over finances accounted for 46% of the variance in couple relationship satisfaction (Koutstaal, 1998).

When couples lack the skills to communicate about finances effectively, they are at increased risk for relationship problems. In a study of 100 husbands and 100 wives who recorded conflict reports in a diary, marital conflicts about money lasted longer and were more likely to be about a recurrent issue when compared to other conflicts (Papp, Cummings, & Goeke-Morey, 2009). Both husbands and wives rated conflicts over money as having a more profound current and long-term impact on the relationship. This same study also found that husbands in the sample exhibited angrier behavior over money-related conflicts and both husbands and wives experienced greater depressive behavior in money-related conflicts. Money-related conflicts were also less likely to be resolved.

Another study that analyzed data from the National Survey of Families and Households found that financial disagreements are the strongest predictor of whether or not a couple will engage in negative communication (Dew & Dakin, 2011). Financial disagreements lead to greater use of heated arguments and couple violence and to less use of calm discussion. Thus, a change in financial disagreements has been found to be associated with change in conflict tactics. Not only have financial disagreements been shown to increase conflict tactics in a relationship but just having a difficult time financially can influence the way couples interact with one another. For instance, in a study of 76 white, middle-class couples (Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Conger, Simons, Whitbeck et al., 1990), which sought to determine if economic hardship influenced the affective quality of couples' relationships, researchers discovered that finances played a significant role in the way the couples in the sample interacted with one another. The findings suggested that men may be affected more by financial matters, become more hostile, and express less warmth towards their wives. When both husbands and wives interacted with one another in hostile ways and lacked warmth, it led to poor marital quality and marital instability (Conger et al., 1990). A study conducted by Britt, Huston, & Durband (2010), on the determinants of money arguments found that couples who have money arguments are also more likely to engage in other types of arguments.

From the research, a case can be made that communication could be a mediating factor between couple financial matters and relationship outcomes. It also indicates that finances have the potential to create a volatile environment in the relationship. Having a volatile environment may lead individual's weighing the costs against the rewards in the relationship to determine if the relationship is beneficial. This type of cost benefit analysis is described well with Social Exchange Theory.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory (SET) can help to explain how couples perceive money ownership in relation to financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability. SET makes many assumptions, which are useful to the present study, to describe why people participate in relationships and makes assumptions about why relationships fail or flourish. For the present study, SET provides the framework for why individuals may see PMO as shared and how this relates to relationship outcomes.

Social Exchange Theory

The basic assumption of SET is that what people need and want in life can only be obtained by making exchanges with others. During these exchanges, individuals will try to receive what they need or want at the lowest possible cost (Turner, 1991). The four basic assumptions of SET are: a) individuals are limited by the range of choices they have available to them; b) people are motivated by their own self-interests and seek after things that will be beneficial to themselves; c) humans are rational beings and have the ability to calculate rewards and costs; and d) an important characteristic of relationships is interdependence, meaning that individuals must provide the other person with a reward (Klein and White, 1996).

The present study has been primarily built upon two assumptions of SET: a) being motivated by self-interests and b) interdependence. According to Klein and White's (1996) description of SET, all relationships need to receive some type of reward in order to continue.

Theoretically speaking, an association between PMO and a "reward" would exist if both people in the relationship perceived high levels of shared PMO. A shared PMO is rewarding because it has the potential to create economic security, it shows commitment to the relationship, and it adds to a sense of unity in the relationship. As couples experience rewards, they will be more likely to continue to engage in activities that foster interdependence. In the present study, PMO can be seen as a measure of how much people are looking out for their own interests as well as a measure of interdependence. Those who have shared money ownership perceptions may be more likely to see that sharing money is one way of providing a reward to the other person. A shared PMO is an example of both individuals perceiving that the other is doing his or her part to make sure that the relationship is flourishing. It is also an example of interdependence. Without the presence of interdependence, SET would not be able to explain relationship stability because people would only be looking out for their own interests and would not feel like they were receiving rewards from the other person. A distinct PMO may lead an individual to the perception that their spouse is only looking out for his or her own self-interests and could lead to greater negative communication. This may reinforce the belief that the individual is not having his or her needs fulfilled in the relationship which could lead to relationship deterioration.

Some of the rewards that have been identified by SET include security, autonomy, money, and equality (Klein & White, 1996). Because people do not always know the outcome of their choices, they will rely on past experiences to inform their decisions and will choose actions they believe will be rewarding or have the lowest cost associated with them. For the present study, a strong sense of interdependence is represented by a shared PMO with higher levels of shared PMO leading to less negative communication. Less negative communication will be related to greater financial satisfaction, greater marital satisfaction, and lower marital instability, which can all be seen as the rewards of being in a relationship.

Based on the assumptions of exchange theory and the concept of equality, when an individual in a relationship perceives the money coming into the relationship as distinct and not shared, it is likely that an individual could possibly see the relationship as one of inequality. This would be particularly true for an individual who was not the primary wage earner. This could lead to perceptions that the costs of staying in the relationship are greater than the reward, at least in the area of finances. Theoretically, this could lead to increased negative communication and, ultimately, lead to decreased marital satisfaction and poor marital stability.

Another premise of exchange theory that has been used in the development of the present study is that of reciprocity. Reciprocity is essentially the belief that people will help those who have helped them (Klein & White, 1996). Reciprocity is applied to the current study in that individuals who have high levels of shared PMO in a marriage are likely experiencing a positive exchange and continue the behavior because they want to keep the relationship stable.

Finally, security is another SET premise, which states human-beings seek economic security. It also states that people who have a high level of economic security place lesser value on economic security (Klein & White, 1996). In the present study, economic security is also being measured through money ownership perceptions. Theoretically speaking, those who perceive money in the relationship as being shared will have a greater sense of economic security because they know they do not have to rely solely on their own income to help make ends meet. One exception to this, as SET would agree, is when both individuals in the relationship are earning large amounts of money. The need for these couples to join forces to achieve greater economic security is not as important as it would be for a couples who have lower paying jobs and are having a hard time getting by financially (Heimadal & Houseknecht, 2003; Vogler, 2005).

Chapter 3 - **Research Design/Methodology**

The purpose of this research was to determine whether PMO was associated with married individuals' financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability and whether negative communication patterns mediated these relationships. It was hypothesized that higher levels of shared PMO would be associated with less negative communication, greater financial and marital satisfaction, and lower marital instability. It was also hypothesized that negative communication would mediate the association between PMO and financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability

Procedure

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling methods using Facebook. Facebook is a social networking media that allows individuals to communicate with coworkers, friends, and family. Facebook was founded in 2004 and has more than 750 million active users with 50% of active users logging on to Facebook every day. The average Facebook user has over 130 friends with 70% of users outside the United States (Facebook, n. d.). More recently, Facebook has been accepted as a viable means for recruiting a convenience sample for research (see Raymer & Hunkins, 2011; Rose, et al., 2010).

Participants were invited to take a self-administered survey. Invitations to participate in the study contained the following: a) a link to the survey research, b) a request that participants should not take the survey if the participants spouse had already taken the survey, and c) an invitation to invite other Facebook friends to participate. The invitation was posted multiple times on Facebook as a status update by the primary investigators and two other investigators who were not connected to each other as Facebook Friends. Facebook Friends were also sent private messages asking them to post the invitation on their wall for their friends to see. Graduate students in various programs at the university were also invited by e-mail to post the invitation as a status update for their Facebook Friends. Several times a week the investigators reposted the invitation as a status update to improve visibility on Facebook news feeds. When potential participants clicked on the link, they were taken directly to the informed consent page of the study, which provided potential participants with a detailed description of the survey, including known benefits and risks of completing the survey. Participants indicated their consent by starting the survey. Those who completed the online survey were able to enter their e-mail address at the end of the study for a chance to win one of ten, fifty-dollar gift cards.

A total of 402 individuals accessed the survey, including some individuals who were not intended participants. As stated in the invitation, the target population for data collection was married and cohabiting couples. The total sample was made up of individuals who were either cohabiting (n = 30), married (n = 345), engaged but not living together (n = 3), single (n = 8), separated (n = 2), and widowed (n = 1). Thirteen people (n = 13) people accessed the first page of the survey, but did not go beyond the informed consent.

Sample Characteristics

Table 5.1 (see Appendix A) shows the descriptive statistics of the married sample (n = 345). Although users of Facebook overall may be diverse, the sample that was obtained through this study indicates that Facebook is made up of users who belong to homogeneous networks. The majority of the sample (69%) was female and nearly 95% of the sample identified themselves as white. The majority of respondents were from the Midwest and the Mountain West. One main indicator that demonstrated a homogeneous network from this study was religion. Just under half (48.1%) of participants identified themselves as Latter-day Saints with about one-fourth (25.5%) of the sample identifying themselves as Protestants.

The sample was mostly college educated with most participants indicated that they attended at least some school beyond high school (77%). Most participants fell into the middle class with the median combined annual income at $80,000 (M = 94,543). The majority of the sample indicated owning a home (67.5%) while 25.8% indicated renting their home. The mean age for the sample was 36.86 years.

Measures

Money ownership perceptions. The Money Ownership Perceptions scale is an eight-item scale that was developed using longitudinal qualitative data by Ashby and Burgoyne (2009) to measure if an individual's perception of money ownership is shared or if it is distinct. When Ashby and Burgoyne developed the scale, a principal-axis factor analysis was conducted on 20 questions and resulted in the questions loading onto two factors. Factor one contained 8 questions and was labeled *shared vs. distinct ownership perceptions* and was used in the current study to operationalize money ownership perceptions. Examples of questions used to determine money ownership perceptions include: a) "I would say that overall I see the money I earn as money for the relationship rather than just my money; " b)"We see ourselves as separated from each other financially;" and c) "I feel we are starting to view money as more shared than we used to." Participants were asked to respond to these statements on a six-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = "very dissatisfied" to 6 = "very satisfied." Scale total scores ranged from 14-40 with increased scores indicating higher levels of shared money ownership perceptions. The alpha coefficient for reliability in the present study was .76.

Marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4) (Funk and Rogge (2007). The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI) was originally developed as a 32-item measure, but also includes 16-item and 4-item short versions. Both the original CSI and the CSI-4 have been found to be valid measures of couple satisfaction. The CSI has been found to have a higher precision of measurement than the Dyadic Adjustment Scale or the Marital Adjustment Test. It also has strong reliability and convergent validity with other existing measures of relationship satisfaction and construct validity has been established. The CSI-4 has one item that asks people to “Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship” on a seven-point Likert scale with 0 = “extremely unhappy” and 6 = “perfect.” The second statement, “I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner” is answered on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = “not at all true” to 5 = “completely true”. The last two questions are: a)“How rewarding is your relationship with your partner;” and b) “In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship.” Responses were measured on a six-point Likert-scale, ranging from 0 = “not at all” and 5 = “completely” (Funk and Rogge, 2007). Total marital satisfaction scores ranged from 0-21 with higher scores signifying greater relationship satisfaction. The reliability of the CSI-4 in this sample was $\alpha = .86$

Financial satisfaction. Financial satisfaction was measured with an eight-item measure developed by DeVaney, Gorham, Bechman, and Haldeman (1996). Participants were asked to rank their satisfaction on a six-point, Likert-type scale with 1 = “very dissatisfied” and 6= “very satisfied” with items such as: a) “level of household income,” b) “money for necessities,” c)“the way money is handled in the family,” and d)“money for family emergencies” The scale is very similar to other scales of financial satisfaction (i.e., Lown, & Ju, 1992; Hira & Mugenda, 1998; Garman, Kratzer, Brunson, & Joo, 1999) found in the literature. Scores ranged from 8-48 with higher numbers indicating a greater degree of financial satisfaction. The alpha coefficient for the scale in the current study was .91. This scale was also chosen because it specifically asks questions about satisfaction concerning the way money is handled in the family and satisfaction for who handles the money, which are two concepts directly related to the purpose of this research.

Negative interaction. Negative interaction was measured using a five-item scale (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002) that has been found to be associated with relationship difficulty. Examples of the items include: a) “Little arguments escalate into ugly fights with accusations, criticisms, name-calling, or bringing up past hurts;” and b) “When we have a problem to solve, it is like we are on opposite teams.” Options for answers on the scale were 1= “never/almost never,” 2= “Once in a while,” 3= “Frequently.” Scores range from 5 to 15 with higher scores indicating higher levels of negative interaction. The alpha coefficient for the scale in the current study was .76.

Ineffective arguing inventory. This scale was developed by Kurdek (1994) and was made up of eight items that described different types of arguments in which people in relationships were likely to participate. Examples of statements included: a) “When we begin to fight or argue, I think, ‘Here we go again;’” b) “We go for days without settling our differences;” and c)“We need to improve the way we settle our differences.” These statements were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = “disagree strongly” to 5 = “agree strongly.” Scores ranged from 8-40 with higher scores indicating a higher degree of ineffective arguing. The alpha coefficient for the scale in this study was .90.

Marital instability. Marital instability was measured using the marital instability index developed by Booth, Johnson, and Edwards (1983). Respondents were asked to respond to five questions about thoughts or activities in which they have engaged 1= “never,” 2 = “ever,” 3 = “within the last three years,” or 4 = “now.” Examples of questions on the scale included: a)

"Have you or your husband/wife ever seriously suggested the idea of divorce within the last three years;" b)"Have you discussed divorce or separation with a close friend;" and c) "Did you talk about consulting an attorney." Total scores on the marital stability index ranged from 5-19 with the higher scores indicating greater instability in the relationship. The reliability coefficient alpha for this scale in the current study was .85.

Preliminary Analyses and Analytic Plan

Initial data analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 19. Data were analyzed to see how variables that were included in the SEM model were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlations (see Table 2). All variables were significantly correlated ($p < .01$) except for perceived money ownership and financial satisfaction.

In order to determine the amount of missing data, descriptive statistics were consulted. Missing data ranged from 7% (CSI-4) to 12.6% (PMO) across the variables in the model. In order to manage the missing data, a procedure known as full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) was used. Acock (2005) has shown that FIML has statistical advantages over traditional approaches, such as listwise and pairwise deletion and mean substitution. FIML has been shown to have similar results to multiple imputation. To help justify the missing at random (MAR) assumption of FIML, a logistic regression was run in SPSS to determine if any variables predicted missingness on the outcome variables of interest. Years of schooling predicted missingness for each outcome variable, supporting the MAR assumption. Therefore, years of schooling was included in all structural models as an auxiliary variable.

In order to allow for the use of a single scale (i.e., CSI-4) to make up a latent variable in the SEM model, individual items from the scale were grouped together using a procedure known as parceling. Because many of the latent variables consisted of a single indicator (i.e., a single, unidimensional scale), parceling allows for items within a single unidimensional scale to be grouped together to create two, three, or four indicators, which improves the chances of a proper solution in the SEM model (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999). Parcels were computed into new variables using SPSS. Latent variables in the SEM model that were made up of items from individual, unidimensional scales were PMO, financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability. Parceling was not utilized to create the latent construct of negative communication because two separate scales were used to create this latent variable (i.e., negative interaction and ineffective arguing).

A Pearson product moment correlation analysis was performed with the variables used in the model and the demographic variables in order to identify variables that could be used as controls. Demographic variables that were significantly correlated with at least one variable in the model were used as control variables. Control variables that were identified were: a) marriage length, b) owning a home, c) number of children, and d) cohabitation before marriage (see Table 2).

Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling in Mplus 6.12 with maximum likelihood estimation. SEM was used because it allows for the use of observed variables and it has the ability to take measurement error into account during the analysis. SEM was also chosen because it has the ability to assess multi-group models, such as comparing males and females (Shumacker & Lomax, 2004). The final SEM model was run using bootstrap analysis (2,000 bootstraps). Bootstrapping is a resampling procedure that repeatedly draws samples with replacement from the data (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Bootstrap analysis was utilized because it is the preferred method for testing mediation models (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Chapter 4 - **Results**

Descriptive Findings

Overall, participants in the study reported having mostly stable marriages (*M=6.9).* A score of 5 on the marital instability index means that in the last three years the participant has never thought that the relationship was unstable. A score of 20 indicates that the individual currently thinks the relationship is unstable. Individuals also reported being satisfied with their relationships (*M=16.40).* The CSI-4 has a marital distress cut-off score of 13.5, meaning that a score of 13.5 or lower is indicative of possible marital distress. Perceptions of shared money ownership were also high (*M= 34.19)* with the highest possible score for shared perceptions being 40. Overall, individuals in the study reported engaging in very little negative interaction (*M= 6.94).* A score of five on the negative interaction scale indicated that the individual reported never or almost never engaging in negative interaction and a score of 15 indicated frequently engaging in negative interactions. Individuals reported being moderately effective in being able to engage in effective arguments (*M=17.52).* A score of 8 on the ineffective arguing scale indicated that the individual did not engage in any of the possible ineffective arguing strategies, whereas a score of 40 indicated that the individual strongly agreed to engaging in ineffective arguing. Financial satisfaction was one variable in the model where participants reported only moderate satisfaction (*M*= 31.69) with higher numbers indicating greater satisfaction. A score of 48 would have indicated the individual was very satisfied with his or her finances (see Table 1).

Correlations

The majority of the observed variables, which made up the latent variables in the model, were correlated with one another (see Table 4.1). PMO was negatively correlated with ineffective arguing (r = -.301, $p < .01$), negative interaction (r = -.228, $p < .01$), and marital

Table 4.1 ***Correlations of Observed Variables That Make Up Latent Variables In SEM Model With Control Variables*** **.**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived Money Ownership	–									
2. Ineffective arguing	-.301**	–								
3. Negative interaction	-.228**	.723**	–							
4. CSI-4	.317**	-.626**	-.608**	–						
5. Marital Instability	-.280**	.584**	.558**	-.630**	–					
6. Financial Satisfaction	.110	-.239**	-.242**	.233**	-.205**	–				
7. Cohab. Before Marriage	-.217**	.111*	.135*	-.102	.081	-.086	–			
8. Number of Children	.112*	.035	.018	.023	-.012	-.115*	-.245**	–		
9. Marriage Length	.017	.031	.003	-.108	-.055	.113*	-.209**	.010	–	
10. Home Ownership	.054	-.041	-.032	.006	-.008	.237**	-.039	.159**	.244**	–
Means	34.19	17.52	7.37	16.40	6.94	31.69	.29	1.80	12.07	1.76

**p < .01 *p < .05

Instability (*r* = -.280, p < .01), and was positively correlated with marital satisfaction (*r* = .317, p < .01). In other words, the more shared the PMO the lower the ineffective arguing, negative communication, and marital instability. Those with a shared PMO were more likely to report higher marital satisfaction, though PMO was not correlated with financial satisfaction (*r* = .110, p < n.s.). Ineffective arguing was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction (*r* = -.626, p < .01), and financial satisfaction (*r* = -.239, p < .01) and positively correlated with marital instability (*r* = .584, p < .01). Thus, those who reported less ineffective arguing reported higher marital satisfaction and financial satisfaction and lower marital instability. Ineffective arguing was positively correlated with negative interaction (*r* = .723, p < .01). Thus, the more ineffective arguing the more negative interaction that was reported. Negative interaction was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction (*r* = -.608, p < .01), and financial satisfaction (*r* = -.242, p < .01), but was positively correlated with marital instability (*r* = .558, p < .01). This can be interpreted as, the lower the negative interaction the higher the marital and financial satisfaction, and the lower the marital instability. Marital satisfaction was negatively correlated with marital instability (*r* = -.630, p < .01), and positively correlated with financial satisfaction (*r* = .233, p < .01). In other words, those who reported higher marital satisfaction reported lower marital instability and more financial satisfaction. Marital instability was negatively correlated with financial satisfaction (*r* = -.205, p < .01). Thus, the higher the financial satisfaction the lower the marital instability.

Various other noteworthy correlations resulted from the analysis of demographic variables with variables in the structural model (see Table 2). Cohabitation before marriage had a significant positive relationship with ineffective arguing (*r* = .111, p < .05) and negative interaction (*r* = .l35, p < .05), and a significant negative relationship with PMO (*r* = -.217, p <

.01). Thus, individuals who cohabited before marriage were more likely to have negative interactions and argue ineffectively. Individuals who cohabited were also less likely to see money as shared in the relationship. Financial satisfaction was positively related to marriage length (r = .113, p < .05) and home ownership (r = .237, p < .05). In other words, those who were satisfied with their finances were also more likely to be married longer and own a home. PMO and financial satisfaction were both correlated with the number of children in the marriage. PMO had a significant positive correlation with the number of children (r = .112, p < .05) and financial satisfaction had a significant negative relationship with the number of children in the relationship (r = -.115, p < .05). This can be interpreted as the more children participants had the more likely they were to have a shared PMO and the less likely they were to be satisfied financially.

Initial Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In the initial stages of model development, a preliminary model was developed that included one latent variable predicting PMO and was labeled relationship assurance (RA). RA included three observed variables: a) trust, b) commitment, and c) confidence. It was originally hypothesized that RA would be associated with whether or not an individual perceived money as being shared. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used in structural equation modeling to first test if the measurement model fits the data and in a two group model, determine whether the data can be measured consistently for both men and women (Kline, 2011). In this study, a CFA was conducted on the initial model. The CFA indicated that the data fit the model adequately for the single group model according to guidelines provided by Kline (2011) (χ^2 (105) = 274.791, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.072 (90% CI = .061, .082), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .954; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .940). However, the two group model did not fit the data well (χ^2 (236) = 499.342, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .083 (90% CI = .073, .094), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .930; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .920). Given the acceptable fitting single group CFA, the full structural model was then tested.

Structural Equation Model

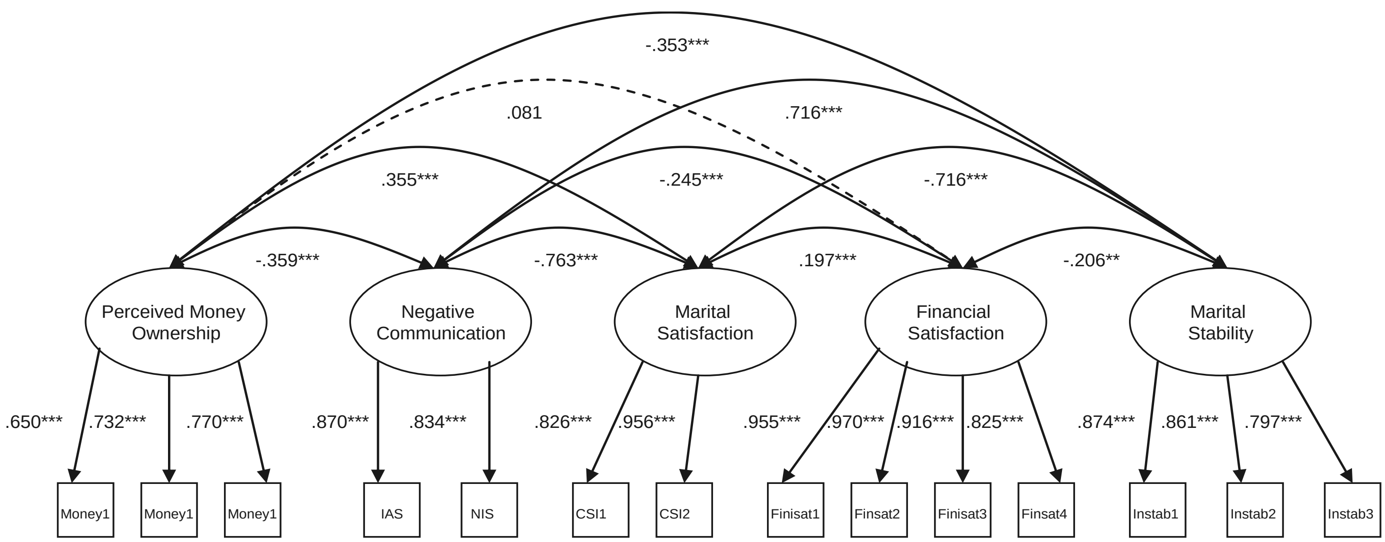
Results of the full structural model, with control variables (i.e. marriage length, owning a home, number of children, and cohabitation before marriage), indicated that there was an acceptable model fit with the data (χ^2 (148) = 329.285, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.060 (90% CI = .051, .068), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .952; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .934). However, a closer look at the model revealed that Relationship Assurance (RA) was so highly associated with negative communication ($\beta = .825$, $p < .001$), marital satisfaction ($\beta = .661$, $p < .001$), and marital instability ($\beta = .719$, $p < .001$) that there was little variability left to be accounted for by the other variables in the model, rendering most other pathways non-significant. Although the variables are distinct theoretically, in this particular dataset, there was significant overlap or redundancy leading to possible multicollinearity. Therefore a more parsimonious, or nested model, that excluded RA was analyzed.

Revised Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

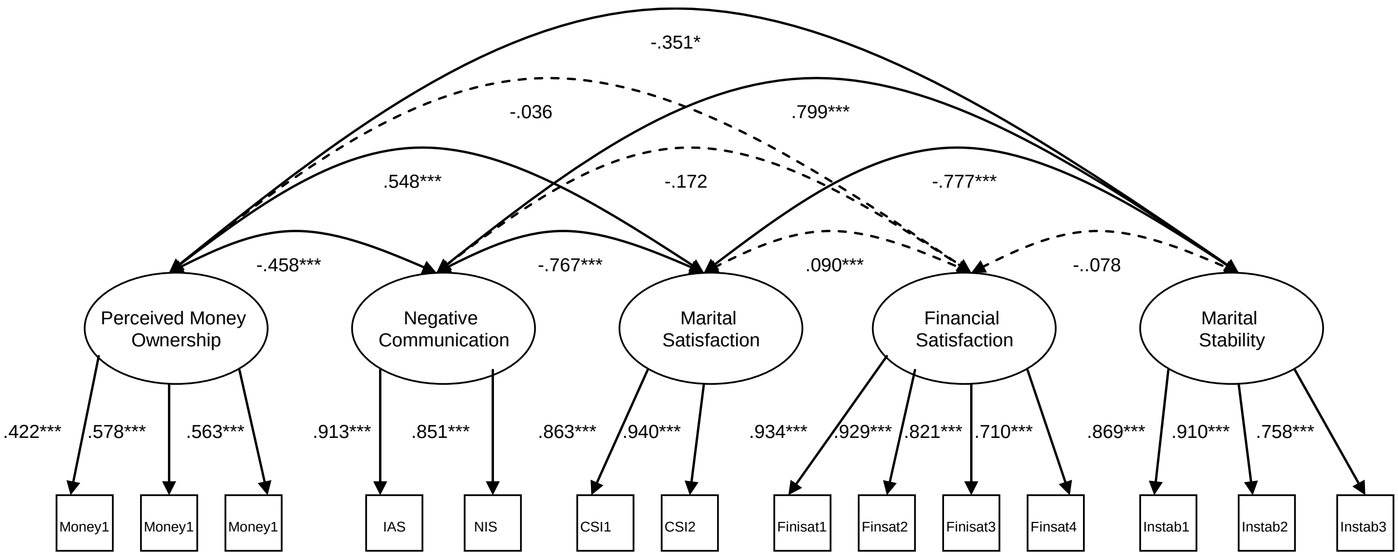
With RA removed, the fit of the data to the model improved. A CFA was conducted first with a single group model, and then on a two group model (men and women separately). Both the single group (i.e., includes both males and females) and the two group models (i.e., male and female) fit the data well. The CFA for the single group (see Figure 1) indicated that χ^2 (67) = 131.011, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.055 (90% CI = .041, .068), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .976; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .967; two group (see Figures 2 and 3) = χ^2 (152) = 242.691, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.061 (90% CI = .046, .075), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .966; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .959.

Figure 4.1 ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Single Group Measurement Model***



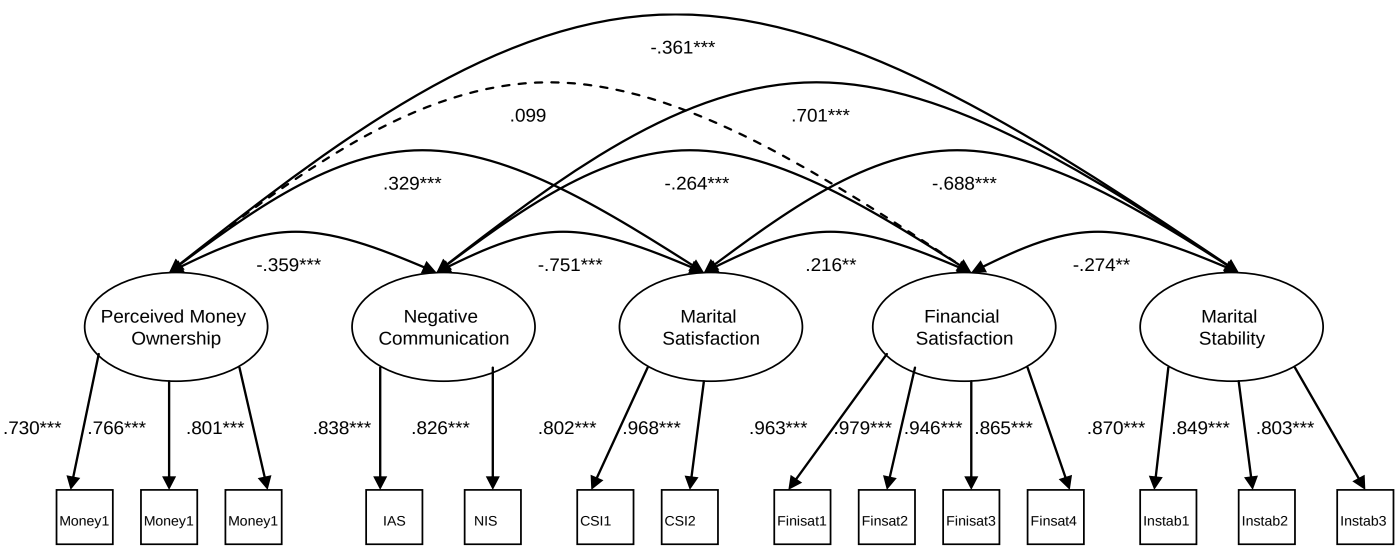
Note: Model Fit Indices: χ^2 (67) = 131.01, RMSEA = 0.055 (90% CI = .041, .068), CFI = .976; TLI = .967

Figure 4.2 ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Two Group Measurement Model (Males)***



Note: Model Fit Indices: χ^2 (152) = 242.69, RMSEA = 0.061 (90% CI = .046, .075), CFI = .966; TLI = .959.

Figure 4.3 ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Two Group Measurement Model (Females)***



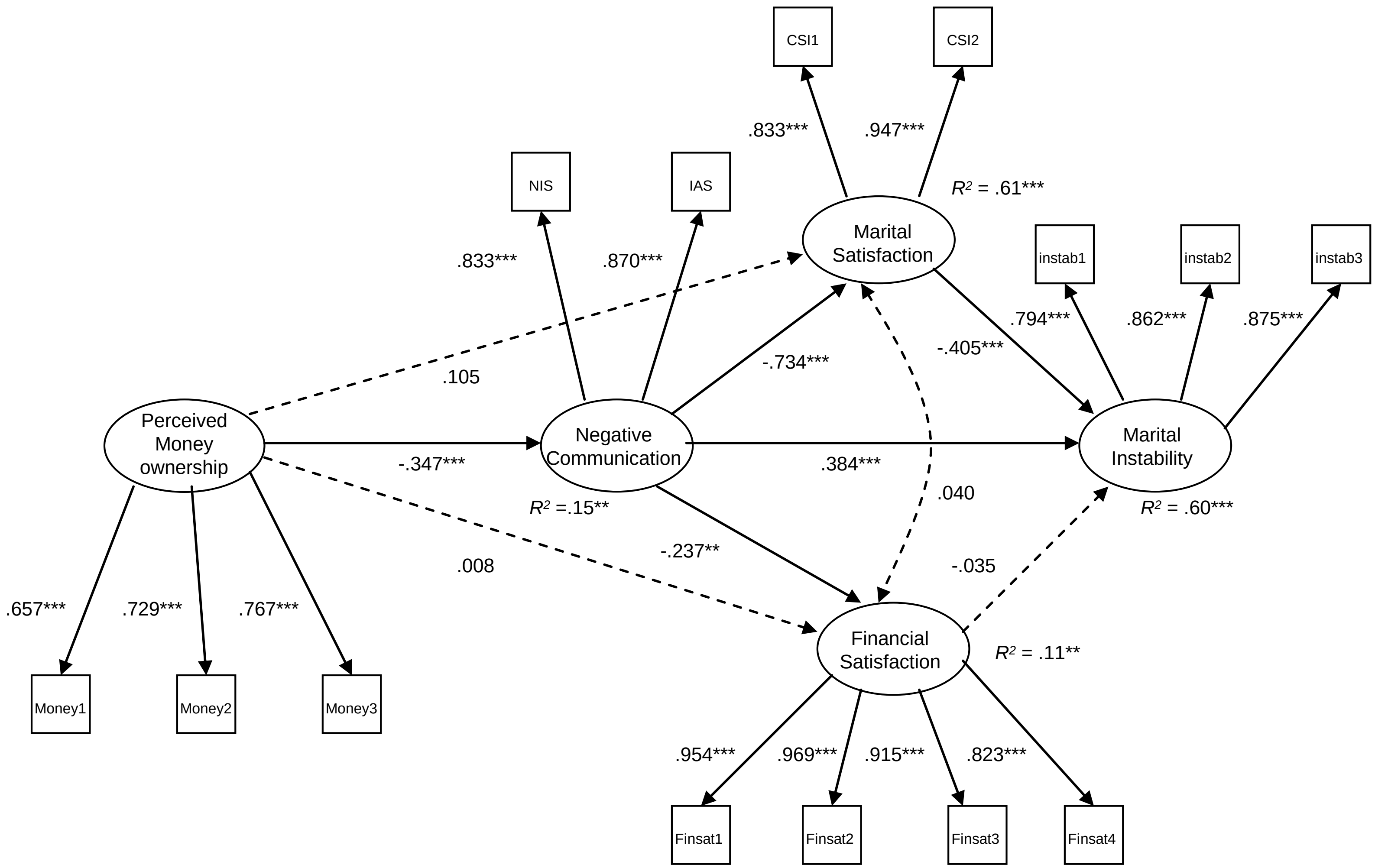
Note: Model Fit Indices: χ^2 (152) = 242.69, RMSEA = 0.061 (90% CI = .046, .075), CFI = .966; TLI = .959.

Structural Equation Model

The revised single group structural equation model (see Figure 4.4) was tested with control variables (i.e., marriage length, owning a home, number of children, and cohabitation before marriage). Model fit indices indicated a good fit between the model and the data: χ^2 (103) = 177.482, RMSEA = .046 (90% C.I. = .034, .057), CFI = .972, TLI = .961. Because this revised model was nested within the original model, the AIC and BIC fit indices were consulted to determine whether the revised model provided a more parsimonious fit to the data (see Kline, 2011). The AIC and BIC dropped from 24075.074 and 24474.803 in the original model to 18846.995 and 19177.540 in the revised model, suggesting a better fitting, more parsimonious revised model. Therefore, the revised model was chosen as the focus of the remainder of the analyses. To determine whether gender moderated the relationship between PMO and the outcome variables of interest a two-group structural model analysis was conducted with the same controls. Model fit indices indicated an acceptable fit between the model and the data for the two group model: χ^2 (157) = 387.291, RMSEA = .063 (90% C.I. = .052, .074), CFI = .942, TLI = .925.

To determine if there were significant differences between men and women all variables in the two group model were constrained to be equal for men and women and the model was run again. The results from the constrained two group model were compared to those of the original two group model and the change in chi-square was calculated. The chi-square difference indicated that there was no significant difference between the models for men and women (χ^2_{diff} (10) = 11.535, $p < .001$). Because there were no significant differences between men and women, only results from the single group model are presented here. After controlling for gender, the model was run a third time to control for religion. Since close to half of the sample were Latter-day Saints (LDS) a dichotomous variable Not LDS vs. LDS was used as a control

Figure 4.4 ***Structural Equation Model (Single Group)***



Note: Model Fit Indices χ^2 (103) = 177.482, RMSEA = .0046 (90% C.I. = .034, .057), CFI = .972, TLI = .961.

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

variable. Results indicated that there were no significant changes in the model and no substantive changes in the path coefficients. The standardized results for the single group structural model can be seen in Figure 4.4. Overall, the model accounted for a small amount of the variance in negative communication (R^2 = .15), and financial satisfaction (R^2 = .11). However, the model explained a substantial amount of variance in marital satisfaction (R^2 = .61), and in marital stability (R^2 = .60).

It was hypothesized that PMO would have a direct, positive relationship with both financial satisfaction and marital satisfaction and a direct, negative relationship with marital instability (RQ1). This hypothesis was not validated. Perceived money ownership (PMO) was not directly related to financial satisfaction (β = .008, p < n.s.), to marital satisfaction (β = .105, p < n.s.), or marital instability (β = .075, p < n.s.). PMO did have a significant negative association with negative communication (β = .347, $p < .001$). In other words when individuals reported higher levels of shared money ownership, they also reported lower levels of negative communication. Negative communication had a significant, negative association with financial satisfaction (β = -.237, $p < .001$) and marital satisfaction (β = -.734, $p < .001$.) and a significant, positive relationship with marital instability (β = .384, $p < .001$). These results can be interpreted as the more negative communication that was reported by the participant, the lower reports were for financial and marital satisfaction and the greater the marital instability.

In order to test whether negative communication mediated the relationship between PMO and the outcome variables (RQ2), a bootstrap analysis was used to test indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Bootstrap analysis resulted in several significant indirect effects (see Table 4.2): a) PMO to negative communication to financial satisfaction (β = .082, $p < .05$), b) PMO to negative communication to marital satisfaction (β = .254, $p < .001$), c) PMO to negative communication to marital instability (β = - .133, p < .05), and d) PMO to negativecommunication to marital satisfaction to marital instability (β = - .103, p < .01). These results can be interpreted as follows: a) for one standard deviation unit increase in PMO, financial satisfaction will increase .082 standard deviation units, via the prior effect of PMO on negative communication, b) for one standard deviation unit increase in PMO, marital satisfaction will increase .254 standard deviation units, via the prior effect of PMO on negative communication, c) for one standard deviation unit increase in PMO, marital instability will decrease .133 standard deviation units, via the prior effect of PMO on negative communication, and d) for one standard deviation unit increase in PMO, marital instability will decrease .103 standard deviation units, via the prior effect of PMO on negative communication and marital satisfaction. These results suggest that the relationship between PMO and the outcome variables are mediated by negative communication.

The third hypothesis (RQ3) was partially supported. Marital Satisfaction had a significant negative association with marital instability (β = -.405, p < .001). However, financial satisfaction was not significantly correlated with marital satisfaction (r =.040, p < n.s.) nor was it associated with marital instability (β = -.035, p < n.s.). In other words, there was no association between financial satisfaction and marital satisfaction and instability, but higher marital satisfaction was associated with lower levels of marital instability.

Table 4.2 ***Mediating Effects with PMO as the Independent Variable, Negative Communication Marital satisfaction and Financial Satisfaction as Mediators and Marital Instability, Financial Satisfaction and Marital Satisfaction as Outcome Variables. Bootstrap Analyses of the Magnitude and Significance of Mediating Pathways (Standardized Solution; N = 321)***

Predictor	Mediator(s)	Outcome	β	CI	*t*-value
PMO →	Neg. Comm. → Marital satisfaction →	Marital Instability	-0.103	-.18, -.02	-2.56**
PMO →	Neg. Comm. →	Marital Instability	-0.133	-..24, -.02	-2.40*
PMO →	Neg. Comm. → Financial Satisfaction →	Marital Instability	-0.003	-..02, -.01	-.44
PMO →	Negative Communication →	Marital Satisfaction	0.254	.13, .38	4.11***
PMO →	Negative Communication →	Financial Satisfaction	0.082	.009, .16	2.21*

Note: Indirect paths tested with 2,000 bootstraps. CI = 95% confidence interval

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

Chapter 5 - **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine how perceived money ownership (PMO) in marriage was associated with financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability and whether negative communication mediated the relationship between these variables. The results of this study suggest that the relationship between PMO and financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability is mediated by negative communication. In other words, higher levels of PMO are related to higher levels of financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability indirectly through negative communication. Higher levels of PMO are related to lower levels of negative communication. These findings add to the literature on couples, finances, and relationships by showing that PMO is a potentially important variable in understanding relationship processes and outcomes in marriage.

PMO and Outcome Variables

PMO and Negative Communication

In the SEM model there was a significant, negative relationship, between PMO and negative communication. In other words, the more an individual saw the money ownership as shared the lower the negative communication was in the relationship. This is consistent with Poduska's (1993) clinical hypothesis which indicated that when couples have a perception of shared financial decision making they have lower amounts of conflict than those who do not share in the management of their finances. Other research also indirectly supports this finding in that couples, who make financial decisions together, communicate about financial decisions, and have equal control over spending report less conflict and communicate better in other areas of their relationships (Blumestein & Schwartz, 1983; Dew & Dakin, 2011).

Although research has shown an association between financial arguments and relationship outcomes, the present study did not focus specifically on financial arguments or conflict but instead focused on negative communication in general. A more recent study by Britt, Huston, and Durband (2010) indicated that couples who argue about money were also more likely to argue in general, and that arguing more in general was a stronger predictor of whether or not a couple will argue about money matters. Thus, couples who fight about money are more likely to fight about other things as well in their relationship. These findings support the use of a more general measurement of negative communication such as the measurement used in the present study.

From a social exchange theory perspective, these findings suggest that having a shared PMO is beneficial to the relationship because it demonstrates reciprocity and equality because the individual is sharing what he or she has earned with the other person in order to make sure the other person is taken care of financially. However, a shared PMO is not in and of itself beneficial to the relationship. Instead, the relationship is seen as rewarding because the individual experiences a feeling of reciprocity and equality, leading them to have less negative communication. When money ownership is distinct it leads to feelings of inequality, increasing negative communication. Other research has shown that couples who have equal control over spending are also more likely to have greater marital satisfaction (Vogler et al., 2008). However, in the present study, PMO did not have a direct relationship with marital satisfaction.

Another possible explanation for why having a shared PMO decreases the likelihood of having negative communication could be in the personal paradigm by which the individual sees his or her relationship. For example, a key ingredient for successful communication in a relationship would seem to the presence of a personal paradigm that places an emphasis on "we" rather than "me." People who have a “me” focused paradigm with money may also be more likely to have a “me” focused paradigm in other aspects of their relationship, including the way that they communicate. It would seem that a key ingredient for successful communication in a relationship is having a personal paradigm that places the “us” in the relationship first and foremost (Hargrave, 2000).

PMO, Negative Communication, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Instability

Even though there was not a direct relationship between PMO and marital satisfaction and marital instability, negative communication was an important mediating variable between PMO and marital satisfaction and marital instability. Previous research on money and relationships has found that poor communication and conflict about money is related to lower levels of marital satisfaction and is also related to arguing in other parts of the relationship (Britt, Huston, & Durband, 2010; Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, Prawitz, 1993). Many studies have discussed how arguments about finances can be detrimental to a relationship. Conflicts about money have been reported to last longer and happen more often than other conflicts (Papp, Cummings, & Goeke-Morey, 2009). Negative conflict over finances has accounted for much of the variance in marital satisfaction and has been associated with lower marital satisfaction (Amato and Rogers, 1997; Koutstaal, 1998; Skogrand, Johnson, Horrocks, & Defrain, 2011).

Britt et al.’s findings suggested that it is not arguing about finances that causes a lack of satisfaction in a marriage, but it is arguing in general and that arguing in general is possibly more detrimental to a relationship than a lack of financial equality or a financial power imbalance. Although Britt and colleagues’ study used logistic regression and did not test for mediation, their findings lend support to the present study as to why a direct relationship between PMO and marital satisfaction was insignificant. However, when mediated by negative communication, PMO had a significant effect on marital instability and marital satisfaction. From these findings, it can be argued that those who have distinct PMO will be more likely to have problems with communication and therefore be more likely to have lower marital satisfaction and marital instability. In other words, a perception of shared money ownership is related to lower amounts of negative communication, which in turn is related to greater marital satisfaction and lower marital instability. We know from previous research (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002) that negative interaction was negatively associated with higher levels of marital quality and positively related to increased thoughts of divorce. Stanley, Markman, and Whitton indicated that their findings spoke "directly to the importance of targeting negative interaction in interventions" (p. 670). The present research adds to their suggestions in that negative communication is also an important mediating variable for PMO.

SET would suggest that when negative communication is high it becomes too much of a cost to the individual and marital satisfaction deteriorates and marital instability increases. SET indicates that people get what they want and need in life by making exchanges with others (Klein & White, 1996; Turner, 1991). If these exchanges are fraught with negative communication, then the exchange becomes unrewarding. On the other hand, when exchanges are characterized by positive communication, the exchange is seen as rewarding and thus marital satisfaction improves and marital instability decreases.

PMO and Financial Satisfaction

The absence of a relationship between PMO and financial satisfaction was surprising. Although, there has been no previous research conducted on the association between PMO and financial satisfaction, it was hypothesized that PMO would be directly associated with financial satisfaction. However, this was not the case. Instead, like marital satisfaction and marital instability, there was an indirect association through negative communication. The more individuals perceived money to be shared the less likely they were to report negative communication, which in turn was associated with higher levels of financial satisfaction. In other words, having a sense of shared money ownership alone is not related to financial satisfaction in marriage, but it is associated with negative communication in the relationship, which in turn is associated to greater financial satisfaction..

PMO, Religion and Gender

In the present study there was not a significant difference in the model or the path coefficients when controlling for religious affiliation. Thus LDS participants were not significantly different from those who were not LDS. Previous studies have shown that LDS are different from the rest of the population in areas such as gender roles. Hartman and Hartman (1983) found that LDS have more traditional gender roles attitudes. Previous studies have shown that having more traditional gender role attitudes are associated with having a money management practice that are less equal (Ashby & Burgoyne, 2008; Phal, 1995; Vogler, 2005). Thus, an assumption could be made that if LDS have more traditional gender roles they would see the management of money and the ownership of money as less equal. However, Hartman and Hartman found that even though LDS had more traditional gender role attitudes, being LDS was not significantly related to attitudes toward equality for men and women (Hartman and Harman 1983). In fact, a woman staying at home is seen as a highly valued role because of the LDS Church's theology on the importance of having strong families. In the present study, there was not a significant difference between LDS and Not LDS when it came to perceptions of money ownership. These results provide further evidence that PMO is a better measurement than money management strategies for understanding how individuals perceive money management practices in a marriage. Therefore, having traditional gender roles does not mean that individuals will perceive that a relationship is unequal. Similarly, having a money management system that appears less equal does not mean that individuals will maintain a perception that the money in the relationship is not shared.

Previous studies have shown that there are significant differences between men and women with respect to money management and finances. However, in the present study there was not a significant difference in the models for men and women, although other studies have shown that men are more likely to see money as shared (Ashby & Burgoyne, 2009). One explanation for the lack of gender differences in the study could be that couples are moving more and more to egalitarian attitudes about money, which has been found to be the case over time (Zuo, 1997). Another possible explanation could be the context in which the present study was conducted; a struggling U.S. economy. It is possible that tough financial times cause couples to become more unified in their finances, although there is no empirical research to support this hypothesis at this time.

Financial Satisfaction, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Instability

Another surprising finding in the model that was not expected and is not consistent with previous studies was the lack of a relationship in the SEM model between financial satisfaction and marital instability (RQ3). In the initial stages of analysis, financial satisfaction was correlated with both marital instability ($r = -.205$, $p < .01$) and martial satisfaction ($r = .233$, $p < .01$). However when placed into the model their relationships became insignificant. Previous studies (e.g., Kerkmann, Lee, Lown, and Allgood, 2000) found that financial management and financial problems contributed 13% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Other studies have shown that financial satisfaction was directly related to both marital satisfaction and marital instability (Aniol & Snyder 1997; Archuleta, Britt, Tonn, & Grable, 2011; Grable, Britt, &

Cantrell, 2007). There are several possible explanations for these difference including the use of different measures, type of statistical analysis, and sample demographics. Another likely reason for this is that the study by Kerkmann et al. did not account for negative communication like the present study, which may indicate that negative communication is a significant mediator that needs to be included in future studies of financial satisfaction. Another possible explanation for these differences is that previous studies used only one question to measure financial satisfaction (Archuleta, Britt, Tonn, & Grable, 2011; Grable, Britt, & Cantrell, 2007), whereas the present study used a multi-item scale to measure financial satisfaction. It is unknown if the one question financial satisfaction scale and the eight-question financial satisfaction scale are in fact measuring the same thing. In addition, previous studies did not use SEM and, therefore, it is possible that when financial satisfaction is included in an SEM model with other variables, its relationship becomes insignificant. The findings of the present study suggest that more work needs to be done to understand financial satisfaction both in how it is measured and variables which impact financial satisfaction.

PMO and Control Variables

In the present research study, the majority of couples indicated having shared perceptions of money ownership ($M = 34.19$). Because of the cross-sectional nature of the current study it is not known if couples' perceptions have changed over time. Previous research (Blumestein & Schwartz, 1983; Burgoyne, Clark, Reibstein, & Edmunds, 2006; Burgoyne, Reibstein, Edmunds, & Dolman, 2007; Pahl, 1995) has shown that money management strategies usually change from more separate money management systems at the beginning of the relationship to being more equal or shared after about a year of marriage. It is possible that the reason the majority of the individuals in the current study identified a shared perception of money ownership is that the majority had well established relationships (*M* =12.08 years). Even though the present study controlled for years of marriage it cannot explain why PMO was more shared for those in the study. Burgoyne et al. identified that the reason for couples moving to a more shared management system was because of having a home and raising a family. It is possible that these two factors had an impact on individuals in the present study with about 68% of participants in the study having at least one or more children and 68% of participants owning a home.

Because previous research identified time in the relationship, home ownership, and number of children as variables associated with more shared money management, each of these items were included as controls in the SEM model. Cohabitation before marriage was also used as a control variable, since couples who cohabit before marriage are more likely to see money as distinct (Burgoyne, Clark, Reibstein, & Edmunds, 2006; Burgoyne, Reibstein, Edmunds, & Dolman, 2007). Correlations between the control variables and the variables included in the SEM model showed some interesting and notable findings. First, cohabitation before marriage had a significant negative relationship with perceived money ownership and a significant, positive relationship with ineffective arguing and negative interaction. In other words, individuals who cohabited were less likely to see money as shared and were more likely to have negative interactions and to argue ineffectively. Thus, it is possible that those who cohabit before marriage are more likely to keep money separate and are therefore more likely to argue. No research studies have looked at cohabiting couples longitudinally to determine if couples who cohabit before marriage are in fact more likely to keep money separate longer than just one year after marriage. The number of children in the marriage had a positive relationship with PMO and a negative relationship with financial satisfaction. The correlation between the number of children in the home and perceptions of shared money ownership is consistent with previous research on money management systems (Burgoyne et al., 2006, 2007). Marriage length and home ownership were both positively related to financial satisfaction. Both of these findings make intuitive sense in that the longer you are married the more likely you are to be better off financially.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

This study contains a number of limitations. The first limitation is that the sample is homogenous and the majority of the respondents were white, middle-class, females (69%), with very little variation in race/ethnicity (94% white). Also the majority of the sample (74%) identified themselves as either protestant (26%) or Latter-day Saint (48%). Further, the majority of the sample lived in the Mountain West (31%) or the Midwest (42.9%). Caution should be used when interpreting the results as they should only be generalized to the participants in this study.

A second limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study, limiting the ability to determine causality. Research by Burgoyne et al. (2007) indicated that there is some change in money management strategies over time with couples moving towards a more shared money management strategy. However, it is not known at this time how perceptions of money ownership change over time. Another limitation is that the current model only included one financial variable (PMO) other than financial satisfaction. It is possible that there are other financial factors directly influencing financial satisfaction that were not included in this study.

A third limitation of this study is that only married individuals were included. Because the study only analyzed information from individuals in married relationships, we do not know the degree to which perceptions of money ownership and other variables in the study are different for husbands and wives. Further, the study does not include cohabiting couples in the analysis, but it does include couples who cohabited prior to marriage. Research has shown that there is a difference between money management practices of cohabiting partners as compared to those who are married (Burgoyne et al., 2007).

Future studies would benefit from continuing to explore the impact of PMO on negative communication, financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability. Future studies would also benefit by including all types of committed relationships. In particular, longitudinal designs involving couples in committed relationships need to be developed to determine how perceptions of money ownership change over time, and how this change impacts negative communication, relationship instability, and relationship satisfaction. Future studies would also be enhanced by including other relationship and financial variables that may have an impact on relationship outcomes. Other studies in the future would be improved with a more representative sample.

In the current study, not all control variables that have been identified by research were used to test the model. At least three other factors have been identified by researchers that could be used as control variables: a) relationship status (Gray & Evans, 2008; Heimadal & Houseknecht, 2003; Vogler2005), b) earning differences (Heimadal & Houseknecht, 2003; Vogler, 2005; Yodanis & Lauer, 2007;), and c) the presence of egalitarian beliefs in the relationship (Burgoyne and Routh, 2001; Yodanis & Lauer, 2007). A future study might include egalitarian gender beliefs in the model to examine the relationship that egalitarian beliefs have with PMO and negative communication. This same study might also look at primary breadwinner status and how this is related to egalitarian beliefs, PMO and negative communication. Because the present study and other studies (Blumestein & Schwartz, 1983; Burgoyne, Clark, Reibstein, & Edmunds, 2006; Burgoyne, Reibstein, Edmunds, & Dolman, 2007) have found that a) marriage length, b) number of children, c) home ownership, and d) cohabitation are important variables that influence money management strategies and perceptions of money ownership, these variables should be included as controls in future studies. Each of these controls could be used effectively with a longitudinal design that follows couples from before they get married to many years after marriage.

Implications

Although the findings of this study should not be generalized beyond the participants of this study, it raises important points in which Marriage and Family Therapists should be aware of when working with couples. The first is that understanding couples' perceptions of money ownership is associated with negative communication in the relationship. Thus, understanding the way individuals in the relationship perceive money ownership could tell therapists more about how couples view the equality in their relationships. Perceived money ownership may also be a good indicator of how together focused or individually focused the individuals are in the relationship. If therapists can help couples embrace shared money ownership perceptions it may also help couples increase their perception of equal sharing in other parts of their relationship.

Shapiro's (2007) clinical hypothesis that a couple's relationship with money is a good metaphor for how the couple functions in the rest of the relationship is supported in theory by the present study. The current study suggests that money ownership perceptions is an important variable in understanding couples who have relationships characterized by negative communication. The current study has shown that feelings of inequality around money ownership are important to understanding negative communication. For instance, if a couple were to come into therapy presenting with increased negative communication, a therapist could use PMO as a way to begin examining the way that the couples sees inequality in marriage.

The second point for marriage and family therapists that can be taken from the present findings is that negative communication (ineffective arguing and negative interaction) still plays an important role in couples' financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability. Couples who come into therapy who are experiencing poor financial satisfaction can be taught that communicating more positively has the potential to improve not only marital satisfaction, and marital stability but it also has the potential to impact how satisfied they are financially. Theoretically speaking, negative communication may be one reason why couples experience a lack of financial satisfaction. When the relationship is dissatisfying because of negative communication, individuals may start seeking money as a means for them to find satisfaction with life rather than finding satisfaction in the relationship. Changing the negative communication may shift the couple away from focusing on how satisfied they are financially to focusing on other aspects of their relationship for fulfillment.

In regards to the financial therapy movement discussed at the outset of this paper, continued collaboration between relationship therapists and financial planners and counselors is imperative to fully help clients increase their financial satisfaction and relationship outcomes. More specifically, relationship therapists can assist financial planners and counselors by helping their clients move towards having shared money ownership perceptions and increasing positive communication. Collaboration can occur in multiple ways such as: a) a financial planner or counselor referring clients to a relationship therapist, b) consulting with a relationship therapist, c) inviting a relationship therapist to be part of a financial planning or counseling session, or d) the financial planner or counselor having relationship therapy training in order to intervene when negative communication arises and when money ownerships perceptions are distinct (Gale, Goetz, & Bermudez, 2009; Klontz, Kahler, & Klontz, 2008; Maton, Maton, & Martin, 2010;

Sages & Britt, 2012). Interestingly, Archuleta et al. (2011) discovered that financial professionals are more likely to collaborate with mental health professionals than mental health professionals are to reach out and collaborate with financial professionals. This study may provide partial explanation to this finding because when a financial planner encounters a couple who are not financially satisfied, negative communication may be to blame. In this case, collaboration in any form with a relationship therapist may be considered proper protocol or a best practice. Whereas, when a relationship therapist works with a couple experiencing financial issues that may lead to decreased financial satisfaction, they are likely to treat the problem as a relationship issue (Klontz, Kahler, & Klontz, 2008). However, this does not exempt therapist from being more willing to collaborate with financial professionals. This study provides partial explanation for this common practice among therapists because the association between money ownership perceptions and negative communication on financial satisfaction is indicative of a relationship issue rather than a financial issue, and therefore can be treated appropriately through relation focused interventions. Moreover, relationship therapists need to be sure not to ignore couple financial matters (i.e. poor money management skills) that may contribute to negative communication in the relationship and could be improved by meeting with a financial professional.

Conclusion

This study provides an initial exploration into the relationship between PMO and relationship factors. What has been found is that negative communication is an important mediating variable in the association between PMO and financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and marital instability. Thus, having a shared money ownership perception is associated with lower levels of negative communication, which in turn is associated with lower levels of marital instability and higher levels of financial satisfaction and marital satisfaction. These findings suggest that a feeling of unity with finances is important to relationship outcomes through its relationship with negative communication. The direct significant relationship between PMO and negative communication provides a possible understanding of how financial unity impacts relationship functioning. When individuals have a sense of shared money ownership they are less likely to report negative interactions in the relationship, which could be due to a feeling of unity and a desire to work together for the common good of one another and the marriage. Although these finding cannot be generalized, they add to the discussion on couple relationships and finances. A better understanding of why couples choose to keep money separate or together and how negative communication is related to relationship outcomes and financial satisfaction is needed. Continuing to explore these issues will further help marital therapists and will advance the field of financial therapy.

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Appendix A: Tables and Figures

Table 5.1 ***Sample Demographics***

Variables	*M*	*Mdn*	Min	Max	*SD*
Sex					
Male	31%				
Female	69%				
Age	36.86	33.00	21	72	10.597
Spouse Age	37.79	34	20	74	10.796
Years of Schooling	16.84	16	10	26	2.680
Spouses years schooling	16.58	16	5	26	3.159
Marriage length	12.08 years	9 years	<1 month	53 years	10.375
Cohabited before marriage	No	70.4%	Yes	29.6%	
Time cohabited	1.41	.50	0	12 years	2.037
# times married	1.13	1	1	4	.470
# children in home	3	1.80	0	8	1.697
Combined annual income	94,543.	80,000	0	700,000	72451.323
Total combined debt	160,083	150,000	0	900,000	145199.909
Race					
White	94.8%				
Hispanic	2%				
Native American	0.3%				
African American	0.3%				
Asian	1.7%				
Other	.9%				
Rent/Own Housing					
Rent	25.8%				
Own	67.5%				
Other	3.2%				
Religion					
Protestant	25.5%				

Catholic	8.4%
Latter-day Saint	48.1%
Jewish	0.9%
Buddhist	0.3%
Agnostic	4.3%
Atheist	2.2%
Other	10.2%
Region of United States	
Eastern U.S.	10.1%
Midwest	42.9%
Mountain West	31%
West	16%

Note; n=345