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THE ROLE OF HUSBANDS' SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION
PRACTICES IN THE LIVES OF EMPLOYED MOTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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1999

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the experiences of employed mothers. Four problems employed mothers experience are work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and double bind beliefs. In this study I examine the role of husbands' supportive communication practices in serving to alleviate these problems, as well as contribute to positive outcomes such as marital, job, and life satisfaction. Specifically, women's perceptions of their husbands' support practices are examined in this study.

One-hundred twenty-one employed mothers participated in this study. These women completed questionnaires that included open-ended and fixed-response measures of husbands' support, as well as measures of the problems and outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation to work and family. A conception of husbands' support was tailored to employed mothers, and included the components of encouraging discussion, interpersonal involvement, acceptance, dialogue, and assistance. Results showed that most employed mothers did experience the problems at moderate to high levels, and these problems were negatively correlated with women's perceptions of their husbands' support as well as the outcomes of marital and life satisfaction. Women's descriptions of their husbands' support practices in the open-ended narratives of their work

family difficulties were consistent with components of the fixed-response scale measure of support. That is, women described similar support practices in both measures of support. Regression analyses on marital and life satisfaction showed that husbands' support served a mediating role in that employed mothers' problems were lessened when support was present in the lives of these women. Implications of these results and contributions of the study are described in Chapter 5.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the first half of this century married women with children rarely participated in paid employment outside the home. When they did, it was often on a temporary basis. Starting in the 1950s, and increasing in the 1970s, married women with children flooded the labor force (Chafetz, 1997). In 1950, women made up 30% of the labor force, and by 1970, they represented 38%. The 62 million women currently employed in the United States make up 46% of the total labor force (Costello, Miles, & Stone, 1998). Many of these women are mothers. Currently, 63 percent of all mothers with pre-school aged children are engaged in paid employment, and the majority of them (67%) work full-time (Costello, Miles, & Stone, 1998).

This study focuses on the experiences of employed mothers. Researchers have studied these women and the issues they face for the last few decades (Costello, Miles, & Stone, 1998). Much of this work, which will be described in Chapter 2, has been conducted by social scientists. However, the topic of employed mothers also involves a wider audience of people interested in the issues these women face, and researchers have responded to this audience with books that address issues such as the lack of child care options and family leave (Holcomb,

1998), the importance of women choosing for themselves whether they want to be employed (Chira, 1998; Peters, 1998), and the disproportionate numbers of women employed part-time and the effects of their participation in the workplace (Friedan, 1997).

In general, researchers who publish in scholarly journals as well as those who write for the popular press have an interest in the topic of employed mothers because a mother who is employed outside the home experiences changes in her life that affect her job or career, her child, and herself. The combination of mothering with paid employment often results in problems concerning time pressures and conflicting role demands (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996). Indeed, research on dual-career families has consistently shown that women are disproportionately more responsible for household work and child care than men (Blain, 1994; Coltrane, 1996; Ferree, 1991; Leslie, Anderson, & Branson, 1991; Pina & Bengtson, 1993). This results in a pattern of simultaneous management of career responsibilities and family responsibilities. Because many women enjoy their careers and enjoy their families, successful management of work and family is a desirable goal.

I have also focused my study on employed mothers because there is a certain social exigence in learning more about the lives of these women and in understanding how significant people in their lives may assist them in managing their work and family responsibilities and goals. As indicated previously, the majority of mothers with pre-school age children are employed (63%). If these women face particular challenges as a demographic group, their stresses and difficulties managing work

and family may contribute to reduced feelings of contentment in their interpersonal relationships, their jobs, and their lives in general. Our work force may suffer decreases in productivity and reductions in creative problem-solving in organizations. Ideally, the pursuit of work and family goals should not be so difficult. In this study, I attempt to explore the factors that may facilitate the pursuit of work and family for employed mothers. I start by examining some of the problems women experience as they adapt to the realities of their lives as employed mothers. While many employed mothers are single parents who experience their own set of particular challenges, the focus here is on the role of husbands of married employed mothers and the supportive practices they enact with their wives. Examination of employed mothers' perceptions of their husbands' communication practices is useful because these men are the lifetime partners of these women, and their actions and behaviors may be meaningful in the context of women's efforts to manage work and family. Throughout this project, hypotheses are advanced and research questions are asked that explore how wives' perceptions of their husbands' actions and communication practices serve to facilitate or hinder the process of adaptation to work and family for women. Women's descriptions of particular features of their husbands' supportive communication practices will be examined so that we may gain a greater understanding of what it means to be supportive in the context of employed mothers and how support affects women's lives.

As indicated previously, employed mothers experience particular difficulties. But what are these difficulties, exactly? There is, in fact, a

large body of research that has identified several specific problems women encounter as they attempt to manage work and family. These problems, which will be examined in this study, are work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and double bind beliefs. Work-family conflict refers to the struggle many women encounter as they tend to the responsibilities of their home and their career (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Gilbert, 1994). Stress is a condition in which people feel as though they cannot cope with all of the things they have to do and they are not confident about their ability to handle problems (Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996). Inequity in the division of household and child care labor refers to a lack of perceived fairness on the part of one spouse regarding the other spouse's contributions to the home (Coltrane, 1996; Galinsky & Bond, 1996). Double bind beliefs are contradictory beliefs regarding women's roles, such as the belief that women cannot have children and a career simultaneously and successfully (Jamieson, 1995). These are all problems that have been discussed or substantiated in the literature as particularly difficult aspects of employed mothers' lives. In this study I examine the influence of husbands' support practices on employed mothers' experiences of these problems.

In addition to examining problems employed mothers experience, I also explore three outcomes of the adaptation process. By outcomes, I refer to women's overall feelings of happiness in three primary areas of their lives. These outcomes are marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Marital and job satisfaction are important outcomes

because they pertain to women's feelings of contentment in their family and work domains. Life satisfaction is an important outcome also, as it relates to employed mothers' personal feelings of happiness. In this study, I explore the influence of husbands' support practices on these outcomes for employed mothers. How do wives' perceptions of their husbands' actions and communication practices influence wives' feelings of happiness in their marriages, their jobs, and their lives? Of particular interest in this study will be an exploration of marital, job, and life satisfaction within the context of employed mothers' problems and their perceptions of their husbands' support. How do the problems and husbands' support practices combine to predict women's satisfaction in these three areas of their lives?

To date, communication scholars have largely ignored the topic of the problems of employed mothers. While some scholars have explored the impact of the transition to parenthood on couples (Stamp, 1994; Stamp & Banski, 1992), and the patterns of financial decision-making in dual-income couples (Krueger, 1985), most have remained largely uninformed about the role of communication in the lives of employed mothers and how communication practices affect the problems women experience during the process of adaptation in the pursuit of work and family. This study attempts to contribute to our limited knowledge by examining the role of supportive communication practices in facilitating the process of adaptation for employed mothers.

The theoretical basis for the study of social support is grounded in the understanding that social support plays a crucial role in the

development of interpersonal relationships (Burleson, Albrecht, Goldsmith, & Sarason, 1994). The communication of support is a symbolic activity in personal relationships (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). Important interpersonal relationships, such as marital relationships, are sustained through showing concern to one another and allowing each other to express thoughts, feelings, and concerns. In communication, the study of social support explores how these communication practices affect interpersonal relationships (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Burleson, 1984, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990). Social support is viewed as a particular form of communication that occurs between individuals within the context of their relationships with others (Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994). It has been defined as an interactional process of caring for, comforting and assisting others during particularly stressful situations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Burleson, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990; Goldsmith & Parks, 1990). Recipients of support are seen as having a network or a configuration of personal ties with others where emotional caring and/or instrumental assistance is provided (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Gottlieb, 1983). Providers of social support can be family members, friends, romantic partners, spouses, counselors, or other professional or nonprofessional individuals.

The context of the present study necessitates the development of a conception of support tailored to the context of employed mothers, as other conceptions or models of support do not adequately address the support needs of employed mothers. For instance, Burleson's (1985, 1990,

1994) work on comforting involves consoling someone who is hurt or sad. The focus on support in the context of employed mothers is not on consoling them because they are feeling hurt or sad, but in acknowledging their stress and work-family conflict and showing an understanding of their needs as women pursuing multiple goals. Other researchers have examined support specifically in the context of married couples (e.g., Barbee & Cunningham, 1994; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992, 1994), but because these models of support were not developed to examine employed mothers' perceptions of support, they do not specifically assess understanding and concern for the work-family conflicts and stresses that employed mothers experience. Thus, we do not really know how support is communicated to employed mothers, or the particular role of support in the problems of adaptation and the outcomes of adaptation.

While the conception of support used in this study was influenced by and drawn from the work of key scholars (e.g., Barbee & Cunningham, 1994; Burleson, 1985, 1990, 1994; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992, 1994), the particular communication practices and actions examined were tailored to the context of employed mothers. The focus is on how husbands of employed mothers engage them in discussions of the stresses and work-family conflicts they experience and on how they acknowledge their wives' thoughts and feelings about their pursuit of the multiple goals of motherhood and career. This conception of social support also explores the tangible support husbands provide to their wives to assist them in dealing with their multiple roles and responsibilities. The conception developed here includes the following components: Encouraging

Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance, Dialogue, and Assistance. Encouraging Discussion involves husbands' engaging their wives in talks about work-family conflicts. Interpersonal Involvement refers to expressions of concern and care. Acceptance is when a husband grants legitimacy to his wife's thoughts and feelings regarding work and family issues. Dialogue involves husbands' and wives' discussions of new alternatives to work and family situations. Assistance involves the actual provision of assistance with household work or child care, or the communicative practices that convey a willingness to provide assistance.

In this study, then, I set out to explore the impact of these components of support on the problems of work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and double bind beliefs, and the outcomes of marital, job, and life satisfaction. The analysis of employed mothers' perceptions of their husbands' support will serve as a basis for understanding more precisely how lifetime partners of employed mothers can help facilitate the process of adaptation in work and family.

Preview of the chapters

Chapter Two is a review of the literature on the process of adaptation for employed mothers. The problems of work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and double bind beliefs are discussed. The literature on social support is reviewed, and the conception of support that was developed for this study is described, with detailed descriptions of its components. The research on marital, job, and life satisfaction is described, along with

descriptions of how these outcomes may impact employed mothers. Hypotheses and research questions are advanced throughout the review of the literature.

Chapter Three contains a description of the methods used in the study. The project involved the use of a 40-item scale that measured the components of spousal support described above. The questionnaire also included an additional measure of support, a free-response, open-ended task designed to elicit employed mothers' responses to specific work-family challenges they recently experienced. In this task, women were asked to recall recent difficulties they had taking care of housework or child care due to responsibilities at work, and to describe what their husbands said to them when they discussed these difficulties. Analysis of women's responses provided insight into the types of supportive or unsupportive practices from their husbands they chose to describe, and allowed for a comparison to the spousal support practices scale. The questionnaire also included measures of the problems of adaptation (i.e., work-family conflict, stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs) and the outcomes of adaptation (i.e., marital, job, and life satisfaction). The chapter concludes with a description of the analysis procedures used in the study.

Chapter Four contains the results of the data analysis. The sample of participants is first described. The correlational analysis of the problems of employed mothers adaptation are then presented, followed by results from the correlational analysis of the Spousal Support Practices Scale and its relationship with the adaptation problems and outcomes.

These results are followed by a descriptive analysis of the open-ended measure of spousal support, as well as correlational analyses involving this measure, adaptation problems and adaptation outcomes, as well as a comparison of the two measures of spousal support. Finally, the analysis involves hierarchical multiple regression analysis to determine the ways the problems of adaptation and spousal support combine to account for variation in the outcomes of adaptation.

Chapter Five contains a discussion of the results. Findings from the hypotheses and research questions are summarized, and the implications of the key findings from the analyses are discussed and expanded. I also describe the contributions my study makes to the topic of employed mothers as well as to the discipline of communication. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my study, and propose directions for future lines of research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review of the literature is composed of two sections. The first section is a broad overview of the literature on employed mothers. It is organized around a framework that addresses the specific phases that comprise the employed mother's adaptation to her home and work environments. The second section focuses on the research most relevant to the design of this study and reviews this research in greater depth. Research on the problems of employed mothers' adaptation is reviewed first. Next, I review research that has been conducted on social support, and I advance a conception of spousal support that is tailored to the context of employed mothers. This conception of spousal support is grounded in humanistic and constructivist theories of communication. The overall theoretical focus is on how communication is used when husbands direct their messages toward their wives in ways that are focused on their wives' thoughts, feelings, and concerns, and how husbands display, through their communicative practices, a desire to work with their wives in helping them manage work and family. Finally, the research on the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation is reviewed, as three primary questions of interest in this study are concerned with how employed mothers' problems and their perceptions

of their husbands' support practices relate to these women's feelings of happiness in their marriages, their jobs, and their lives in general.

The Process of Employed Mothers' Adaptation

An adaptation framework allows one to examine the experiences of employed mothers holistically by focusing on how they adjust to their diverse environments over time. Ecological theory forms the basis for adaptation frameworks that focus on the interactions between a person and his or her environment (Altman & Lett, 1970; Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1995). Ecological theory regards people as social beings engaged in continuous exchanges with their social environments, physical settings, and cultural contexts (Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1995). Applied here, employed mothers would be conceptualized as social beings, and an emphasis is placed on the social-psychological aspects of adapting to work and family lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Chang, 1997). Similar frameworks have been used to examine adaptation processes in other contexts, such as international students' adaptation in host cultures (Ady, 1995; Chang, 1997; Kim, 1989, 1990; Weaver, 1986). The adaptation framework used here is temporal and multifaceted because it encompasses key facets of the antecedent, process, and outcome phases of employed mothers' experiences. The antecedent phase is the chronological stage that begins at a woman's birth and ends at the point when she begins to pursue a career and also have children. The process phase focuses on the adjustment dynamics experienced by employed mothers in their transition to the realities of managing their goals and responsibilities in their home and work domains. The problems they

experience and the needs they have as people pursuing multiple goals form part of this phase. Included in the outcome phase are the consequences and psychological state of the employed mother as a result of her adjustment process. Each of these three phases are influenced by the tasks, or activities of employed mothers, their relationships with significant others, their psychological reactions and identity issues, and the ecological conditions of the work and family domains. According to ecological theory, each of these facets may affect the process of adaptation.

The antecedent phase focuses on the period before the woman becomes an employed mother. In general, women will arrive at this point one of two ways. They will either make an initial decision to pursue a career and have children simultaneously, or they will already have one (e.g., career) and decide to pursue the other (e.g., children). Several conditions can arise during this period that can affect whether employed mothers decide to pursue work and family simultaneously. These conditions include the level of education employed mothers attain before beginning their careers (Folk & Beller, 1993), the motivations and ambitions women have for pursuing a career (Cotton, Antill, & Cunningham, 1989; Parker & Aldwin, 1994) and the choices women make for engaging in either full or part-time work (Folk & Beller, 1993). Another identity-related factor is gender, and gender role orientation (Gilbert, 1994; Leslie, Anderson, & Branson, 1991). Included in the identity facet is the anticipation of combining work and family responsibilities, as several researchers have found that women give considerable thought to how they will integrate career and family

(Gilbert, 1993; Holahan, 1983; Shuster, 1993). Relationship facets include family structure, such as whether a woman is single or married (Ladewig & White, 1984) and the level of support she has from family members for taking on a career when she has children (Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994). Ecological facets include the stereotypes about mothers and career women (Bridges and Orza, 1992; Ganong and Coleman, 1995), and the factors that affect women's choices for child care, such as the availability of care and the quality of care (Hofferth & Wissoker, 1992).

The process phase of employed mothers' adaptation centers around the adjustment dynamics mothers experience in their transition to the realities of managing goals and responsibilities at home and at work. A large body of literature delineates the common problems experienced by employed mothers as they attempt to manage their home and work lives. In addition to problems of adaptation, the personal needs women have also affect how they adjust to work and family.

Several task-related concerns are problematic for employed mothers during their process of adaptation. These include work-family conflicts (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Shuster, 1993) which often arise due to the inequality in the division of household and child care labor (Blain, 1994; Ferree, 1991; Hochschild, 1989). Other problematic conditions include the psychological facets of stress (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996), depression (Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991), psychological distress (Ozer, 1995), self-esteem (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979), and mental health (Hyde, 1995; Hyde et al., 1995). Identity concerns

involve personal needs women have during the process of adaptation, such as the economic need to work, (Apter, 1993; Barciauskas & Hull, 1989) the need to pursue self-fulfillment through work, (Barciauskas & Hull, 1989; Fox & Hesse-Biber, 1984) and the need for independence (Barciauskas & Hull, 1989; Gordon, 1990).

While the support of family members is an important antecedent condition relating to one's relationships, it is also an important part of the process of adaptation for employed mothers (Beatty, 1996; Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994). Support from husbands and family members is seen to be an important aspect of the process of adaptation for many employed mothers (Beatty, 1996). This support may take the form of support for a woman's career goals (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986), help with child care and household responsibilities (Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994; Suchet & Barling, 1986), and emotional support (Erickson, 1993). Other relationship-related concerns of employed mothers include family conflict (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991), marital conflict (Kluwer, Heesink, & DeVliert, 1997; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994), and marital power (Sexton & Perlman, 1989).

Several ecological conditions also affect employed mothers' process of adaptation. One relevant line of research is research on double bind beliefs (Jamieson, 1995), which are contradictory beliefs that are entrenched in our everyday discourse. Other ecological facets include stereotypes about the role of mothers (Etaugh & Nekolny, 1990; Hertz, 1997; Riedle, 1991), and the inadequacy of organizational and supervisor

support for employed mothers (Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996; Hyde, 1995; McNeely & Fogarty, 1988; Seyler, Monroe, & Garand, 1995; Shuster, 1993).

The problems employed mothers encounter and the personal needs they have each play an important role in the process of adaptation. Examination of the outcome phase of adaptation allows us to see how well employed mothers have adapted to managing their home and work lives.

One task-related outcome of employed mothers' process of adaptation is the task of maintaining quality child care (Blau & Robins; 1988; Hofferth & Wissoker, 1992). Another task-related outcome is the task of raising children. Some researchers have challenged employed mothers' abilities to raise children successfully, by examining the extent to which maternal employment has a negative impact on children (Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996).

There are also several psychological outcomes of employed mothers' process of adaptation. Among these are their levels of satisfaction with their lives in general (Roskies & Carrier, 1994). Other outcomes include their physical health (Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991), their levels of stress (Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996; Shipley and Coats, 1992; Steffy and Ashbaugh, 1986), psychological well-being (Ozer, 1995), and work-family conflict (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Shipley & Coats, 1992).

Relationship-related outcomes of the adaptation process of employed mothers include their satisfaction with their marriages (Erickson, 1993; Nicola & Hawkes, 1986) and their jobs (Burke & McKeen,

1994; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). Ecology-related outcomes of adaptation include having organizational benefits that enable employed mothers to manage their work and family responsibilities, such as maternity leave policies, flexible scheduling options, telecommuting, and personal days to care for sick children (Hyde, 1995; Seyler, Monroe, & Garand, 1995).

The research reviewed above provides a general background of the various facets involved in the process of employed mothers' adaptation. This study will focus on how supportive communication practices affect particular outcomes of employed mothers' process of adaptation. The following sections explore aspects of this process in greater depth. This review will focus on the large body of research which has identified several specific problems women encounter as they attempt to manage work and family. The literature on social support will then be reviewed, which will serve as a background for the description of a conception of support that was developed for this study. Research on the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation will also be reviewed in greater depth. Hypotheses and research questions will be proposed throughout this section.

Adaptation Problems of Employed Mothers

The problems that will be discussed in this section are work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and double bind beliefs. These are all problems that have been substantiated in the literature as difficulties in the lives of employed mothers.

Role-Identities and Work-Family Conflict

The concept of role-identity has been referred to as the character and role that a person devises for him/herself as an occupant of particular social positions (McCall & Simmons, 1978). One's role-identity is an imaginative view of the person as he/she likes to think of him/herself being and acting in relation to such positions (McCall & Simmons, 1978). A person may have several role-identities, such as mother, wife, gardener, and accountant. Through interactions with others, a person learns to understand one's role in relation to others, as well as what is expected of each role. These role expectations and the pressures associated with them create work-family conflicts for many employed mothers. Work-family conflict is a form of interrole conflict, which occurs when responsibilities associated with the work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Frone & Rice, 1987; Higgins & Duxbury, 1992; Paden & Buehler, 1995; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Interrole conflict has been associated with women's work-family demands (Blair, 1993; Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Facione, 1994; Fuller, 1990; Gilbert, 1994; Higgins & Duxbury, 1992; Moen, 1992; Paden and Buehler, 1995; Rankin, 1993; Shipley & Coats, 1992; Shuster, 1993; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Warren & Johnson, 1995).

Employed mothers experience more interrole conflict than their employed husbands (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Apter, 1985; Benin & Keith, 1995; Cherlin, 1988; Fox & Hesse-Biber, 1984; Fuller, 1990; Killien & Brown, 1987; Moen, 1992; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986). For instance,

Higgins, Duxbury, and Lee (1994) found that women experienced greater work-family conflict than men, and that this conflict was highest when there were young children in the home (i.e., children 13 years and younger). Similarly, Beutell and Greenhaus (1982) found that 72% of women reported experiencing work-family conflicts. More recently, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) found that 58% of employed mothers reported conflicts between their work and family lives. Employed mothers may experience more interrole conflict than their husbands because employed mothers remain more involved than fathers in household work and child care (Benin & Keith, 1995; Cherlin, 1988; Fox & Hesse-Biber, 1984; Higgins, Duxbury, and Lee, 1994; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Leslie, Anderson, & Branson, 1991; Wilkie, 1988).

Role overload is closely connected to interrole conflict, because overload occurs when the total demands on time and energy associated with the prescribed activities of multiple roles are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994). Paden and Buehler (1995) found that role overload was positively associated with interrole conflict in women ($r = .54$). Similarly, Voydanoff (1988) found a positive association between workload pressure and work-family conflict ($b = .43$). Employed mothers may be experiencing role overload and interrole conflict because the space-time requirements of their role-identity as employees interferes with their role-identity as mothers. Thus motherhood may be in competition with other desirable roles, such as the pursuit of a career (Killien, 1987).

Stress

For many people, stressful experiences arise out of their surrounding social structures and their locations within them (Pearlin, 1989). When a person appraises a situation as particularly taxing or exceeding the resources they may have to cope, they may experience stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The particular stresses people experience will be largely dependent on their role-identities as well as their own personal appraisals of situations (Pearlin, 1989). Stress is a problematic condition that is part of the process of employed mothers' adaptation because many women experience stress in their daily lives as they try to manage their work and family lives (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996; Gilbert, 1993; Killien & Brown, 1987; Skinner, 1980). The necessity of performing multiple roles to meet women's own personal needs and the needs of others is likely to increase stress (Facione, 1994).

While some researchers have found weak associations between stress and work-family conflict in women, other researchers have found higher levels of dual-role stress. For instance, Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986), Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994), and Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996) found positive but weak associations between women's work-family conflicts and their reported stress ($r_s = .24, .25$ and $.18$). However, Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found that work-family conflict was moderately associated with stress in women ($r = .51$). Similarly, Rankin (1993) interviewed 118 employed mothers of preschool children. Of the 100 who described stress in their lives, 62% reported a high level of stress. The stressors reported by these women

were connected to their multiple roles, and included child-related problems, lack of time, and maternal guilt. Similarly, Wheatley (1991) found that 79% of 10,000 women surveyed indicated that they felt overstressed. This stress was most prevalent in employed mothers with children under 16 years of age, and the main manifestation of this stress was increased irritability.

Some researchers have compared the stress in the lives of both dual-career women and men (Guelzow, Bird, & Koball, 1991; Pett, Vaughan-Cole, & Wampold, 1994). This research shows that women experience more stress related to their adaptation to work and family responsibilities than men. For instance, Guelzow, Bird, and Koball (1991) found a positive but weak correlation between women's work-family conflicts and stress ($r = .26$), but no significant association between work-family conflict and stress for men ($r = .13$). Anderson and Leslie (1991) and Rushing and Schwabe (1995) also found that women experienced significantly more family and employment stress than men.

The above review illustrates the existence of stress in employed mothers and the positive associations between stress and work-family conflict. In this study, I extend the work of the researchers that have examined these associations (Frone, Barnes, & Farrell, 1994; Guelzow, Bird, & Koball, 1991; Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986). Because these associations vary, I also expect to find positive but weak associations between these constructs:

H1: Employed mothers who experience work-family conflict also experience stress.

Work-family conflicts and stress are problems that have a substantial impact on employed mothers' adaptation. Many scholars believe that one of the main reasons for this is the unequal division of household and child care labor that persists in dual-income families.

Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor

Many researchers have found that the transition to parenthood is stressful for many parents, particularly mothers (Belsky, Perry-Jenkins, & Crouter, 1985; Belsky & Rovine, 1990; Hoffnung, 1992; Rossi, 1980; Stamp, 1994; Stamp & Banski, 1992). One reason this transition is stressful for many new mothers is that there is an unequal division of labor in the home which causes the mother to bear the brunt of the responsibility for the household and child care tasks (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Berk, 1988; Blain, 1994; Cockburn, 1991; Coleman, 1988; Coltrane, 1996; Ferree, 1991; Galinsky & Bond, 1996; Hochschild, 1989; Hossain & Roopnarine, 1993; Hyde, 1995; Kamo, 1988; Leslie, Anderson, & Branson, 1991; Menaghan & Parcel, 1991; Model, 1981; Pestello & Voydanoff, 1991; Pina & Bengtson, 1993; Sekaran, 1986; Smith & Reid, 1986; Spitze, 1991; Starrels, 1994; Wilkie, 1988). Examination of household inequity is useful, as researchers have found that the balance of responsibilities for household tasks is a primary measure of relationship equality for women (Rosenbluth, Steil, & Whitcomb, 1998).

Several scholars have researched the nature of household inequity. In her study of dual-career couples, Hochschild (1989) found that only

twenty percent of the men in dual-career families shared equally in the household responsibilities with their employed wives. She found that household inequity led to work-family conflict, chronic exhaustion, and low sex drive for wives. Similarly, Barnett and Baruch (1987) asked fathers to indicate the actual number of child care tasks they were responsible for. Responsibility was defined as remembering, planning, and scheduling. Seventy-eight percent of the fathers indicated that they had no responsibility for these tasks. Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) found that only 11% of employed fathers indicated that they were responsible for cooking, compared to 83% of employed mothers. Starrels (1994) found from a national survey that only about one-fifth of husbands were fully involved in household tasks. Other work shows that about 20% of the husbands of employed women share equally in the housework and child care with their wives, and only 7% do so when their wives do not work outside the home (Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1991). Blain (1994) found that in 14 out of 16 dual-earner households, women carried the responsibility for most areas of housework and child care, regardless of which spouse earned a higher income. Leslie, Anderson, and Branson (1991) studied 60 families who were classified as either dual-career (43%), dual-job (37%), or mixed-employment (20%). They found that, regardless of the couples' employment profiles and wives' relative income, the main determinant of responsibility for child care was gender. Similarly, Hossain and Roopnarine (1993) found that mothers invested substantially more time in the role of primary caregiver than fathers, regardless of whether the wife was employed full or

part-time. Lavee, Sharlin, and Katz (1996) found that a traditional division of household and child care labor was associated with stress in women ($r = .26$).

The unequal division of household labor has evolved out of a time when domestic responsibilities were ideologically designated as women's work (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995; Cowan, 1983). Prior to industrialization, the entire family partook in the completion of household chores (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995; K. Anderson, 1988; Barciauskas & Hull, 1989; Coltrane, 1996; Cowan, 1983; Lopata, 1993; Stromberg & Harkess, 1988). The work that women contributed to the home was essential for the survival of the families and the communities in which they lived (K. Anderson, 1988; M. Anderson, 1988; Barciauskas & Hull, 1989; Coltrane, 1996; Stromberg & Harkess, 1988). Moreover, a woman's work was not necessarily limited to her own household. Women were often expected to serve as nurses and midwives in their neighborhoods, as well as care for orphans, the mentally ill, the infirm, and the aged (K. Anderson, 1988). In this environment, the labor of women in the home and community was visible to the public, was valued as equally as other forms of work, and was seen as economically necessary (M. Anderson, 1988; Barciauskas & Hull, 1989).

During the early stages of the industrial revolution, many women worked for pay outside the home. However, an emerging ideology viewed men as the societal members who should work outside the home, and housework became a form of labor that was the opposite of paid work (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995; Coltrane, 1996; Cowan, 1983; Ferree,

1991). As our society moved toward industrialization, the separation of family and work activities became more pronounced (Gilbert, 1993). Chores which were once shared by all family members became more difficult to accomplish when only women were designated as responsible. In addition, a family's migration to the city meant new adjustments for women who now lacked the space and opportunity to utilize the homemaking skills they developed on farms. The early 1900s saw the professionalization of home economics, which was geared toward helping women manage family life (Coltrane, 1996; Steinem, 1994).

Thus gender roles and ideals have had a significant impact on the division of labor in households (Ferree, 1991). Because of gender ideals, norms that regulate the allocation of household tasks, and gendered patterns of dominance, gender intervenes directly in the household division of labor for many couples (Barnett & Shen, 1997; Menaghan & Parcel, 1991). Some people believe that women are naturally inclined to household organization and child care (Blain, 1994; Gilbert, 1994). The belief that women engage in nurturing activities more than men may lead to the expectation and the belief that men are less nurturing than women "by nature." The implications of this are significant, as women who fail to live up to societal and familial expectations of nurturant behaviors toward their children may face mother-blaming (Phares, 1993) and mother-guilt (Eyer, 1996).

These beliefs and expectations about mothers and fathers also have an influence on what particular activities actually are performed by each sex (Gilbert, 1994). Related to this is what Blain (1994) calls the myth of

male incompetence. Blain examined dual-earner couples and found that many men explained that they didn't know how to operate the washing machine or the dishwasher. They explained that this was the reason they let their wives do these things. Some of the men blamed their own incompetence on not learning these things when they were young (Blain, 1994). By claiming that they would do a certain amount of damage if the task was left up to them, these men rationalized that it was better if their wives handled it with their own expertise. However, several men claimed that their "incompetence was a function of their not wanting to spend time on a task they considered unnecessarily complicated or of their not wanting to operate within a definition of performance provided by their wives" (Blain, 1994, p. 520).

The above section describes the nature of the inequity in the division of household and child care labor that exists in many dual-income households. Some researchers have found that equity in the division of household labor is related to work-family conflict and stress. For instance, Burley (1995) found that fairness in the division of household labor was negatively but weakly associated with work-family conflict ($r = -.23$). Similarly, Suchet and Barling (1986) found that an equitable division of household labor was negatively associated with interrole conflict in women ($r = -.30$). Inequity in the division of household and child care labor has also been shown to be related to stress in women. For instance, Lavee, Sharlin, and Katz (1996) found that a traditional, inequitable division of labor in the home was positively but weakly associated with women's parenting stress ($r = .26$). Guelzow, Bird,

and Koball (1991) also found that an equitable division of labor was negatively but weakly associated with women's marital stress ($r = -.19$). Based on the work of these four groups of researchers, I also expect to find a significant but weak association between these constructs:

H2: Perceived inequity in the division of household and child care labor is positively associated with employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict and (b) stress.

The previous section has described several problematic conditions that affect employed mothers adaptation. In the following section I discuss double bind beliefs, which is also a problematic condition that affects the process of adaptation. However, this problematic condition is not as firmly described and established in the literature.

Double Bind Beliefs

Jamieson (1995) has discussed some of the ways in which women are faced with contradictory beliefs in society that may hinder them from achieving their goals. Double binds are contradictory beliefs that are entrenched in our everyday discourse and conduct. Jamieson (1995) takes the concept of double bind from Gregory Bateson, who developed the concept in his analysis of schizophrenia. As a rhetorical construct, the double bind posits two alternatives, with one or both penalizing the person to which they are directed. The implication is that a person cannot be both at the same time, or somewhere in between (Jamieson, 1995). In a double bind, a person is 'damned if they do, and damned if they don't.' Jamieson (1995) sees the double bind as a strategy used by those who have power against those who do not. The power of the bind

is found in the ways in which people use them to simplify complex situations, by dichotomizing events and contrasting good and bad, true and false, or strong and weak.

Jamieson (1995) describes a number of double binds that have implications for employed mothers. One double bind is called womb/brain, in which women are told that they can use their womb or their brains, but not both at the same time. The assumption is that if a woman tries to have a child and develop a career simultaneously, she will be ineffective in one or the other, if not ineffective in both. The concepts of sequencing and juggling are part of the womb/brain bind, as they represent the different ways women attempt to manage children with careers. In sequencing, a woman may take time to develop her career, then take some time off to care for the child for several years, and return to work at a later date. In juggling, a woman makes attempts to incorporate both a child and a career in her life simultaneously. Juggling is seen as ineffective for both the child and the career, while sequencing comes with its own costs to a woman's professional goals. Mothers experience more interruptions in their workforce participation than fathers (Galinsky & Bond, 1996). By taking time off to have children, women take themselves out of the professional arena and lose years of professional experience that their male counterparts gain. Moreover, because women can only 'safely' have children until a certain age, they leave their careers at times when they may be most likely eligible for professional advancement (Moen, 1992). Furthermore, a woman who

decides to sequence may invite employers to argue that hiring women is more costly than hiring men (Jamieson, 1995; Lobel, 1991; Moen, 1992).

A second double bind Jamieson (1995) discusses is called silence/shame. In this bind women are told to be silent, or suffer shame in public. Throughout history, expressive women have been condemned for expressing their opinions and accused of everything from stirring controversy to being militant, brash femi-nazis who have destroyed the family. Employed mothers face the silence/shame bind because they are expected to do their best at work and thus, they may feel pressure to not talk about how aspects of the job and home situations should be changed to make it easier to accomplish both. This problem is complicated further because employers often view women as less psychologically invested in their jobs than men, regardless of their marital status or familial obligations (Moen, 1992; Spitze, 1988). Thus women may find it difficult to prove themselves to be committed to their jobs while at the same time dealing with their other roles as mothers.

A third double bind, femininity/competence, reflects the notion that women are expected to be feminine, and yet they are subjected to traditional conceptualizations of femininity that exclude real possibilities of being seen as competent and decisive (Jamieson, 1995). A woman cannot be both feminine and competent at the same time, for if she is seen as feminine, she is considered to be too emotional and not tough enough to compete in a man's world. If she deviates from the traditional norm of femininity, she runs the risk of being perceived as too brash and bitchy, and thus ostracized by others who believe that women shouldn't

be that way. Indeed, women who have aspirations to succeed in high-powered careers are seen as denying their femininity (Gilbert, 1993). Moreover, because femininity is more commonly associated with motherhood than with professional endeavors, employed mothers may find it more difficult than others to establish their competence in the workplace. In support of this view, Halpert, Wilson, and Hickman (1993) had 239 undergraduates view videotapes of either a pregnant or a non-pregnant woman working to determine their attitudes about pregnant employees. They found that the employees' performances were consistently rated lower when they appeared pregnant. Male subjects assigned lower ratings than females. Pregnant women were seen as irrational, overly emotional, physically limited and undependable employees. Because of this double bind belief, women may find it difficult to establish their competence at work while maintaining their femininity.

All of these double bind beliefs may impact how people view the role of employed mothers. Double bind beliefs may also have an effect on the other problems of adaptation that are common to employed mothers.

Double Bind Beliefs and Problems of Adaptation

Stress and work-family conflict are firmly established in the literature as problems employed mothers experience. Jamieson's (1995) womb/brain bind may be connected to these problems, because women are faced with the conflict of dealing with the negative consequences of managing career and motherhood. If they choose one over the other, they are left having to forego options that their male counterparts take for

granted. When they attempt to do both at the same time, they are faced with stresses and problems that are not encountered by men. Higgins and Duxbury (1992) examined the interrole conflicts of dual-career men and found that these men did experience interrole conflict, and it created a negative spillover effect for them. The strains produced by the mens' work situations drained and preoccupied them, making it difficult for them to participate adequately in their family lives. These men explained their lack of participation in child care and household duties as a consequence of their stress from work. However, women experience these same work stresses, and yet they cannot absolve themselves of their other role responsibilities. Thus, men appear to be able to explain away their lack of participation in the family domain, while women are left shouldering the responsibility and, along with that, the possible feelings that they may be ineffective in both work and family as a result of their dual-roles.

Another problem employed mothers experience during the process of adaptation is the inequitable division of household and child care labor. The implications of these inequities may have important connections to Jamieson's (1995) femininity/competence bind. Characterizing women as being "naturally" inclined to housework and child care, and as being "naturally nurturant" hinders women's abilities to develop their competencies in their jobs/careers. Several factors further affect this process. Steil and Weltman (1991) found that men had more say in financial matters in their marriages and less responsibility for household and child care duties than women. These men also saw their

own careers as being more important than their wives' careers, regardless of whether or not they earned more money than their wives. Because employed mothers spend so much more time than their husbands with housework and child care, they may have less time, both psychologically and physically, to devote to their paid work. Work hours, overtime demands, and commuting distance may have to be minimized to make the time and energy needed for household work and child care (Model, 1981).

Women's disproportionate responsibility for domestic work places them at a disadvantage in paid employment and public life (Chafetz, 1988; Cockburn, 1991; Stanley, Hunt, & Hunt, 1986). In fact, women hold the majority of part-time, temporary, and contingent jobs, in large part because of their child care and other domestic responsibilities (Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996; Folk & Beller, 1993; Moen, 1992; Spitze, 1988). Approximately 38% of employed mothers with young children are employed in part-time positions (Folk & Beller, 1993), and, overall, over 90% of part-time workers are women (Cockburn, 1991). These jobs tend to provide low pay, few benefits, and little opportunity for advancement (Cockburn, 1991; Costello, Stone, & Dooley, 1996; Folk & Beller, 1993; Moen, 1992; Raabe & Gessner, 1988; Spitze, 1988).

The social and cultural tradition of mothers taking on more responsibility for child care than fathers serves to segregate them occupationally and keep their pay low (Avioli & Kaplan, 1992; Mansbridge, 1986). Responsibility for child care is a highly significant barrier to women's equal employment opportunities (Bohen, 1984).

Furthermore, opportunities to hold part-time or flexible positions are more limited in managerial and professional occupations (Avioli & Kaplan, 1992). Some research has found that highly educated women with professional careers are less likely than other women to be engaged in marriage and motherhood (Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1989). This is consistent with the findings of Olson et al. (1990) who found that many women in professional careers did not combine motherhood with their career, even though they expressed a desire to have children. Moreover, women may also have to deal with employers and co-workers who see feminine qualities as incompatible with professional competencies. Giving women the status of being competent in the domestic domain places them as high ranking officials in a low status arena (Ferree, 1991), while it gives men more time to focus on their career.

The previous section describes the double bind beliefs that may inhibit the process of adaptation and exacerbate the problems employed mothers experience during this process. However, several questions remain. For instance, will employed mothers perceive that important people in their home and work lives endorse double bind beliefs? How will the perception of double bind beliefs affect the problems they experience during the process of adaptation? While a large body of literature covers the various problems employed mothers experience, to date no study has examined how these problems are connected to women's perceptions of double bind beliefs. Therefore, I propose the following research question:

RQ1: Will employed mothers who perceive double bind beliefs in their home and work lives (a) feel more work-family conflict, (b) feel more stress, and (c) perceive more inequity in the division of household and child care labor with their husbands than employed mothers who do not perceive double bind beliefs in their home and work lives?

As indicated previously, communication scholars have largely ignored the topic of the problems of employed mothers. This study attempts to add to our understanding of the lives of these women by examining the role of supportive communication practices in facilitating the process of adaptation for employed mothers. By examining supportive communication practices in this context, we can see how they affect both the problems employed mothers experience as well as the outcomes of their adaptation (i.e., marital, job, and life satisfaction), and we can perhaps gain an understanding of how these women can successfully manage their dual-roles.

The following section is a review of literature on social support. Key researchers and models of support are discussed, which serves as a background for a description of the conception of supportive communication that was developed for this study.

Social support

The communication of support is an important symbolic activity in the context of relationships (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). Important interpersonal relationships are sustained through expressing concern to one another and allowing one another to express feelings, thoughts, and concerns. As indicated previously, social support has been defined as an

interactional process of caring for, comforting and assisting others (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Burleson, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990; Goldsmith & Parks, 1990).

Because support is an important aspect of interpersonal relationships, it is important to examine how support may affect the adaptation process of employed mothers. Such an examination is useful, as support has not been studied in this context as much as it has been examined in other contexts. Traditionally, support research has focused on contexts such as supporting people with physical or mental illnesses, such as cancer, depression, or alcoholism (e.g., Baron, Cutrona, Hicklin, Russell, & Lubaroff, 1990; Friedman & King, 1994; Dalgard, Bjork, & Tambs, 1995; Pistrang & Barker, 1995; Trobst, Collins, & Embree, 1994), supporting or comforting friends in need (e.g., Barbee, 1990; Burleson, 1985, 1990, 1994, Burleson & Samter, 1985a, 1985b; Derlega, Barbee, & Winstead, 1994; Procidano & Heller, 1983; Samter, Burleson, & Murphy, 1987), marital partners supporting one another (e.g., Cutrona & Suhr, 1994), supporting friends through social networks (e.g., Berg & Piner, 1990; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990), and supporting people through interaction in support groups (e.g., Katz, 1993; Levine, 1988; Schubert & Borkman, 1994). While some studies have examined support for employed mothers (Beatty, 1996; Erickson, 1993; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991; Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994; Suchet & Barling, 1986), in general, researchers have not focused on topics such as women's work

family conflicts or related stresses. Only a few studies have examined these constructs (Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991; Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994). Therefore, this study contributes to our knowledge of how support operates in the adaptation process for employed mothers. The following sections will describe the mechanisms and functions of social support, as well as the components of socially supportive messages.

Mechanisms of social support

There are different views regarding the process of social support and the effect it may have on a person's well-being. Some scholars have suggested that social support may serve the function of buffering individuals from the stress that may result in difficult situations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Dalgard, Bjork, & Tambs, 1995; Gerin, Milner, Chawla, & Pickering, 1995; Gottlieb, 1983). Appraisal theory suggests that stress arises when a person cognitively appraises a situation as demanding or threatening, and he or she does not feel that he or she has coping responses available (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to the buffering model of social support, a person's perception of the availability of support impacts his or her appraisal of a situation by altering his or her cognitive interpretation of the stressors and the coping resources available. When people experience situations that may cause stress (i.e., difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities, job loss, loss of a loved one) the networks of social support that people have may serve to buffer them from some of the negative effects on mood and functioning that the stress may ordinarily

cause. They may feel a sense of relief because they know that others care and are willing to help out in some way, which in turn, may allow the stressed individual to reappraise their situation as less difficult and taxing.

This buffering effect of social support may, by extension, serve a salutary function for individuals. Some of the research on social support has examined the effect support can have on an individual's health (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cheng, Schuckers, Hauser, & Burch, 1994; Dalgard, Bjork, & Tambs, 1995; Gottlieb, 1983; Pistrang & Barker, 1995). Because stress may have a negative effect on a person's health (i.e., contributing to depression and physical illnesses), the buffering effect of social support may serve to reduce the likelihood of that person developing an illness.

In addition to producing positive physical health outcomes, social support has been shown to have a positive effect on one's emotional and/or psychological health. Indeed, social support has also been examined for its function of providing the recipient with feelings of personal control over situations. When one repeatedly feels as though he or she cannot control personal situations, he or she may experience depression (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). Thus, being involved in supportive networks that provide one with a sense of personal control may reduce the likelihood of that person developing psychological distress or other symptoms of depression (Dalgard, Bjork, & Tambs, 1995; Pistrang & Barker, 1995). Several studies have supported this notion. For instance, Pistrang and Barker (1995) examined the role of support from a

partner in women's psychological response to breast cancer. They found that satisfaction with the partner support relationship was associated with feelings of personal control and psychological well-being. Similarly, Friedman and King (1994) found among older women with heart failure that greater emotional support was related to greater positive affect, control in one's life and satisfaction with life. Conversely, Cheng, Schuckers, Hauser, and Burch (1994) found that low social support was associated with increased depression and decreased life satisfaction.

While the buffering model of social support has received considerable attention, the "main effects" model has also been explored (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Researchers have examined the notion that the beneficial effects of social support occur when large social networks provide others with regular positive experiences that relate to well-being because they provide a sense of predictability and stability in one's life (Cohen & Wills, 1985). A main effects model suggests that social support has positive influences on individuals' lives regardless of the presence or absence of other forms of stress in their lives, and that increases in social support result in increases in well-being regardless of existing levels of support (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cummins, 1990). Thus, integration in a social network positively influences a person's well-being in ways that do not necessarily involve coping with particular stressful life events (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cummins, 1990).

General types of social support

While researchers have documented the effects social support may have on an individual, they have also identified the general functions of

supportive messages. These include emotional, esteem, informational, tangible, and social integration support (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990). Emotional support is the expression of concern, caring, empathy, and sympathy (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Esteem support is the expression of positive regard for one's worth as well as for one's abilities and competencies (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Informational support is conveyed when one provides advice or guidance to another in uncertain or stressful situations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Tangible support is conveyed when one provides time, resources, labor, services or goods to another (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Social integration support refers to a feeling of inclusion in a network of individuals with similar concerns and interests (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990).

Albrecht and Adelman (1987) have proposed a framework to explain how these functions of supportive messages operate. They suggest that messages are supportive when they serve to enhance a recipient's feeling of control in a stressful situation and reduce his/her uncertainty about the situation. Supportive communication helps individuals to reduce uncertainty by decreasing anxiety or stress caused by an uncertain situation (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). By decreasing uncertainty, supportive communication also helps a support recipient to gain a feeling of greater control because the communication provides them with a plan of action, more options, and/or greater knowledge to

deal with the situation that is the source of stress. The following section describes the features of supportive messages in greater depth.

Features of supportive messages

As already been mentioned, social support is expressed through messages directed by one person to another within the context of their relationships which are created and sustained through communicative interactions (Burleson, Albrecht, Goldsmith, & Sarason, 1994). Several researchers have developed models that identify particular features of effective support messages.

For instance, Barbee and Cunningham (1994) have developed the interactive coping model of support. This model accounts for the fact that persons do not always use positive communicative behaviors when interacting with someone who is trying to deal with stress. The researchers prefer the term "interactive coping," as opposed to social support, because of their belief that the term social support conveys the use of helpful and positive behaviors only. Interactive coping refers to the dynamic behavioral process of one person responding verbally and nonverbally to another person's problem or emotions.

The interactive coping typology includes four types of coping behaviors that can be classified according to their function and type. Solve behaviors are considered problem-focused/approach behaviors because they make an attempt to find an answer to the person's problems or stresses. The provision of information, tangible assistance, making suggestions, and asking clarifying questions would be included under this category. Solace behaviors have an emotional focus, and are also

approach behaviors because they attempt to express closeness and positive emotion. Dismiss behaviors are classified as problem-focused/avoidance behaviors, because they minimize the importance of the problem. Finally, escape behaviors are emotion-focused/avoidance behaviors, because they discourage the help seeker from expressing negative emotions, they express irritability towards him/her or they ignore the help seeker's expression of emotion (Barbee & Cunningham, 1994; Barbee, Rowatt, & Cunningham, 1998).

Barbee and Cunningham (1994) have examined the effects of interactive coping on relationship outcomes. In one study they examined 120 couples and the extent to which partners provided effective or ineffective interactive coping behaviors to the other in a laboratory setting. The researchers contacted both partners of each couple 10 months after the experiment to see which couples had remained together. They found that the use of dismiss behaviors and the lack of an attempt to make a partner feel better during the experiment predicted subsequent romantic relationship terminations (Barbee & Yankeelov, 1992, as cited in Barbee & Cunningham, 1994). These findings indicate a potential connection between social support provided by husbands toward their wives, relationship maintenance, and relationship satisfaction.

Cutrona and Suhr (1992, 1994) developed the optimal matching model of stress and social support. With this model they examine the characteristics of the stress and the characteristics of the relationship between the stressed individual and the support provider. From these characteristics Cutrona and Suhr (1992, 1994) have established two broad

categories of support: action-facilitating support and nurturant support. Action-facilitating support refers to behaviors that assist a stressed person in solving the problem they are faced with. Informational support and tangible assistance are behaviors that comprise this category. Nurturant support refers to efforts to console or comfort a stressed person. Included in this category are emotional support and network support. Cutrona and Suhr (1992, 1994) developed this model further by examining the controllability of the stressful situation and its relationship to the type of support that is most beneficial. The researchers propose that action-facilitating support would be most beneficial in the context of a controllable situation, and nurturant support would be most beneficial in an uncontrollable situation. In two separate studies these researchers have examined married couples in a laboratory setting in which one spouse discussed an important stressor with the other spouse. In one study (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992) they found that when a stressful situation was seen as being controllable by the stress victim, his or her spouse provided a number of information support behaviors. When the stressed spouse had the ability to control the situation, they were less satisfied with high amounts of information and advice from their spouse because they felt that they didn't need or want assistance when they could deal with the situation themselves. They also found that recipients preferred high levels of emotional support, such as empathy and expressions of caring, regardless of the controllability of the stressful situation (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). In another study, Cutrona and Suhr (1994) found that spouses rated their partners as more supportive the

more that partner provided emotional support to him or her. Moreover, they found that individuals who were satisfied with their marriages and who felt that their spouses were very supportive evaluated their stressful situations as more controllable than those individuals who reported low marital satisfaction and spousal supportiveness.

Applegate (1980) and Burleson (1983, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1994) have developed a nine-level hierarchical message coding system of comforting strategies. Comforting messages have the function of alleviating emotional distress that arises from everyday hurts and disappointments (Burleson, 1985). Constructivist researchers have found that the development and use of sophisticated forms of comforting strategies is a function of the complexity and abstractness of interpersonal constructs, which are the basic cognitive structures people use in interpreting others' behavior. People with highly developed interpersonal construct systems are better able to adapt to the perspective of a listener (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982; Hale & Delia, 1976).

The nine levels of Applegate's and Burleson's system are subsumed under three primary levels. At the lowest primary level are messages that deny the perspective and feelings of a distressed individual. Here the speaker denies or challenges the legitimacy of the other's feelings (e.g., "There is nothing for you to be worried about."). At the middle level are messages that provide some implicit support and recognition of the individual's feelings. Here the speaker acknowledges the other's feelings, but makes no attempt to help the other understand why they are feeling that way (e.g., "I'm sorry you are upset about that.").

At the highest level are messages that explicitly recognize, acknowledge, legitimize, and elaborate the individual's feelings and perspective. Here the speaker may say something such as, "I'm sorry you feel bad about not being asked to be in Sarah's wedding. This happened to me once, too. It can hurt to feel left out like that." These higher level messages are more explicitly person centered, more feeling centered, more evaluatively neutral, and are more accepting of the individual. Person-centered communication recognizes and supports the unique qualities and characteristics of the persons with whom we interact (Applegate et al., 1985).

Burleson and his colleagues have examined person-centered comforting message strategies and have found that an individual's use of highly person-centered comforting strategies is perceived to be the most effective and sensitive means of dealing with another individual's emotional distress (Burleson & Samter, 1985a, 1985b). They have also found that individuals who used highly person-centered comforting messages were evaluated more positively and better liked than those individuals who did not use these strategies (Samter, Burleson, & Murphy, 1987). These findings have important implications for work on the social support of employed mothers, as components of Burleson's person-centered message hierarchy (i.e., acknowledging and legitimating feelings) may be applicable to this context.

The literature reviewed above summarizes the work of the key researchers who have been influential in the field of social support in general. Because the context of this study is employed mothers, it is also

useful to review research that has examined the social support women receive from their husbands as they attempt to manage work and family.

Husband support

Several researchers have examined the role of husbands' support in the lives of employed mothers (Beatty, 1996; Erickson, 1993; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Suchet & Barling, 1986). This research has generally focused on husbands' support of their wives' career goals, the tangible support they provide in the household, and the emotional support they give to their wives. For instance, Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986) examined how supportive husbands were regarding their wives' employment. They found that spousal support was positively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = .52$). Conversely, Beatty (1996) found that a lack of spousal support for a woman's career was negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = -.67$).

Some researchers have just focused on tangible support. For instance, Suchet and Barling (1986) operationalized spousal support as the amount of help women receive from their husbands with household work and child care. They found that spousal support was negatively associated with interrole conflict in women ($r = -.30$). Yet Reifman, Biernat, and Lang (1991) found that husbands' tangible support had no effect on women's stress levels.

Other researchers have examined both tangible and emotional support. Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found that spousal support was associated with greater family satisfaction ($r = .40$).

Erickson (1993) found that husbands' emotional support was positively associated with marital well-being ($r = .56$). Steinberg and Gottlieb (1994) examined employed mothers' appraisals of their husbands' support, and found that women praised support from their husbands that was spontaneously given and devalued assistance and support they had to ask for. They also found that women appreciated tangible assistance over emotional support.

While most of this research offers respectable contributions to the study of employed mothers, the research does not enable us to gain a precise understanding of the communication of support in this context. In many instances, the operationalization of support is too simplistic. For instance, some researchers have asked women to rate on a scale how supportive their husbands are regarding the women's employment outside the home (Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986). In other studies researchers have asked respondents to rate how much they could count on their husbands to be a source of encouragement and reassurance (Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991), or rate the degree of emotional support provided by their spouse for their professional work (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979). Other studies incorporate multi-item support scales, but ask participants to respond to vague statements such as "My spouse is very supportive of my career" (Beatty, 1996). While the studies do provide general measures of support in the context of employed mothers, the definition of "support" is sometimes too simplistic or general, which leads to findings that cannot be interpreted precisely.

Another problem with current research on husbands' support of employed mothers is that the relationship of the construct of support to particular communication practices is nonexistent. In all of the studies described above, the construct of support was not operationalized in terms of specific communication practices. For instance, having participants respond to statements such as "My spouse is very supportive of my career," (Beatty, 1996) or "How supportive is your husband regarding your employment outside of the home" (Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986) still does not give us information regarding how this support is conveyed to these women through communicative practices. This operationalization problem may be due, in part, to the fact that in many of these studies support was one of many variables and was not a primary focus (Beatty, 1996; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Suchet & Barling, 1986). However, in some studies, support by husbands has been a main focus (Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994). For instance, Steinberg and Gottlieb (1994) examined employed mothers' appraisals, on a seven-point scale, of their husbands' helpfulness in the home. These researchers focused on helpful behaviors enacted by husbands (i.e., cooking, cleaning, laundry). Still, these researchers did not focus on specific aspects of the husbands' communicative practices that reflected their support. Studies that explore the construct of support in greater depth may measure it more accurately and precisely.

This study is an extension of the studies described above that have examined husbands' support of employed mothers. The focus of this

study is on employed mothers' perceptions of communicative messages enacted by their husbands during interactions about work and family responsibilities. Here, support is conceptualized as more than merely a general idea of feeling "supported." Communication scholars see support as being conveyed to another through communicative practices, and it is through the perception of supportive message practices that one feels support from another. Thus, it is through an examination of these message practices that we can gain a more precise understanding of when and how employed mothers feel support from their husbands.

Spousal Support Practices

The following section describes the conception of social support developed for this study. The focus is on how husbands of employed mothers engage them in discussions of the work-family conflicts and stresses the women experience and on how husbands acknowledge their wives' thoughts and concerns regarding women's pursuit of the multiple goals of motherhood and career. This conception of social support also involves the tangible support husbands provide to their wives to assist them in managing their multiple roles and responsibilities. The conception developed here includes the following components: Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance, Dialogue, and Assistance. The following section describes the theories of social support, communication, and relational development that undergird these components.

A theory of social support attempts to explain how it is that communicative interactions may help a distressed person feel better. As

indicated previously, the emotional experience of an individual may be explained by appraisal theory, which suggests that emotional states, such as distress, are viewed as resulting from a person's interpretation of a situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Work-family difficulties are likely to be interpreted by employed mothers as stressful. Supportive communication interactions serve to improve the feelings or affective state of a distressed person by stimulating a reappraisal of that person's situation (Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996). This reappraisal may be brought about through interpersonal communication practices that facilitate the reappraisal of situations such as work-family difficulties.

Given that reappraisals may be stimulated by supportive communication practices, a theory of support needs to rely on a theory of communication. The conception of support advanced in this study integrates constructivist and humanistic theories of communication. Constructivism views communication as a relation among individuals that is characterized by the organization of action and interaction around the reciprocal communicative intentions of interactants (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982). Communication is a situated activity in which interactants adapt to one another and coordinate individual lines of action (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982; O'Keefe & Delia, 1982). Two key processes in communication, then, are coordination and adaptation. Coordination involves the alignment of participants' intentions and actions to facilitate a sense of mutual understanding, and adaptation refers to cooperative practices that facilitate the sense of mutual

understanding (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982). Many interpersonal situations are inherently person-oriented, where communicators may focus their communication practices on the interpersonal needs and feelings of another (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982). Thus, coordination and adaptation may be accomplished through the use of person-centered communication practices. Person-centered communication practices stimulate the sense of mutual understanding, which permit the coordination of joint lines of action. These communication practices are supportive because they are responsive to the goals of the other, they are adapted and tailored to meet the needs of the listener, and they serve to enhance the interpersonal relationship between the partners (Applegate, Kline & Delia, 1991; Burleson, 1989). In conversations, supporters attempt to empathize with another and gain an understanding of the other's experiences (Rogers, 1959). Empathy underscores the adaptation process, as the feeling of mutual understanding may be gained through communication practices in which people actively seek to understand another. Supporters cannot truly know what another person is feeling, because two people cannot have exactly the same experiences. Thus, empathy is a process of imagining and understanding (Rogers, 1959). In addition, these supportive communication practices display positive regard for the other, acceptance, and respect (Applegate, Kline & Delia, 1991; Burleson, 1989; Rogers, 1959).

Together, the theory of social support and the theory of communication advanced above function in the process of sustaining long term intimate relationships. A plausible theory of relationship

development to use in the context of employed mothers and their husbands is equity theory, as this theory stresses the contributions persons make in their intimate relationships with others. Equity theory is based on the principle of distributive justice, which holds that fairness is determined by comparing the outcome-input ratios of relational partners (Deutsch, 1985). The relationship is inequitable when the ratios are not equal. Equitable relationships are more satisfying than inequitable relationships, and people in inequitable relationships experience negative emotions, such as distress (Buunk & Mutsaers, 1999; Canary & Stafford, 1992). Equity theorists have proposed, though, that persons in inequitable relationships may attempt to restore equity (Adams, 1965). The spousal support practices, as conceptualized in this study, may serve the function of establishing, restoring, or maintaining equity in a relationship because supporters formulate messages that display their desire to place priority on the concerns of their partner. Greater emphasis is placed on the other, while less emphasis is placed on the self. When supporters use person-centered and empathic communication practices, they attempt to reach out to the other to understand how the other sees his or her world. Thus, support practices may be viewed as inputs on the part of the supporter, and outcomes for a support recipient.

The conception of support advanced in this study integrates the theories of support, communication, and relational development described above. Because the conception of support advanced here is tailored to employed mothers, it incorporates communication practices

on the part of husbands that encourage open talk about work-family difficulties, express care and concern, convey legitimization of women's work-family concerns, engage in a collaborative process of negotiation of responsibilities, and assist these women in the completion of both child care and household tasks. These communication practices may serve to facilitate reappraisals of women's work-family difficulties, as they are person-centered and empathic, and foster mutual understanding between husbands and wives. Thus, as marital partners develop mutual understanding and coordinate their individual lines of action, there is a greater likelihood of equity being sustained in the relationship. In the following sections I describe each component in the conception of husbands' support advanced in this study and explain how each component operates in the lives of employed mothers.

Encouraging Discussion

Some communication scholars have emphasized the idea that supportive conversations are most likely to be effective if all participants are motivated to engage in the discussion (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996). If a person feels strongly about the importance of the topic, they are likely to be motivated to discuss it with significant others. Several conditions may contribute to a person's motivation to talk about stressful thoughts and feelings. The people involved need to trust one another, and have a sense that a discussion of thoughts and feelings is appropriate. Further, one must feel at ease with the setting where a conversation may occur (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996). Indeed, a person's motivation to discuss

and explore stressful thoughts and feelings will be enhanced if they feel safe and secure in such a situation (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

In addition to being motivated to discuss a topic, people who are trying to convey support may also communicate in such a way that encourages another person to discuss his or her feelings. Several researchers have noted the importance of a support provider giving his or her recipient the time to talk about their feelings, stresses, and frustrations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994; Burleson, 1990; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996; Leatham & Duck, 1990). By talking through feelings and frustrations support recipients, such as employed mothers, may relieve pressures they have internalized (Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994).

The process of encouraging discussion also requires effective listening on the part of the support provider, because providers need to be receptive to the recipient's disclosures as well as ask follow-up questions that allow the stressed person to move from one topic to another until they have expressed all of their frustrations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984, 1987). This is important because, across a wide variety of situations, there is evidence to suggest that focusing the topic on the feelings of a person in need is consistently evaluated as a helpful form of support (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

Encouraging discussion is included in a conception of social support because it is seen as an effective means of moderating the intensity of negative emotional states, such as stress and frustration

(Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994). An employed mother may feel a strong need to express her stress and frustrations to her husband. Conversing about stressful feelings is seen as a medium through which an employed mother can express, clarify, and elaborate these feelings. It is through this talk that an employed mother may be able to make sense out of her work-family conflicts and the stresses that may accompany these conflicts, and reappraise them as less difficult (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

Interpersonal Involvement

Interpersonal involvement refers specifically to showing that you care about and empathize with someone because that person is an important part of your life. Expressions of concern convey a sense of caring for the other and affirmation of the other's roles and aspirations. Burleson (1990) contends that expressing concern towards a person in distress contributes to their feelings of well-being, acceptance, and control over events. Cutrona and Suhr (1992) examined marital partners' satisfaction with support from their spouse and found that expressions of concern and caring were related to partner satisfaction across a wide range of stressful situations their partners experienced.

The expression of concern by a husband towards his wife when she is discussing her stressors with him is an important aspect of providing social support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). By expressing concern husbands show that they care about and affirm the different role-identities employed mothers must enact. This is important because many women carry multiple role-identities that must be performed simultaneously,

and sometimes this leads to feelings of interrole conflict and stress. Indeed, by expressing caring and affirmation, supportive husbands may decrease the stress experienced by employed mothers (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992).

In addition to expressing concern, interpersonal involvement also involves empathizing with another to show that we understand their thoughts and feelings (Rogers, 1959). Researchers have stressed the importance of empathy as a key component in the provision of social support (Barbee, 1990; Barbee & Cunningham, 1994; Burleson, 1990; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992; Gottlieb, 1988; Thoits, 1986). Thoits (1986) explains how empathic understanding on the part of the support provider will enhance the likelihood that effective social support will take place. Cutrona and Suhr (1992) found that expressions of empathy were associated with recipient satisfaction, regardless of whether the event was controllable or uncontrollable. Thus, it appears that the expression of empathy and concern during interaction with a spouse is an important aspect of support. Together, these communication practices may help to foster feelings of trust, which may influence reappraisals of stressful situations (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

Acceptance

Acceptance refers to the notion of granting legitimacy to one's feelings. This construct is taken from Burleson's (1984, 1985, 1990) work on comforting communication, which has its roots in a constructivist, person-centered approach to human interaction (Applegate, 1990; Burleson, 1984, 1985; Delia, O'Keefe, & O'Keefe, 1982). The component of

acceptance is illustrated by the following prototype statement: "Under the circumstances, you have every right to feel the way you do." The concept of granting legitimacy has important applications to the context of employed mothers. Granting legitimacy is evaluatively neutral and is more accepting of the recipient of support (Burleson, 1984, 1985, 1990; Burleson, Albrecht, Goldsmith, & Sarason, 1994; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996). If supportive discussions are going to be helpful, a stressed person must not only feel that they are accepted, but also that it is acceptable for them to have feelings that another may consider negative, and that it is acceptable to express the feelings they have (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

If an employed mother is experiencing feelings of stress as a result of her work-family demands, and her husband is making an attempt to be supportive towards her, granting legitimacy to her feelings will be an effective means of making her feel as though he perceives her stresses as valid and important, and that he accepts her and her feelings. This acknowledgment and validation of the woman's feelings is one important way in which support is effectively communicated and in which stressful situations may be reappraised (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996).

In contrast, communicative behaviors that dismiss, minimize, or avoid the feelings and thoughts of another are seen as an ineffective means of providing support. In Barbee and Cunningham's (1994) interactive coping model of support, dismiss behaviors are classified as problem-focused/avoidance behaviors, because they minimize the importance of the problem. Escape behaviors are emotion

focused/avoidance behaviors because they discourage the help seeker from expressing negative emotions and/or distract him/her by expressing irritability towards him/her or ignoring the help seeker's expression of emotion (Barbee & Cunningham, 1994). Allowing a person to talk about their feelings, and accepting what the person is saying, is more supportive than minimizing or denying his or her experiences (Burlison & Goldsmith, 1996).

Dialogue

Dialogue refers to communicative practices that build community and work for both self and other. In dialogue the focus is on the reciprocal relationship between participants (Buber, 1965; Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992; Stewart, 1978). Dialogue is embedded in a philosophical approach to communication that emphasizes reciprocal actions, where self and other are seen as inseparably linked (Buber, 1965; Shotter, 1997; Stewart, 1978). Thus, dialogue focuses on collaborative joint action between participants, where the communication situation constitutes something to which both can contribute (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Shotter, 1997). Persons involved in joint action create unique, circumstantially appropriate situations between themselves (Shotter, 1997). Because the focus is on joint action, dialogue values all participants, instead of overemphasizing the self or the other (Johannesen, 1990; Shotter, 1997; Stewart, 1978).

Because this approach values all participants in a conversation, it factors each of their needs into discussions (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Shotter, 1997). It is an approach to communication whereby all

participants allow one another to express their opinions and views. Further, all participants understand that each person may have concerns related to the discussion topic, and they allow one another to express them. While these aspects of dialogue reflect the other components of support (i.e., encouraging discussion, interpersonal involvement and acceptance), the particular focus of dialogue as it is used here involves other, distinct features. In a dialogic conversation between an employed mother and her husband, the couple discusses new alternatives to the current situation, in attempts to find an agreeable solution. Dialogue involves a collaborative search for a redefinition of roles and responsibilities, whereby an employed mother and her husband discuss the possibilities for give and take on the part of each other. Thus, people involved in a dialogic conversation may say something such as, "Let's try to work out the best way to take care of our child care arrangements so that we can both pursue our careers." It is through these processes that employed mothers may reappraise their situations, since their husbands actively display a willingness to collaborate with them. For example, employed mothers who are attempting to handle conflicts between their motherhood and professional roles may need to negotiate child care schedules with their husbands (Elman & Gilbert, 1984). Employed mothers and their husbands may negotiate a more equitable division of household and child care labor, or collaboratively work on making sure these responsibilities are attended to without either person sacrificing too much of their other role identities. This collaborative process involves exploring several possibilities that may work out for each person, with

each participant reasoning through ideas and alternatives, examining the strength of each other's arguments, and determining ideas and arrangements that are suitable for each person.

Assistance

The provision of tangible assistance has also been identified as a key component of social support (Adelman, Parks, & Albrecht, 1987; Albrecht & Adelman, 1984, 1987; Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994; Barbee & Cunningham, 1994; Burleson, 1990; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992, 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990; Eckenrode & Wethington, 1990; Hobfoll & Stokes, 1988; Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994; Thoits, 1986). Tangible assistance has been referred to as instrumental aid or instrumental support (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992, 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990; Eckenrode & Wethington, 1990; Thoits, 1986) and is conceptualized as an exchange of time, resources, and/or labor that conveys support that can be very beneficial to recipients (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984, 1987). Assistance may also take the form of informational support, whereby someone offers information or suggests alternatives (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Assistance may also involve instructional aid, whereby someone teaches or instructs another in how to do something. Cutrona and Suhr (1992) have described tangible assistance as action-facilitating support, because of its role in assisting the stressed person to solve or eliminate the sources of their stress.

Assistance may involve communicative behaviors that convey either a willingness to provide assistance or the actual provision of

assistance. Communicating assistance on the part of the husband may include offers to take on more responsibilities for various household and child care duties, or keeping his wife informed about his schedule so that they may coordinate household and child-care activities better.

Assistance on the part of husbands is included as a component of social support because it may help employed mothers to reappraise their situation and to reduce the stress experienced by women by providing direct resolution to their problems and, in the process, providing them with increased time for entertainment and recreational activities (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996; Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Conveying actual assistance is also an important form of spousal support. It involves the act of doing things that need to be done in order to help your partner and/or contribute to the household activities. A study by Steinberg and Gottlieb (1994) found a significant relationship between instrumental assistance and wives' appraisal of their spouses' support. In fact, their research found that women placed more importance on instrumental assistance when dealing with work-family conflicts than on emotional support.

The conception of support described above was designed to extend the studies that have examined husbands' support of employed mothers (Beatty, 1996; Erickson, 1993; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Reifman, Biernat, and Lang, 1991; Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy and Ashbaugh, 1986; Steinberg and Gottlieb, 1994; Suchet and Barling, 1986). Because this conception of support is designed to address the needs of employed mothers, I expect that employed mothers who perceive spousal support

practices from their husbands in their interactions about their work and family concerns will feel less work-family conflict, feel less stress, will perceive an equitable division of household and child care labor with their husbands, and will perceive fewer double bind beliefs than women who do not perceive spousal support. However, available research has not provided a foundation to predict the effect of different types of spousal support practices on work-family conflict, stress, inequity in the household, and double bind beliefs. Accordingly, I propose the following hypotheses and research questions:

H3: Employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices (a) will feel less work-family conflict, (b) will feel less stress (c) will perceive an equitable division of household and child care labor, and (d) will perceive fewer double bind beliefs than employed mothers who do not perceive spousal support practices.

RQ2: What types of spousal support practices are associated with (a) lower levels of work-family conflict, (b) lower levels of stress, (c) the perception of an equitable division of household and child care labor , and (d) the perception of fewer double bind beliefs?

Because the conception of support described above has been developed and tailored to the context of employed mothers, it is useful to examine it using two forms of measurement. One measure will be a fixed-response scale that includes items that assess the degree to which husbands engage in the particular supportive practices already described. Another measure will provide the opportunity for open-ended responses to work-family situations. In it, participants will be free to describe the

actual communication that occurred in discussions with their husbands. A comparison of the two measures of support will allow the researcher to see if participants' responses are reasonably consistent across measures. If participants' responses to the open-ended task reflect the spousal support practices on the closed-ended scale, the construct validity of the scale measure may be established.

RQ3: What spousal support practices do employed mothers report in open-ended descriptions of work-family situations?

RQ4: How do these spousal support practices relate to employed mothers' experiences of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and (d) double bind beliefs?

RQ5: How do employed mothers' responses in open-ended descriptions of work-family situations compare to their responses on a fixed-response scale measure of spousal support practices?

I suggest that the supportive practices described in the above model will be most beneficial in facilitating adaptation by alleviating women's experience of stress, work-family conflict, and inequity in the division of household and child care labor. There are several outcomes that may result from a positive process of adaptation to work and family. In order to determine further how well support facilitates this process, it is useful to examine the outcome phase.

Outcomes of Employed Mothers' Adaptation

As introduced earlier, studies focusing on the outcome phase of employed mothers examine the extent to which these women adjust as

they work on managing their home and work lives. The three most significant outcomes are employed mothers' satisfaction with her marriage, her job, and her life in general. As indicated earlier, marital and job satisfaction are important outcomes because they pertain to women's feelings of happiness in their family and work domains. Life satisfaction is an important outcome also, as it relates to employed mothers' personal feelings of contentment. These outcomes are of particular interest in this study, as the influence of both the problems of adaptation and women's perceptions of their husbands' support practices may be determined by examining how the problems and support relate to women's feelings of satisfaction in these three areas of their lives. The following sections summarize the research related to these outcomes.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is one of the most examined relational variables (Kamo, 1993; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Marital satisfaction refers to a person's feelings of contentment and happiness in their relationship with their spouse (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). An understanding of the dynamics of marital satisfaction is important because it is the satisfaction within the relationship that predicts the stability of a marriage (Fitzpatrick & Badzinski, 1994).

Scholars who are interested in the complexities of dual-income marriages have often examined marital satisfaction to determine the extent to which these couples are satisfied with their relationships (Belsky & Rovine, 1990; Chassin, Zeiss, Cooper, & Reaven, 1985; Cotton, Cunningham, & Antill, 1993; Easterbrooks & Emde, 1988; Emery & Tuer,

1993; Jordan, 1987; Juni & Grimm, 1994; Nicola & Hawkes, 1986; Pina & Bengtson, 1995; Pleck, 1985; Stamp, 1994; Suchet & Barling, 1986; Terry & Scott, 1987; Vangelisti & Huston, 1994; White, Booth, & Edwards, 1986). Several scholars have found that marital satisfaction declines following the birth of a child, and that the presence of children in the home is negatively associated with marital satisfaction (Belsky & Rovine, 1990; Easterbrooks & Emde, 1988; Emery & Tuer, 1993; Vangelisti & Huston, 1994; White, Booth, & Edwards, 1986). Some researchers have also shown that this lowered satisfaction is related to the decrease in communication marital partners experience as a result of spending more time tending to the needs of the child (Belsky & Rovine, 1990; Stamp, 1994). In instances where pre-birth marital quality is high, the introduction of a child into the family may also be seen as an intrusion into the couple's relationship (Easterbrooks & Emde, 1988).

The problems of employed mothers' adaptation also have an impact on mothers' marital satisfaction. Beatty (1996), Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996) and Suchet and Barling (1986) have all found significant negative associations between women's marital satisfaction and work-family conflict (r s have ranged from $-.12$ to $-.45$). Other researchers, such as Sears and Galambos (1992) and Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996), have found that women's marital satisfaction was negatively associated with stress (r s = $-.21$ and $-.30$). Thus, employed mothers who experience work-family conflict and stress appear also to experience reduced levels of satisfaction in their marriages.

Stafford & Canary (1991), Dainton, Stafford, & Canary (1994), and Reissman, Aron & Bergen (1993) have explored the relationship between couples' relational maintenance behaviors and their marital satisfaction. Relational maintenance refers to behaviors and actions used to sustain a desired definition of a relationship (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Stafford & Canary (1991) and Dainton, Stafford, and Canary (1994) have found that certain maintenance behaviors and actions are associated with marital satisfaction, such as assurances, positivity, openness, sharing tasks, and interaction with social networks. Indeed, sharing household tasks is related to marital satisfaction, and this relates to the notion of equity in a marital relationship. However, in separate studies differences were found in the associations between marital satisfaction and sharing tasks. For instance, Stafford and Canary (1991) found that couples who shared tasks were more satisfied with their relationship than couples who did not share tasks. In another study, Dainton, Stafford, and Canary (1994) found that only wives' marital satisfaction was related to sharing tasks. Because women contribute more than men to domestic tasks, they may experience greater marital satisfaction when their partners share more of these tasks with them (Galinsky & Bond, 1996).

Consistent with the relational maintenance research described above, other research indicates that women are more satisfied with their marriages when their husbands share tasks and contribute to household and child care (Buunk & Mutsaers, 1999; Nicola & Hawkes, 1986; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Lowered satisfaction is related to

perceptions of inequity, as wives are dissatisfied with their marriages when they perceive an inequitable distribution of household and child care chores (Pleck, 1985; Thompson & Walker, 1989). An employed mother's perception of equity in the division of household and child care work is important because a husband's domestic contributions may also symbolically represent support and love to their wives (Hochschild, 1989; Pina & Bengtson, 1995). Several researchers have found positive associations between equity in the household and marital satisfaction. For instance, Perry-Jenkins and Folk (1994) found that wives' perceptions of an equitable division of household and child care labor was positively associated with their marital satisfaction ($b = .37$). Erickson (1993) and Starrels (1994) found that husbands contributions to household work was positively associated with wives' marital satisfaction ($r_s = .18$ and $.27$). Lavee, Sharlin, and Katz (1996) found that an inequitable division of household labor was negatively associated with employed mothers' marital satisfaction ($r = -.30$). Thus, husbands' participation in household tasks affects their wives' level of marital satisfaction.

Finally, I also wish to test the relationship between women's perceptions of double bind beliefs in their home and work lives and their level of marital satisfaction. It would seem that women who perceive that important people in these domains endorse double bind beliefs may be less satisfied in their marriages because people such as husbands and supervisors believe that they cannot do a good job of raising their children while pursuing a career. This study extends the studies described above that have examined associations between marital

satisfaction and the problems of adaptation (Beatty, 1996; Erickson, 1993; Lavee, Sharlin, & Katz, 1996; Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Sears & Galambos, 1992; Starrels, 1994; Suchet & Barling, 1986). Specifically, I expect that employed mothers' adaptation problems are negatively associated with their marital satisfaction, at moderate levels of magnitude:

H4: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) an inequitable division of household and child care labor with their husbands, and (d) double bind beliefs is negatively associated with their marital satisfaction.

It is also useful to examine how these problems collectively account for variation in marital satisfaction:

RQ6: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in marital satisfaction?

As this section has demonstrated, the problems employed mothers experience have negative effects on marital satisfaction. However, there is research that shows that spousal support practices are positively associated with increases in marital satisfaction. Specifically, Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986) found that spousal support was positively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = .52$). Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found that spousal support was associated with greater family satisfaction ($r = .40$). Erickson (1993) found that husbands' emotional support was positively associated with marital well-being ($r = .56$). Similarly, Suchet and Barling (1986) found that spousal support was positively associated with women's marital satisfaction ($r = .70$).

Conversely, Beatty (1996) found that a lack of spousal support for a woman's career was negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = -.67$).

These findings suggest that husbands' support is an important factor affecting women's happiness in their marital relationships. Extending this research, I also expect that wives' perceptions of their husbands' support practices will be moderately to strongly associated with employed mothers' marital satisfaction. However, available research has not provided a foundation to predict the associations between various types of spousal support practices and marital satisfaction. Because I am attempting to explain employed mothers' marital satisfaction in the context of the problems and their perceptions of their husbands' support, I am especially interested in examining the ways adaptation problems and support practices combine to account for variation in marital satisfaction. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis and research questions:

H5: Husbands' support practices are positively associated with employed mothers' marital satisfaction, at moderate levels of magnitude.

RQ7: What types of spousal support practices are associated with marital satisfaction in employed mothers?

RQ8: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' level of marital satisfaction?

Satisfaction with marriage has been shown to be an important relational variable in the study of dual-income couples. However, the complexities of a dual-income lifestyle necessitate the examination of job satisfaction as well, since this domain is also a crucial part of an employed mother's identity.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction involves the feelings of enjoyment and happiness a person derives from their job (Fricko & Beehr, 1992). The amount of time a person spends at work and the impact of a work schedule on a family schedule make job satisfaction an important variable to consider in the context of employed mothers' adaptation.

As indicated in an earlier section, work-family conflict may have a negative effect on one's work life. Several researchers (Beatty, 1996; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose, 1992; Ray and Miller, 1991; Rice, Frone, and McFarlin, 1992) have found negative associations between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, associations that have varied in magnitude from weak to moderate (r s have ranged from $-.19$ to $-.40$). The stress employed mothers experience may also affect their job satisfaction. For instance, Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found a moderate negative association between stress and employed mothers' job satisfaction ($r = -.33$). Similarly, Koeske and Koeske (1993) found a moderate negative association ($r = -.35$) and Beatty (1996) found a strong negative association between women's job satisfaction and work stress ($r = -.61$).

An employed mother's perception of an equitable division of household and child care labor may also contribute to job satisfaction, because a husband's assistance with these responsibilities may provide a woman with more time to devote to her job. Moreover, the endorsement of double bind beliefs on the part of significant people in the home and work environment may also be associated with employed mothers' experiences of job satisfaction, since people in these domains may be biased against employed mothers' ability to pursue both work and motherhood. While the literature reviewed suggests that all of these associations are possible, available research has not established these connections.

Based on the research reviewed above (Beatty, 1996; Koeske and Koeske, 1993; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose, 1992; Ray and Miller, 1991; Rice, Frone, and McFarlin, 1992), I expect that work-family conflict and stress will be negatively associated with employed mothers' job satisfaction. I will also explore the associations between equity in the division of labor, double bind beliefs, and job satisfaction, and examine how all of the problems of adaptation combine to account for variation in job satisfaction. Thus, I propose the following hypotheses and research questions:

H6: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict and (b) stress is negatively associated with their job satisfaction.

RQ9: Is employed mothers' perception of (a) an inequitable division of household and child care labor with her husband and (b) double bind beliefs in their home and work lives associated with their job satisfaction?

RQ10: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in job satisfaction?

While there are several conditions that may negatively affect an employed mother's job satisfaction, there are also factors that may positively influence an employed mother's job satisfaction. An employed mother's perception of spousal support practices may affect this satisfaction, because husbands' supportive practices may make employed mothers feel as though their husbands care about them achieving their career goals. However, available research has not established these connections. I also wish to explain employed mothers' job satisfaction in the context of the problems of adaptation and their perceptions of their husbands' support. Thus, an examination of how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to account for variation in job satisfaction is of primary interest here. Therefore, I propose the following research questions:

RQ11: Will employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices from their husbands also experience job satisfaction?

RQ12: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' job satisfaction?

The examination of satisfaction in both the family and work domains are key to determining the influence of stress, work-family

conflict, and social support on employed mothers. But satisfaction with one's life in general may also be important to examine, as this level of satisfaction may reflect employed mothers' overall feelings of happiness with their daily experiences as a whole.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a cognitive, judgmental process of assessing the quality of one's life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). This process involves comparing one's life circumstances to a subjectively held standard. This individually constructed standard is important, because particular individuals may place different values on qualities such as health, energy, or other aspects of life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

The ability to enjoy a highly satisfying life is important to many people. A common thread that runs through many peoples' dissatisfaction with their lives is a feeling of being overwhelmed, exhausted, and having too many responsibilities. Currently, seven out of ten Americans say that one of their biggest problems is maintaining a balance between their work and family responsibilities. One in four couples claim to be overwhelmed and exhausted because of this (National Public Radio, 2-25-1997). Because many people feel that their lives are out of balance, there is an increasing emphasis on voluntary simplicity, whereby people attempt to simplify their lives in an effort to attain a higher quality of life (Iwata, 1997; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984). Voluntary simplicity is a lifestyle that involves a process of redefining what we think of as success and a restructuring of one's roles and

responsibilities, so that traditional notions of a successful person may be reconceptualized to involve less emphasis on careers and more emphasis on families.

Researchers have begun to establish that many people decide to cut back on their work responsibilities because they experience work-family conflicts that affect their quality of life. For instance, Rice, Frone, and McFarlin (1992) found a negative but weak association between work-family conflict and life satisfaction for employed mothers ($r = -.20$). In two studies (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992), Duxbury and his colleagues found that work-family conflict was negatively and moderately associated with employed mothers' life satisfaction ($r = -.42$ and $-.38$). Life satisfaction is also affected by stress, as Ozer (1995) found a strong negative association between stress and a measure of well-being ($r = -.67$). I will extend this research that has found associations between life satisfaction and problems of adaptation.

Because women's marital satisfaction is associated with their husbands' contributions to household and child care work (e.g., Erickson, 1993; Hochschild, 1989; Pina & Bengtson, 1995), it also seems likely that employed mothers who perceive an equitable division of household and child care labor with their husbands will be more satisfied with their lives than mothers who perceive an inequitable relationship with their husbands. Finally, it would also seem that women who perceive that important people in their lives endorse double bind beliefs may be less satisfied with their lives because these people would believe that women could not do a good job of raising children while pursuing a career.

However, available research has not established connections between these variables. I will examine the associations between the problems of adaptation and life satisfaction and explore how the problems combine to account for variation in life satisfaction. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses and research question:

H7: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) an inequitable division of household and child care labor and (d) double bind beliefs is negatively associated with their life satisfaction.

RQ13: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in life satisfaction?

While problems of adaptation may have a negative affect on life satisfaction, supportive practices may be positively associated with life satisfaction. Because work-family conflict and stress can have negative affects on one's life satisfaction, finding adequate resources for balancing work and family responsibilities is a priority for many people. Roskies and Carrier (1994) found that single professional women and married childless women experienced low levels of life satisfaction. They also found that married professional women with children experienced more life satisfaction than their counterparts, in part because they were able to secure resources, such as household help, who assisted them in managing work and family responsibilities. Because marriage is a significant part of one's life, I also wish to examine whether employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices from their husbands in their interactions about child care and household responsibilities will also be more satisfied with their lives than their counterparts. However,

existing research has also not provided a foundation to predict the effect of the types of spousal support behaviors on life satisfaction. Finally, similar to the other outcomes, I want to explain employed mothers' life satisfaction in the context of their problems and their perceptions of their husbands' support. Thus, I will examine how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to account for variation in life satisfaction. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ14: Will employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices from their husbands be more satisfied with their lives than their counterparts?

RQ15: What types of spousal support behaviors are associated with life satisfaction in employed mothers?

RQ16: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' life satisfaction?

This review of research provides a description of the problems employed mothers experience during the process of adapting to their dual-roles and suggests that supportive practices may alleviate these problems and facilitate the process of adaptation. The following is a summary of the hypotheses and research questions that were advanced throughout this review:

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The Problems of Adaptation

H1: Employed mothers who experience work-family conflict also experience stress.

H2: Perceived inequity in the division of household and child care labor is positively associated with employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict and (b) stress.

RQ1: Will employed mothers who perceive double bind beliefs in their home and work lives (a) feel more work-family conflict (b) feel more stress, and (c) perceive more inequity in the division of household and child care labor with their husbands than employed mothers who do not perceive double bind beliefs in their home and work lives?

The Problems of Adaptation and Spousal Support Practices

H3: Employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices (a) will feel less work-family conflict, (b) will feel less stress, (c) will perceive an equitable division of household and child care labor, and (d) will perceive fewer double bind beliefs than employed mothers who do not perceive spousal support.

RQ2: What types of spousal support practices are associated with (a) lower levels of work-family conflict, (b) lower levels of stress, (c) the perception of an equitable division of household and child care labor , and (d) the perception of fewer double bind beliefs?

RQ3: What spousal support practices do employed mothers report in open-ended descriptions of work-family situations?

RQ4: How do these spousal support practices relate to employed mothers' experiences of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) inequity in the division of household and child care labor, and (d) double bind beliefs?

RQ5: How do employed mothers' responses in open-ended descriptions of work-family situations compare to their responses on a fixed-response scale measure of spousal support practices?

Adaptation Problems, Spousal Support, and Marital Satisfaction

H4: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) an inequitable division of household and child care labor with their husbands, and (d) double bind beliefs is negatively associated with their marital satisfaction.

RQ6: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in marital satisfaction?

H5: Husbands' support practices are positively associated with employed mothers' marital satisfaction, at moderate levels of magnitude.

RQ7: What types of spousal support practices are associated with marital satisfaction in employed mothers?

RQ8: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' level of marital satisfaction?

Adaptation Problems, Spousal Support, and Job Satisfaction

H6: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict and (b) stress is negatively associated with their job satisfaction.

RQ9: Is employed mothers' perception of (a) an inequitable division of household and child care labor with her husband and (b) double bind beliefs in their home and work lives associated with their job satisfaction?

RQ10: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in job satisfaction?

RQ11: Will employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices from their husbands also experience job satisfaction?

RQ12: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' job satisfaction?

Adaptation Problems, Spousal Support, and Life Satisfaction

H7: Employed mothers' experience of (a) work-family conflict, (b) stress, (c) an inequitable division of household and child care labor and (d) double bind beliefs is negatively associated with their life satisfaction.

RQ13: How do the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in life satisfaction?

RQ14: Will employed mothers who perceive spousal support practices from their husbands be more satisfied with their lives than their counterparts?

RQ15: What types of spousal support behaviors are associated with life satisfaction in employed mothers?

RQ16: How do the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' life satisfaction?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the participants of the study and explains the procedures and methods used to gather and analyze the data. Tasks, measures, and methods of analysis will also be described.

Participants and data gathering procedures

The population for this study is mothers who are engaged in full-time employment outside of the home, and who have at least one child, aged infant to thirteen, living in their home. To obtain a convenience sample of this population, the following procedures were used. Students from introductory and advanced level communication courses at a large, Midwestern university were given extra course credit to enlist the cooperation of an employed mother in completing a questionnaire. They were instructed to find an employed mother who was married, with at least one young child living in the home (i.e., aged infant to 13 years), and who was employed at least 30 hours per week outside of the home.

Two hundred four questionnaires were distributed. Each questionnaire contained two open-ended response situations, ten scales, and several demographic questions (See questionnaire in Appendix). The questionnaires began with a cover page that contained detailed instructions for completion, and students were instructed to ask each

participant to read these instructions carefully before completing the questionnaire. Upon completion, employed mothers mailed questionnaires directly to the researcher. One hundred thirty were returned to the researcher, which resulted in a response rate of 63%. Nine questionnaires that were returned were not sufficiently completed by the participant, so they were not included in the study. This resulted in 121 questionnaires that were used in the analysis.

Tasks and Measures

The following tasks and measures were used to examine the problems of employed mothers' adaptation.

Measurement of Adaptation Problems

Work-Family Conflict. The work-family conflict scale is a four-item scale developed by Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992a, 1992b) to measure the degree to which a person feels that their job/career interferes with their home life, and the degree to which their home life interferes with their job/career. Participants were asked questions such as: "How often does your job or career interfere with your responsibilities at home, such as yard work, cooking, cleaning, repairs, shopping, paying the bills, or child care?" and "How often does your home life interfere with your responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, or working overtime?" The scale format used for each item was: one (never), two (almost never), three (sometimes), four (almost always), and five (always). Items were totalled, with higher scores indicating greater work-family conflict.

The work-family conflict scale has construct validity, as Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994) found the scale to be positively associated with stress ($r = .28$). Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .75 for the work-family conflict scale.

Stress. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a 14-item scale designed to measure the degree to which one appraises situations in one's life as stressful (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Participants were asked questions, such as: "In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all of the things that you had to do?" The response format for each item was zero (never), one (almost never), two (sometimes), three (fairly often), and four (very often). Total scores were obtained by reversing the scores on the seven positive items (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13), and summing across the 14 items. Higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived stress.

Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein (1983) found evidence of the predictive validity of the scale. They hypothesized that levels of perceived stress in college students should be associated with their ability to become integrated into the university community. In two student samples they found that increases in perceived stress were associated with increases in social anxiety ($r_s = .48$ and $.37$). They also found that the scale's internal reliability was .84, and the test-retest reliability was .85.

Inequity. The Equitable Division of Labor scale was designed by Hawkins, Marshall and Meiners (1995) to examine a person's perception of the fairness of the division of household and child care responsibilities in their home. The two items on this scale include "Overall, how fair do

you feel the division of household tasks is in your family.....to you?," and "Overall, how fair do you feel the division of child care tasks is in your family.....to you?" Participants used a seven point Likert-type scale that ranged from one (very unfair), to seven (very fair). The midpoint response was four (neither fair nor unfair). Because this scale was used to measure inequity in the division of labor, scores were totaled and reversed, so that higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived inequity.

Hawkins, Marshall, and Meiners (1995) found this measure of equity to have face validity, in that it allows respondents to report their perceptions of fairness about child care and household work. They also found that it correlated with women's feelings of being appreciated by their husbands. The more wives felt appreciated by their husbands, the fairer they reported the allocation of family work ($r = .66$). Hawkins, Marshall, and Meiners (1995) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .84 for this scale.

Double Bind Beliefs. This measure is an eight-item scale developed to assess three of Jamieson's (1995) double binds: womb/brain, femininity/competence, and silence/shame. The scale was adapted from the Attitudes Toward Working Mothers Scale (Tetenbaum, Lighter, and Travis, 1983), which is a 45-item scale designed to measure attitudes towards working mothers and the effect of their work on their families. Items taken from this scale assessed women's perceptions of the extent to which they perceive that significant people in their home and work environments endorsed double bind beliefs. Each double bind was

assessed using either two or three statements. For example, one item that assessed the femininity/competence bind was: "Mothers who stay home tend to be more patient and warmer than mothers who go to work." Participants indicated on seven point Likert-type scales the extent to which they believed their husbands and supervisors agreed with each statement. The scales ranged from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree), with midpoint response four (neither agree nor disagree). Scores were totalled, with higher scores indicating that the employed mother perceived that people in their home and work lives endorsed double bind beliefs. Two items (items 5 and 8) were reverse scored.

Tetenbaum, Lighter, and Travis (1983) tested the validity of the Attitudes Toward Working Mothers Scale (AWM) and found that the AWM Scale shared less than 5% of the variance with three other measures of attitudes toward women. Thus, it was considered to contribute meaningfully in its own right beyond what was contributed by the other scales. In another study, Tetenbaum, Lighter, and Travis (1991) found that males held more negative attitudes toward working mothers than females. Besides construct validity, the Double Bind Beliefs scale also has face validity, as several items from the Attitudes Toward Working Mothers scale are consistent with Jamieson's (1995) analysis of double bind beliefs. For instance, one item is "No woman, no matter how bright, energetic, and capable, can have a family and career and do both well," which directly embodies Jamieson's (1995) womb/brain bind. Thus, the scale developed here appears to be a valid measure of women's

perceptions of double bind beliefs. Tetenbaum, Lighter, and Travis (1983) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .94 for the Attitudes Toward Working Mothers scale.

Measurement of Outcomes

The outcomes examined in this study were marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. The following is a description of the measures used to assess these variables.

Marital Satisfaction. The Quality Marriage Index is a six-item Likert-type scale designed to assess variables that determine the quality of one's marital relationship (Norton, 1983). An example item from this scale is: "My relationship with my husband makes me happy."

Respondents rated each item on a seven point Likert scale ranging from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). Responses were totalled and higher scores indicated higher levels of marital satisfaction.

This scale has construct validity, as Stafford and Canary (1991) found that it was positively correlated with the relational maintenance practices of positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks (r_s ranged from .41 to .66). Moreover, Norton (1983) has found that perceived similarity of attitudes between partners was positively associated with the scale. Heyman, Sayers, and Bellack (1994) have also found that marital satisfaction was negatively associated with depression in women ($r = -.53$). Noller and Feeney (1994) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .90 for the measure.

Job Satisfaction. The job satisfaction scale used in this study was developed by Fricko and Beehr (1992). The five-item scale was designed

to assess participants' feelings of satisfaction with their job and the kind of work they have to do on their job. Fricko and Beehr took the first three items from Hackman and Lawler's (1971) measure of general job satisfaction, and the last two from Quinn and Shepard's (1974) index of job satisfaction. An example item from the scale is: "In general, my job measures up to the sort of job I wanted when I took it." Respondents rated each item on a seven point Likert scale ranging from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). One item (item 2) is reversed scored. The other items were totalled, with higher scores indicating higher levels of job satisfaction.

This scale has been found to be a valid measure of job satisfaction, as Fricko and Beehr (1992) found that job satisfaction was positively related to salary ($r = .24$). Fricko and Beehr (1992) obtained an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .90 for their scale.

Life Satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is a five-item scale designed to assess an individual's judgment of his or her quality of life. An example item from this scale is: "In most ways my life is close to my ideal." Respondents rated each item on a seven point Likert scale that ranged from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). The items were totalled, with higher scores indicating higher levels of life satisfaction.

The Satisfaction with Life scale is a valid measure, as Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) found that it was positively associated with self-esteem ($r = .54$). They also found that the scale was negatively

associated with neuroticism ($r = -.48$). Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .87 for this scale.

Measurement of Spousal Support Practices

Spousal support practices were measured using a multi-item scale and responses to two open-ended support situations. This section describes these tasks and the measures obtained from them.

Spousal Support Practices Scale. The scale was developed by initially examining the work of other social support researchers and determining what components of their models and scales could be useful for the analysis of support of employed mothers. Albrecht and Adelman's (1987) model of support, Barbee and Cunningham's Interactive Coping Scale (1994), Burleson's (1985, 1989) comforting model, Burleson and Goldsmith's (1996) work on comforting, and Stewart (1978) Buber (1965) and Shotter's (1997) work on dialogue all contributed to the development of the conception of support used in this study. As described in the previous chapter, the conception of social support includes five components: encouraging discussion, interpersonal involvement, acceptance, dialogue, and assistance.

The items for the Encouraging Discussion component of the scale were developed from the work of Burleson and Goldsmith (1996), Barbee (1990), and Barbee & Cunningham (1994). Ten items were developed to assess the extent to which employed mothers perceived that their husbands were motivated to discuss their work-family concerns with them, and the degree to which these women were motivated to express their concerns to their husbands. These items also tapped into women's

perceptions of their husbands' willingness to allow them to fully express their concerns. Examples of these items are: "I believe that my husband is interested in discussing these concerns with me," "He encourages me to discuss my thoughts and feelings with him," and "He encourages me to discuss my career ambitions and goals." Principle components factor analyses were conducted for each subscale of the scale to establish the unifactorial nature of each subscale. Similar factor analysis procedures were used by Samter, Burleson, and Murphy (1987) in their examination of semantic differential scales assessing the features of comforting messages. The ten items tapping encouraging discussion yielded a single-factor solution (eigenvalue = 5.64), with a single factor accounting for 70.5% of the variance in the eight items.

The Interpersonal Involvement component was developed from the work of Albrecht and Adelman (1987), Cutrona & Suhr (1992, 1994), Barbee (1990), and Barbee & Cunningham (1994). Items for this component measured employed mothers' perceptions of their husbands' understanding and concern for them achieving their goals in their career as well as their goals for motherhood. Examples of items from this component include: "He says that he understands my desire for recognition in my career," "He expresses concern for me," and "He says that he cares about me achieving my career goals." The six items assessing interpersonal involvement yielded a single-factor solution (eigenvalue = 3.3), which accounted for 66% of the variance in the six items.

The work of Applegate (1980), Burleson (1985, 1989, 1990), Barbee and Cunningham (1994), and Cutrona & Suhr (1992, 1994) was used to formulate items for the Acceptance component of the scale. Items were designed to assess employed mothers' perceptions of their husbands' acceptance and validation of their thoughts and feelings about their work and family concerns. Four items were developed for this component, including: "He tells me that, given my situation, it is reasonable for me to feel the way I do" and "He tends to dismiss or minimize what I say." A single-factor solution was obtained on the four items tapping acceptance (eigenvalue = 1.9), which accounted for 62% of the variance in the four items.

The work of Buber (1965), Shotter (1997), and Stewart (1978) was used to develop items for the Dialogue component of the scale. Nine items were developed to measure the level of negotiation and collaboration involved in employed mothers' conversations with their husbands regarding work-family matters, and to determine how much they take each other's concerns into consideration when discussing this topic. The following are example items: "We talk about how this topic affects both of our lives" and "We negotiate expectations we both have for our household and child care responsibilities so that we do not become resentful of one another." The nine items assessing dialogue yielded a single-factor solution (eigenvalue = 4.2), and the variance accounted for by these items was 69.3%.

The Assistance component of the scale was developed from the work of Albrecht & Adelman (1987), Cutrona & Suhr (1992, 1994), and

Barbee & Cunningham (1994). This component was broken into two dimensions: offers to assist and actual assistance. Offers to assist refers to communicative practices that verbally express one's willingness to take on tasks or responsibilities. Actual assistance refers to assistance-providing behaviors such as cleaning the house or feeding the baby. Four items comprised the offers to assist dimension, which included: "He tells me that he will take on more responsibility for child care duties," and "He keeps me informed about his schedule so that we can coordinate household and child-care activities and tasks." The actual assistance dimension of the scale contained seven items, such as "He pitches in to complete household duties that need to get done," and "He works on chores around the house that he doesn't usually do." A single-factor solution was obtained for the eleven items assessing assistance (eigenvalue = 4.5), which accounted for 55.7% of the variance in the items.

Respondents rated each scale item on a seven point Likert scale that ranged from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). Five items were reverse scored. The item scores were totalled, with higher scores indicating higher levels of spousal support practices.

The Spousal Support Practices Scale has face validity because all items were developed from the work of key researchers in the area of social support such as Albrecht and Adelman (1987), Burleson (1985, 1989, 1990), Cutrona and Suhr (1992, 1994) and Barbee and Cunningham (1994). The spousal support practices scale also has predictive validity because in a pretested version of the scale (described below) it was found to be

positively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = .75$) and life satisfaction ($r = .44$), and negatively associated with stress ($r = -.35$). The pretested version of the scale was also found to be reliable in that it obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .95.

Pretest

The measures of adaptation problems, spousal support, and adaptation outcomes were pretested about three months before the final data collection took place. Approximately 61 students from introductory communication courses at a large, Midwestern university were recruited for the pretest and instructed to distribute a questionnaire to an employed mother. Similar to this study, students were instructed to find an employed mother who was married, with at least one child living in the home (i.e., aged infant to 13 years), and who was employed at least 30 hours per week outside of the home. The questionnaires contained scales that measured all of the constructs included in the present study. Fifty usable questionnaires were returned to the researcher, and each measure was analyzed for its reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each measure and Pearson product moment correlations were computed between the measures. The pretested version of the spousal support practices scale contained a total of 50 items: 17 items for the encouraging discussion component, 8 items for the interpersonal involvement component, 8 items for the acceptance component, 12 items for the dialogue component, and 5 items for the assistance component. Each item was examined to determine the frequency of responses to the items, and to determine how well each item fit into the conception of

social support developed for the study. Through this analysis I determined that several items needed to be discarded, and some of the remaining items needed to be rewritten. The final version of the scale that was used in this study contained a total of 40 items (See Appendix).

Most of the other measures were also found to be reliable and valid. The only changes made involved the work-family conflict scale, and the inequity in the division of labor scale, which were found to be unreliable, so they were replaced with scales that had better reliability records. The Work-Family Support Narratives (described in detail below) were also examined to determine the types of responses they elicited. The analysis showed that the instructions were not completely clear, so changes in the wording of the instructions were made in this section of the questionnaire (See questionnaire in Appendix).

Work-Family Support Narratives. The second measure of support developed for this study was an open-ended measure. Two situations depicting employed mothers' work-family conflicts were written for the purposes of this study. Each situation was developed from reading the literature about employed mothers' experiences as well as from interviews with eight employed mothers who provided information about their experiences managing their work and family lives.

The task situations reflect the fundamental critical difficulties that women face as they attempt to complete household chores and childcare duties during times when they have work-related concerns that they need to handle. In one situation, the employed mothers were asked to think back to a recent time when completing household chores (such as

cooking, cleaning, or laundry) was burdensome because they had a lot going on with their job (e.g., they had to work overtime, and were too tired when they got home). In the other situation, mothers were asked to think back to a recent time when they experienced frustration or difficulty in carrying out their responsibilities for taking care of their child because their work responsibilities got in the way (e.g., they needed to pick their child up from day care but they also had important things going on at work). In each case, the mothers were asked if they had experienced a similar situation within the last two or three months. They were then asked if they discussed the situation with their husbands. If they did talk about the situation with their husbands, they were asked to think of what their husbands said to them in that situation, and then to write down exactly what he said during the conversation.

These task situations and instructions were a variation of the critical incident technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan (1954) and used by many researchers (e.g., Fly, van Bark, Weinman, Kitchener, & Lang, 1997; Plutchik, Conte, & Karasu, 1994; Ross & Altmaier, 1990; Wark, 1994). The CIT procedure involves gathering incidents of behavior in defined situations (Flanagan, 1954). It does not involve a rigid set of rules for data collection, but rather a flexible set of principles that can be modified to fit a specific situation (Flanagan, 1954; Fly, et al., 1997). Flanagan and others have emphasized the importance of obtaining recent incidents to insure that the incidents are representative of actual occurrences (Flanagan, 1954; Fly, et al., 1997; Wark, 1994).

A content analysis procedure was used to examine responses to the Work-Family Support Narrative situations. Employed mothers' responses to each situation were examined to determine what supportive or non-supportive message features were present. Message responses were first segmented into idea units. The idea unit as a unit of analysis is essentially equivalent to the thought unit, which has been used in research the analysis of interpersonal messages by O'Keefe and Lambert (1995), and by Saeki and O'Keefe (1994) in their research on refusals and rejections. In Saeki and O'Keefe's study, and in this study, the idea unit was operationalized as the independent clause. A sentence counted as one idea unit if it consisted of a single independent clause (e.g., "I should be able to do that."). If a sentence contained more than one independent clause, each clause was counted as a separate idea unit (e.g., "He says he will try to leave work to get there or he will take a day off."). Complex sentences consisting of one independent and one or more subordinate clauses were counted as one idea unit (e.g., "He tries to do more for me so I'm not so stressed.").

Using these principles, two independent coders segmented 30 randomly selected work-family narratives into idea units. Cohen's (1960) kappa was computed to yield an index of interrater agreement that corrects for chance agreement. Unitizing agreement was reliable, $k = .86$. Following this, idea units in the work-family support narratives were grouped into categories. Separate lists of categories were developed for the household chores narrative and the child care narrative, and within each situation, separate lists of categories were developed for idea units

reflecting the wives' descriptions of their own communication practices as well as their descriptions of their husbands' communication practices.

Categories were developed through a painstaking process of inductive analysis, where I worked at building categories by examining and combining semantically similar idea units. Similar category analysis procedures have been used by Kline, Stafford, and Miklosovic (1996) in their study of women's decisions regarding surname choices before marriage. Categories were not pre-established; rather, they emerged as each narrative was read and examined. The goal was to develop sets of categories that captured meaningful variation in employed mothers' narratives. Initially, many categories were formed. Because new idea units had the opportunity to form a new category or be placed in existing categories, I passed through the data set several times to adjust categories and make sure all idea units were represented in an appropriate category. After going through the data set thoroughly, I collapsed more categories that were semantically similar. This resulted in the sets of categories that are represented in the right hand columns in Tables 3.1 through 3.4. In the child care narratives, 12 categories were formed for the wives' communication practices and 22 categories were formed for the husbands' communication practices (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). In the household narratives, 14 categories were formed for the wives' communication practices and 26 categories were formed for the husbands' communication practices (Tables 3.3 and 3.4).

Using these four lists of categories, two independent coders classified the idea units contained in 30 randomly selected child care

narrative situations and 30 randomly selected household narrative situations. Cohen's (1960) kappa was computed for the category codings for wives' descriptions of their own and their husbands' communication practices in both narrative situations (i.e., child care and household chores). The following are interrater reliability statistics for each list of categories used to classify idea units: wives' child care narratives, $\kappa = .84$, husbands' child care narratives, $\kappa = .85$, wives' household narrative, $\kappa = .87$, husbands household narratives, $\kappa = .86$. Having obtained sufficient reliability, I classified all of the idea units into categories.

Based on semantic and conceptual similarity, the categories were then grouped into content themes. The process of forming themes involved considering how groups of categories could best represent variation in the data as well as how groups of categories fit the conception of support advanced in this study. Different groupings of categories were considered until the most meaningful and conceptually clear groups were formed. This resulted in the themes that are presented in the left hand columns in Tables 3.1 through 3.4. These themes were used in the analysis of spousal support. Categories within each theme were summed to obtain a measure of each theme, and the frequencies and percentages of each theme were examined.

Table 3.1

Wives' Themes and Categories Identified in Child Care Narratives

Themes	Categories
I. Experiencing Difficulties Balancing Work and Family	<p>I am usually responsible for picking up and dropping off my kids.</p> <p>It is difficult balancing time between my work and my family.</p>
II. Expression of Distress	<p>I put our children first.</p> <p>I feel frustrated, overwhelmed.</p> <p>I feel angry, betrayed.</p> <p>I feel stressed.</p> <p>I feel guilty.</p>
III. Handling Child Care Situations on My Own	<p>I had to take care of the situation because my husband wouldn't help.</p> <p>I do not discuss my child care difficulties with my husband.</p> <p>It is not worth having an argument with my husband about child care difficulties.</p>
IV. Asking for Assistance	<p>I asked my husband to pick up/drop off our children.</p> <p>I tell him what work responsibilities I need to attend to.</p>
V. Other	

Table 3.2

Husbands' Themes and Categories Identified in Child Care Narratives

Themes	Categories
I. Expression of Concern	<p>He is supportive/he is there for me.</p> <p>He was concerned about our child.</p> <p>He tells me not to worry about it.</p> <p>He reassures me that I/we are good parents.</p> <p>He recognizes my frustrations and stress.</p> <p>He is affectionate toward me.</p> <p>He listens to me/he is open.</p>
II. Minimizing Wives' Concerns	<p>He assumes I should be responsible for child care.</p> <p>He feels that work should never come before your family.</p> <p>He avoids talking about the situation.</p> <p>He feels that his work/activities are more important than mine.</p> <p>He becomes angry, irritated with me.</p>
III. Exploring Alternatives in Child Care	<p>We work together in discussing alternative arrangements, schedules for taking care of our children.</p> <p>He proposes alternative solutions for handling child care.</p> <p>He helps as long as I give him advance notice.</p> <p>He called his parents, someone else to help.</p>
IV. Participation in Child Care	<p>He picks up/drops off, takes care of our child.</p> <p>We split, share the responsibility for child care.</p>

Table 3.2 continued

Husbands' Themes and Categories Identified in Child Care Narratives

Themes	Categories
V. Avoidance of Child Care	<p>He says he is too busy to help.</p> <p>He said I would have to take care of the situation.</p> <p>My husband is busy so he is unable to help.</p> <p>He refuses to help.</p>
VI. Other	

Table 3.3

Wives' Themes and Categories Identified in Household Narratives

Themes	Categories
I. Expressing Feelings about Inequity in Housework	<p>I feel that it is unfair that I do all the cleaning.</p> <p>I am usually responsible for cooking and cleaning.</p> <p>I argued with my husband over his not doing the cooking, cleaning, or laundry.</p> <p>I feel angry, resentful.</p> <p>I feel frustrated, overwhelmed.</p> <p>I feel stressed.</p>
II. Handling Housework on My Own	<p>I don't usually discuss my difficulties completing housework with my husband.</p> <p>I feel like my husband takes me for granted.</p> <p>I hired a cleaning person to help with chores.</p>
III. Asking for Assistance with Housework	<p>I asked my husband for help with housework.</p> <p>I tell him that it is hard to balance work and family goals.</p> <p>I like to have a clean house.</p> <p>I haven't had time to cook and clean.</p> <p>I feel guilty.</p>
IV. Other	

Table 3.4

Husbands' Themes and Categories Identified in Household Narratives

Themes	Categories
I. Expression of Concern	<p>He says that it is okay if all of the housework doesn't get done.</p> <p>He is supportive, thoughtful of me.</p> <p>He understands the difficulty I have combining work and family.</p> <p>He tells me to relax and to not worry about it.</p> <p>He apologized.</p>
II. Minimizing Wives' Concerns	<p>He assumes I/women should do all the cooking.</p> <p>He complains/gets annoyed about me asking him to help.</p> <p>He avoids talking about my difficulties with household chores.</p> <p>He complains about the house being a mess.</p> <p>He thinks I should not work outside the home.</p> <p>He doesn't understand my multiple responsibilities.</p> <p>He is critical of my housekeeping and cooking abilities.</p>
III. Exploring Alternatives in Completing Housework	<p>We discuss how we can accomplish the housework fairly.</p> <p>We create a schedule and make arrangements so that we can pursue work and family.</p> <p>He says he will try to do better.</p> <p>He wants me to be happy and take more time out for myself.</p>

Table 3.4 continued

Husbands' Themes and Categories Identified in Household Narratives

Themes	Categories
	He says he thinks he is helpful. He will openly discuss my frustrations and stress with me.
IV. Participation in Housework	He helps with cooking, cleaning, and laundry. He does more than his share of housework. My husband and I do chores together. He asks me what I want him to do. He says he will help me if I am too busy.
V. Avoidance of Housework	He never volunteers to help or asks how he can help with family housework. He will not cook or clean unless I ask him to. He says we should hire a cleaning person.
VI. Other	

Analysis procedures

All of the hypotheses and research questions that were proposed were initially examined through Pearson product moment correlations. The adaptation problems were also analyzed with frequency distributions. Hypotheses were supported when significant positive correlations were obtained at a $p < .05$ level. Significant differences between correlation coefficients were calculated to determine whether there was meaningful variation between individual support components, adaptation problems,

and adaptation outcomes. The power of a study is the probability that it will yield statistically significant results (Cohen, 1977). With an $N = 121$, and an $\alpha = .05$, the statistical power of this study is .59 for small effect sizes ($f = .20$), .96 for medium effect sizes ($f = .30$), and in excess of .99 for large effect sizes ($f = .50$).

Themes and categories from the Work-Family Support Narratives were analyzed by calculating the frequencies and percentages for each theme and category for each narrative situation. Correlations between the themes and the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices were examined. The overall results of the analyses involving the Spousal Support Practices Scale and the Work-Family Support Narrative themes were compared for validity purposes. Finally, hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine Research Questions 6, 8, 13, and 16, and determine how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combined to account for variation in the adaptation outcomes of marital and life satisfaction.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study. First, the characteristics of the sample are described. Then the results of the hypotheses and research questions are presented. The correlational analysis of adaptation problems are reported first, followed by the correlational analysis of spousal support practices and the outcomes of adaptation (marital, job, and life satisfaction). Descriptive and correlational analyses of the work-family support narratives are then reported, and results from both support measures are compared. The means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for each of the measures are described in their respective sections. Finally, the results of the regression analyses on the outcomes of adaptation are presented.

Characteristics of the Sample

A total of 121 women returned completed questionnaires for the study. These women ranged in age from 23 to 50, with a mean age of 36. Most of the participants were Caucasian (84.3%). There were equal percentages of African-American and Asian-Americans who completed the questionnaire (5.8% and 5.8%, respectively). One Hispanic-American (.8%) and three Native-Americans participated (2.5%). All participants were high school graduates and most had completed some college. Also, several had

graduate degrees. The women had been married between one and 30 years, with a mean of 10.6 years of marriage. The number of children in the households of participants ranged from one child to five children, with a mean of 1.9 children. The family income of these women ranged between \$60,000 and \$70,000, with the mean individual income ranging between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Participants' weekly employment ranged from 30 to 80 hours per week ($M = 40$ hours). Husbands of the participants worked between 30 and 80 hours per week ($M = 46$ hours). Approximately half of the women in the study characterized their own employment as "having a job," (50.4%), while 48.8% saw themselves as "having a career." Only 34.7% of participants characterized their husband's employment as "having a job," while 63.6% viewed their husband as "having a career." Most women had only one supervisor at their place of employment (77.7%), while others had between 2, 3, and 4 supervisors (20%). About half of the participants indicated that their primary supervisor was male (50.4%), while 45.5% said they had a female supervisor, and 2.5% indicated that they had both a male and a female supervisor.

This sample is consistent with the samples of other studies that have examined husbands' support of employed mothers and other variables similar to the ones explored here (e.g., Erickson, 1993; Guelzow, Bird, & Koball, 1991; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Reifman, Biernat, & Lang, 1991; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Suchet & Barling, 1986). Most studies have had samples of women in their thirties, women who were college educated, who worked full-time and had an average yearly salary of between \$23,000 and \$38,000. Thus, the sample in this study is

representative of the population of employed mothers who have participated in other current studies about work and family.

Analysis of Adaptation Problems

This section presents the results of the analysis of employed mothers' problems. The means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for the measures of adaptation problems are presented in Table 4.1. As seen, acceptable reliability coefficients above .70 were obtained for each measure. Frequency distributions for these measures were normal (A skewness of zero would indicate a perfectly normal distribution; skewness ranged from -.014 and -.168).

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Cronbach's alpha for Adaptation Problems

Problems	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
WFC	11.2	2.7	4-20 (4-20)	.71
Stress	26.0	6.9	10-41 (0-54)	.83
Inequity	8.7	3.3	2-14 (2-14)	.73
DBB	50.4	12.3	22-76 (16-112)	.76

Note. WFC=Work-Family Conflict, Stress=Stress, Inequity=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, and DBB=Double Bind Beliefs. Numbers in parentheses represent possible range.

While a quarter of the women reported low levels of the adaptation problems, most reported experiencing these problems at moderate to high levels. For instance, a small percentage of women reported low levels of

work-family conflict (16%), 69% reported moderate levels, and 15% reported high levels of work-family conflict. About a quarter of women (28%) reported low levels of stress, 50% reported moderate levels of stress, and 22% reported high levels of stress. A similar percentage of women (26%) reported having an equitable division of labor, 44% reported moderate levels of fairness, and about a third of the women (30%) reported high levels of inequity in the division of labor. Finally, over a quarter of employed mothers (28%) indicated fewer perceptions of double bind beliefs on the part of others in their lives, while 52% reported moderately strong perceptions of double bind beliefs and a fifth of women (20%) reported a strong presence of these beliefs. These results show that this sample of women did indeed experience the problems of adaptation documented in the literature.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted positive relationships between work-family conflict, stress, and inequity. To examine these hypotheses, Pearson product moment correlations were calculated, and these are presented in Table 4.2. As expected, the results indicated a weak positive association between work-family conflict and stress ($r = .28$), indicating a relationship between a difficulty completing work and family responsibilities and feelings of anxiety and frustration.

Table 4.2

Intercorrelations Between Adaptation Problem Measures

Problems	WFC	Stress	Inequity	DBB
WFC				
Stress	.28**			
Inequity	.26**	.18		
DBB	.29**	.33***	.28**	

Note. N = 121. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. WFC=Work-Family Conflict, Stress=Stress, Inequity=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, and DBB=Double Bind Beliefs.

The analysis also showed a weak positive association between inequity in household labor and work-family conflict ($r = .26$), but inequity in household labor was not significantly correlated with stress ($r = .18$). Together, these findings indicate that women who perceive that chores are unfairly divided experience difficulty in completing responsibilities of the home and work domains. However, unfairness in the division of labor does not appear to significantly influence women's levels of stress.

Research Question 1 examined the associations between employed mothers' perceptions of double bind beliefs and their adaptation problems. The results, indicated in Table 4.2, showed weak to moderate correlations between double bind beliefs and work-family conflict ($r = .29$), stress ($r = .33$), and inequity in household labor ($r = .28$). Hence women's perceptions of double bind beliefs about women's roles appear to have a negative influence on the other problems of adaptation.

Overall, the findings from the correlational analysis of the problems of employed mothers' adaptation support Hypotheses 1 and 2 and Research Question 1. All of the correlations, with the exception of inequity and stress ($r = .18$), were significant, positive, and at weak to moderate levels of magnitude. Examination of pairs of observations on scatterplots revealed linear relationships between constructs.

Spousal Support Practices and the Problems of Adaptation

As indicated in Chapter 2, two measures of spousal support were used in this study. This section presents results from the analysis of the Spousal Support Practices Scale and employed mothers' adaptation problems.

Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for the Spousal Support Practices Scale and its components are presented in Table 4.3. As seen, acceptable reliability coefficients above .70 were obtained for the scale and its components. Frequency distributions of the Spousal Support Practices Scale and its components showed distributions with slight negative skewness: the total scale (-.466), Encouraging Discussion (-.559), Interpersonal Involvement (-.560), Acceptance (-.191), Dialogue (-.561), Offers of Assistance (-.515) and Actual Assistance (-.323).

Table 4.3

Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Cronbach's alpha for Subscales of the Spousal Support Practices Scale

Subscales	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
ED	37.2	11.5	10-56 (10-70)	.91
II	19.8	5.2	6-28 (6-56)	.89
A	18.9	4.6	5-28 (5-28)	.71
D	28.4	8.1	9-42 (9-56)	.92
OA	18.4	5.1	4-28 (4-28)	.86
AA	18.3	5.3	7-28 (7-49)	.85
SS	140.9	36.0	45-207 (40-280)	.92

Note. ED=Encouraging Discussion, II=Interpersonal Involvement, A=Acceptance, D=Dialogue, OA=Offers to Assist, AA=Actual Assistance, and SS = Total Scale. Numbers in parentheses represent possible range.

Hypothesis 3 predicted negative associations between spousal support practices and each adaptation problem. Pearson Product Moment correlations were calculated between each of these variables, and these are presented in Table 4.4. Spousal support practices were weakly correlated with work-family conflict ($r = -.26$) and stress ($r = -.25$), but strongly correlated with inequity ($r = -.62$) and moderately correlated with double bind beliefs ($r = -.39$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 4.4

Pearson Correlations Between Spousal Support Practices and Adaptation Problems

Adaptation Problems	Spousal Support Practices Scale
Work-Family Conflict	-.26**
Stress	-.25**
Inequity in Division of Labor	-.62***
Double Bind Beliefs	-.39***

Note. $N = 121$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

In an attempt to explore the relationships between spousal support and employed mothers' problems further, Research Question 2 asked what types of support practices were associated with adaptation problems. Table 4.5 presents the Pearson Product Moment correlations between measures of the problems of adaptation and the components of spousal support. Work-family conflict was negatively associated with each component of the scale at consistently weak levels of magnitude (r_s ranged from $-.20$ to $-.28$). Stress was negatively correlated with four of the support subscales, again at weak levels of magnitude (r_s ranged from $-.23$ to $-.31$). The support practices that were not significantly associated with stress were Encouraging Discussion and Offers of Assistance.

Table 4.5

Pearson Correlations Between Subscales of the Spousal Support Practices Scale and Adaptation Problems

Problems	Support Subscales					
	ED	II	A	D	OA	AA
Work-Family Conflict	-.24**	-.28**	-.27**	-.20	-.22*	-.21*
Stress	-.17	-.27**	-.31***	-.24**	-.11	-.23*
Inequity	-.49***	-.42***	-.41***	-.55***	-.68***	-.71***
Double Bind Beliefs	-.34***	-.33***	-.48***	-.34***	-.29**	-.36***

Note. N = 121. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ED=Encouraging Discussion, II=Interpersonal Involvement, A=Acceptance, D=Dialogue, OA=Offers to Assist, and AA=Actual Assistance.

Unlike the previous correlations, there were moderate to strong negative correlations between an inequitable division of labor and each component of spousal support: Encouraging Discussion (-.49), Interpersonal Involvement (-.42), Acceptance (-.41), and Dialogue (-.55), Offers of Assistance (-.68) and Actual Assistance (-.71). A lack of fairness in the way tasks and responsibilities are divided at home appears to be consistently related to the perception of a lack of spousal support. A significance test was calculated to determine whether there was a significant difference between the correlation obtained between inequity and the Offers of Assistance component and the correlation between inequity and the Dialogue component of support ($r_s = .68$ and $.55$; $z = 2.34$, $p < .01$). Because the other components of support were not as strong as the Dialogue

component, this test showed that the correlations between inequity and the assistance components were stronger than the correlations between inequity and the other components of support. This is an interesting finding, because two related but separate constructs were measured. The inequity scale measured women's perceptions of fairness in the division of child care and household responsibilities, while the assistance components of the Spousal Support Practices Scale measured women's perceptions of their husbands' communication practices and actions related to their participation in child care and housework. Thus, the strong correlation makes logical sense since women who report little participation from husbands may also report feeling as though the division of responsibilities is unfair.

Finally, Research Question 2 asked whether particular types of spousal support practices are associated with the perception of fewer double bind beliefs. The results showed consistently negative correlations at moderate levels of magnitude between each component of the scale and double bind beliefs: Encouraging Discussion (-.34), Interpersonal Involvement (-.33), Acceptance (-.48), Dialogue (-.34), Offers of Assistance (-.29), and Actual Assistance (-.36). A significance test showed that the correlation between double bind beliefs and the Acceptance component was significantly stronger than the correlation between double bind beliefs and the Offers of Assistance component ($r_s = -.48$ and $-.29$; $z = 2.48$, $p < .006$). Together, these findings suggest that women who believe that their husbands or their supervisors endorse contradictory beliefs about women's roles do not perceive their husbands as being supportive of their efforts to combine

work and family, and that husbands' acceptance and legitimation of their wives' concerns has a stronger association with double bind beliefs than offering to assist around the home.

Together, these findings show that spousal support practices are indeed associated with the problems of employed mothers' adaptation. The correlations between work-family conflict and the support components accounted for 4-8% of the variance. Similarly, the correlations between stress and the support components accounted for 5-10% of the variance. However, inequity accounted for more variance in spousal support (i.e., 17-50% of variance). Also, double bind beliefs accounted for 8-23% of the variance in spousal support practices. Examination of scatterplots revealed linear relationships between the scale and each of the adaptation problems.

In sum, all of the correlations between the support subscales and the problems of adaptation were in the expected negative direction. The components of Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance, and Actual Assistance were significantly correlated with each of the problems. The components of Encouraging Discussion and Offers of Assistance were not significantly correlated with stress, but were associated with the other problems. Finally, Dialogue was not significantly correlated with work-family conflict, but was associated with the other problems.

The Outcomes of Adaptation

This section presents results of the correlational analysis of the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation: marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for measures of the outcomes of adaptation are presented

in Table 4.6. As can be seen, strong reliability coefficients were obtained for these measures. Frequency distributions showed slight negative skewness for the marital satisfaction scale (-.835), the job satisfaction scale (-.875) and (-.547) the life satisfaction scale (These skewness levels do not deviate dramatically from the normal distribution, as they are less than -1.00). Hypotheses 4 through 7, and Research Questions 4 through 16 examined the impact of adaptation problems and spousal support practices (i.e., from the Spousal Support Practices Scale) on marital, job, and life satisfaction. These results are presented in Tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9, respectively.

Table 4.6

Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Alphas for Outcome Measures

Outcomes	M	SD	Range	Alpha
MS	34.6	9.8	7-42 (7-42)	.97
JS	26.0	6.7	5-35 (5-35)	.86
LS	23.9	5.9	5-35 (5-35)	.82

Note. MS = Marital Satisfaction, JS = Job Satisfaction, and LS = Life Satisfaction.

Table 4.7

Pearson Correlations Between the Problems and Outcomes of Adaptation

Problems	Outcomes of Adaptation		
	Marital Sat.	Job Sat.	Life Sat.
Work-Family Conflict	-.21*	-.17	-.26**
Stress	-.31***	-.30***	-.54***
Inequity in Household Labor	-.35***	-.06	-.27**
Double Bind Beliefs	-.31***	-.14	-.22*

Note. N = 121. *p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. Sat. = Satisfaction.

Table 4.8

Pearson Correlations Between Spousal Support Practices and Outcomes

Outcomes	Spousal Support Practices Scale
Marital Satisfaction	.78***
Job Satisfaction	.07
Life Satisfaction	.54***

Note. N = 121. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 4.9

Pearson Correlations Between Subscales of the Spousal Support Practices Scale and Adaptation Outcomes

Outcomes	Subscales					
	ED	II	A	D	OA	AA
Marital Satisfaction	.75***	.77***	.59***	.78***	.57***	.55***
Job Satisfaction	.03	.14	.03	.08	.07	.06
Life Satisfaction	.45***	.49***	.44***	.52***	.44***	.46***

Note. N = 121. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. ED=Encouraging Discussion, II=Interpersonal Involvement, A=Acceptance, D=Dialogue, OA=Offers to Assist, and AA=Actual Assistance.

Marital Satisfaction

Hypothesis 4 predicted negative associations between three of the problems of employed mothers' adaptation and their marital satisfaction. As expected, a weak negative correlation was found between marital satisfaction and work-family conflict ($r = -.21$). Marital satisfaction was also negatively correlated with stress ($r = -.31$) and inequity ($r = -.35$), at moderate levels of magnitude. Research Question 4 examined the association between double bind beliefs and marital satisfaction. A significant negative relationship was found between these constructs ($r = -.31$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported, and marital satisfaction is associated with perceptions of double bind beliefs. While employed mothers' problems are only one of several factors that may impact a woman's happiness in her relationship with her husband (that is, only 4-12% of the variance in marital satisfaction was explained by the problems of

adaptation), nevertheless these findings indicate that these problems do negatively influence employed mothers' level of marital satisfaction.

The impact of spousal support practices on marital satisfaction was examined in Hypothesis 5 and Research Question 6. As expected, the correlational analysis showed a strong positive association between spousal support practices and marital satisfaction ($r = .78$). Strong positive associations were also found between each component of spousal support and marital satisfaction (r s ranged from .55 to .78). Between 30% and 61% of the variance in marital satisfaction was accounted for by spousal support. Further, significance tests showed that the correlation between marital satisfaction and the Encouraging Discussion component was significantly stronger than the correlation between marital satisfaction and the Acceptance component (r s = .75 and .59; $z = 3.28$, $p < .001$). Also, the correlation between marital satisfaction and Interpersonal Involvement was significantly stronger than the correlation between marital satisfaction and Acceptance (r s = .77 and .59; $z = 3.80$, $p < .000$). Finally, the correlation between marital satisfaction and Dialogue was significantly stronger than the correlation between marital satisfaction and Acceptance (r s = .78 and .59; $z = 4.07$, $p < .000$). Because the correlations between marital satisfaction and the two Assistance components were not as strong as the correlations between marital satisfaction and Acceptance, these findings show that the components Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, and Dialogue were significantly stronger than the components Acceptance, Offers of Assistance, and Actual Assistance. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is supported. The findings suggest that all of the support components were

positive influences on women's marital satisfaction, and especially Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, and Dialogue.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was examined in Hypothesis 6 and Research Questions 8 through 12. Hypothesis 6 predicted negative associations between employed mothers' job satisfaction, work-family conflict, and stress. A negative correlation was found between job satisfaction and work-family conflict, but it was not significant ($r = -.17$). However, a negative, moderate association was found between job satisfaction and stress ($r = -.30$). Research Questions 8 and 9 asked whether an employed mother's job satisfaction is negatively associated with her perception of an inequitable division of labor and double bind beliefs. The analysis revealed non-significant associations between job satisfaction and inequity ($r = -.06$) and double bind beliefs ($r = -.14$). Thus, inequity in the home and the perception of double bind beliefs were not related to employed mothers' job satisfaction.

Research Question 11 asked about the relationship between husbands' support practices and employed mothers' job satisfaction. Again, a non-significant association was found ($r = .08$); spousal support was not associated with job satisfaction.

Thus, the analyses suggest that stress is the only variable that influences employed mothers' experience of job satisfaction. Variables pertinent to the home domain, such as wives' perceptions of their husbands' support practices and equity in the division of labor, did not affect job satisfaction for women.

Life Satisfaction

Employed mothers' experience of life satisfaction was the last outcome examined. Hypothesis 7 predicted a negative association between work-family conflict and life satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported ($r = -.26$). Research Question 13 explored the relationship between life satisfaction, stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs (see Table 4.7).

Negative associations were found between life satisfaction and stress ($r = -.54$), life satisfaction and inequity ($r = -.27$) and life satisfaction and double bind beliefs ($r = -.22$).

Together, these analyses suggest that employed mothers' problems do indeed contribute to lowered levels of happiness in their lives in general, and that stress and inequity are the strongest predictors of life satisfaction. Tests to determine the significant difference between the correlation coefficients showed that the correlation between life satisfaction and stress was significantly stronger than the correlation between life satisfaction and inequity, which had the next highest correlation with life satisfaction out of the problems ($r_s = -.54$ and $-.27$; $z = 3.63$, $p < .000$). Thus, the correlation between life satisfaction and stress was significantly stronger than the correlations between life satisfaction and the other problems. This suggests that when some women feel unable to cope with their daily responsibilities they also experience a reduced level of overall personal happiness.

Hypothesis 8 predicted a positive association between spousal support and life satisfaction (see Tables 4.12 and 4.13). As expected, a significant positive correlation was found ($r = .54$). In an attempt to examine this relationship further, Research Question 12 asked what

particular support practices were associated with life satisfaction. The analysis revealed positive associations between each component of the scale and life satisfaction (r s ranged from .44 to .52). Thus, Hypothesis 8 was supported, and each component of spousal support was associated with employed mothers' life satisfaction. Between 19% and 27% of the variance in spousal support was accounted for by life satisfaction.

Examination of scatterplots revealed linear relationships between the outcomes of adaptation, the problems of adaptation, and spousal support. Overall, then, both marital and life satisfaction were negatively affected by women's adaptation problems. However, job satisfaction was not associated with work-family conflict, inequity, or double bind beliefs, and only associated with stress. The correlation between marital satisfaction and spousal support was stronger than the correlation between life satisfaction and spousal support (r s = .78 and .54; $z = 4.90$, $p < .000$). Correlations found between the subscales of support and the outcomes of adaptation revealed consistent patterns, as Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, and Dialogue were all strongly correlated with marital satisfaction and moderately correlated with life satisfaction. Acceptance, Offers of Assistance, and Actual Assistance were moderately correlated with marital and life satisfaction.

Work-Family Support Narratives

This section reports the findings from the second measure of support, the Work-Family Support Narratives. As indicated in the previous chapter, two narrative tasks were presented to participants. One asked employed mothers to recall a recent time when they had difficulty dealing with child

care due to work-related matters, while the other narrative situation asked the women to recall an incident in which they had trouble completing household chores because of a work-related conflict. Women were asked to indicate what their husbands said to them during conversations about these situations. Participants' responses were grouped into categories and themes. Categories refer to clusters of conceptually similar or co-occurring ideas in employed mothers' responses, and themes refer to groupings of conceptually similar categories.

Research Question 3 asked about the spousal support practices employed mothers reported in their work-family narratives. Frequencies and percentages of themes and categories occurring in these narratives are presented below, along with specific examples of ideas that comprised the categories. Descriptions of themes and categories in the child care narratives are presented first, followed by the household narratives. A comparison of themes and categories in child care and household narratives is also presented.

Child Care Narratives

A total of 99 out of the 121 participants responded to the child care narrative situation. Women described a variety of child care situations that were difficult to manage. A majority of them described situations in which they were unable to pick up or drop off their child from day care or school because of a work conflict (52%). Other women described how their child was sick and unable to attend school or day care at times when these women had important business at work (19%). Some employed mothers described how they needed to bring their work home, and didn't have time

to deal with child care situations (21%). Others indicated how they needed to work overtime and could not take their child to an extracurricular activity (8%).

Wives' Themes and Categories in Child Care Narratives. The wives' themes and categories in the child care narratives represent the communicative practices employed mothers engaged in during conversations with their husbands about work-family difficulties. The four themes, and their respective categories, are presented in Table 4.10. A first theme that emerged was Experiencing Difficulties Balancing Work and Family (22%). For instance, women (6%) said how it was difficult to manage work and family responsibilities (e.g., "I have to add that it is very hard for working mothers these days."), or that when they had a work-family conflict (3%), they put their children first (e.g., "I always put my son first."). Overall, about a fifth of the women experienced difficulties meeting responsibilities associated with their work and their families.

A second theme in the wives' child care narratives was Expression of Distress (19%). Women (11%) expressed frustration and a sense of being overwhelmed with their multiple work and family responsibilities (e.g., "I was frustrated I had to find a sitter on such short notice."). Some (6%) also expressed anger and betrayal toward husbands who would not help with child care matters (e.g., "I was angry."), and 4% expressed stress from having so much to do (e.g., "The situation caused stress for me."). About one fifth of the employed mothers responding to this narrative situation experienced negative emotions related to the problems they had managing work and family.

Table 4.10

Frequency and Percentage Use of Wives' Themes and Categories Identified in Child Care Narratives

Themes & Categories	N	%
I. Experiencing Difficulties Balancing Work and Family	22	22
1. I am usually responsible for picking up and dropping off my kids.	13	13
2. It is difficult balancing time between my work and my family.	6	6
3. I put our children first.	3	3
II. Expression of Distress	19	19
4. I feel frustrated, overwhelmed.	11	11
5. I feel angry, betrayed.	6	6
6. I feel stressed.	4	4
7. I feel guilty.	1	1
III. Handling Child Care Situations on My Own.	22	22
8. I had to take care of the situation because my husband wouldn't help.	15	15
9. I do not discuss my child care difficulties with my husband.	7	7
10. It is not worth having an argument with my husband about child care difficulties.	2	2
IV. Asking for Assistance	32	32
11. I asked my husband to pick up/drop off our children.	22	22
12. I tell him what work responsibilities I need to attend to.	14	14
V. Other	4	4

Note. N = 99. Numbers and percentages represent actual numbers and percentages of women with responses in each theme or category. Percentages may not sum to 100%, as employed mothers may have responses in more than one category or theme.

A third theme, Handling Child Care Situations on My Own, also emerged in the wives' child care narratives (22%). As part of this theme, most women (15%) described how they had to take care of a child care situation because their husbands would not help (e.g., "So I had to call off work on Friday."). Others (7%) said they did not discuss their difficulties

with child care (e.g., "I never really express to my husband what I'm feeling about situations like this."). About a fifth of these employed mothers had primary responsibility for child care, which suggests an inequitable division of child care labor.

The fourth theme that occurred in the wives' child care narratives was Asking for Assistance (32%). In this theme, women described discussions they had with their husbands about child care. For instance, 22% of the women described how they asked their husband to take care of the children when they could not (e.g., "I asked him to pick up our three year old son."), or how they (14%) told him what work responsibilities they needed to attend to (e.g., "I let him know my day was very full."). About one third of these employed mothers sought help from their spouses when they were unable to handle a child care situation.

Overall, the wives' themes and categories identified in the child care narratives revealed that the women chose to describe the ways managing work and family was difficult for them (22%), how they became frustrated and stressed as a result of their multiple work and family responsibilities (19%), how many sought their husband's assistance when particular situations arose (32%), and how some of them dealt with child care without the help of their husbands (22%). These themes and categories show that it can be difficult to deal with work-family conflicts, particularly when these women feel they must manage these conflicts on their own. However, the fact that many women actively enlisted the help of their husbands (32%) suggests a sense of teamwork in these couples, where one spouse asks the other spouse to take over when work responsibilities get in the way.

Husbands' Themes and Categories in Child Care Narratives. This next section describes wives' descriptions of their husbands' communication practices in the child care narratives, which were coded as husbands' themes and categories. Five themes are presented in Table 4.11. A first theme that emerged was Expression of Concern (28%). Women (12%) described the ways their husbands expressed concern to them, such as being supportive and "there" for them (e.g., My husband tries hard to support the time I need to spend on school-related activities."), or how their husbands (5%) recognized their frustrations and stress (e.g., "I know you're tired."), and (5%) listened to them (e.g., He does listen when I express my frustration."). The emergence of this theme is interesting because these freely given descriptions virtually match the Expression of Concern component of the Spousal Support Practices Scale. However, another theme that emerged in the child care narratives was Minimizing Wives' Concerns (25%). Here women (11%) described how their husbands assumed they should be responsible for child care (e.g., "It has always been assumed that I am the first point of responsibility for the children."), and how their husbands (5%) felt that their work/activities were more important than the women's work/activities (e.g., "Because of course my job isn't as important as my husbands'."). While some women (28%) had husbands who conveyed concern to their wives, a roughly equal percentage of women (25%) had husbands that dismissed or downplayed the importance of the wives' work-family concerns.

In a third theme, Exploring Alternatives in Child Care (33%), 18% of the women described how they worked with their husbands in discussing

alternative arrangements for taking care of their children (e.g., "We really do work together to work out these types of situations."). Other women (8%) described how their husbands proposed alternative solutions for handling child care, or how husbands helped when given advance notice from their wives (5%). A third of the women described how they worked together with their husbands in negotiating and determining the best arrangements for taking care of their children. This suggests the presence of dialogue in the lives of these women.

Participation in Child Care (37%) was a fourth theme identified in the child care narratives. In this theme, women described their husbands' level of assistance with child care responsibilities. Most women (36%) described how their husbands picked up, dropped off, or took care of their child (e.g., "My husband usually takes our little girl to school."). A smaller percentage (5%) indicated that they shared responsibility for child care with their husbands (e.g., "We have always shared responsibility with the children."). About a third of the women who responded to the child care narrative had husbands who assisted them with or otherwise shared responsibility for child care.

The final theme in the child care narratives was Avoidance of Child Care (20%). Some women described how their husbands refused or otherwise avoided dealing with child care (e.g., "The answer was no."). This theme reflects a lack of participation in child care among a fifth of the husbands of these women.

Overall, the husbands' themes and categories revealed that women perceived that their husbands enacted a variety of supportive practices with

them, including expressing concern (28%), exploring alternatives in child care (32%), and participating in child care (37%). Thus, some of these husbands appeared to care about what their wives were going through, and wanted to work with them in dealing with it. However, unsupportive communication practices were also represented in the themes and categories (i.e., minimizing and avoidance), which indicates that some wives perceived that their husbands (45%) did not fully understand why the women felt the situation was important, or perhaps did not care enough to help their wives take care of the situation.

Table 4.11

Frequency and Percentage Use of Husbands' Themes and Categories
Identified in Child Care Narratives

Themes & Categories	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
I. Expression of Concern	28	28
1. He is supportive/he is there for me.	12	12
2. He was concerned about our child.	8	8
3. He tells me not to worry about it.	8	8
4. He reassures me that I/we are good parents.	5	5
5. He recognizes my frustrations and stress.	5	5
6. He listens to me/he is open.	5	5
7. He is affectionate toward me.	2	2
II. Minimizing Wives' Concerns	25	25
8. He assumes I should be responsible for child care.	11	11
9. He feels that work should never come before your family.	8	8
10. He avoids talking about the situation.	6	6
11. He feels that his work/activities are more important than mine.	5	5
12. He becomes angry, irritated with me	3	3
III. Exploring Alternatives in Child Care	32	32
13. We work together in discussing alternative arrangements, schedules for taking care of our children.	18	18
14. He proposes alternative solutions for handling child care.	8	8
15. He helps as long as I give him advance notice.	5	5
16. He called his parents, someone else to help.	2	2
IV. Participation in Child Care	37	37
17. He picks up, drops off, takes care of our child.	36	36
18. We split, share the responsibility for child care.	5	5
V. Avoidance of Child Care	20	20
19. He says he is too busy to help.	13	13
20. He said I would have to take care of the situation.	4	4
21. My husband is busy so he is unable to help.	4	4
22. He refuses to help.	3	3
VI. Other	19	19

Note. N = 99.

Household Narratives

A total of 103 out of the 121 participants responded to the household narrative situation. In these narratives, women described a variety of situations that hindered their ability to complete housework. Many described situations related to their work that got in the way of doing household chores (39%). Other women described how they had to work overtime or needed to travel for their job and could not finish housework (24%). Some employed mothers described how they needed to pick up their children from their sports activities, or that their child was sick so they could not complete the housework (23%). Other women described how they had an important project at work that prevented them from completing chores, and that it was very typical that they seemed to do all of the chores (14%).

Wives' Themes and Categories in Household Narratives. Wives' themes and categories in the women's household narratives are presented in Table 4.12. A first theme in these narratives was Expressing Feelings about Inequity in Housework (45%). Many women (13%) described how they were usually responsible for cooking and cleaning (e.g., "Most of the time I do the cooking."), how they (13%) felt that it was unfair that they did all the cleaning (e.g., "I feel my husband could be more helpful."), or how they (13%) argued with their husband over his not doing the cooking, cleaning, or laundry (e.g., "My husband and I had an argument because I felt that dinner should have already been cooked."). Employed mothers (9%) also expressed feelings of anger (e.g., "This made me so mad!"), (5%) frustration (e.g., "Then I feel frustrated."), and (2%) stress (e.g., "I was very stressed

out.”). Almost half the women responding to this narrative situation perceived an inequitable division of household labor with their husbands and this inequity bothered them.

Table 4.12

Frequency and Percentage Use of Wives' Themes and Categories Identified in Household Narratives

Themes & Categories	N	%
I. Expressing Feelings about Inequity in Housework	47	45
1. I am usually responsible for cooking and cleaning.	14	13
2. I feel that it is unfair that I do all the cleaning.	14	13
3. I argued with my husband over his not doing the cooking, cleaning, or laundry.	14	13
4. I feel angry, resentful.	10	9
5. I feel frustrated, overwhelmed.	6	5
6. I feel stressed.	3	2
II. Handling Housework on My Own	17	16
7. I don't usually discuss my difficulties completing housework with my husband.	13	12
8. I feel like my husband takes me for granted.	3	2
9. I hired a cleaning person to help with chores	2	1
III. Asking for Assistance with Housework	31	30
10. I asked my husband for help with housework.	22	21
11. I tell him that it is hard to balance work and family goals.	4	3
12. I like to have a clean house.	4	3
13. I haven't had time to cook and clean.	3	2
14. I feel guilty.	2	1
IV. Other	9	8

Note. N = 103.

A second theme in the wives' household narratives was Handling Housework on My Own (16%). In this theme, employed mothers (12%) described how they didn't usually discuss their difficulties completing

housework with their husbands (e.g., "I don't really communicate to him how frustrating it is."), or how they (2%) felt like their husband took them for granted (e.g., "Often I feel taken for granted."). This theme also reflects employed mothers' feelings of inequity in the household, but unlike the previous theme, this theme also displays a lack of discussion between employed mothers and their husbands regarding housework.

Asking for Assistance with Housework was another theme in the wives' household narratives (30%). Most women (21%) described how they asked their husband for help with housework (e.g., "I asked my husband to help me catch up."), or how they (3%) told him it was hard to balance work and family goals (e.g., "I let him know that it's hard trying to balance all this and a full-time and part-time job."). Close to one third of the employed mothers not only asked their husbands for help with housework, but also explained to them some of the reasons why they needed this assistance.

Overall, the wives' themes and categories identified in the household narratives revealed that many women (45%) felt that they did all of the housework, and that this bothered them. Further, these themes and categories revealed that more women asked their husbands for help when they had a work-family conflict than those women who did not involve their husbands in their difficulties with housework (30% vs. 16%). These themes and categories show that there are times when women are too busy to complete regular household chores. Women also, by and large, try to get their husbands involved in their work-family conflicts. This suggests that many of these women believe in equity in the home, in which men are considered to be just as important in running the household as women.

Husbands Themes and Categories in Household Narratives.

Husbands' themes and categories identified in household narratives are presented in Table 4.13. In the theme, Expression of Concern (36%), participants (8%) said that their husbands were supportive and thoughtful (e.g., "He is very supportive of me."), or that they understood the difficulty these women (6%) had combining work and family (e.g., "He said he understood some of the things I go through."). This theme directly reflects the Expressing Concern component of the Spousal Support Practices Scale. Over one third of the husbands were supportive and understanding of the frustrations these women had in trying to complete housework.

A second theme that emerged in these narratives was Minimizing Wives' Concerns (38%). Women (12%) described how their husbands assumed they should do all of the housework (e.g., "Chores, help with kids, that's what a woman is supposed to do."), how the men avoided talking about the women's (6%) difficulties completing housework (e.g., "He avoided the question after I asked again."), or how the men did not understand their wives' (4%) multiple responsibilities (e.g., "He also doesn't understand that I have two full-time jobs."). About a third of the women indicated that they had husbands who did not understand or acknowledge their work-family difficulties.

In the theme, Exploring Alternatives in Completing Housework (18%), women (7%) described how they discussed with their husbands how they could accomplish the housework fairly (e.g., "And then we discuss how we can accomplish it all."), or how they (5%) created a schedule and made arrangements so that both husband and wife could pursue work and

family goals (e.g., "Let's set up a schedule and have a plan of action for the following week so we don't keep going through this all the time."). This theme reflects the Dialogue component of the Spousal Support Practices Scale. Close to one fifth of the employed mothers engaged in meaningful talks with their husbands about how to accomplish the housework and run an organized household.

In the theme, Participation in Housework, a total of 49% of women described their husbands' level of assistance and responsibility for household chores, with 37% indicating that their husbands helped with cooking, cleaning, and laundry (e.g., "Since we've been married my husband has always helped with cooking, cleaning, dishes, and laundry."). Women (8%) also described how their husbands did more than their share of housework (e.g., "He tries to get the housework done quite often so I can relax."), or how they (7%) did chores with their husbands (e.g., "We work with each other."). This theme reflects the Assistance component of the Spousal Support Practices Scale. About half of the women indicated that they had husbands who helped them when they were busy or worked with them in doing housework. However, the theme, Avoidance of Housework, included 24% of the subjects. Women described how their husbands (13%) never volunteered to help or asked how they could help (e.g., "He doesn't even as much as put his toothbrush back in the holder."), or how their husbands (8%) didn't cook or clean unless asked to do so by their wives (e.g., "He will only do the work if I ask.").

Table 4.13

Frequency and Percentage Use of Husbands' Themes and Categories
Identified in Household Narratives

Themes & Categories	N	%
I. Expression of Concern	37	36
1. He says that it is okay if all of the housework doesn't get done.	10	9
2. He is supportive, thoughtful of me.	9	8
3. He understands the difficulty I have combining work and family.	7	6
4. He tells me to relax and to not worry about it.	7	6
5. He apologized.	6	5
6. He wants me to be happy and take more time out for myself.	4	3
7. He says he thinks he is helpful.	3	2
II. Minimizing Wives' Concerns	39	38
8. He assumes I/women should do all the cooking and cleaning.	13	12
9. He complains/gets annoyed about me asking him to help.	12	11
10. He avoids talking about my difficulties with household chores.	7	6
11. He complains about the house being a mess.	6	5
12. He thinks I should not work outside the home.	6	5
13. He doesn't understand my multiple responsibilities.	5	4
14. He is critical of my housekeeping and cooking abilities.	4	3
III. Exploring Alternatives in Completing Housework	19	18
15. We discuss how we can accomplish the housework fairly.	8	7
16. We create a schedule and make arrangements so that we can pursue work and family.	6	5
17. He says he will try to do better.	6	5
18. He will openly discuss my frustration and stress with me.	2	1
IV. Participation in Housework	50	49
19. He helps with cooking, cleaning and laundry.	37	37
20. He does more than his share of housework.	9	8
21. My husband and I do chores together.	8	7
22. He asks me what I want him to do.	8	7
23. He says he will help me if I am too busy.	4	3

Table 4.13 continued
Frequency and Percentage Use of Husbands' Themes and Categories
Identified in Household Narratives

Themes & Categories	N	%
V. Avoidance of Housework	25	24
24. He never volunteers to help or asks how he can help with family housework.	14	13
25. He will not cook or clean unless I ask him to.	9	8
26. He says we should hire a cleaning person.	4	3
VI. Other	16	15

Note. N = 103.

Overall, the husbands' themes and categories identified in the household narratives showed that there were many employed mothers who perceived that their husbands were concerned about their difficulties completing housework (36%), and who helped them complete it (49%) or discussed alternatives for getting it done (18%). Many men appeared to care enough about their wives' difficulties to find ways to work with them in alleviating their work-family conflict. The most common theme was Participation in Housework, which indicates that most women perceived that their husbands responded to their concerns by doing what needed to be done around the house. Expression of Concern was also a prevalent theme, which suggests that it was not just tangible assistance that was important when women had trouble completing housework. Responding to the wives' feelings was also appropriate. However, some women perceived that their husbands displayed unsupportive communication practices (i.e., minimizing and avoidance), which may indicate a lack of

concern for the conflicts these women were experiencing. While fewer women perceived that their husbands avoided housework (24%) than participated in housework (49%), similar percentages of women perceived that their husbands minimized their concerns (38%) or expressed concern (36%).

Comparison of themes and categories in child care and household narratives. This section presents a comparison of both narrative situations in order to highlight the similarities and differences across the narratives. In comparing the findings of both narrative situations, several similarities emerged. Of the seven themes that were developed for the wives' descriptions of their own communication practices, all of them were similar. While 22% of women described handling child care situations on their own, 16% of women indicated that they handled housework on their own. While 32% of women described asking their husbands for assistance with child care, 30% indicated that they asked their husbands for assistance with housework. In the child care situation two themes represented women experiencing difficulties balancing work and family, and their expressions of distress. Combined, these two themes represented 41% of the women. In the household narratives, one theme represented women expressing their feelings of inequity, and this theme represents a similar percentage of women (45%). Thus, when taken together, similar ideas were expressed about the difficulties in taking care of their children and the housework.

Within these seven themes, there were also similarities among categories. For instance, equal percentages of women described how they were usually responsible for child care (13%) and housework (13%).

Twenty percent of the women indicated that they felt frustrated, angry, and stressed in dealing with child care problems, while a similar percentage of women (16%) described the same feelings regarding housework difficulties. Similar percentages of employed mothers indicated that they did not discuss their child care (9%) and housework (12%) situations with their husbands. Also, equal percentages of women described having primary responsibility for child care (13%) and housework (13%).

Of the ten themes that were developed for the husbands' child care and the household narratives, all ten were similar. For instance, women perceived that their husbands expressed concern in both the child care (28%) and the household narratives (36%). Employed mothers also perceived that their husbands explored alternatives in child care (32%) and housework (18%), and participated in child care (37%) and housework (49%). Wives perceived that their husbands minimized their concerns with both child care (25%) and housework (38%), and avoided participating in child care (20%) and housework (24%).

Within these ten themes, there were also similarities among categories. For instance, similar percentages of women described how their husbands were supportive and thoughtful regarding their difficulties with child care (12%) and housework (8%). Furthermore, women equally described how their husbands recognized their frustrations, stress, and difficulties in combining work and family (5% & 6%). Also, women described how they worked with their husbands in discussing alternative arrangements for taking care of their children (18%) and their housework (12%). Women also equally described specifically how their husbands

participated by picking up, dropping off, or taking care of their child (36%) and helping with cooking, cleaning, and laundry (37%).

These comparisons show that employed mothers' descriptions of their husbands' overall responses were similar across the narratives. There was a particular content of responses to wives' work-family conflicts, whether these conflicts involved caring for children or cleaning the house. Women indicated that their husbands showed their care and concern by listening, expressing concern, and helping them deal with the situation, or they displayed an apparent lack of concern by downplaying the importance of the wives' concerns, avoiding discussion of these concerns, or refusing to help with child care or housework.

Work-Family Support Narratives, Adaptation Problems and Outcomes

This section presents the results of the correlational analysis of the work-family support narratives with employed mothers' problems and outcomes. For purposes of measurement, work-family support narrative themes were computed by summing across categories represented in each theme.

Child Care Narratives

Research Question 4 asked how the spousal support practices employed mothers report in open-ended measures of work-family situations related to work-family conflict, stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs. Table 4.14 reports Pearson correlations between wives' themes in child care narratives and the problems of adaptation.

The theme, Experiencing Difficulties Balancing Work and Family, was not significantly associated with any of the problems of employed

mothers' adaptation, and the theme, Expression of Distress, was found only to be positively associated with work-family conflict ($r = .20$). Handling Child Care Situations on My Own was not significantly associated with any of the adaptation problems. The only significant association for the theme, Asking for Assistance, was with inequity ($r = .27$).

Table 4.14

Pearson Correlations Between Wives' Themes in Child Care Narratives and the Problems and Outcomes of Adaptation

Wives' Themes	Problems				Outcomes		
	WF	S	IE	DBB	MS	JS	LS
Experiencing Difficulties Balancing							
Work and Family	.12	.07	-.08	.13	.12	-.16	.06
Expression of Distress	.20*	.12	.00	-.02	-.02	-.14	-.00
Handling Child Care Situations							
on My Own.	.04	.02	.14	.13	-.29**	.00	-.20
Asking for Assistance	-.03	-.06	.27*	-.03	-.02	.02	.08

Note. $N = 99$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. WF=Work-Family Conflict, S=Stress, IE=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, and DBB=Double Bind Beliefs, MS=Marital Satisfaction, JS=Job Satisfaction, and LS=Life Satisfaction.

Table 4.14 also presents the results of the correlational analysis of wives' child care narratives and the outcomes of adaptation. The themes, Experiencing Difficulties Balancing Work and Family, Expression of Distress, and Asking for Assistance, were not significantly associated with

any of the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation. However, Handling Child Care Situations on My Own was negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = -.29$). Otherwise, the women's themes had no significant correlations with their levels of satisfaction in their marriages, their jobs, or their lives.

Table 4.15 presents Pearson correlations between husbands' themes in the child care narrative situation and the problems of adaptation. While the theme, Expression of Concern, was not significantly associated with any of the problems of adaptation, the theme, Minimizing Wives' Concerns, was positively associated with work-family conflict ($r = .28$) and inequity ($r = .24$). Exploring Alternatives in Child Care, was negatively correlated with inequity ($r = -.22$), and Participation in Child Care was negatively associated with work-family conflict ($r = -.22$) and double bind beliefs ($r = -.27$). The theme, Avoidance of Child Care, was not significantly associated with any of the adaptation problems.

Finally, the analysis of the husbands' themes and the adaptation outcomes showed that Expression of Concern was not significantly associated with any of the outcomes (See Table 4.11). However, Minimizing Wives' Concerns was negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = -.26$) and life satisfaction ($r = -.22$), and Participation in Child Care was positively associated with all three outcomes: marital satisfaction ($r = .23$), job satisfaction ($r = .22$) and life satisfaction ($r = .21$).

Table 4.15

Pearson Correlations Between Husbands' Themes in Child Care Narratives and the Problems and Outcomes of Adaptation

Husbands' Themes	Problems				Outcomes		
	WF	S	IE	DBB	MS	JS	LS
Expression of Concern	-.09	-.08	-.14	-.06	.17	.09	.10
Minimizing Concerns	.28**	.13	.24*	.18	-.26*	-.02	-.22*
Exploring Alternatives in Child Care	.00	.02	-.22*	-.17	.05	-.13	.06
Participation in Child Care	-.22*	-.10	-.12	-.27*	.23*	.22*	.21*
Avoidance of Child Care	.09	.09	.16	.00	-.13	-.03	-.09

Note. N = 99. *p < .05. ** p < .01. WF=Work-Family Conflict, S=Stress, IE=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, DBB=Double Bind Beliefs, MS=Marital Satisfaction, JS=Job Satisfaction, and LS=Life Satisfaction.

Together, these findings suggest that husbands' expressions of concern toward wives are not associated with employed mothers' problems, but the lack of concern and/or minimization of wives' problems has a negative influence on the problems. Also, husbands' participation and dialogue are related to wives' lower levels of work-family conflict, perceptions of equity in the home and fewer perceptions of contradictory beliefs about women's roles. However, husbands' avoidance of child care does not have a negative influence on women's experiences of work-family conflict, stress, inequity, or double bind beliefs. These findings also indicate that it may be the absence of concern and/or the minimization of the wives'

difficulties that has a greater influence on women's levels of happiness in their marriages and their lives in general than the expression of concern by husbands. Finally, these findings suggest that husbands' participation in child care has a greater influence on wives' happiness in their marital relationships, their jobs, and their lives than husbands' avoidance of child care.

Table 4.16

Pearson Correlations Between Wives' Themes in Household Narratives and the Problems and Outcomes of Adaptation

Wives' Themes	Problems				Outcomes		
	WF	S	IE	DBB	MS	JS	LS
Expressing Feelings about							
Inequity in Housework	.20*	.16	.08	-.01	.10	-.09	.10
Handling Housework on							
My Own	.02	.13	.07	.23*	-.30**	.01	-.17
Asking for Assistance with							
Housework	.18	.08	.19	-.03	.01	-.03	.01

Note. N = 103. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. WF=Work-Family Conflict, S=Stress, IE=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, and DBB=Double Bind Beliefs, MS=Marital Satisfaction, JS=Job Satisfaction, and LS=Life Satisfaction.

Household Narratives

This section extends the examination of Research Question 4. Table 4.16 presents the results of the correlational analysis of wives' themes in the household narratives, the problems, and the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation. As can be seen, the theme, Expressing Feelings about

Inequity in Housework, was positively correlated with work-family conflict ($r = .20$), but was not significantly correlated with the other problems or outcomes. Handling Housework on My Own was only significantly correlated with double bind beliefs ($r = .23$) and marital satisfaction ($r = -.30$). Asking for Assistance with Housework was not significantly correlated with any of the problems or outcomes of adaptation. These findings suggest that describing their feelings about inequity and asking for assistance did not influence their feelings of satisfaction. This may be because women were describing one particular situation in the narratives, and their feelings about inequity and asking for assistance in that one situation may not reflect the overall pattern of fairness in their marital relationships.

Table 4.17 presents the results of the analysis of husbands' themes in the household narratives and the problems and the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation. Expression of Concern was found only to be significantly associated with inequity ($r = -.25$), and Minimizing Wives' Concerns was only significantly associated with work-family conflict ($r = .24$). Exploring Alternatives in Housework was not significantly associated with any of the problems. Participation in Housework was significantly associated with stress ($r = -.22$) and double bind beliefs ($r = -.22$), and Avoidance of Housework was significantly associated with inequity ($r = .26$).

Results from the analysis of husbands' themes in household narratives and the outcomes of adaptation are also presented in Table 4.17. Expression of Concern was found to be positively associated with marital

satisfaction ($r = .25$) and life satisfaction ($r = .20$). Minimizing Wives' Concerns, Exploring Alternatives in Housework and Participation in Housework were not significantly associated with any of the outcomes. Avoidance of Housework was, however, negatively associated with marital satisfaction ($r = -.21$). These findings suggest that employed mothers' are happy in their marriages and their lives when their husbands express concern and caring. However, unsupportive practices, such as minimizing, do not influence the outcomes. Also, exploring alternatives and participation in housework were not associated with the outcomes, but wives were less satisfied with their marriages when their husbands avoided doing household chores.

Overall, the analysis of the wives' themes showed that handling child care and housework without their husbands' help was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction, and with double bind beliefs in the household situation. These results also showed that expressing distress in the child care situation and expressing feelings about inequity in housework were negatively correlated with work-family conflict. Finally, asking for assistance was negatively correlated with inequity only in the child care situation.

Table 4.17

Pearson Correlations Between Husbands' Themes in Household Narratives and the Problems and Outcomes of Adaptation

Husbands' Themes	Problems				Outcomes		
	WF	S	IE	DBB	MS	JS	LS
Expression of Concern	-.11	.05	-.25*	-.05	.25*	.10	.20*
Minimizing Concerns	.24*	.16	.10	-.02	-.06	.06	-.04
Exploring Alternatives							
in Housework	.02	-.07	-.18	-.10	.13	.02	.06
Participation in Housework	-.13	-.22*	-.07	-.22*	-.06	.04	.01
Avoidance of Housework	.17	.09	.26**	.10	-.21*	-.14	-.10

Note. $N = 121$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. WF=Work-Family Conflict, S=Stress, IE=Inequity in the Division of Household and Child Care Labor, DBB=Double Bind Beliefs, MS=Marital Satisfaction, JS=Job Satisfaction, and LS=Life Satisfaction.

In the husbands' themes, minimizing wives' concerns was positively correlated with work-family conflict in both situations, and was positively correlated with inequity in the child care situation, as well as negatively correlated with marital and life satisfaction in the child care situation. The theme, Participation in child care, was negatively correlated with work-family conflict in the child care situation, and with double bind beliefs in both situations. In the household situation, the theme, Participation in child care, was also negatively correlated with stress. Participation was correlated with all three outcomes in the child care situation. Finally, avoidance of housework was correlated with both inequity and marital

satisfaction, but avoidance of child care was not correlated with either problems or outcomes, such as marital, job, or life satisfaction.

Work-Family Support Narratives and the Spousal Support Practices Scale

Given that two measures of spousal support were used in this study, the types of support practices women reported in each can be compared to establish the construct validity of the Spousal Support Practices Scale.

Research Question 5 asked how the employed mothers' responses to the work-family narratives compared to the Spousal Support Practices Scale.

Child Care Narrative Themes

Table 4.18 presents results from the correlational analysis of husbands' themes in the child care narratives and the Spousal Support Practices Scale. As can be seen, Expression of Concern was positively associated with the total scale ($r = .23$) and the components, Encouraging Discussion ($r = .27$), Interpersonal Involvement ($r = .24$), and Acceptance ($r = .24$). Minimizing Wives' Concerns was negatively associated with the scale ($r = -.38$) and all of its components (r s ranged from .25 to .39).

Exploring Alternatives to Child Care was also found to be positively correlated with the scale ($r = .20$) as well as the Offers and Actual Assistance components (r s = .29 and .27). Participation in Child Care was positively associated with the scale ($r = .20$) and the components of Acceptance ($r = .21$) and Actual Assistance ($r = .25$). Avoidance of Child Care was not significantly associated with the total scale, and was only negatively associated with Actual Assistance ($r = -.21$).

Table 4.18

Pearson Correlations Between Husbands' Themes in Child Care
Narratives and Spousal Support Practices

Husbands' Themes	Spousal Support Practices						
	SS	ED	II	A	D	OA	AA
Expression of Concern	.23*	.27**	.24*	.24*	.14	.13	.20
Minimizing Concerns	-.38***	-.39***	-.32**	-.34**	-.35**	-.25*	-.30**
Exploring Alternatives	.20*	.16	.14	.08	.16	.29**	.27**
in Child Care							
Participation in Child Care	.20*	.17	.15	.21*	.17	.15	.25*
Avoidance of Child Care	-.19	-.19	-.19	-.03	-.18	-.15	-.21*

Note. N = 99. *p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. SS=Spousal Support Practices Scale, ED=Encouraging Discussion, II=Interpersonal Involvement, A=Acceptance, D=Dialogue, OA=Offers to Assist, and AA=Actual Assistance.

These findings are noteworthy because the themes extrapolated from the free-response measure of support have significant associations with relevant components of the Spousal Support Practices Scale. Each distinct theme idea is correlated with its relevant support subscales. For instance, there were significant associations between Expression of Concern and Interpersonal Involvement (.24), between Minimizing Wives' Concerns and Acceptance (-.34), between Participation in Child Care and Actual Assistance (.25), and between Avoidance of Child Care and Actual Assistance (-.21). Furthermore, examining the themes in meaningful groups reveals that the groups were correlated with relevant support practices. For

instance, Expression of Concern and Minimizing Wives' Concerns can be seen as a set, since they represent two sides of the notion of conveying concern and caring. These two themes were both significantly correlated with the support practices, Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance. Participation in Child Care and Avoidance of Child Care can also be seen as a set, as they represent two sides of the notion of assistance. These two themes were both correlated with the Actual Assistance component of the scale.

Table 4.19
Pearson Correlations Between Husbands' Themes in Household Narratives and Spousal Support Practices

Husbands' Themes	Spousal Support Practices						
	SS	ED	II	A	D	OA	AA
Expression of Concern	.33**	.32**	.20*	.28**	.33**	.29**	.27**
Minimizing Concerns	-.19	-.18	-.25*	-.22*	-.17	-.13	-.06
Exploring Alternatives in Housework	.20*	.20*	.14	.16	.22*	.20	.12
Participation in Housework	.02	-.04	-.01	.13	-.04	.04	.14
Avoidance of Housework	-.26**	-.25*	-.15	-.21*	-.22*	-.39***	-.20*

Note. N= 103. *p <.05. ** p <.01. *** p < .001. SS=Spousal Support Practices Scale, ED=Encouraging Discussion, II=Interpersonal Involvement, A=Acceptance, D=Dialogue, OA=Offers to Assist, and AA=Actual Assistance.

Household Narrative Themes

Table 4.19 presents the results of husbands' themes in the household narratives and the Spousal Support Practices Scale. Expression of Concern was significantly associated with the total scale ($r = .33$) and each of its components (r s ranged from .27 to .33). Minimizing Wives' Concerns was not significantly associated with the total scale, but was negatively associated with Interpersonal Involvement ($r = -.25$) and Acceptance ($r = -.22$). Exploring Alternatives in Housework was positively associated with the scale ($r = .20$) and the components, Encouraging Discussion ($r = .20$) and Dialogue ($r = .22$). Participation in Housework was the only theme that was not significantly associated with the scale or any of its components. Finally, Avoidance of Housework was negatively associated with the scale ($r = -.26$) and each of the components except Interpersonal Involvement (r s ranged from .20 to .39). Further, a significance test showed that the correlation between the theme, Avoidance of Housework, and the component, Offers of Assistance was significantly stronger than the correlation between the theme, Avoidance of Housework, and the component, Encouraging Discussion (r s = $-.39$ and $-.25$; $z = 1.74$, $p < .04$). This shows that husbands' avoidance of household chores had a stronger negative association with their offers of assistance than with their efforts to engage their wives in discussions of work-family difficulties.

Similar to the findings from the child care narratives, these results show consistent patterns across the two measures of support used in this study. In particular, the significant associations between the Expression of Concern theme and the Interpersonal Involvement component (.20) and

between the Minimizing Wives' Concerns theme and the Acceptance component (-.22) are evidence that the scale has construct validity. Also, the significant associations between the Exploring Alternatives to Housework theme and the components, Encouraging Discussion (.20) and Dialogue (.22), and between the Avoidance of Housework theme and the components, Offers of Assistance (-.39) and Actual Assistance (-.20) are further evidence of the scale's validity.

Like the child care narratives, meaningful groups of themes in the household situation were also correlated with relevant support practices. The themes, Expression of Concern, and Minimizing Wives' Concerns were both significantly correlated with the components, Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance. While the Participation in Housework theme was not correlated with the Assistance component, the Avoidance of Housework theme was, indicating that it is the avoidance of housework that has is associated with wives' perceptions of husbands' assistance.

Construct validity is concerned with whether a procedure really measures the construct it claims to measure (Kerlinger, 1973). In this study, women's descriptions of their husbands' communication practices not only matched the corresponding components of the fixed-response scale, but were also significantly correlated with these components. Similar patterns of themes and categories emerged in both the child care situation and the household chores situation, and the themes in both of these situations were associated with corresponding components of the fixed-response scale. Moreover, correlational analysis of each open-ended situation showed significant correlations with corresponding components of the Spousal

Support Practices Scale. Thus, the fact that two versions of the free-response measure yielded similar themes, and that themes on both of these versions were significantly associated with corresponding components of the fixed-response scale provides further evidence that the Spousal Support Practices Scale is measuring support within the context of employed mothers.

Regression Analyses on The Outcomes of Adaptation

This section presents the results of the regression analyses on the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation. Research Questions 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 16 asked how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to account for variation in marital, job, and life satisfaction. These questions were answered through a series of hierarchical regression analyses, with forced entry of variables at different steps in the analyses. I did not choose a stepwise method because this method is primarily useful when there is a large pool of independent variables and little reasoning to guide the selection of variables for each block in the regression. Other methods, such as forward selection and backward elimination, were not chosen because I wanted to examine the effect of all of the relevant independent variables on the dependent variables. The hierarchical procedure allows for such an examination because it requires the entry of predictor variables in the regression equation according to their logical priority (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Unlike other methods of entry, all variables of interest were included in the analyses at particular steps, without being eliminated by the statistical program. Sets of independent variables were entered cumulatively in a specified hierarchical order. Upon

the addition of each new set an R squared (R^2) was calculated so that sets were analyzed into increments and the proportion of variance in the dependent variable due to the addition of each new set of independent variables was determined (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

In each hierarchical analysis, the problems of adaptation were initially entered as the first block, and support was entered as the second block. While the possibility exists that women may already perceive husbands' support before they begin to experience work-family difficulties, in this study I was examining the supportive communication practices that husbands' enacted in response to their wives' problems or difficulties handling work and family. It is the support communicated in this context that I was interested in, because I wanted to determine how husbands responded when their wives discussed work-family problems. Both the spousal support practices scale and the work-family support narratives were designed with this view. However, the possibility that problems develop within the context of a home environment where support may already be communicated was also tested through additional regression analyses.

In these regression analyses, the predictor (i.e., independent) variables included work-family conflict, stress, inequity, double bind beliefs, and spousal support. The dependent variables were marital and life satisfaction. Independent variables were only included in the analysis when significant correlations were found between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Given the correlational analyses, then, all of these independent variables were included in the regression analyses for marital

and life satisfaction so that the effect of each variable could be assessed. Because job satisfaction was only correlated with one independent variable (i.e., stress), there was no need to conduct a regression analysis on this outcome.

Hierarchical regression also provides a framework in which interactions among variables can be assessed. Interaction terms are formed by multiplying the values of relevant predictors by one another and entering them into the regression after the original predictors (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Initially, four interaction terms were created by multiplying the spousal support practices scale by each of the problems of adaptation (work-family conflict, stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs). I examined these interaction terms so that I could determine whether the effect of support on marital and life satisfaction was different depending on the problem and its level. Other interaction terms were created for subsequent analyses, and these are described in the respective sections.

Before presenting the results of the regression analyses, I will discuss the assumptions that should be met before using regression analysis. One assumption of regression is "the assumption of measurement without error," which refers to the validity of the measures used in the study, and was established in Chapter 3 (Berry, 1993, p. 49). All of the measures used were valid measures of the constructs under investigation. A second assumption is that regression analysis involves variables that have linear relationships. Examination of scatterplots revealed linear relationships between each dependent variable and independent variable under investigation. A third assumption is in regard to the level of measurement, which should be

quantitative and continuous (Berry, 1993). All variables included in these analyses met this criterion. A fourth assumption is the absence of perfect multicollinearity (Berry, 1993). This is rarely a problem in research, as it would require that two independent variables were perfect linear combinations of one another. However, multicollinearity also refers instances where two or more independent variables are highly correlated. Such correlations make it difficult to interpret the individual effects of each independent variable on a dependent variable. In this study, two independent variables were found to have collinearity, and so this issue needs to be addressed and is addressed in the relevant sections. Finally, in regression analysis it is assumed that the error term (i.e., the difference between the sample and the population) has a mean of zero (Berry, 1993). If the regression model is appropriate for the data, the residuals, which are estimates of errors, should have similar characteristics. To test this, standardized residuals were examined for each of the regression models and were found to have means of around zero. Because these five assumptions were satisfied, regression analysis was appropriate for this study. The following section presents the results of the regression analyses on marital satisfaction.

Marital Satisfaction

In order to determine which of the problems of adaptation are the strongest predictors of marital satisfaction, Research Question 6 asked how the problems of employed mothers combined to account for variation in marital satisfaction. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.20. Given the analysis of the adaptation process of employed mothers in

Chapter 2, problems were seen as preceeding the supportive practices that alleviate the problems. Thus, the problems were entered as a first block, followed by support as a second block, and the interaction terms as a third block. Given this order, the problems of adaptation together explained 22% of the variance in marital satisfaction at step 1 ($R = .47$, $R^2 = .22$, adjusted $R^2 = .19$, $F = 7.86$, $df = 4,112$, $p < .001$). Stress ($b = -.19$, $t = -2.12$, $p < .05$) and inequity ($b = -.28$, $t = -3.18$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors of marital satisfaction, and double bind beliefs was nearly a significant predictor ($b = -.17$, $t = -1.79$, $p < .10$). Work-family conflict was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction ($b = -.02$, $t = -.20$, $p = .839$). An examination of semi-partial correlation coefficients permits a more informed understanding of the proportion of variance in marital satisfaction uniquely associated with particular independent variables when the effects of the other independent variables are partialled out. When the effects of the other variables were partialled out, stress uniquely accounted for 3% of the variance in marital satisfaction (semi-partial $r = -.18$) and inequity uniquely accounted for 7% of the variance in marital satisfaction (semi-partial $r = -.27$). Thus, while the problems as a set were significant predictors of marital satisfaction, stress and inequity were the strongest predictors.

Table 4.20

Summary of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Marital Satisfaction with Problems and Support

Step	Variable Entered	R ² Change	R	<u>R²</u>	<u>Overall Regression</u>			
					Adj. <u>R²</u>	<u>df</u>	F	p
1	WFC Stress Inequity DBB	.22	.47	.22	.19	4,112	7.86	.000
2	Husband Support	.44	.81	.65	.64	5,111	41.92	.000
3	SS x WFC SS x Stress SS x Inequity SS x DBB	.05	.84	.71	.68	9,107	28.54	.000

Note. N = 116. SS = Spousal Support.

Research Question 8 asked how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' marital satisfaction. When entered at step 2, spousal support uniquely explained 44% of the variance in marital satisfaction (R = .81, R² = .65, adjusted R² = .64, F = 41.92, df = 5,111, p < .000). This reflects a significant improvement in the model from step 1 (R² = .22, F = 139.36, df = 1,111, p < .000). However, the third variable block, which contained the interaction terms, was also significant (R = .84, R² = .71, adjusted R² = .68, F = 28.54, df = 9,107, p < .001) and also contributed significantly to the prediction of marital satisfaction at step 3 (R² = .05, F = 4.74, df = 4,107, p < .001). At step 3, the

interactions between support and stress ($b = .80, t = 2.72, p < .01$) and support and double bind beliefs ($b = .65, t = 2.05, p < .05$) were each significant predictors of marital satisfaction.

An interaction effect refers to a situation where the effect of one independent variable on a dependent variable is different depending on the level of another independent variable (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In this regression model, the interaction between support and stress indicated that the effect of support on marital satisfaction was different depending on the level of stress experienced by the employed mothers. Inspection of group means, correlations, and graphed regression lines showed that when stress was high, women's marital satisfaction was higher when they had high levels of support from husbands ($r = .85$). But when women's stress was low, there was still a strong positive influence of husbands' support on marital satisfaction, but low levels of support from husbands did not have as strong of an effect on marital satisfaction ($r = .76$). The difference between these correlations was significant ($z = 6.50, p < .000$). This means that women's marital satisfaction was more positively affected by husbands' support when the women's stress levels were high.

There was also a conditional relationship between support and double bind beliefs. The interaction between support and double bind beliefs indicated that when women perceived high levels of double bind beliefs in their lives, and high levels of support from their husbands, their marital satisfaction was substantially higher than when they perceived low levels of double bind beliefs and low levels of husbands' support ($rs = .83$ and $.51; z = 15.60, p < .000$). That is, marital satisfaction was higher when

there was the perception of high double bind beliefs, but also the perception of high support. Together, these findings correspond to the depiction of support in the design of this study, in which support is seen as a response to the problems that employed mothers experience. The interactions between support and stress and support and double bind beliefs suggest the importance of support in the lives of employed mothers, particularly when women feel stress and perceive double bind beliefs. It is at these times when a lack of support from husbands exerts less of a positive effect on women's marital satisfaction than the perception of high levels of support. Thus, support exerted a different effect on these women's level of marital satisfaction, depending on the level of stress or perception of double bind beliefs.

The issue of multicollinearity is also relevant to this regression analysis, as two of the independent variables (i.e., inequity and spousal support) were highly intercorrelated ($r = .62$). Cohen and Cohen (1983) recommend that if an investigator is interested in each of the variables in the analysis, a hierarchical regression procedure should be employed, as it was done here. Indeed, the tolerance statistics for inequity (.595) and support (.552) were similar, and smaller in magnitude than the tolerance statistics for the other independent variables. This indicates that they share more variance than the other independent variables. Examining the semi-partial correlation coefficients can help determine the extent to which particular variables uniquely accounted for variance in marital satisfaction when the effects of the other variables are partialled out. At step 2, inequity uniquely accounted for 2% of the variance in marital satisfaction, but support

uniquely accounted for 44% of the variance in marital satisfaction. So support emerged as a much stronger predictor of marital satisfaction than inequity at step 2.

The Adaptation Problems and The Components of Spousal Support

Given the discovery of the conditional relationships between support and stress and between support and double bind beliefs when measured by the total support scale, I wanted to see if these conditional relationships were also obtained when the individual components of support were examined. I also wanted to determine how the individual components of support contributed to the overall prediction of marital satisfaction. So another hierarchical regression was conducted in which the problems of adaptation were entered as a first block, followed by the individual components of spousal support (i.e., Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance, Dialogue, and Assistance) as a second block, and interaction terms entered as a third block. Interaction terms for this analysis were formed by multiplying the components, Interpersonal Involvement and Dialogue, each with stress and double bind beliefs. These combinations were only chosen because prior analyses showed that only these variables were significant predictors of marital satisfaction. They were also only chosen because fewer variables entered reduces the likelihood of experiment-wise error. Experiment-wise error involves Type I error; the error of rejecting a true null hypothesis, which is increased when a large number of independent variables are entered into an analysis such as hierarchical regression. One way to address this problem is to restrict the number of independent variables (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Because work

family conflict did not emerge as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction in the previous regression analyses, it was also omitted from this analysis as well as the other analyses presented in this section. Deleting this variable contributed to a more parsimonious regression model, and further addressed the potential problem of experiment-wise error (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

As already been indicated by the first analysis, the problems were significant predictors of marital satisfaction at step 1 ($R = .47$, $R^2 = .22$, adjusted $R^2 = .20$, $F = 10.55$, $df = 3, 113$, $p < .000$). Step 2 was also significant ($R = .82$, $R^2 = .68$, adjusted $R^2 = .65$, $F = 28.30$, $df = 8, 108$, $p < .000$), and the results showed that the inclusion of the support components as a whole set substantially increased model fit at step 2 ($R^2_{\text{c}} = .46$, $F = 30.65$, $df = 5, 108$, $p < .000$). Dialogue was the only individual component of spousal support that was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction when the components were entered at step 2 ($b = .38$, $t = 2.84$, $p < .01$), but Interpersonal Involvement was nearly a significant predictor ($b = .22$, $t = 1.92$, $p < .10$) and Acceptance was also nearly significant ($b = .16$, $t = 1.69$, $p < .10$). However, while step 3 was overall significant ($R = .85$, $R^2 = .73$, adjusted $R^2 = .69$, $F = 22.90$, $df = 12, 104$, $p < .000$) the inclusion of the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to the prediction of marital satisfaction ($R^2_{\text{c}} = .05$, $F = 4.59$, $df = 4, 104$, $p < .10$). Thus, when taken together, the support components combined explained a significant percentage of variance in marital satisfaction, and three out of the five components were especially influential in explaining this variance. However, a major difference in this analysis is that the interaction terms were not significant, unlike the analysis

which used the total support scale. The lack of interactions may be because the chance of detecting significant interactions with the total support scale was greater because it had a much larger range than the individual component subscales (the range difference was 192); such variation in the total scale permitted a much greater likelihood of capturing variation in patterns of relationships with the other variables.

Collapsed Components of Spousal Support

While the previous findings showed that multiple components of support were influential in predicting marital satisfaction, the validity of these findings is potentially threatened by the risk of experiment-wise error. Because there were five components of the Support Scale, and the inclusion of too many independent variables in a regression analysis increases the risk of experiment-wise error, in the subsequent analyses I took a more conservative view of the support components. Specifically, the five support components were collapsed into two groups so that variation among larger groupings of the support scale could be more reliably examined. The condensed support components were formed by combining Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance into one component, and Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance into another component. These combinations were chosen because they represented a difference between supportive practices focused on action-dialogue (i.e., Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance), and those supportive practices focused on empathy and understanding (i.e., Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance). These combinations also reflect the solve and solace support distinction by Barbee, Rowatt, and Cunningham (1998), the action

facilitating and nurturant support distinction by Cutrona and Suhr (1994), and the emotion-focus and action-focus practices distinction by Goldsmith and Dun (1997).

In another regression, then, the problems of adaptation were entered as a first block, followed by the collapsed components of spousal support as a second block. Interaction terms formed from the combinations of the condensed support components and the problems of stress and double bind beliefs were entered as a third block (see Table 4.21). These problems were only chosen because they were the only problems that had significant interactions with support in the previous analyses. Similar to the previous analyses, step 2 was significant ($R = .81$, $R^2 = .66$, adjusted $R^2 = .64$, $F = 42.51$, $df = 5, 111$, $p < .000$), and the addition of the support components resulted in a significant increase in the prediction of marital satisfaction ($R^2_c = .44$, $F = 70.88$, $df = 2, 111$, $p < .000$). The Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance component (semi-partial $r = .20$, $b = .50$, $t = 3.68$, $p < .000$) and the Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance component (semi-partial $r = .19$, $b = .41$, $t = 3.38$, $p < .001$) each uniquely accounted for 4% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Thus, when problems are present, both solve and solace support behaviors from husbands are important in predicting employed mothers' marital satisfaction. It is not just the action-dialogue practices that are important for employed mothers' marital satisfaction; providing empathy, understanding and acceptance also contributes to their happiness in their marriages.

Finally, the third step was significant ($R = .84$, $R^2 = .71$, adjusted $R^2 = .68$, $df = 9, 107$, $F = 28.36$, $p < .000$), but the inclusion of the interaction terms

at the third step did not result in a significant increase in the analysis ($R^2_c = .05$, $F = 4.32$, $df = 4, 107$, $p < .01$). None of the interaction terms were significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Taken together, these findings and the findings of the previous analysis are different from the findings of the analyses involving the total support scale, where interactions were discovered. Given the measurement issues identified in the prior analysis involving the individual components of support, and the findings of this analysis, it is likely that the results obtained by the total support scale are a more valid reflection of the conditional relationships that exist between total support and stress, and support and double bind beliefs in the prediction of marital satisfaction. The findings from this analysis show that the influence of support on marital satisfaction operates equally through the two distinct support components of action-dialogue and involvement-acceptance.

Table 4.21

Summary of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Marital Satisfaction with the Problems of Adaptation and Condensed Subscales of Support

Step	Variable Entered	R ² Change	R	R ²	Overall Regression			
					Adj. R ²	df	F	p
1	Stress Inequity DBB	.22	.47	.22	.20	3,113	10.55	.000
2	II & A ED, D, & AS	.44	.81	.66	.64	2,111	42.51	.000
3	IIA x Stress IIA x DBB EDA x Stress EDA x DBB	.05	.84	.71	.68	4,107	28.36	.000

Note. N = 116. IIA = Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance, EDA = Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance.

Examination of the Mediating Role of Support on the Problems

Even assuming the existence of conditional relationships between support and stress and support and double bind beliefs, it is also useful to ask about the amount of variance support accounts for in marital satisfaction, and the extent to which adaptation problems are mediated through spousal support. Because the correlations between marital satisfaction and support were high for women who had either high or low levels of stress, and high or low perceptions of double bind beliefs, there is still a strong effect for support on marital satisfaction, beyond the conditional relationships that were found.

As indicated in Chapter 2, support may be usefully viewed as given in response to problems experienced by an employed mother, and the interaction effects found in the previous analysis support that view. However, there is the possibility that support also preceeds the problems. That is, husbands may already be providing support to their wives before the women experience work-family problems. Thus, the problems may be seen as arising within an overall communicative environment in which support is provided. In the context of such a supportive environment, women may reappraise problems such as work-family conflict and inequity. Thus, the problems may be mediated through support. The problems of adaptation may be lessened because of the supportive environment within which those problems are handled.

In order to examine the amount of variance attributed to support when it preceeds the problems, a simple path analysis using multiple regression was conducted. This analysis involved examining and comparing two hierarchical regression analyses, one that involved entering the problems of adaptation on the first step of the regression, and the collapsed components of support on the second step (already described above). In the other regression the order of entry for the problems of adaptation and support components was reversed. While this analysis does not enable one to specifically explicate causal relationships between the problems and support, this analysis does permit a more informed understanding of which type of support (i.e., action-dialogue, or involvement-acceptance support) explains more variance in marital satisfaction when these components are entered before and after the

problems of adaptation in the regression analysis, and how support affects the problems when support is entered first or second. The difference between the values of the R squared change (R^2_c) for the problems when entered first and when entered second provides an indication of how much the effect of these problems on marital satisfaction is mediated through support, or vice versa. I did not consider the effects of the third step in these particular regressions because the prior analyses detected no significant interaction effects between support subscales, stress, and double bind beliefs.

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.22. As seen, a substantial reduction in the variance in marital satisfaction attributed to the problems was caused by entering the support components into the regression equation first (from 22% to 2%). When the support components were entered first in the regression they accounted for a significantly greater percentage of variance in marital satisfaction than the problems ($R^2_c = .64$, $F = 99.69$, $df = 2,114$, $p < .000$). The Interpersonal Involvement component explained 7% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($b = .50$, $t = 4.52$, $p < .000$) and the Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance component ($b = .32$, $t = 2.90$, $p < .01$) explained 3% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2_c = .04$, $F = 99.69$, $df = 2,114$, $p < .000$) when the components were entered first. When the problems were entered at step 2, the overall step was significant ($R = .81$, $R^2 = .66$, adjusted $R^2 = .64$, $df = 5,111$, $F = 42.51$, $p < .000$), but the problems as a set were insignificant predictors of marital satisfaction ($R^2_c = .02$, $F = 2.23$, $df = 3,111$, $p < .10$). At step 2, inequity remained significant ($b = -.15$, $t = -1.99$, $p < .05$), but stress and double bind

beliefs were non-significant. Similar to the previous analysis the inclusion of the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to the prediction of marital satisfaction at step 3 ($R^2_c = .05$, $F = 4.32$, $df = 2,107$, $p < .01$).

Table 4.22

Comparison of the Effect of Adaptation Problems on Marital Satisfaction When Entered Into Regression Analyses Before and After Support Components

Source	<u>Indices Entered into Regression Equation First</u>							
	<u>Adaptation Problems</u>				<u>Support Components</u>			
	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Problems (set totals)		(.22)	(10.55)	(.000)		(.02)	(2.23)	(.088)
1. Stress	-.19	.20	4.79	.031	-.11	.66	3.30	.072
2. Inequity	-.29	.14	10.91	.001	-.15	.65	3.97	.049
3. DBB	-.17	.22	3.49	.064	.04	.66	.32	ns
Support (set totals)		(.44)	(70.88)	(.000)		(.64)	(99.69)	(.000)
1. II & A	.41	.66	11.41	.001	.50	.61	20.47	.000
2. ED, D, & AS	.50	.62	13.51	.000	.32	.64	8.39	.005

Note. $N = 116$. II & A = Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance, ED, D, & AS = Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance. Numbers in parentheses represent R^2 , F , and p change statistics.

These results show that support captures a greater percentage of variance in marital satisfaction when it preceeds the problems. That is, we may want to view support as an overarching communicative climate within which problems are handled. When problems such as inequity and stress

arise within the context of a supportive environment in the home, problems like inequity and stress lose significant strength in predicting marital satisfaction. Thus, apart from the conditional relationships that were found to exist when the total measure of support was examined, the results of this analysis show that support accounts for a greater percentage of variance in marital satisfaction when we view support as a communication environment within which problems arise and are handled. Integrating these findings with the prior analyses suggests that the presence of a supportive communication environment may be especially valuable when problems such as stress and double bind beliefs are high.

The Problems of Adaptation and The Work-Family Support Narrative Themes

Because two measures of support were used in this study, it is also possible to determine if the work-family narrative measure of support operates similarly to the scale measure in predicting marital satisfaction. For this purpose, another hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in which the problems of adaptation were entered as a first block, followed by the narrative themes that were significantly correlated with marital satisfaction as a second block, and interaction terms as a third block. The themes that were correlated with marital satisfaction were Minimizing Wives' Concerns and Participation in Child Care in the child care narratives, and Expression of Concern and Avoidance of Housework in the household narratives. In order to make more meaningful comparisons of the contributions of the themes to marital satisfaction, the positive themes (i.e., Participation and Expression of Concern) were combined, and the negative

themes (i.e., Minimizing and Avoidance) were also combined. Interaction terms were formed by multiplying the themes with each problem (i.e., stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs).

The results of this regression analysis are presented in Table 4.23. When entered at the first step, the problems accounted for 16% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R = .40$, $R^2 = .16$, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, $df = 3,85$, $F = 5.26$, $p < .01$). The second step, which included the themes, was also significant in the analysis and accounted for 22% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R = .47$, $R^2 = .22$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$, $df = 2,83$, $F = 4.73$, $p < .001$). The positive themes (i.e., Participation and Concern) were nearly significant ($b = .19$, $t = 1.89$, $p < .10$), but the negative themes (i.e., Minimization and Avoidance) were not significant predictors of marital satisfaction ($b = -.17$, $t = -1.60$, $p = .114$). Together, though, the themes contributed significantly to the model at step 2 ($R^2_c = .07$, $F = 3.47$, $df = 2,83$, $p < .05$). The addition of the interaction terms did not significantly contribute to marital satisfaction at step 3 ($R^2_c = .01$, $df = 3,80$, $F = .34$, $p = .795$). This analysis, then, is similar to the previous analyses in that the support themes as a whole significantly contributed to the prediction of marital satisfaction at step 2.

Table 4.23

Summary of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Marital Satisfaction with Problems and Work-Family Support Themes

Step	Variable Entered	R2 Change	R	<u>R2</u>	<u>Overall Regression</u>			
					Adj. R2	df	F	p
1	Stress Inequity DBB	.16	.40	.16	.13	3,85	5.260	.002
2	Participation & Concern Minimizing & Avoidance	.07	.47	.22	.17	5,83	4.729	.001
3	Themes x Stress Themes x Inequity Themes x DBB	.01	.48	.23	.16	8,80	3.013	.005

Note. N = 88.

Examination of the Mediating Role of Support Themes on the Problems

Given these findings, and the previous analyses in which support was found to be better viewed as a communicative environment that preceeds the adaptation problems, I then wanted to determine whether reversing the order of the themes and the problems in a regression would alter the findings. An analysis was conducted in which the themes were entered at step 1, and is presented in Table 4.25. When entered in the first block, the narrative themes accounted for 15% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R = .38$, $R^2 = .15$, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, $df = 2,86$, $F = 7.37$, $p < .001$). Each of the themes became significant predictors: Minimization and

Avoidance uniquely accounted for 10% of the variance ($b = -.26$, $t = -2.55$, $p < .01$), and Participation and Concern uniquely accounted for 5% of the variance in marital satisfaction when entered before the problems ($b = .23$, $t = 2.28$, $p < .05$). Overall step 2 was also significant ($R = .47$, $R^2 = .22$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$, $df = 5,83$, $F = 4.73$, $p < .001$), but the addition of the problems were not significant predictors in the regression ($R^2_c = .08$, $F = 2.68$, $df = 3,83$, $p < .05$). In this analysis inequity was no longer significant at step 2 ($b = -.17$, $t = -1.63$, $p = .107$). Step 3 was also overall significant ($R = .48$, $R^2 = .23$, adjusted $R^2 = .16$, $df = 8,80$, $F = 3.01$, $p < .01$), but the addition of the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to the prediction of marital satisfaction ($R^2_c = .01$, $F = .34$, $df = 3,80$, $p = .795$).

Overall, this suggests that both the supportive and unsupportive practices represented in the themes play a significant role in predicting marital satisfaction. Also, in this analysis the problems as a whole and inequity in particular ceased to be significant at step 2. Thus, inequity dissipates when it arises within the context of both supportive and unsupportive communication practices. While I am not arguing for causal relationships between the problems and the themes, I did find that entering the themes first in the regression contributed to a better model fit, in that both themes were significant predictors of marital satisfaction at step 1, and inequity was mediated by them. However, the effects of the themes in these analyses was not as strong as the total measure of support or the collapsed support components in predicting marital satisfaction.

Table 4.24

Comparison of the Effect of Adaptation Problems on Marital Satisfaction
When Entered Into Regression Analyses Before and After Support Themes

Source	<u>Indices Entered into Regression Equation First</u>							
	<u>Adaptation Problems</u>				<u>Support Components</u>			
	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Problems (set totals)		(.16)	(5.26)	(.002)		(.08)	(2.68)	(.052)
1. Stress	-.20	.14	-3.72	.057	-.19	.19	-3.53	.064
2. Inequity	-.27	.09	-6.89	.010	-.17	.18	-2.65	.107
3. DBB	-.12	.16	-1.30	ns	-.07	.22	-.48	ns
Themes (set totals)		(.07)	(3.47)	(.036)		(.15)	(7.37)	(.001)
1. Participation & Concern	.19	.20	3.56	.063	.23	.15	5.21	.025
2. Minimization & Avoidance	-.17	.22	-2.54	ns	-.26	.10	-6.52	.012

Note. *N* = 88. Numbers in parentheses represent R², F, and p change statistics.

Overall, the results of the regression analyses on marital satisfaction showed that interaction effects were detected between the total measure of support and the problems of stress and double bind beliefs. These results showed that the effects of stress and double bind beliefs on marital satisfaction were contingent upon husbands' level of overall support. Both types of support (i.e., involvement-acceptance support and action-dialogue support) contributed meaningfully to the prediction of marital satisfaction. Also, I found from these analyses that when we view support as preceeding

the problems, we are able to explain a greater percentage of variance in marital satisfaction, in addition to the conditional relationships that were found to exist with the total support measure. The overall effect of the problems as a whole were lessened when support was conceptualized as being present in the home, as opposed to being just a mere remedy to problems. The support themes, Participation and Concern and Minimization and Avoidance, were found to play a similar role in the prediction of marital satisfaction, although the effects of the support themes were weaker than the effects of the total scale measure of support. Nevertheless, the findings from the analysis of the themes also confirmed the notion that problems arise and are handled within the context of a supportive communicative environment.

Life Satisfaction

This section presents the results of the regression analyses on employed mothers' life satisfaction. Research Question 13 asked how the problems of employed mothers' adaptation combine to account for variation in life satisfaction. The results of the initial analysis are presented in Table 4.25. In this analysis, the problems of adaptation were entered as the first block, support was entered as a second block, and the interaction terms of support multiplied by the problems were entered as a third block. The problems of adaptation explained a highly significant 33% of the variance in life satisfaction at step 1 ($R = .57$, $R^2 = .32$, adjusted $R^2 = .31$, $F = 13.71$, $df = 4, 112$, $p < .000$). Stress ($b = -.48$, $t = -5.78$, $p < .000$) and inequity ($b = -.19$, $t = -2.26$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors of life satisfaction, unlike work-family conflict ($b = -.06$, $t = -.75$, $p = .456$) and double bind beliefs ($b = .00$, t

= .04, $p = .971$). Stress uniquely accounted for 20% of the variance in life satisfaction and inequity uniquely accounted for 3% of the variance when the effects of the other independent variables were partialled out. Thus, stress and inequity were the strongest problem predictors of life satisfaction; together the problems accounted for a moderately sized percentage of the variance (33%) in life satisfaction.

Research Question 16 asked how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices combine to predict employed mothers' life satisfaction. In the hierarchical analysis, spousal support was entered in the second block, and the block was significant ($R = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, adjusted $R^2 = .48$, $F = 22.02$, $df = 5,111$, $p < .000$). A significant improvement in the model was also realized ($R^2_{\text{c}} = .17$, $F = 37.45$, $df = 1,111$, $p < .000$), as support accounted for 17% of the variance. The addition of the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to the prediction of life satisfaction ($R^2_{\text{c}} = .02$, $F = .89$, $df = 4,107$, $p = .480$).

As indicated in the previous section, collinearity between inequity and support was present, so semi-partial correlation coefficients were examined. Stress uniquely accounted for 20% of the variance (semi-partial $r = -.45$) and inequity accounted for 3% of the variance in life satisfaction (semi-partial $r = -.18$) when entered at step 1. Spousal support uniquely accounted for 17% of the variance when entered at step 2 (semi-partial $r = .41$, $b = .55$, $t = 6.12$, $p < .000$), but inequity uniquely accounted for less than 1% of the variance ($b = -.11$, $t = -1.31$, $p = .193$). Thus, support had a stronger effect than inequity in predicting employed mothers' life satisfaction. This analysis shows that, while the problems together

accounted for a moderate percentage of variance (33%) in life satisfaction, support accounted for an additional 17% of the variance. These analyses also show that conditional relationships between support and the problems were not operating, unlike the analysis with marital satisfaction.

Table 4.25

Summary of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Life Satisfaction with Adaptation Problems and Support

Step	Variable Entered	R ² Change	R	R ²	Overall Regression			
					Adj. R ²	df	F	p
1	WFC Stress Inequity DBB	.33	.57	.33	.31	4,112	13.71	.000
2	Husband Support	.17	.71	.50	.48	5,111	22.02	.000
3	SS x WFC SS x Stress SS x Inequity SS x DBB	.02	.72	.51	.47	9,107	12.57	.000

Note. N = 116. SS = Spousal Support.

Examination of the Mediating Role of Support on the Problems

Given that both the problems and spousal support were significant predictors of life satisfaction, I examined next how the problems of adaptation and spousal support practices affected life satisfaction, by examining the extent to which the impact of the problems was mediated

through spousal support, or the extent to which spousal support was mediated through the problems. For this purpose, a simple path analysis using two multiple regressions was conducted, similar to the procedures presented in the section on marital satisfaction. The first of the two analyses was the prior one, in which the problems of adaptation were entered on the first step of the regression, and spousal support was entered on the second step. This was compared with an analysis in which the order of entry for support and the problems was reversed.

The results of these regression analyses are presented in Table 4.26. As can be seen, entering spousal support into the regression equation first caused a reduction (from 33% to 19%) in the variance in life satisfaction attributable to adaptation problems. Both work-family conflict and double bind beliefs were insignificant predictors of life satisfaction in each analysis. Inequity uniquely accounted for 3% of the variance in life satisfaction when entered as part of the first block (semi-partial $r = -.18$, $b = -.19$, $t = -2.26$, $p < .05$), but was non-significant when entered at step 2 (semi-partial $r = -.09$, $b = -.11$, $t = -1.31$, $p = .193$). Thus, when support is already present, the problem of inequity is lessened. That is, in the context of an on-going supportive environment, support lessens the affect of problems such as inequity, and these problems, then, are not as strong in predicting women's general happiness in their lives. However, stress uniquely accounted for 20% of the variance in life satisfaction when entered as part of the first block (semi-partial $r = -.45$, $b = -.48$, $t = -5.76$, $p < .000$), and still uniquely accounted for 17% of the variance when entered at step 2 (semi-partial $r = -.41$, $b = -.45$, $t = -6.13$, $p < .000$). Therefore, unlike inequity, stress is not

mediated through support. Even when support is present in the home, an employed mothers' stress is still a predictor of her life satisfaction.

Table 4.26

Comparison of the Effect of Adaptation Problems on Life Satisfaction
When Entered Into Regression Analyses Before and After Spousal Support

Source	<u>Indices Entered into Regression Equation First</u>							
	<u>Adaptation Problems</u>				<u>Spousal Support</u>			
	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Problems (set totals)		(.33)	(13.71)	(.000)		(.19)	(10.26)	(.000)
1. WFC	-.06	.33	-.56	ns	-.04	.50	-.34	ns
2. Stress	-.48	.29	-33.47	.000	-.45	.48	-37.55	.000
3. Inequity	-.19	.33	5.13	.026	-.11	.48	-1.71	ns
4. DBB	.00	.33	.14	ns	.12	.48	2.37	ns
Support (set totals)		(.17)	(37.45)	.000		(.31)	(52.27)	(.000)
1. Husband Support	.55	.50	37.45	.000	.56	.31	52.27	.000

Note. N = 116. Numbers in parentheses represent R², F, and p change statistics.

Similar to the analyses on marital satisfaction, I am not using these analyses to make causal arguments about the effect of the problems and support on life satisfaction. However, overall, these regression analyses suggest that the model of support entered as a first block is a better fit than support entered as a second block. That is, we may usefully view support

as an overall communicative environment within which problems such as inequity arise, and within such a communicative climate, a problem like inequity may be reinterpreted and reframed. However, this model also shows us that, even within a supportive communication environment, problems such as stress may not be lessened or reframed. Stress is still a predictor of life satisfaction, even within a context of support, and that the effect of stress on life satisfaction does not depend on husbands' support.

The Adaptation Problems and The Components of Spousal Support

In order to gain more insight about how the problems and support operate in predicting life satisfaction I also examined the contributions of the individual components of support. Another hierarchical regression was conducted in which the problems of adaptation were entered as a first block, followed by the individual components of spousal support (i.e., Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance, Dialogue, and Assistance) as a second block, and interaction terms entered as a third block. Interaction terms were formed by multiplying the component of Assistance with stress and inequity, as prior analyses showed that these variables were significant predictors of life satisfaction.

As indicated previously, the problems of adaptation explained 33% of the variance in life satisfaction, and the regression was highly significant at step 1 ($R = .57$, $R^2 = .33$, adjusted $R^2 = .31$, $F = 13.71$, $df = 4, 112$, $p < .000$). Stress ($b = -.48$, $t = -5.78$, $p < .000$) and inequity ($b = -.19$, $t = -2.26$, $p < .05$) were each significant predictors of life satisfaction at step 1. At step 2, the support components were significant as a whole in predicting life satisfaction ($R = .71$, $R^2 = .51$, adjusted $R^2 = .47$, $F = 12.25$, $df = 9, 107$, $p <$

.000) and the addition of the components at step 2 contributed to an increase in the prediction of life satisfaction ($R^2_c = .18$, $F = 7.77$, $df = 5,107$, $p < .000$). However, only the Assistance component emerged as operating significantly different from the other support components ($b = .33$, $t = 2.31$, $p < .05$), and uniquely explained 2% of the variance in life satisfaction (semi-partial $r = .16$) when the effects of the other independent variables were partialled out. Step 3 was significant overall ($R = .72$, $R^2 = .51$, adjusted $R^2 = .46$, $F = 10.07$, $df = 11,105$, $p < .000$), but the addition of the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to the prediction of life satisfaction in the regression analysis ($R^2_c = .01$, $F = .62$, $df = 2,105$, $p = .539$). Overall, this analysis shows that, the components of support as a set explained a meaningful amount of variance in life satisfaction, but the one component that explained a significantly higher percentage of variance was Assistance.

Collapsed Components of Spousal Support

Given this prior analysis, I next wanted to determine if different groupings of support components would explain variation in life satisfaction more distinctly. In order to determine the contributions of the two types of support (i.e., action-dialogue support and involvement-acceptance support) to life satisfaction, another regression analysis was conducted in which the problems were entered as a first block, followed by the collapsed components of spousal support as a second block, and the interaction terms of each (collapsed) support component multiplied by the problems of stress and inequity entered as a third block. These interaction terms were chosen because prior analyses showed that stress and inequity were the only problems that were significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Table 4.27

Comparison of the Effect of Adaptation Problems on Life Satisfaction
When Entered Into Regression Analyses Before and After Support
Components

Source	<u>Indices Entered into Regression Equation First</u>							
	<u>Adaptation Problems</u>				<u>Support Components</u>			
	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Problems (set totals)		(.33)	(13.71)	(.000)		(.18)	(9.89)	(.000)
1. WFC	-.06	.33	-.56	ns	-.05	.50	-.34	ns
2. Stress	-.48	.29	-33.47	.000	-.46	.48	-37.55	.000
3. Inequity	-.19	.33	5.13	.026	.13	.50	-1.71	ns
4. DBB	.00	.33	.14	ns	.11	.49	2.37	ns
Support (set totals)		(.17)	(18.57)	(.000)		(.32)	(26.51)	(.000)
1. II & A	.06	.50	.15	ns	.30	.30	3.87	.052
2. ED, D, & AS	.51	.50	9.51	.003	.28	.32	3.48	.065

Note. N = 116. II & A = Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance, ED, D, & AS = Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance. Numbers in parentheses represent R², F, and p change statistics.

The results of step 1 were identical to the analysis involving the problems and the five components of support in which the problems explained 33% of the variance in life satisfaction. When entered at step 2, the two components of support uniquely explained 17% of the variance in life satisfaction (R² = .17, F = 18.57, df = 2,110, p < .000), and the regression was highly significant (R = .71, R² = .50, adjusted R² = .47, F = 18.19, df = 6,110, p < .000). The only component set that emerged as a significant predictor was the Encouraging Discussion, Dialogue, and Assistance set (b

= .51, $t = 3.08$, $p < .01$). This support set uniquely explained 4% of the variance (semi-partial $r = .21$) in life satisfaction when the effects of the other independent variables were partialled out. The interaction terms remained non-significant additions in the regression analysis at step 3 ($R^2_c = .01$, $F = .43$, $df = 4, 106$, $p = .788$). These results indicate that when problems are present in the lives of employed mothers, the support practices that matter most in terms of life satisfaction are the action-dialogue practices. These findings parallel the analysis involving the five components of support, in which Assistance was the support component that emerged as a significant predictor in the model.

Examination of the Mediating Role of Support Components on the Problems

Prior analyses on the total support measure indicated that a more interpretable explanation of life satisfaction was rendered when support was considered to be an overarching condition within which problems are handled. Given this finding, I next wanted to determine whether it differed as a function of the type of support present. Thus, a second hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in which the collapsed components of support were entered on the first step and the problems of adaptation were entered on the second step of the regression.

The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4.27. As already been reported, when the support components were entered at step 2, the action-dialogue component of support was significant ($b = .51$, $t = 3.08$, $p < .01$), but the involvement and acceptance support component was not, and the regression was significant at this second step ($R = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, adjusted

$R^2 = .47$, $F = 18.19$, $df = 6,110$, $p < .000$). However, when the support components were entered in the first block, the step was highly significant ($R = .56$, $R^2 = .32$, adjusted $R^2 = .31$, $F = 26.51$, $df = 2,114$, $p < .000$). Both the involvement-acceptance support component ($b = .30$, $t = 1.97$, $p < .05$) and the action-dialogue component ($b = .28$, $t = 1.87$, $p < .10$) were each nearly significant predictors of life satisfaction. When the problems were entered at step 2, inequity became an insignificant predictor of life satisfaction, and both work-family conflict and double bind beliefs remained non-significant. The addition of the interaction terms was not significant at step 3 ($R^2_{\text{c}} = .01$, $F = .43$, $df = 4,106$, $p = .788$). Thus, the impact of inequity in household and child care labor is lessened when problems such as inequity arise within the context of a supportive home climate. However, stress still uniquely accounted for 17% of the variance when entered at step 2 ($b = -.46$, $t = -6.11$, $p < .000$). Apparently, even with a supportive husband women may still feel stress, and this may affect their life satisfaction.

These findings are similar to the analyses on the total support measure, in that these analyses also show that support accounts for more variance in life satisfaction when entered at step 1. Thus, when comparing the two regressions we find that entering support first is a better fit for the regression model. When problems such as inequity arise within the context of a communication environment in which both involvement and acceptance support and action-problem-solving support are enacted, inequity has less of an effect on life satisfaction.

Adaptation Problems and the Work-Family Support Themes

The previous analyses show us that it is informative to view employed mothers' life satisfaction as affected by the presence of a supportive communication environment within which problems are handled. The purpose of the final regression analyses was to see if similar results were obtained when the second measure of support was utilized. Thus, in these final analyses I examined the relationships between the problems of adaptation and the work-family support narrative themes, and their effect on life satisfaction. These variables were examined in another hierarchical regression analysis in which the problems were entered as a first block, followed by the themes that were significantly correlated with life satisfaction as a second block, and interaction terms as a third block. The themes that were correlated with life satisfaction were Minimizing Wives' Concerns and Participation in the Child Care narratives, and Expression of Concern in the Household narratives. The two positive themes (Participation and Expression of Concern) were combined for purposes of the regression analysis, and the negative theme (Minimizing Wives' Concerns) was entered on its own. Interaction terms were created by multiplying the themes with each problem (i.e., work-family conflict, stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs).

The analysis showed that the problems of adaptation accounted for 28% of the variance in life satisfaction when entered at step 1 ($R = .53$, $R^2 = .28$, adjusted $R^2 = .24$, $F = 7.97$, $df = 4, 84$, $p < .000$). The themes accounted for 4% of the variance at step 2 ($R = .56$, $R^2 = .32$, adjusted $R^2 = .26$, $F = 6.27$, $df = 6, 82$, $p < .000$), but the addition of the themes did not result in a

significant increase in model fit ($R^2_c = .04$, $F = 2.36$, $df = 2,82$, $p < .10$), and neither theme was a significant predictor in the equation. Step 3 was significant ($R = .58$, $R^2 = .33$, adjusted $R^2 = .25$, $F = 3.92$, $df = 10,78$, $p < .000$), but the interaction terms did not provide a significant increase in the analysis ($R^2_c = .02$, $F = .58$, $df = 4,78$, $p = .676$). This analysis differs from previous analyses in showing that the support themes were not significant predictors of life satisfaction when entered at step 2.

Examination of the Mediating Role of Support Themes on the Problems

Despite these negative results, I wanted to determine if these findings would be altered if I viewed support as preceding the problems, as prior analyses showed. Thus, I conducted a final regression analysis in which the order of entry for the problems and the themes were reversed. When the themes were entered as a first block, the themes accounted for 9% of the variance in life satisfaction ($R = .30$, $R^2 = .09$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$, $F = 4.39$, $df = 2,86$, $p < .01$), and each theme was nearly a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The two positive themes (Participation and Concern) were nearly significant ($b = .20$, $t = 1.94$, $p < .10$) and the negative theme (Minimizing Concerns) was also nearly significant ($b = -.19$, $t = -1.83$, $p < .10$). Step 2 was significant ($R = .56$, $R^2 = .32$, adjusted $R^2 = .26$, $F = 6.27$, $df = 6,82$, $p = .000$), and an improvement in the model was realized ($R^2_c = .22$, $F = 6.64$, $df = 4,82$, $p < .000$). However, when the problems were entered at step 2, work-family conflict, inequity, and double bind beliefs were all insignificant predictors of life satisfaction. This reflects a change from the previous analysis, in which inequity was nearly significant ($p < .10$). Stress

still emerged as a significant predictor of life satisfaction at step 2 ($b = -.45$, $t = -4.62$, $p < .000$). The interaction terms remained insignificant at step 3 ($R^2_c = .02$, $F = .583$, $df = 4,78$, $p = .676$).

In this regression, then, the themes together were significant predictors of life satisfaction at step 1, unlike the previous analysis in which the themes were not significant at step 2. Also, in this analysis, both themes were nearly significant predictors at step 1. However, they did not function like the Spousal Support Practices Scale, as substantially less variance in life satisfaction was accounted for by the themes (9%) than was accounted for by the scale (31%). However even though the themes were weaker in predicting life satisfaction, the analyses still provided confirmation of viewing support as an overarching feature of one's home life within which problems arise and are handled.

In summary, then, the findings from the regression analyses on life satisfaction show that both the problems and support were significant predictors of life satisfaction. Furthermore, the analyses lend credence to the idea that support is best viewed as a feature of one's overall communication environment. Support accounted for a greater percentage of variance in life satisfaction than the problems, and lessened the effects of problems such as inequity. These analyses further showed that the condensed components of support (involvement-acceptance, and action-dialogue support) both play a role in explaining variance in life satisfaction. These findings were further confirmed as the support themes, Participation and Concern, and Minimizing Concerns, also predicted life satisfaction.

Table 4.28

Comparison of the Effect of Adaptation Problems on Life Satisfaction
When Entered Into Regression Analyses Before and After Support Themes

Source	<u>Indices Entered into Regression Equation First</u>							
	<u>Adaptation Problems</u>				<u>Support Components</u>			
	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Problems (set totals)	(.28)	(7.97)	(.000)		(.22)	(6.64)	(.000)	
1. WFC	-.12	.27	1.37	ns	-.07	.32	.46	ns
2. Stress	-.44	.23	20.31	.000	-.45	.29	21.33	.000
3. Inequity	.17	.26	30.56	.084	-.13	.31	1.61	ns
4. DBB	.04	.28	.17	ns	.07	.31	.54	ns
Themes (set totals)	(.04)	(2.35)	(.101)		(.09)	(4.38)	(.015)	
1. Participation & Concern	.18	.31	3.26	.074	.20	.06	3.76	.056
2. Minimizing Concerns	-.10	.32	1.04	ns	-.19	.09	3.35	.071

Note. N = 88. Numbers in parentheses represent R², F, and p change statistics.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this study, I have attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the ways spousal support is related to the problems and outcomes of adaptation for employed mothers. In this chapter I summarize the findings from the hypotheses and research questions, and discuss the implications of the results. I indicate the contributions I believe my study makes to the discipline of communication and the topic of employed mothers. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study and propose directions for future lines of research.

Summary of the Findings

This section discusses the findings obtained from the analysis of adaptation problems and outcomes, spousal support, and the work-family support narratives. Connections between the findings of this study and existing literature are described, and additional knowledge and insight gained from these findings are discussed.

Adaptation Problems

In this study, I set out to determine the relationships between employed mothers' problems, their perceptions of their husbands' support, and the outcomes of marital, job, and life satisfaction. Most employed mothers experienced the problems of work-family conflict,

stress, inequity, and double bind beliefs at moderate to strong levels. These findings substantially confirm the research reviewed in Chapter 2 about the problems employed mothers face.

The correlational analysis of the adaptation problems showed that most of the problems were intercorrelated at weak levels of magnitude. The correlation obtained between work-family conflict and stress was virtually identical to those found by Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986), Guelzow, Bird, and Koball (1991), Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994), and Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996). The correlation found between inequity and work-family conflict was almost identical to the correlations found by Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986) and Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994). These similarities provide evidence for the generalizability of the findings of this study to the population of employed mothers. The only two problems that were not significantly intercorrelated were inequity and stress. However, the magnitude of that correlation was similar to the correlation found by Guelzow, Bird, and Koball (1991), who found a similar but significant association.

Correlational analyses also showed that double bind beliefs were consistently associated with all of the problems of adaptation, at moderate levels of magnitude. These findings are interesting because associations between double bind beliefs and the problems of adaptation have not been previously established in the literature. This study, then, serves as a basis for establishing these relationships, which make sense given the analysis of double bind beliefs in Chapter

2. When women perceive that others in their lives endorse double bind beliefs (e.g., women cannot successfully have a career if they have children), it follows that they may feel a certain level of stress and difficulty completing responsibilities of their home and work domains. In this study, 72% of women indicated moderate or strong perceptions of double bind beliefs. The fact that these perceptions were positively correlated with the other problems indicates that double binds are problematic for employed mothers, and suggests that further exploration of this problem is warranted, so that we may gain a greater understanding of how double bind beliefs affect employed mothers.

Spousal Support Practices and Adaptation Problems

As expected, each of the problems was negatively correlated with spousal support practices. The weak correlation between support and work-family conflict is almost identical to the correlation found by Suchet and Barling (1986). The weak but significant correlation found between spousal support and stress is noteworthy, as Riefman, Biernat, and Lang (1991) found that husbands' support was not significantly associated with their wives' stress levels. The significant correlation found in this study may be related to the fact that the measure of support used in this study was more complex than the measure used in the Riefman, Biernat, and Lang (1991) study. In their study, they asked women to rate how much they could count on their husbands to be a source of encouragement and reassurance. While this provides a general measure of support, it does not enable one to

determine what that support means, in terms of how it is communicated and conveyed to an employed mother. Because support was examined more completely in this study, the analyses may have enabled me to determine the nature of the relationship between support and stress more precisely.

Support was also strongly correlated with inequity. Out of all of the correlations between support and the problems, the correlation between support and inequity was the strongest (-.62). The one component of support that could be seen as sharing the most variance with inequity is Assistance. However, when inequity is correlated with a modified version of the support scale, in which Assistance is deleted, the correlation drops slightly, but is still strong at .54. Thus, regardless of whether the Assistance component is included, inequity is still strongly associated with spousal support, which shows that inequity is also associated with the other components of support that do not directly involve the provision of assistance.

Finally, similar to the correlations found between double bind beliefs and the problems, a moderate correlation was found between double bind beliefs and support. Double bind beliefs accounted for 15% of the variance in spousal support. This correlation provides evidence for a relationship between these constructs that has not been tested before. The correlation between support and double bind beliefs also makes sense, in that women who perceive that people in their lives (including their husbands) endorse these beliefs may not perceive support from their husbands. The correlation suggests that

double binds could be studied in greater depth to determine more precisely how it is that women come to perceive them in their lives and how these perceptions are related to support. For instance, what particular communication practices reflect double bind beliefs, and how do these beliefs come to be conveyed to employed mothers? What is the nature of the association between these communication practices and supportive communication practices? Future research could explore the answers to these questions and further our knowledge of double bind beliefs.

Further analyses showed that each component of spousal support was negatively correlated with inequity and double bind beliefs. These correlations were primarily moderate in magnitude, with the exception of the correlations between inequity and the Assistance components, which had significantly stronger correlations. Work-family conflict and stress were also negatively correlated with most of the components of support, at weak levels of magnitude. The only component not significantly correlated with work-family conflict was Dialogue, and the components that were not significantly correlated with stress were Encouraging Discussion and Offers of Assistance.

Overall, these correlations indicate relationships between spousal support and employed mothers' experience of stress and difficulty in managing their dual responsibilities. The perception of a lack of support from husbands is related to the unfair division of household and child care responsibilities. Finally, women who felt

spousal support did not perceive that their husbands endorsed contradictory beliefs about women's roles. Given the fact that most of the women who participated in this study experienced the problems at moderate to high levels, the negative correlations found between support and the problems make sense in that engaging women in discussion and dialogue, expressing care and concern, legitimizing the women's feelings, and providing assistance with tasks are practices that would serve to lessen the experiences of the problems for these employed mothers.

The Outcomes

In large part there were significant correlations found between the adaptation problems, spousal support, and the adaptation outcomes of marital and life satisfaction. The correlational analyses showed that the problems of employed mothers' adaptation negatively influenced their level of marital satisfaction. The weak correlation between marital satisfaction and work-family conflict is consistent with other studies (Beatty, 1996; Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996; Suchet & Barling, 1986). The moderate correlation between marital satisfaction and stress is identical to the correlation found by Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996). The moderate correlation between marital satisfaction and inequity is also consistent with that found by Lavee, Sharlin, and Katz (1996).

Unlike marital satisfaction, which was significantly correlated with each of the problems, job satisfaction was only correlated with stress. However, this correlation is virtually identical with the

findings of Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992). Job satisfaction was not correlated with the other problems. The non-significant association between job satisfaction and inequity suggests a separation of work and family, where problems more directly associated with the home domain did not have a significant association with feelings of contentment at work. The non-significant association between job satisfaction and work-family conflict suggests that women may not have work-family conflicts that are so troublesome that they affect the women's happiness in their jobs. Associations between job satisfaction and double bind beliefs have not been tested before this study, but future work could examine these variables to determine if relationships exist with other samples of women.

Similar to marital satisfaction, life satisfaction was also negatively correlated with each of the problems, suggesting that these problems contribute to lowered levels of happiness in the lives of employed mothers. The magnitude of the relationship between life satisfaction and work-family conflict was consistent with the correlations found by Rice, Frone, and McFarlin (1992) and Duxbury and Higgins (1991). The association between life satisfaction and stress was similar to the association Ozer (1995) found between stress and well-being, and shows that the feelings associated with stress affect women in not only their marital happiness, but also in their jobs as well as their lives in general.

Given the associations found between the outcomes and the problems, I wanted to determine the relationships between the outcomes and spousal support. Spousal support practices were correlated with marital satisfaction and life satisfaction, but were not significantly associated with job satisfaction. The correlation between support and marital satisfaction was significantly stronger than the correlation between support and life satisfaction, which suggests a more direct association between husbands' communicative practices and wives' happiness in the relationships within which those practices are enacted. Moreover, each component of spousal support was positively associated with women's marital and life satisfaction, at moderate to strong levels of magnitude. Thus, women who perceived that their husbands engaged them in discussions of their work-family difficulties, who cared about them achieving their goals, and who worked with them in finding solutions to work-family problems were relatively happy in their marital relationships as well as in their lives.

These findings suggest that it is a combination of all support practices that influence women's happiness. These findings are interesting, primarily because the correlation between job satisfaction and support did not even approach significance, while the correlations between marital satisfaction, life satisfaction, and support were strong. Thus, it appears as though women's feelings about their jobs have little association with the perception of support they get from their husbands. Similar to the non-significant association between job satisfaction and inequity, this suggests a separation between one's

work life and family life, in which husbands' support affects women primarily in terms of their feelings about their marital relationships and their lives in general, but not in terms of their work situation.

While all of the components were positively correlated with marital satisfaction, some components of support operated differently in terms of their relationship to marital satisfaction. The correlations between marital satisfaction and Encouraging Discussion, Interpersonal Involvement, and Dialogue were all significantly stronger than the correlations between marital satisfaction and the other components of support. These findings suggest that it is more than just assisting with child care and housework that is important in the support of employed mothers. Communicative practices that express concern, empathy, and understanding, and that actively work at discussing feelings and exploring alternatives in managing work and family are particularly important in the lives of employed mothers.

Work-Family Support Narratives

In addition to the spousal support scale, the second measure of support used in this study also yielded interesting results. Overall, the wives' themes in both the child care narratives and the household narratives were remarkably similar in that they reflected women's experiences of difficulty managing work and family, their feelings of stress and frustration, their experience handling child care and

housework situations on their own, and their asking for help with child care and housework. Thus, in each situation, consistent ideas and feelings were represented.

Like the wives' themes, similar ideas were represented in the husbands' themes in both the child care and the household narratives. Themes in both situations reflected women's perceptions of their husbands expressing concern, minimizing the women's concerns, exploring alternatives in both child care and housework, participating in child care and housework, as well avoiding chores and responsibilities in child care and housework. The one difference worthy of note was within the Minimizing themes. In the household narratives, Minimizing Wives' Concerns included categories such as "He complains about the house being a mess" and "He is critical of my housekeeping abilities." Similar categories were not represented in the child care narratives, suggesting that the inanimate nature of housework makes it easier for husbands to be critical. However, overall there was consistent similarity in the content of ideas represented in both the wives' and the husbands' themes.

Child Care Themes, Problems, and Outcomes. Most of the wives' themes in the child care narratives were not significantly associated with the problems or the outcomes. The theme, Expression of Distress, was only associated with work-family conflict, and the theme, Asking for Assistance, was only associated with inequity. Handling Child Care Situations on My Own was only negatively correlated with marital satisfaction. The fact that most of these

themes were not significantly associated with the problems or the outcomes of adaptation may indicate that the child care situation these women described was something that did not happen to them often enough to make them feel high levels of work-family conflict or stress, or did not happen often enough to affect their marital, job, or life satisfaction. However, when employed mothers express their feelings of frustration and distress, they may be experiencing difficulties managing work and family. These findings also suggest that when women feel the need to ask their husbands for help with child care, they may be feeling as though there is an unfair division of child care responsibilities in the home. Furthermore, it appears that women feel negatively about their marriages when they must handle child care situations on their own.

The main similarity of the findings from the husbands' themes in the child care narratives is the fact that minimizing women's concerns was negatively correlated with both problems and outcomes, suggesting that communication practices that do not acknowledge the feelings of employed mothers influence both the problems they experience as well as the happiness they have in their marital relationships and their lives in general. Another similarity is that husbands' participation in child care was also correlated with problems and outcomes, which suggests that when husbands are actively involved in the responsibilities of child care, women feel less work-family conflict, perceive fewer double bind beliefs, and are happier in their marriages, their jobs, and their lives in general.

Household Themes, Problems, and Outcomes. In the wives' themes in the household narratives, the theme, Expressing Feelings about Inequity in Housework, was only associated with work-family conflict, and Handling Housework on My Own was only associated with double bind beliefs. Asking for Assistance with Housework was not significantly associated with any of the problems. These findings suggest that when some women express to their husbands their feelings about inequity in the home, they may also be experiencing difficulties managing work and family. However, expressing feelings about inequity were not associated with perceptions of inequity, which may indicate that these women do not perceive an overall pattern of inequity in their homes. Rather, they may only occasionally perceive this inequity. These findings also indicate that when employed mothers manage household chores on their own, they may perceive that important people in their lives believe that the combination of motherhood with careers is incompatible. Thus, they may feel as though they cannot discuss their difficulties completing housework with their husbands. This is consistent with the silence/shame bind described in Chapter 2 (Jamieson, 1995). However, because this theme was not associated with work-family conflict, stress, or inequity, this may suggest that these women are used to this pattern in their marriage, and that doing housework on their own is more of a routine than a source of negative feelings.

Similar to the wives' themes in the child care narratives, the only theme from the wives' themes in the household narratives that

was significantly correlated with the outcomes was Handling Housework on My Own, which was correlated with marital satisfaction. This is a remarkable similarity, and it suggests that women do not appreciate having to take on both child care responsibilities and household tasks without the help of their husbands.

Together, the findings from the husbands' themes in the household narratives indicate an association between employed mothers' descriptions of husbands expressing concern to them during discussions of work-family difficulties and wives perceiving fairness in the division of labor. However, these expressions of concern do not appear to affect women's feelings of work-family conflict, stress, or perceptions of double bind beliefs. Instead, it is when wives perceive that their husbands downplay the importance of their concerns when wives may be experiencing difficulties managing work and family. Also, when women perceive that their husbands participate in the responsibilities of the household wives may be feeling less stress and perceive fewer double bind beliefs, but this participation does not influence perceptions of inequity. Rather, it is when wives perceive that their husbands avoid doing chores that wives feel that there is an unfair division of labor.

The results from the analysis of husbands' themes in household narratives and the outcomes of adaptation indicate that some employed mothers are satisfied with their marriages and their lives when their husbands convey concern and caring to them.

However, unsupportive practices, such as minimizing, do not influence the outcomes. Perhaps this is because the wives' descriptions of their husbands' minimizing behaviors in this situation were not reflective of their normal communication practices with their wives. Also, exploring alternatives and participation in housework were not associated with the outcomes, but wives were less satisfied with their marriages when they perceived that their husbands avoided doing household chores. Thus, it is when women perceived that their husbands neglected their responsibilities in the home that wives experienced negative emotions regarding their marriages.

Comparison of the Two Support Measures

The comparison of the two measures of support showed that the themes developed for the work-family support narratives were similar to the components of the support scale. In the child care narratives, Minimizing Wives' Concerns was negatively correlated with every component of the scale, but in the household narratives, this theme was only correlated with the components of Interpersonal Involvement and Acceptance. Perhaps minimization of the employed mothers' feelings was more important in the child care situation because the problems associated with completing housework are not seen as important as those problems involving child care. Another interesting finding was that Participation in Housework was not significantly associated with any of the components of support. However, Avoidance of Housework was correlated with every

component except Interpersonal Involvement. This suggests that employed mothers were more bothered by their husbands' neglecting to do housework than they were pleased by the men actually doing chores.

The fact that themes from the open-ended measure were conceptually and semantically similar to components of the scale shows not only that the scale is a valid measure of support, but confirms that the components of the scale are appropriate in the context of employed mothers. Participation emerged in both narratives, which further corroborates the importance of actually doing chores and taking on responsibilities to assist employed mothers. However, the emergence of the themes, Expression of Concern, in both the child care and household narratives shows that communication practices that convey understanding, caring, and love are also relevant when women are having difficulties carrying out their responsibilities in these areas. Thus, women may want their husbands to assist them, but they also may want their husbands to show them that they care about what these women are thinking and feeling.

The fact that Exploring Alternatives in Housework and Child Care emerged further stresses the importance of dialogue in the context of employed mothers' problems. Similar to the findings of Deutsch (1999), both the scale measure and the open-ended measure of support used in this study revealed that part of working through employed mothers' problems involves communication practices such

as discussing how child care arrangements and housework may be accomplished fairly, and creating schedules and making arrangements that work for each partner. This study only examined women's perceptions of their husbands' support, but the concept of dialogue can be studied further to determine more precisely the communication behaviors that are enacted when both husbands and wives collaborate and negotiate with one another.

Regression Results on the Outcomes

The only two outcome variables that were significantly correlated with all of the independent variables were marital and life satisfaction. The results of the regression analyses on marital satisfaction showed that problems, such as stress, were significant predictors at steps 1 and 2, and support was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction at both steps in the analysis. However, interaction effects were found between support and stress and support and double bind beliefs. These findings showed that there were conditional relationships operating among these variables. Husbands' support exerted a stronger effect on marital satisfaction when women were highly stressed. Similarly, when women perceived high levels of double bind beliefs, a high level of support from husbands especially contributed to their marital satisfaction. Examination of the collapsed support components showed that both the involvement-acceptance support type and the action-dialogue type contributed to the prediction of marital satisfaction.

I also found that when support is seen as an overall communicative framework in the home, it explained a greater percentage of variance in marital satisfaction. This view of support gives credence to the idea that the act of supporting someone in need does not take place in a vacuum. There may be a supportive communication environment, then, that is the context within which work-family problems happen and are handled. Supportive interactions may take place because women are having particular difficulties handling a work-family situation. In this sense, then, the supportive responses on the part of the husband may be viewed as a remedy to his wife's problem. This view of support is also congruent with the design of this study, as I specifically wanted to examine husbands' responses to their wives' expressions of work-family problems. However, these exchanges may occur within the context of a communicative environment where there is support. In this view, support as just a remedy to problems is too simplistic. The fact that more variance in marital satisfaction was explained when support was seen as preceeding the problems, and that the overall effect of the problems as a whole were weakened when they followed support in the regression models shows that support could be better conceptualized as a presence in the home. Given the conditional relationships found between the total measure of support and the problems of stress and double bind beliefs, the presence of a supportive environment would be especially valuable when

employed mothers feel high levels of stress and perceive double bind beliefs on the part of significant others in their home and work lives.

Similar to the regression analyses on marital satisfaction, the analyses on life satisfaction showed that the problems and support were both significant predictors of employed mothers' life satisfaction. The regression analyses on life satisfaction gave further credence to the notion that support is a feature of a person's overall communicative environment. There were no interaction effects between support and the problems in the life satisfaction regressions. The analyses overall showed that support accounted for a greater percentage of variance in life satisfaction than the problems, and that both the involvement-acceptance type of support and the action-dialogue type of support played a significant role in predicting life satisfaction. However, even when support was seen as a communicative context within which problems arise and are handled, stress was still a predictor of life satisfaction. This suggests that, despite a communicative environment where supportive exchanges take place, the stress a woman feels may still be a strong predictor of her life satisfaction.

Implications of the Study

This study makes some important contributions to our knowledge about employed mothers. Unlike researchers who have examined husbands' support in general (Beatty, 1996; Erickson, 1993; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Rudd & McKenry, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Suchet & Barling, 1986), this study provides more specific

information about particular types of support that influence the lives of employed mothers. Each component of spousal support was shown to be important to employed mothers.

As a whole, one could say that the conception of support advanced in this study would receive support if its components were systematically negatively associated with the problems, and systematically positively associated with the outcomes of employed mothers' adaptation. This support was established in this study. The conception of support as a whole received confirmation, and the results of this study showed that each component contributed to the quality of life of employed mothers.

The fact that the Encouraging Discussion component emerged as a significant supportive practice underscores the importance of coordinating meaning and intentions in work-family discussions (Delia, O'Keefe, & O'Keefe, 1982; Pearce, 1989). This supportive practice suggests that husbands give their wives time to discuss their feelings and frustrations, so that they may begin to work through them, findings similar to the views of others (Burleson, 1990; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1996). Encouraging discussion was particularly and strongly related to women's perceptions of equity and to their feelings of marital and life satisfaction. Encouraging discussion may have been important because women may have wanted to connect interpersonally with their husbands and describe how they felt about not being able to handle child care and housework on their own. Women may have felt that they were better able to

work through their difficulties when they could express them to their partners. Thus, practices such as encouraging women to discuss their thoughts and feelings, and encouraging them to discuss their ambitions and goals may facilitate reappraisals of these problems because the women felt they were able to communicate their feelings in a safe environment. Indeed, women appeared to be happier in their marriages and their lives when their husbands created the context for open discussion of their work-family difficulties, and when women perceived that their husbands were unwilling to talk with them about the women's feelings, they perceived a lack of fairness in the division of household responsibilities. Perhaps some women's feelings of inequity were related to their perception that their husbands did not want to talk about the problematic conditions that affected their ability to pursue work and family, and these women may have felt as though they had to take on more than their share of the home responsibilities. Open discussion creates the possibility for expressing perceptions of overbenefitedness or underbenefitedness in relationships. If one cannot express their concerns with their partner they may not be able to explore aspects of the relationship that contribute to inequity.

The emergence of Interpersonal Involvement stresses the communication process of empathy and adaptation. Rogers (1959) emphasized the importance of empathic understanding, and actively seeking to understand another's thoughts, feelings, and meanings. The practice of interpersonal involvement also showed that

expressing concern, caring, and empathy to employed mothers was an important part of husbands' support. Interpersonal Involvement was negatively related to each of the problems of adaptation, and was strongly and positively related to marital and life satisfaction. The fact that these communication practices were important in this context suggests that wives wanted to feel as though their husbands understood and cared about the fact that they had some trouble carrying out their multiple responsibilities. Wives' perceptions of their husbands' caring and concern may have influenced reappraisals of their adaptation problems, such that the problems were reframed as less difficult and stressful because wives felt that their intimate partners cared about them achieving their career goals. Similar to the Encouraging Discussion component, wives feelings of happiness in their marriages may have been influenced by their perceptions that their husbands recognized their frustrations and stress, reassured them, and were affectionate with them. Such displays of caring on the part of husbands may have been associated with women feeling as though their husbands wanted to be loving, active partners in the marriage, and wanted to develop and maintain an equitable relationship with their wives.

The emergence of Acceptance shows the importance of person-centered communication practices, where the feelings and the perspective of another person are acknowledged and granted legitimacy (Applegate, 1980; Burleson, 1984). It was important that husbands grant legitimacy to their wives' feelings in this context

(Applegate, 1990; Burleson, 1984, 1985, 1990). Women not only wanted their husbands to discuss their situation, and show that they cared, but they also wanted their husbands to convey that their concerns were valid, and that given their situation, they had a right to feel the way they did. Such legitimation may have allowed women to reframe their view of their situation, since a significant other validated their concerns. Like Interpersonal Involvement, Acceptance was related to each problem, but in particular it was related to double bind beliefs. This suggests that women may have felt that husbands who legitimated their concerns and validated their roles as women respected and valued the work these women did in their careers and in their homes. Perhaps validation and acceptance were especially important in this context, since the women were discussing their situation with their husbands. As intimate life partners, women may especially appreciate and value husbands' use of person-centered communication practices that acknowledge and legitimate their feelings. Indeed, when husbands minimized their wives' concerns women felt as though their husbands were not supportive. Minimization practices, such as husbands telling wives that their work should never come before their families, may have contributed to women feeling as though they had to deal with their frustrations and stresses alone without the help of the person that is supposed to be their partner in life.

The significant findings related to the Dialogue component emphasize the importance of collaborative action, and the ability to

negotiate social change with one's partner (Buber, 1965; Stewart, 1978). The concept of dialogue was also found to be important in the context of employed mothers' lives (Buber, 1965; Stewart, 1978). The finding that dialogue was correlated with employed mothers' problems and outcomes was interesting, in that previous models of support have not incorporated this construct in their conceptions of support. In terms of women's marital satisfaction, for instance, dialogue was found to be significantly more important than acceptance and assistance. Dialogue also appeared in women's open-ended descriptions of husbands' communication, where women described how they worked with their husbands in discussing alternative arrangements for child care, or they discussed how best to create equity in the housework by working out schedules for sharing housework. Thus, when women perceived that they engaged in communication practices with their husbands where they negotiated expectations for their home responsibilities so that they did not become resentful of one another, and where they worked out the best way to do household and child-care duties so that both of their career goals could be met, women may have reframed their perceptions of inequity and may have felt happy that their husbands were willing to collaborate and coordinate with them. These results suggest that feeling as though your partner is actively working with you toward the goals of developing an egalitarian intimate relationship contributes to a sense of happiness that this person is such a significant part of your life.

The findings of this study show that dialogic communication practices are key aspects of husbands' supportive communication. Deutsch (1999) has also found that dialogic communication is crucial in establishing and maintaining equality in dual-career marriages. She studied dual-career couples to determine how they achieve equality in child care responsibilities and found that couples who were able to develop equality in their marriages engaged in an on-going process of collaboration and negotiation of their roles and responsibilities. In working out the details of child care arrangements, couples were able to create equality by talking through the alternative ways of managing these responsibilities. The findings of this study as well as the findings of Deutsch (1999) show that the process of supporting one's partner involves more than expressions of care and concern and encouraging discussion. Especially in the context of employed mothers, support involves the willingness of a husband to engage in a negotiation and collaboration process with their wives by actively discussing how responsibilities will be handled. It is through such as negotiation process that wives may perceive greater levels of equity with their husband and greater levels of marital satisfaction.

In addition to the other support practices, I also found that assistance was important in the lives of employed mothers. The Assistance component of support is related to the relational maintenance research that has found that sharing tasks is positively associated with marital satisfaction (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Recognition and acknowledgement of thoughts and feelings are

important for employed mothers, but that is not all that is important. Their feelings may be centered around the fact that there are too many things that need to be completed, and that they need some assistance. What is memorable in this study, though, is that, other than the correlation between assistance and inequity, the correlations between assistance and the other problems were weaker than the correlations between the other components of support and the problems. Thus, the act of doing things around the house is not the only form of support that serves to facilitate reappraisals in the context of employed mothers. The use of person-centered communication practices, as has already been demonstrated, significantly contributes to the quality of life for employed mothers.

However, assistance was also an important component of support in this context. Thus, planning and coordinating the children's activities, and offering to do things around the house without being asked were practices that may have been perceived by women as significantly contributing to the equity in the relationship, as these practices reflected husbands' willingness to actively adapt to their wives' difficulties and work with them in making the situation less stressful. Whether husbands were communicating their willingness to do things like take the children to soccer practice or whether they actually did things, like take out the garbage, do the laundry, or cook dinner, were perceived similarly by women. Thus, the important aspect of these practices may have been the fact that

husbands were displaying to their wives their desire to sustain a sense of egalitarianism in the marriage, and wives appreciated this.

Thus, the conception of support advanced in this study has received support. Indeed, in this study I found that it is a combination of all these support practices that are important to employed mothers. These findings further stress the multi-dimensional nature of support, and show that if the provision of support is to be understood, scholars should not study this construct using a small number of scale items that simplify and generalize the nature of support. Because support is inherently a communication activity, it should be studied in ways that capture the multiple types of messages that may be produced in the interactional process of support.

The regression analyses further show that support is best viewed as a feature of an overall communication environment within which problems arise and are discussed and worked through. Thus, the traditional conceptualization of support as a remedy to persons' problems could be reframed to include the notion that supportive interactions may not only occur in the presence of problems. These interactions, which include person-centered and empathic communication practices, may be part of the communication climate in the home. Thus, women who have husbands that listen to them, who express their concern for the women's feelings, who share responsibility for child care and housework, and who work with their wives in discussing alternative arrangements for taking care of the children and the housework may

feel more comfortable in expressing their frustrations and difficulties with their husbands, and may more easily reappraise their situations because of the comfort level created by this communication environment.

Validity of the Support Scale

The findings of this study were obtained through a triangulation of methods. The comparison of the two measures of support showed that the themes developed for the work-family support narratives were conceptually similar to the components of the Spousal Support Practices Scale, and that these themes were correlated with components of the scale that reflected the same or similar communication practices. The work-family support narratives were useful in not only establishing the validity of the scale, but also adding richness to the support data. The work-family support narratives enabled these women to respond in their own words and describe the supportive or unsupportive communication practices their husbands actually used during conversations about work-family difficulties. Thus, the fact that themes developed from the narratives closely matched the conception of support used in the scale showed that the components of the scale are a fairly accurate representation of the content of both supportive and unsupportive communication practices husbands may use during discussions with their wives about work-family difficulties.

Limitations of the Study

While this study has produced several interesting findings and made important contributions to the study of employed mothers and the field of communication, there were also some limitations that need comment. One limitation was that the sample size was not large enough to have strong statistical power to detect small effect sizes. While the power for medium effect sizes and large effect sizes was adequate for this study, the power to detect small effect sizes was only .59 (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). However, many of the weak correlations I obtained through correlational analysis were nevertheless congruent with other studies that examined the same constructs.

Another limitation of this study was that employed mothers were the only participants. This was, in fact, part of the design of the study, as I set out to explore women's perceptions of their husbands' supportive practices. However, including the husbands in the design would perhaps have provided additional knowledge about how husbands see their role in supporting their wives' efforts to combine work and family. Without including the husbands, it is difficult to gain a complete understanding of the communicative dynamics of support in the context of employed mothers.

While the Spousal Support Practices Scale appears to be useful for future research, its status is not entirely clear, because I did not conduct a full factor analysis of the entire scale. In order to fully examine the entire scale, a principle axis factor analysis could be used with a much larger sample.

I used questionnaires to collect the data that was used in this study. While surveys enabled me to obtain more participants than a method that relied on in-depth interviews, a certain level of richness in the data was sacrificed. Qualitative or ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis would have enabled me to explore the lives of these women in greater depth. Employed mothers could have told me their own stories and could have given me their beliefs about the types of supportive practices their husbands engaged in during conversations about work-family difficulties. I could have probed these women for descriptions about what their daily lives were like, and how work-family problems and difficulties actually manifested themselves. I could have also interviewed husbands of these women to examine how they saw their role in supporting their wives, and what communication practices they believed were important when their wives were having difficulties managing work and family.

The work-family support narrative task in this study asked women to describe a recent situation in which they had a problem completing home and work responsibilities. While this technique has been used by other researchers, and is considered valid and reliable, it still has its limitations. One limitation is that it is difficult to determine whether participants actually thought of a recent event, like the instructions indicated, or whether they thought of general situations that had happened to them. This is problematic in that some participants may have thought of recent events, and others may have thought of general situations, yet the data may appear the same

or similar in terms of the situations described and the communication practices reported. When interpreting the data, then, it may not be clear which communication practices reported represent communicative exchanges from recent events.

The final, and perhaps most important limitation of this study is that the simple path analyses used in the regressions were not extensive enough to establish the true nature of the mediating relationships between support and the problems. The simple path analyses I conducted suggest that problems are mediated through spousal support. More sophisticated path models would have provided the analysis techniques necessary to simultaneously explicate the causal relationships and the interrelationships between variables. However, more elaborate path model analyses would require a larger sample than was included in this study.

Directions for Future Work

As indicated in the earlier chapters, the topic of employed mothers has yet to become a fruitful line of research for communication scholars. While this study makes a contribution to our knowledge in this area, there is more that can be done to further our understanding of the work and family interface. Researchers interested in the role of support in the lives of employed mothers may want to employ designs that incorporate the input of husbands. Obtaining both wives' perceptions of husbands' support as well as husbands' perceptions of the support they give their wives will contribute to our understanding of how support is communicated in

this context. Including husbands will also enable researchers to compare wives' and husbands' perceptions, determine the congruence between these perceptions, and examine the relationships between marital partners' perceptions of support and their level of marital satisfaction. Including husbands in future work will also allow researchers to further explore how couples engage in the process of dialogue when they attempt to work out their child care and household arrangements.

Another line of research could involve the organizations within which employed mothers work. There are several questions that may be answered through such an endeavor, such as: what role do supervisors and colleagues play in supporting the efforts of employed mothers? What supportive or unsupportive communication practices do they engage in during conversations with employed mothers? Are these communication practices important in the lives of employed mothers, compared to the communication practices of husbands? Do these communication practices reflect the same interpersonal communication processes as husbands' support? What types of organizational benefits or policies enable employed mothers to manage their daily lives more successfully?

In this study, I focused exclusively on married employed mothers. Being married was critical for inclusion in the study, as I wanted to examine the role of husbands' support in the lives of these women. There is still more to learn, though, about employed mothers who are not married or who do not have partners. Single

employed mothers may not have someone in the home who can provide support. Researchers could examine the lives of single employed mothers in order to determine the extent to which they encounter challenges not experienced by married employed mothers. Further analysis could uncover the sources of support these women have (i.e., family, extended family, friends, and others), and the effects of this support on single women's perceived ability to manage their work and family lives.

As indicated in Chapter 2, there is a large body of research that explores the lives of employed mothers. This area of inquiry began to develop in the 1970s, as greater percentages of women were entering the workforce. While the scholarly work on this topic has evolved over the past twenty-five years, there is still little work that examines employed fathers as a demographic group (Gilbert, 1994). This is perhaps because women still hold primary responsibility for household work and child care, regardless of their employment status (Blain, 1994; Coltrane, 1996; Ferree, 1991; Galinsky & Bond, 1996). Indeed, the idea of an "employed mother" is accepted and understood by people because gender in our language affects how we talk about women and men and their work. Gilbert (1994) has described the ways gender is embedded in the ways we describe dual-career families. She notes that women who work outside the home are called "working mothers," while men who work outside the home are merely considered employed. Thus, another reason there are so few studies that refer to working fathers as a normative group is because their

work is what is supposed to define who they are. There is a gender ideology which suggests that women who work and also have children are essentially mothers, while men who work and also have children are essentially good providers (Gilbert, 1994). Reframing this topic to include the idea of "employed parents" may enable researchers to examine more completely the experiences of both men and women, and determine the support needs of both.

Practical Recommendations and Conclusions

In summary, this study is important because it has produced knowledge about how husbands may most effectively support their wives, and also shows us how we can use this knowledge to help move dual-career couples forward toward more egalitarianism. This study allows us to see that support is not merely a response to a helpless individual. It is an interactional process of showing that you care about what your significant other is going through, and that you want to work with them in helping to make a difficult work-family situation better. In particular, the support practices of encouraging discussion, interpersonal involvement, acceptance, dialogue, and assistance were all confirmed in this study, which shows that it is these practices that contribute to the support of employed mothers.

This study, then, has yielded some practical recommendations about particular communication practices that may contribute to the sustenance of healthy, equitable marital relationships for employed parents. First, it is beneficial for husbands and wives to encourage each other to discuss thoughts and feelings, and to allow one another

to talk after questions are asked in conversation. This may involve finding time out of busy schedules to sit down and talk with one another at the end of the day. These discussions are beneficial when each person is allowed the time to describe how aspects of their day-to-day lives may make them feel like they cannot cope with everything they have to do.

A second recommendation for these conversations is that husbands and wives attempt to understand each other's thoughts and feelings, and not minimize or dismiss each other's concerns. This may involve telling your partner that you care when he or she tells you about how difficult it was to get work done today because he or she needed to take the child to the doctor. These conversations may also involve reassuring your partner that you see his or her point of view, and that you want to try to understand how he or she feels.

Sustaining equitable relationships also means that couples work together and talk about the meanings each has for success in their careers. So a third recommendation is that couples negotiate expectations they each have for their work and family goals, so that both can pursue them. Couples may need to talk about how they could work out a plan so that neither person's goals suffer. Couples may want to set aside time each week or each month to talk about and decide who will take on certain family responsibilities, based on each person's career commitments at the time (i.e., such as work-related travel). This may involve a reciprocal process of reasoning through ideas and alternatives so that couples can mutually explore one

another's viewpoints. Couples may benefit from creating a schedule that works for that time period, knowing that next week, or next month, there may be different career and family responsibilities, with new plans and courses of action.

Finally, couples who wish to maintain egalitarianism may work together in completing household and child care responsibilities. Couples may want to cook, clean, or do laundry for each other as each copes with work-related stresses. Or, offer to take their child to after school activities when the other spouse is too busy at work. Together, then, couples' use of person-centered communication practices as well as assistance practices may contribute to a healthy, enriching relationship for employed parents.

The practical lessons learned in this study about the influence of supportive communication for employed mothers may be utilized in interpersonal communication courses. The lessons may also be taught in organizational training seminars, where participants can gain a better perspective on managing work and family.

This process of healthy communication and interaction may contribute not only to wives' feelings of greater happiness in their marriages and their lives, but also to couples developing a more equitable, egalitarian relationship, within which both partners are better able to pursue their goals for work and family. The more husbands and wives engage in person-centered, empathic communication with one another, the more these communication practices may become part of the normal routine in couples' lives.

These communication practices, then, transform what has previously been seen as simply supportive responses to wives' problems to mutual, reciprocal communication between marital partners who respect and encourage one another's goals for pursuing work and family, and who want to engage in the most effective communication practices to help realize those goals.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire Distributed to Employed Mothers

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire itself. In this project we are attempting to learn more about communication between employed mothers and their husbands. Please be assured that all of your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

The student who gave you this questionnaire will receive extra course credit for having you fill this out. In order for the student to receive credit the questionnaires must be returned to me by May 20. Under no conditions will your answers be divulged to the student who gave you the packet.

PLEASE PRINT THE NAME OF THE STUDENT WHO GAVE YOU THIS PACKET IN THE RETURN ADDRESS SPACE OF THE ENVELOPE SO THAT WE CAN ENSURE THAT THE STUDENT RECEIVES CREDIT.

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, PLEASE PLACE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE PROVIDED ENVELOPE, SEAL THE ENVELOPE AND MAIL IT TO MICHELE REES OR RETURN IT TO THE STUDENT.(IF MAILING, PLEASE MAIL TO: MICHELE REES, SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION, 3016 DERBY HALL, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS, OH 43210). If you choose to mail this you need two 32 cent stamps. If you have any further questions or desire additional information regarding this study, please feel free to contact Michele Rees at (614) 292-5988 or (614) 292-3400.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

As you begin remember:

The purpose of this study is to understand more about employed mothers. **There are no right or wrong answers to any of the items.** Please try to answer all items honestly. The people we intend to complete this questionnaire are employed mothers. Specifically, we are gathering responses from employed mothers who are married and have children between the ages of infant to thirteen. We are interested in your perceptions. Please do not consult your husband. Your responses will help us understand the different ways employed mothers communicate with their husbands. So we thank you very much!

We would like to learn about certain topics that you and your husband TALK ABOUT. *Please read the following paragraphs carefully and respond according to the instructions.*

1. Think back to a time recently when you were experiencing some level of frustration or difficulty in carrying out your responsibilities for taking care of your child/children because your work responsibilities got in the way. For instance, perhaps you needed to pick up your child from school (or daycare), but you had important things going on at work.

Have you experienced anything similar to this recently? Did you discuss this situation with your husband to let him know how you felt? If you did discuss this situation with your husband, **please write down exactly what your husband said to you during the conversation.** *Just briefly describe the situation, and then write down specific things your husband said.* Use the back of this page if needed.

2. Now, think back to a time recently when completing household chores (such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc.) was burdensome for you because you had a lot going on with your job. Perhaps you had to work overtime, and you were too tired when you got home.

Have you experienced anything similar to this recently? Did you discuss this situation with your husband to let him know how you felt? If you did discuss this situation with your husband please write down exactly what your husband said to you during the conversation. Just *briefly* describe the situation, and then write down specific things your husband said. Use the back of this page if needed.

3. Please read the following questions and CIRCLE the response that applies to you.

1. How committed are you to your profession?

Very Low	Low	Somewhat Low	Neither Low nor High
	Somewhat High	High	Very High

2. How high are your aspirations in regard to professional recognition and achievement?

Very Low	Low	Somewhat Low	Neither Low nor High
	Somewhat High	High	Very High

4. Please read the following questions, and, using the following key as your guide, CIRCLE THE NUMBER of the response that applies to you.

1 = never	4 = almost always
2 = almost never	5 = always
3 = sometimes	

1. How often does your job or career interfere with your responsibilities at home, such as yard work, cooking, cleaning, repairs, shopping, paying the bills, or child care?	1 2 3 4 5
2. How often does your job or career keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend with your family?	1 2 3 4 5
3. How often does your home life interfere with your responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, or working overtime?	1 2 3 4 5
4. How often does your home life keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on job or career related activities?	1 2 3 4 5

5. The following is a list of statements that reflect how some people feel about working mothers. Next to each statement, you will find two blank spaces. In the **FIRST** column, please indicate the extent to which you believe your husband agrees or disagrees with each statement. In the **SECOND** column, please indicate the extent to which you believe your supervisor agrees or disagrees with each statement. Please use the following key as your guide:

1 = Strongly disagrees	5 = Slightly agrees
2 = Disagrees	6 = Agrees
3 = Slightly disagrees	7 = Strongly agrees
4 = Neither agrees nor disagrees	

	<u>Husband</u>	<u>Supervisor</u>	
1.	_____	_____	Working women tend to be overly aggressive and competitive.
2.	_____	_____	Mothers who stay home tend to be more patient and warmer than mothers who go to work.
3.	_____	_____	If a woman decides to have children, she owes it to them to stay home with them at least until they're of school age.
4.	_____	_____	No woman, no matter how bright, energetic, and capable, can have a family and a career and do both well.
5.	_____	_____	The difficulties women face in trying to raise children, run a home and also work make them deserving of as much support from everyone as possible.
6.	_____	_____	Because of their family responsibilities, working mothers are not as committed to their jobs as women without children.
7.	_____	_____	Working mothers shouldn't complain so much about needing flexibility at work.
8.	_____	_____	Women with children have just as much right to pursue a career as men.

6. Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by **CIRCLING** the appropriate number next to that item. Please be open and honest in your responses.

1 = Strongly disagree	5 = Slightly agree
2 = Disagree	6 = Agree
3 = Slightly disagree	7 = Strongly agree
4 = Neither agree nor disagree	

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Please read the following statements and, using the following key as your guide, CIRCLE the number of the response that applies to you:

1 = very unfair	5 = slightly fair
2 = unfair	6 = fair
3 = slightly unfair	7 = very fair
4 = neither fair nor unfair	

1. Overall, how fair do you feel the division of child care tasks is in your family.....to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Overall, how fair do you feel the division of household tasks is in your family.....to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. The following items are designed to measure the degree of satisfaction you have with your present marriage. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by CIRCLING the number that applies to each one.

1 = Strongly Disagree	5 = Slightly Agree
2 = Moderately Disagree	6 = Moderately Agree
3 = Slightly Disagree	7 = Strongly Agree
4 = Undecided	

1. I think that we have a good relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I think my relationship with my husband is very stable.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. I think our relationship is strong.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. My relationship with my husband makes me happy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I really feel like a part of a team with my husband.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. All things considered, I am extremely happy with my relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. The following statements reflect feelings people have about their jobs. Using the following key as your guide, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by CIRCLING the appropriate number next to each statement.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly disagree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Slightly agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly agree

1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I frequently think of quitting my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with the kind of work I have to do on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Knowing what I know now, if I had to decide all over again whether or not to take my job, I would decide to take it without hesitation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. In general, my job measures up to the sort of job I wanted when I took it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. It is often difficult to meet the demands of the different roles in our lives. For working women with children, a particularly common area of conflict is between the responsibilities, commitments, and aspirations one feels as a parent and those that one feels as a professional in their career. When it becomes difficult to balance these responsibilities and goals, some women talk with their husbands about how this is affecting their lives.

How often do you discuss this topic with your husband? Please circle one response.

several times a day once a day several times a week once a week
a few times a month once a month once every few months

Now, please read the following statements and, using the following key as your guide, CIRCLE the number of the response that most applies to you.

1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Slightly agree
2 = Disagree 6 = Agree
3 = Slightly disagree 7 = Strongly agree
4 = Neither agree nor disagree

When you discuss with your husband your concerns about balancing your career goals and your family responsibilities:

1. I believe that my husband is interested in discussing these concerns with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. we talk about how this topic affects both of our lives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. he encourages me to discuss my thoughts and feelings with him.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. it is important to me that I let my husband know how I feel about these concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. he passes household or family responsibilities off on me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. he helps me to figure out why I may be feeling stressed about this situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. he encourages me to discuss my career ambitions and goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. he works on chores around the house that he doesn't usually do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I don't believe that my husband sees these concerns as important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. the two of us work together to make this more of a win-win situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. he tells me that he will take on more responsibility for childcare duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. we realize that we both have concerns regarding this topic, and we allow one another to express them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. he says that he understands my desire for recognition in my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. he keeps me informed about his schedule so that we can coordinate household and child-care activities and tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I believe that my husband wants to help me make this a better situation for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. we talk about the meanings we both have for success in our careers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1 = Strongly disagree	5 = Slightly agree
2 = Disagree	6 = Agree
3 = Slightly disagree	7 = Strongly agree
4 = Neither agree nor disagree	

When you discuss with your husband your concerns about balancing your career goals and your family responsibilities:

17. he allows me to really talk after he asks me questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. we negotiate expectations we both have for our household and child care responsibilities so that we do not become resentful of one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. he says that we need to worry less about what the house looks like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. he minimizes the importance of my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. he pitches in to complete household duties that need to get done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. we analyze each other's ideas and reasons for choosing certain alternatives for completing household and child care duties, so that we can figure out the best possible arrangement .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. he helps me to gain a new perspective on this situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. he expresses concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. he starts to notice or remember more when things need to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. we try to work out the best way to do household and child-care duties so that both of our career goals can be pursued.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. he tells me that, given my situation, it is reasonable for me to feel the way I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. he plans and coordinates the childrens' activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. he tells me that he will take on more responsibility for household duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. he says that he knows that being a mother and having a career are important to me, and that this is important to him, too.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. he listens to what I have to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. he tells me that it is important to him that I do not find it difficult to manage my work and family commitments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. we negotiate expectations we both have for our careers so that we do not become resentful of one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. he tends to dismiss or minimize what I say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. he makes time available out of his work schedule to tend to household/child care matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. he says that he cares about me achieving my career goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. he tells me that he understands my thoughts and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. he offers to do things without being asked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. he tends to criticize my thoughts and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. he pitches in to complete childcare duties that need to get done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. The following questions ask you about particular benefits and policies that your organization may or may not have in place. Please use the following key as your guide and WRITE IN the NUMBER of the response that applies to your organization.

1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Don't Know

Please indicate which of the following benefits are available in your organization.

1. ____ Paid Maternity leave (if yes, indicate the length) _____
2. ____ Unpaid Maternity leave (if yes, indicate the length) _____
3. ____ Paid Paternity leave (if yes, indicate the length) _____
4. ____ Unpaid Paternity leave (if yes, indicate the length) _____
5. ____ Flexible schedule program, or flex-time
6. ____ Is the organization covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act?
7. ____ Telecommuting
8. ____ Day care facilities that employees can use
9. ____ Paid Personal Days for family matters
10. ____ Unpaid Personal Days for family matters
11. ____ Job-Sharing
12. ____ Paid Sick Days
13. ____ Family Sick Days
14. ____ Can employees bring children into work on occasion?
15. ____ Can employees use their own sick days for family matters?
16. ____ Vacation time based on seniority or personal accomplishment
17. ____ Paid holidays
18. ____ Medical benefits
19. ____ Dental benefits
20. ____ Do Medical/dental benefits apply to your family members?
21. ____ Dependent care spending account
22. ____ Does your organization have any other benefits or policies that are not listed here? If so, please describe these briefly. _____

12. The following questions ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate *how often* you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly and quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather **CIRCLE** the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate. For each question choose from the following alternatives:

0 = never	3 = fairly often
1 = almost never	4 = very often
2 = sometimes	

In the last month, how often have you:

1. been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
3. felt nervous and "stressed"?	0	1	2	3	4
4. dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?	0	1	2	3	4
5. felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
6. felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
7. felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
8. found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
9. been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
10. felt that you were on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
11. been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4
12. found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?	0	1	2	3	4
13. been able to control the way you spend your time?	0	1	2	3	4
14. felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

Please answer questions 1-8 by writing the number that represents each of your responses. Answer the rest of the questions according to the instructions.

- ____ 1. Your age (in years)
- ____ 2. The number of years you have been married
- ____ 3. The highest level of education you have achieved?
 1 = some high school 2 = high school graduate 3 = some college
 4 = college graduate 5 = some graduate school 6 = graduate degree
- ____ 4. Your combined yearly family income is
 1 = under \$20,000 2 = \$20-\$30,000 3 = \$30-40,000 4 = \$40-\$50,000
 5 = \$50-60,000 6 = \$60-\$70,000 7 = \$70-80,000 8 = \$80-\$90,000
 9 = \$90-\$100,000 10 = above \$100,000
- ____ 5. Your individual income is
 1 = under \$20,000 2 = \$20-\$30,000 3 = \$30-40,000 4 = \$40-\$50,000
 5 = \$50-60,000 6 = \$60-\$70,000 7 = \$70-80,000 8 = \$80-\$90,000
 9 = \$90-\$100,000 10 = above \$100,000
- ____ 6. Number of your children currently living in your home
- ____ 7. Number of hours per week you normally work in paid employment
- ____ 8. Number of hours per week your husband normally works in paid employment
9. What is your occupation? _____
10. What is your husband's occupation? _____
11. What is your race? Please check one.
____ Caucasian	____ Hispanic-American
____ African-American	____ Native American
____ Asian-American	____ Other (briefly explain) _____
12. What are the ages of your children living in your home?
13. Would you characterize your employment as "having a job" or "having a career?"
 Please CIRCLE which one.
14. Would you characterize your husband's employment as "having a job" or "having a career?" Please CIRCLE which one.
15. Do you have at least one supervisor at your place of employment that you report to, or are otherwise responsible to? Please CIRCLE one response: YES NO
16. If you have more than one supervisor, please list the number of supervisors.
17. Is your supervisor MALE or FEMALE? Please circle which one.
18. Please write down your phone number so that we may call you for verification
- _____

Thank You Very Much For Your Participation!

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