

HONEY, WOULD YOU . . . ?

A STUDY OF COMPLIANCE-GAINING MESSAGES OF MARRIED WOMEN

THESIS

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By

Melanie Avant, B.A.

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ABSTRACT

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by

Melanie Avant (A.A., B.A.)

Southwest Texas State University

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SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: M. Lee Williams, Ph.D.

A study was conducted to examine the compliance-gaining strategies women use in their marriages and to investigate how these strategies are related to communication competence, relational power, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Women (N = 65) provided open-ended responses describing their most recent compliance-gaining interaction with their husbands. Subjects also completed the Interpersonal Communication Competence scale, a power measure, and the Communication Patterns questionnaire. Hypotheses investigating women's use of compliance-gaining strategies, their communication competence, their relational power, and the presence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern in the relationship were not supported. Three significant results were found: (1) competent communicators were less likely to use the manipulation strategy than less competent communicators, (2) those with high-scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern were more likely to use the assertion strategy, and (3) those with low scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern were significantly more likely to use the reason strategy. These results suggest a relationship between compliance-gaining strategy choice, communication competence, and the presence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern in relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Compliance-gaining has been studied for decades as the investigation of how we get other people to do what we want. Researchers have attempted to understand not only what strategies we use (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967), but what strategies are effective (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Researchers have further attempted to understand what other variables are related to compliance-gaining strategy choices. This endeavor has found that there are many situational and individual variables that affect our compliance-gaining choices (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Falbo & Peplau, 1980). One of these variables is the relationship between the actor and the target, and it has been extensively studied in comparison of stranger and friend relationships (Boster, Rodriguez, Cruz, & Marshall, 1995). However, there has been limited research examining how compliance-gaining works in marital relationships (Roloff, Janiszewski, McGrath, Burns, & Manrai, 1988). This study examines the compliance-gaining messages used by married women.

Marriage is an important part of society today. People become romantically involved with other people, cohabitate, and formally unionize their relationship. Men and women in marriages often find difficulty in communicating with each other (Fitzpatrick, 1988). This research suggests that this happens because men and women are brought up in different cultures that reward different communication behaviors (Canary & Dindia, 1998). Communication becomes particularly difficult when men and women attempt to problem-solve and resolve conflicts (Noller, 1993). Communicating in this way involves compliance-gaining message strategies.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the compliance-gaining messages women use in their marriages and to investigate how these messages are related to other relational variables. In this introduction three research questions are presented. In the following chapters more specific hypothesis are stated for testing.

Research in compliance-gaining strategies investigates how people get what they want or need from others (i.e., how they gain compliance). This line of research solidified when Marwell and Schmitt (1967) established the first taxonomy of sixteen compliance gaining message strategies. These included such strategies as promise, threat, and moral appeal (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). These categories have continued to be refined and modified over the years as the research has moved from public to more interpersonal contexts. There are many different labels for describing the strategies people use to gain compliance (Kellermann & Cole, 1994).

Variables that affect strategy choice in different situations have been of particular interest to scholars. Research in compliance-gaining message strategies has identified individual differences that strongly affect the choice and effect of compliance-gaining strategies. Two key individual differences investigated previously are gender (usually biological) and communication competence (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1986; Ohbuchi & Yamamoto, 1990; Rudd & Burant, 1995). The present study will determine the relationship between women's interpersonal communication competence and the compliance-gaining strategies they use with their husbands. These findings are designed to replicate prior research taking a skills perspective. According to this perspective, when one has the skills to be communicatively competent, more

appropriate and pro-social (i.e., not harmful to the relationship) compliance-gaining strategies will be used. Several couples' communication workshops have been established on this basis (Burleson & Denton, 1997; Glaser & Glaser, 1977; O'Donahue & Crouch, 1996; Witkin, Edleson, Rose, & Hall, 1983), but the research in compliance-gaining has not been extended to marriages to support this practice. The following research question will specifically address the relationship between communication competence and compliance-gaining strategies used.

Research Question 1: When wives possess high versus low degrees of interpersonal communication competence, what compliance-gaining strategies do they use with their husbands?

Compliance-gaining researchers have also found that relational power (i.e., control) is a significant situational difference influencing compliance-gaining message strategy choices (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Scudder & Andrews, 1995). However, research investigating power in marriage has been inconclusive because of the different methodologies used for measuring power as well as a variety of different labels used for compliance-gaining strategies when studied with power. While some researchers investigate power as merely an income issue (Aida & Falbo, 1991), others have investigated other sources of structural power (e.g., income, age, education, and physical attractiveness) and dependence power (e.g., commitment to and dependence upon the relationship) (Howard et al., 1986). This investigation uses a power measure that includes both structural and dependence power measures to gain a better sense of relational power and its effect on compliance-gaining strategy choices. These issues are addressed in the second research question.

Research Question 2: When wives perceive different degrees of power in their marriage, what compliance-gaining strategies do they use with their husbands?

Research in compliance-gaining message strategies has also found that message choices are strongly influenced by an additional situational variable – intimacy between the persuader and target (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Levine & Wheelless, 1990; Miller, Boster, Roloff, & Seibold, 1977; Roloff et al., 1988; Rudd & Burant, 1995). Since intimacy has typically been defined as relational closeness, and since marital relationships usually include individuals who are disclosing, a marital relationship is seen as more intimate than other types of relationships. Most of the studies investigating compliance-gaining messages have varied intimacy only along the stranger-acquaintance-friendship continuum, leaving close marital intimacy virtually unstudied (Boster et al., 1995; Roloff et al., 1988; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989). The demand-withdraw interaction pattern is a cycle of communication that occurs when one partner demands something from the other, and the other withdraws from or avoids the discussion. Since the demand-withdraw pattern is present and destructive when wives' frame their requests as demands, it is necessary to answer this research question to determine how women ask for compliance from their spouses, and what strategies are associated with the demand-withdraw pattern.

Research Question 3: When a demand-withdraw communication pattern exists in a marriage, what compliance-gaining strategies do wives use with their husbands?

Justification

This study investigating compliance-gaining communication in marital relationships is important for a variety of theoretical, methodological, and practical reasons.

Theoretical Justifications

The first theoretical reason why it is important to study compliance-gaining strategies in marital relationships is that there is little compliance-gaining research focusing on intimate relationships. Most of the research investigating the situational variable of intimacy considers friend versus stranger relationships, not intimate marital relationships (for example, Boster et al., 1995; Roloff et al., 1988; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989). The studies that vary intimacy have found that as intimacy increases (but only up to the friendship level), other variables change, such as obligation to grant request and type of request, which have been correlated with strategy choice (Roloff et al., 1988). Frequently this research asks subjects to reference “a person in this class” as a target, causing the intimacy variation to be skewed. The present study will examine intimacy at the marital level to determine what compliance-gaining messages women use in their relationships.

The second theoretical reason for why this research remains important is because of the woman’s role in marriage. Studies investigating the demand-withdraw pattern in marriages have shown that wives’ behaviors are more significant to the longevity of the relationship than husbands (Winstead, Derlega, & Rose, 1997). Furthermore, Jacobson (1990) and others have confirmed that women in unhappy marriages are more negative (e.g., hostile) than men. Women have been shown to be the “barometers” of marital

discord (Jacobson, 1990). For these reasons, the present study will investigate women's compliance-gaining messages and how they relate to other variables from women's perspectives.

The third theoretical reason for why this research remains important is because of the variety of ways power in relationships has been conceptualized. Some studies examine only structural sources of power (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; Safiolos-Rothschild, 1980) while others conceptualize power in the relationship differently (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Howard et al., 1986; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). This has produced confusion in our understanding of the construct of relational power.

Resource theory is frequently utilized to determine which partner has more structural and dependence power in the relationship. It is assumed that the person with the most resources (e.g. income) is the most powerful (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; Safiolos-Rothschild, 1980). Some authors will ask subjects to indicate the balance of power in the relationship. For example, Falbo and Peplau (1980) asked respondents about their preferences for power in a love relationship and had respondents indicate the importance of equal power, personal autonomy, and to assess the balance of power within their relationships. Several authors have used coding schemes to analyze the verbal messages of respondents and determine the powerfulness of the messages generated. They then deduced that the party using the more powerful strategies had more power in the relationship (Aida & Falbo; Falbo, 1977; Falbo & Peplau; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). Scudder and Andrews (1995) manipulated power in their experiments by assigning various levels of power to participants to determine how it affected their messages. Witteman and Fitzpatrick used the assertiveness factor of the Relational

Dimensions Instrument, which asked how often the subject tried to persuade his/her spouse to do something as the power measure. The partner who attempted to persuade more was assumed to be more powerful, regardless of the content of the persuasion.

The current study will seek to reduce some of the confusion created by these different views of power. This investigation will take a more holistic perspective, examining structural and dependence power, rather than relying only upon resource theory.

Methodological Justifications

The first methodological reason to conduct this research is to investigate compliance-gaining messages with “open response“ methodology rather than “likelihood of use” method. Historically, subjects have been asked to respond by indicating the persuasive strategies they would use in a particular situation via a checklist of strategies from the literature. Subjects typically indicated the “likelihood” that they would use each of the strategies listed (Aida, 1993; Aida & Falbo, 1991; Baglan, Lalumia, & Bayless, 1986; Baxter, 1984; Dallinger & Hample, 1994; deTurck, 1985; Gruber & White, 1986; Hecht, 1984; Howard et al., 1986; and Jackson & Backus, 1982; Rudd & Burant, 1995).

This method has recently come under scrutiny as researchers have found that subjects select items that are socially desirable rather than reporting actual likelihood of use (Burleson et al., 1988). Thus, studies using this methodology may not discover reliable individual and situational predictors of message choices. Furthermore, meta-analyses of studies employing the selection procedure have not consistently found effects for individual and situational differences (Burleson et al.). For these reasons, message construction procedures (rather than message selection procedures) are favored. They

have revealed substantial variations with situational and individual differences, and they are not as susceptible to social desirability biases (Burleson et al.).

One open-ended response method (i.e., message construction procedure) gaining in popularity is to present a situation and ask subjects to “write out exactly what you would say” to persuade this person in this situation to do what you want (Burgoon, Birk, & Hall, 1991; Falbo, 1977; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Grant, King, & Behnke, 1994; Hirokawa, Mickey, & Miura, 1991; Ifert & Roloff, 1994; Javidi, Jordan, & Carlone, 1994; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Ohbuchi & Yamamoto, 1990; Paulson & Roloff, 1997; Roloff et al., 1988; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989; Schlueter, Barge & Blankenship, 1990). A variation of this method was used by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) who asked subjects to “describe an incident in which you actually succeeded” in your compliance-gaining attempt. These “open response” methods generally code the responses to fit into one of the existing compliance-gaining typologies (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Grant et al., 1994).

Sometimes the responses are coded into categories that the author determines (Roloff et al., 1988). Frequently the message strategies are collapsed into a smaller category system, such as: direct and pre-giving (Boster et al., 1995); distributive, avoidance, and integrative strategies (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987); positive identification and threat (Hecht, 1984); direct-indirect and polite-impolite (Hirokawa et al., 1991); weak and strong tactics (Howard et al., 1986); positive, negative, and neutral regard for other (Klinge & Burgoon, 1995); and reward, punishment, altruism or rationale based (Schlueter et al., 1990). This present study will use a similar method, but will employ recall of compliance-gaining strategies used in an actual situation rather than the

likelihood of using a variety of predetermined strategies. A well-established coding scheme developed by Noller, Feeney, Bonnell, & Callan (1994) will then be used to categorize the messages.

The current study will employ the “open response” message construction procedure. Wives will recall the messages they used rather than guess how likely they would be to use a strategy given a situation. This has been shown to be a superior method because it is not as susceptible to social desirability bias (Boster, 1988; Burleson et al., 1988). This method is also preferred because it provides a rich text for analysis, and allows for categories and choices that the researcher may not have considered. This method does not impose categories on the subjects, but rather allows them to create the categories themselves.

The second methodological reason to continue this research concerns the use of hypothetical situations. The current study allows respondents to describe their most memorable and recent compliance-gaining scenario. Researchers have generally studied compliance-gaining message strategy choices by presenting a hypothetical situation to subjects and asking subjects to respond by indicating in some way what they would do in that particular situation to persuade the target. Situations are designed to vary intimacy between the subjects and type of requests. For example, Canary and Spitzberg (1987) provided situations in which one asked another to go out, and one asked his/her roommate to “clean up his/her mess.” Dallinger and Hample (1994) varied situations to include: “do for me, do with me, and do for yourself.” deTurck (1985) asked subjects about situations in which they asked others or were asked to change their plans. Having a neighbor turn down a stereo is frequently used because of its salience with student

populations (deTurck; Grant et al., 1994), as is borrowing class notes (Roloff & Janiszewski, 1988). Levine and Wheelless (1990) call this method using a hypothetical situation a “role-play procedure” and argue that this is a weak manipulation because it does not tap actual behaviors and may not be as salient to subjects. They recommend using a recall procedure instead to produce a stronger manipulation that is more immediate to subjects.

By employing an actual situation that the target describes through recall, this study will induce situations that are more salient to the respondents and thus produce a stronger manipulation. This method will overcome item desirability bias present in “likelihood of use” methodologies (Burleson et al., 1988). This method will further be superior because it will induce an actual situation rather than a hypothetical one (Levine & Wheelless, 1990).

Practical Justifications

The first practical reason why it is important to study compliance-gaining strategies in marriage is that spouses use a significant amount of their communication to influence and gain compliance from each other. Daily life requires spouses to negotiate with each other and problem solve. These activities require persuasion and compliance-gaining. Roloff et al. (1988) report that when in need, “individuals turn to their intimates” (p. 141) for help (i.e., they gain the compliance of their intimates for help). Dillard (1989) states that marital relationships “may be the social arena that is most active in terms of sheer frequency of influence attempts” (p. 162). Thus it is important that we know more about how spouses attempt to gain compliance from each other.

The second practical reason for conducting this study is to better understand what compliance-gaining strategies are associated with stable marital relationships. Although this thesis is not directly investigating relational satisfaction, satisfaction has been shown to be related to the types compliance-gaining strategies used (Aida & Falbo, 1991). Furthermore, relational satisfaction leads to relational longevity, and better understanding of the compliance-gaining messages used in marriages may provide additional information about how to sustain marriages. At this time when the public is demanding information about how to ensure that relationships last longer, any study that contributes to the body of knowledge about what makes relationships work is beneficial. Many current popular journals and magazine are printing advice on relationships to meet the public demand for this type of information. Gottman reports that marital therapy will not help “because it is not based on solid empirical knowledge of what real couples do to keep their marriage happy and stable” (as qtd. in Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999, p. 55). Even credentialed therapists may use approaches that have no basis in research (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999). Although this is the information age, behavioral science has not explained how to keep marriages happy and stable, even though there is evidence to support the importance of a strong marriage. This study will investigate compliance-gaining messages as a form of marital communication.

The third practical reason for this investigation is to discover message strategies that could serve as useful content in marital communication workshops and self-help instruction. Currently there is a proliferation of marital communication workshops designed to help spouses by improving their communication skills. Many of the claims made in these workshops are unsupported, and little is known about how compliance-

gaining communication effect marriages. This research will increase knowledge in this area so that more accurate information may be presented in these workshops, and skills may be developed in compliance-gaining communication that truly help couples improve their communication.

Subjects

The principal pool of subjects for this study are women in marital relationships enrolled in communication classes at Southwest Texas State University – primarily Communication 1310, the basic communication course required for all university students. A snowball method (Aida, 1993; Aida & Falbo, 1991; Lindlof, 1995; Rudd & Burant, 1995) is also employed using students from communication classes who will distribute surveys to married women they know. Finally, a Baptist congregation in the Austin area contributed some additional subjects for the research. This procedure is followed in an effort to get a more varied sample of subjects.

Instruments

Subjects completed a survey containing well-established scales for the measurement of compliance-gaining, interpersonal communication competence, relational power, and demand-withdraw patterning. Specifically, these scales are: (1) an open response methodology developed by Noller et al. (1994) to measure compliance-gaining strategies, (2) Rubin and Martin's (1994) interpersonal communication competence scale, (3) a modified version of the Howard et al. (1986) power scale, and (4) the demand-withdraw component of Christensen's (1988) Communication Patterns Questionnaire. In this analysis, the dependent variable is compliance-gaining strategies,

and the independent variables are interpersonal communication competence, relational power, and the demand-withdraw pattern.

In addition, the survey instrument included other scales measuring other variables of secondary interest that will not be investigated in the thesis. A copy of the questionnaire is in the Appendix.

Method of Analysis

Compliance-gaining research generally uses chi-square analysis (Ohbuchi, Chiba, & Fukushima, 1996; Schlueter & Barge, 1990), Pearson product-moment correlations (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Boster, Levine, & Kazoleas, 1993; Dillard, Henwood, Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1990), and analysis of variance statistics (Aida, 1993; Baglan et al., 1986; deTurck, 1985; Hirokawa et al., 1991; Kipnis et al., 1980; Markman, Silvern, Clements, & Kraft-Hanak, 1993; Roloff et al., 1988) for analysis. The primary statistical analysis in the current study is analysis of variance tests following the procedure used by Noller et al. (1994). This method uses interval level measures, thus allowing the researcher to use the more powerful parametric statistics.

Thesis Preview

Four chapters follow this introductory chapter. The introduction is orienting the reader to the focus of the research as well as explaining relevant concepts and terminology used throughout the thesis. General research questions and a rationale for the study were presented.

Chapter One provides a review of literature and hypotheses. The literature review explores past research on marital relationships, marital communication competence, marital power, marital problem-solving, and marital compliance-gaining. This research

is based on scholarly books and professional journals in speech communication, psychology, and sociology. The hypotheses address the relationships between wives compliance-gaining strategies and interpersonal communication competence, power in the relationship, and the demand-withdraw communication pattern.

Chapters Two and Three of the thesis describe the methods and results of this study. The method chapter will describes the procedures used to test the posed hypotheses. Information such as subjects and sampling procedure, descriptions of the measures, and testing procedure are provided. The results chapter will presents the results of the data analysis, statistical analysis of the findings, and how the results relate to the hypothesis.

Chapter Four provides a discussion of the research. This chapter explains the research findings and how this research relates to existing theory. Criticisms of the methods and limitations of this study are also explored. In addition, Chapter Four offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature and hypotheses for testing. First, the past research on compliance-gaining is examined. Second, the research on marital communication and communication competence in marital communication is explored. Third, past research on relational power in marriage and problem-solving in marital communication is then presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with research hypotheses and the rationale for each hypothesis.

Early Persuasion Research

We frequently use communication to persuade others to think and act in certain ways (Seibold, Cantrill, & Meyers, 1994). Initially, rhetorical scholars investigated persuasion to determine how speakers may use messages to influence public audiences (Miller, Burgoon, & Burgoon, 1984). By the 20th Century, methodical investigations of persuasion were pursued in an effort to understand how propaganda could be used to rally support for the war effort during World War I (Miller, Burgoon, & Burgoon). Interest in persuasion continued as the government sought to control public opinion through communication. In the 1940s and 1950s the Yale Studies, rooted in learning theory, examined attitude change and the impact of source, message, receiver, and channel variables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). These scientific studies were the first systematic effort to empirically test persuasion hypotheses. They set an agenda for

experimental inquiry which greatly influenced the design and framework for doing persuasion research.

By the 1960s, persuasion research was viewed as source-oriented, manipulative, and often exploitative (Miller, Burgoon, & Burgoon, 1984). In an effort to redirect persuasion studies, researchers became less interested in attitude change and became more interpersonal focused. Personal persuasion and the persuasion process began to be studied more. The emphasis shifted from exploring one-to-many persuasion acts to understanding the interaction between the participants.

Compliance-Gaining

Marwell and Schmitt (1967) were some of the first researchers to investigate persuasion in interpersonal settings and the strategies people use to influence each other. They defined compliance-gaining as goal directed behavior that attempts to restructure the environment to satisfy some desire (Marwell & Schmitt). They inventoried what types of messages persuaders used and categorized the message strategies. They contended that strategies are meaningful clusters of the possible behaviors that may be used to influence (Marwell & Schmitt). Researchers began to look at overall persuasive strategies, rather than specific messages. This research focused on what compliance-gaining strategies are available to us and when these strategies are used (Kellermann & Cole, 1994).

Schemas/Typologies

Compliance-gaining researchers have developed various taxonomies to identify and define specific strategies. Following a research tradition established by Skinner (1953), Thibaut and Kelley (1959), French and Raven (1960), Etzioni (1961), Kelman

(1961), Parsons (1963), and Weinstein and Deutchberger (1963), Marwell and Schmitt (1967) designed the first taxonomy of sixteen compliance-gaining strategies. This taxonomy included the following strategies:

Promise – actor offers a reward for compliance.

Threat – actor presents a punishment for noncompliance.

Expertise (positive) – actor acknowledges nature will reward compliance.

Expertise (negative) – actor acknowledges nature will punish noncompliance.

Liking -- actor is friendly and helpful to get target in a “good frame of mind.”

Pre-Giving -- actor rewards target before requesting compliance.

Aversive Stimulation – actor continues punishment until compliance occurs.

Debt – actor reminds target he/she owes actor compliance because of past favors.

Moral Appeal – actor suggests target is immoral if does not comply.

Self feeling (positive) -- actor suggests target will feel better about self with compliance.

Self feeling (negative) -- actor suggests target will feel worse about self with noncompliance.

Altercasting (positive) -- actor suggests a person with “good” qualities would comply.

Altercasting (negative) -- actor suggests only a person with “bad” qualities would not comply.

Altruism -- actor expresses strong need for compliance, comply “for actor.”

Esteem (positive) -- actor suggests people will think better of target with compliance.

Esteem (negative) -- actor suggests people will think worse of target with noncompliance.

These categories have been refined and changed over the years as researchers have used different methods to distinguish the categories (Cody, McLaughlin, & Schneider, 1981; Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979; Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, & Georgacarakos, 1982; Wiseman & Schenck-Hamlin, 1981). Most of the typologies have

been created deductively, with researchers creating the strategies and then testing to see how frequently people used them. Some, however, have used a more inductive procedure. Falbo (1977), for example, inductively created categories from essays written in response to the question “How do you get your way?”

Researchers investigating compliance-gaining messages used in intimate relationships have often used the term “power strategies.” Power strategy research focuses on decision making and the balance of power within couples (Cromwell & Olson, 1975; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970). Power strategy research examines the behaviors people use to gain compliance within an ongoing interpersonal relationship, whereas the compliance-gaining research has focused on one-time messages. Power strategy research has also examined the basis of power in relationships and the effects power has on behaviors. Falbo (1977) created the sixteen power strategies most cited in power strategy research. They are as follows:

Assertion -- forcefully asserting one’s way.

Bargaining – explicitly stating favors will be reciprocated.

Compromise -- both agent and target give up some goals to obtain some goals.

Deceit -- using flattery or lying to fool target into agreement.

Emotion-agent -- altering own facial expression.

Emotion-target -- attempting to alter the emotions of the target.

Evasion -- avoiding the disapproving person.

Expertise -- claiming to have superior knowledge or skill.

Fait accompli -- openly doing what one wants without avoiding the target.

Hinting -- not openly stating what one wants; indirect influence attempts.

Persistence -- continuing influence attempts; repeating one’s point.

Persuasion – making simple statements about persuasion; convincing, or coaxing.

Reason -- using reason as a rational argument.

Simple statement – stating desires without support in a simple, matter of fact way.

Thought manipulation -- making the target think that the agent's way is the target's own idea.

Threat -- stating negative consequences that will occur if agent's plan is not accepted.

One can see from these strategies that although some correspond with Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) compliance-gaining strategies, power strategy researchers are looking at more interpersonally oriented behaviors.

Individual Differences Affecting Compliance-Gaining Messages

Variables that effect the choice of strategies have been of particular interest to communication scholars. Research has identified individual differences that influence strategy choice, as well as the effect of compliance-gaining strategies. Individual variables are person specific and internal to the persuader, such as personality and demographics.

Early studies focused on personality variables as individual differences affecting the choice and result of compliance-gaining strategies. Christie and Geis (1970) found that individuals scoring high in negativism on their Mach IV scale rejected strategies that view people as good, kind, brave, dependable, or moral. These "negative" people tended to use more negative strategies. Roloff and Barnicott (1979) suggested that highly dogmatic persons tend to use more either/or strategies. They are less flexible in bargaining situations, and select strategies to persuade at any cost.

Two key individual differences investigated more recently are gender and communication competence (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Howard et al., 1986; Ohbuchi & Yamamoto, 1990; Rudd & Burant, 1995). The emergence of gender as another individual difference variable has been shrouded in much argument about the causes of

these differences and the extent of the differences. In these studies the term “gender” is used as a cultural concept representing psychological and biological gender. Gender is the social and psychological manifestation of what one believes to be male and/or female, and a person of either sex can be masculine or feminine. Conversely, the term “sex” is a biological concept, where a person can be either male or female (Canary & Dindia, 1998). In these studies, the term gender is used to encompass both sex and gender, although measures generally include only a male/female check box.

Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979) found that women were likely to employ strategies of personal rejection, empathic understanding, and emotional appeals, while men were likely to use a non-negotiation strategy. Falbo and Peplau (1980) reported that men expected compliance in their influence attempts and therefore used more direct strategies, while women anticipated noncompliance and used indirect strategies. Johnson (1976, 1978) found that powerful and direct strategies were more expected of men, whereas powerless and indirect strategies were expected of women.

Many have argued that power differences in the relationship, rather than individual gender differences, are critical variables in determining strategies (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Kipnis (1984) provided support for this argument when he found that people with power use strong tactics more frequently than those with less power. It is suggested that gender differences in the use of strategies is simply a reflection of power differences commonly found between the sexes (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Resource theory and marital power research also supports this contention (McDonald, 1980; Safiolos-Rothschild, 1980). It has been found that the greater resources one has in a marital

relationship, the greater power he/she has, regardless of gender (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; McDonald, 1980; Safiolos-Rothschild, 1980).

Another individual variable investigated in compliance-gaining research is communication skill, also known as communication competence. According to this perspective, when one has the skills to be communicatively competent, more appropriate and pro-social (i.e., not harmful to the relationship) compliance-gaining strategies will be used. Several couples' communication workshops have been established on this basis (Burleson & Denton, 1997; Glaser & Glaser, 1977; O'Donahue & Crouch, 1996; Witkin et al., 1983). However, the limited compliance-gaining research in marital relationships has not explored or confirmed this assumed relationship between skill development and pro-social strategy use.

Situational Variables

Research in compliance-gaining message strategies has also found that message choices are strongly influenced by situational variables. Situational variables are specific to the persuasive context and frequently involve the relationship between the source and the receiver. Several researchers suggest that strategy selection is greatly influenced by the perception of how listener compliance will effect the relationship (Kaminiski, McDermott, & Boster, 1977; Lustig & King, 1980; Miller et al., 1977; Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979). Satisfaction with the relationship also affects strategy selection (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Other interesting situational factors in strategy selection are the extent to which the listener's compliance benefits the listener (Hunter & Boster, 1979; Williams & Boster, 1981) and the extent to which the listener's compliance benefits the persuader (Clark, 1979; Williams & Boster). This research suggests that we choose

different compliance-gaining strategies by examining the effect of the compliance and the nature of the relationship.

The most researched situational variable in compliance-gaining is intimacy (also referred to as relational closeness) between the persuader and target (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Levine & Wheelless, 1990; Miller et al., 1977; Roloff et al., 1988; Rudd & Burant, 1995). The intimacy of the persuader-listener relationship strongly affects choice of compliance-gaining strategy (Miller et al., 1977; Kaminiski et al., 1977; Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979; Sillars, 1980). The relationship between the interactants is varied in these studies on the basis of intimacy and familiarity. Relationships studied primarily include strangers (no intimacy/familiarity), acquaintances (low intimacy/familiarity), and friends (greater intimacy/familiarity) (Boster et al., 1995; Roloff et al., 1988; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989).

Methodological Issues

Miller et al.(1977) introduced compliance-gaining research to the field of communication, and began to discover the variables that influence persuasive strategy selection (Boster & Stiff, 1984). In these experiments, a situation was presented in which a speaker attempts to gain compliance from a listener, and the subject indicated the strategies he/she would be most likely to use. Subjects typically indicated the “likelihood” that they would use each of the strategies listed (Aida, 1993; Aida & Falbo, 1991; Baglan et al., 1986; Baxter, 1984; Dallinger & Hample, 1994; deTurck, 1985; Gruber & White, 1986; Hecht, 1984; Howard et al., 1986; Jackson & Backus, 1982; Rudd & Burant, 1995).

This methodology has recently come under scrutiny as researchers have found that subjects select items that are socially desirable rather than reporting actual likelihood of use (Burleson et al., 1988). Thus, studies using this methodology may not discover reliable individual and situational predictors of message choices. Furthermore, studies employing the selection procedure have not consistently found effects for individual and situational differences (Burleson et al.). For these reasons, message construction procedures (rather than message selection procedures) are favored. Such open response type procedures have revealed substantial variations with situational and individual differences, and they are not as susceptible to social desirability biases (Burleson et al.).

One open-ended response method (i.e., message construction procedure) gaining in popularity is to present a situation and ask subjects to “write out exactly what you would say” to persuade a person in a specific situation to do what you want (Burgoon et al., 1991; Falbo, 1977; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Grant et al., 1994; Hirokawa et al., 1991; Ifert & Roloff, 1994; Javidi, Jordan, & Carlone, 1994; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Ohbuchi & Yamamoto, 1990; Paulson & Roloff, 1997; Roloff et al., 1988; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989; Schlueter et al., 1990). A variation of this method is used by Kipnis et al. (1980) who asked subjects to “describe an incident in which you actually succeeded” in your compliance-gaining attempt. These “open response” methods generally coded the responses to fit into one of the existing compliance-gaining typologies (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Grant et al., 1994). Sometimes the responses are coded into categories that the author determines (Roloff et al., 1988). Frequently the message strategies are collapsed into a broad category system, such as: direct and pre-giving (Boster et al., 1995); distributive, avoidance, and integrative strategies (Canary &

Spitzberg, 1987); positive identification and threat (Hecht, 1984); direct-indirect and polite-impolite (Hirokawa et al., 1991); weak and strong tactics (Howard et al., 1986); positive, negative, and neutral regard for other (Kling & Burgoon, 1995); and reward, punishment, altruism or rationale based strategies (Schlueter et al., 1990).

Marital Communication

Marriage is fundamental to today's Western culture. Fitzpatrick (1988) writes "the majority of adults in contemporary Western society marry; they form emotional alliances and share their domicile with an adult of the opposite sex" (p.1). A 1991 Family Values Study found that beyond accepting responsibility for one's actions and respecting others, the most widely held value in American families is having a happy marriage (McLeod, 1992). Yet the divorce rate in this country continues to rise. Almost 30% of women in this country experience at least one divorce (US Census, 1998).

Separation and divorce "have strong negative consequences for the mental and physical health of both spouses. These negative effects include increased risk for psychopathology; increased rates of automobile accidents including fatalities; and increased incidence of physical illness, suicide, violence, homicide, and mortality from diseases" (Gottman, 1994, p. 2). One study even found that stability of marriage was the best predictor of dying or staying alive, even when health factors were controlled (Gottman). In his review of research over the past thirty years, Gottman concludes that marital distress is associated with a number of deleterious effects in children, including depression, withdrawal, poor social competence, health problems, poor academic performance, and a variety of conduct related difficulties.

Marital researchers have responded to these negative findings about marital distress and divorce by investigating marital communication (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Communication has become the key to marriage – those who are satisfied with the communication in their marriage are satisfied with their marriage and seek to continue it (Fitzpatrick). Many contend that communication is even more essential and thereby important in marriages than in our other social interactions (Fitzpatrick). Fitzpatrick noted “interaction between husbands and wives is crucial to the marital relationship because it is the means by which couples manage their daily lives, express their feelings to one another, solve their problems, and cope with other relationships” (p.2).

A Cultural Perspective of Marital Communication

Differences between the sexes, both in their communication and their conflict solving strategies, have been studied extensively over the last 20 years (Schapp, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988). These investigations have sought to understand the reasons for the continuing dissolution of marriages and to improve the quality of marital relationships. A cultural perspective has guided this research because cultural theory explains that the communication difficulties couples face is a result of their gender differences (i.e., a masculine culture and a feminine culture) (Canary & Dindia, 1998). While cultural theory does not dispute other theories of gender differences such as biological or psychological, it explains these theories by showing them to reflect larger cultural factors (Wood, 1997). Gender is a primary source of our self-identity, which we learn from conversations with others (Wood). These different cultures value different communication behaviors, causing difficulties when cross-cultural communication occurs between husbands and wives.

Marital Quality/Satisfaction

The quality of marital communication is frequently associated with marital quality. Most of the research in marital relationships has attempted to predict and explain marital quality or satisfaction largely because of the negative consequences of marital distress and divorce (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Psychologist, sociologist, and communication scholars have contributed to this body of research over the past 20 years. Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) reviewed marital communication literature and found that the research has concentrated on:

the processes by which marital communication affects or is affected by marital satisfaction. Of particular interest are the causal mechanisms that may account for this strong relation between a couple's communication patterns and the type of marriage they have. (p. 832)

The goal of the research has been "to understand the differences in communication pattern between couples in distressed and nondistressed marriages . . ." (p. 835). The key question organizing the research has been "How does the behavior of happy couples differ from that of unhappy couples?" (p. 835).

Communication between spouses can be a source of marital distress. Marital therapists report that couples seeking treatment most commonly complain of difficulty with communication (Geis & O'Leary, 1981). Marital distress has been directly linked with poor communication by a number of researchers (Baucom & Adams, 1987; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Smith, Vivian & O'Leary, 1991). Pearson and Sessler (1991) reported that communication is essential to improving relationships. Noller and Guthrie (1989) explained that this is because relationships exist primarily in the interaction that occurs

between partners. Furthermore, satisfied couples talk to each other more often than unsatisfied couples (Cole, 1985; Holman & Brock, 1986; Pearson, 1991; Worthington, Buston, & Hammonds, 1989). The finding that communication is a determinant to marital satisfaction has led researchers to investigate basic communication competencies and behaviors in marriage, and has found gender differences in the way spouses communicate.

Communication Competence and Marital Communication

Given the importance of communication to marital satisfaction, those who are better communicators should be more satisfied with their marriages. Communication scholars have labeled the ability to communicate well “communication competence” (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

Definition of Communication Competence

Communication competence, as simply defined by a basic communication text book, is “the ability to get what you seek from others in a manner that maintains the relationship on terms acceptable to both you and the other person” (Adler & Rodman, 1997, p. 17). Weimann (1977) explained that when one is a competent communicator, he or she can have his or her way in the relationship while maintaining a mutually acceptable definition of that relationship. Weimann argued for a five factor definition of communication competence that includes: (1) affiliation/support, (2) social relaxation, (3) empathy, (4) behavioral flexibility, and (5) interaction management skills. This perspective suggests that the competent communicator is:

other oriented to the extent that he is open (available) to receive messages from others, does not provoke anxiety in others by exhibiting anxiety himself, is

empathetic, has a large enough behavioral repertoire to allow him to meet the demands of changing situations, and, finally, is supportive of the faces and lines his fellow interactants present. (Weimann, 1977, p. 393)

This other-oriented perspective is also found in other examinations of competence. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) advanced one of the most developed conceptualizations of communication competence. They define competence as a relational phenomenon that is a function of both appropriateness and effectiveness of communication within a relationship. They explain that appropriate communication does not violate norms or rules of the context of the encounter. Effective communication achieves interactant goals/objectives or satisfies “interactant needs, desires, or intentions” (p. 102). Thus, the competent communicator is “the person who accomplishes personal objectives through communication in a way that is appropriate to the interpersonal context” (p. 105).

Rubin and Martin (1994) created a comprehensive measure of communication competence based, in part, on the work of Spitzberg and Cupach, which acknowledges that competence is contextual. Rubin and Martin explained that Interpersonal Communication Competence (ICC) “is an impression or judgement formed about a person’s ability to manage interpersonal relationships in communication settings” (p. 33). Rubin and Martin reported that the past twenty years of research in communication competence has discovered dozens of skills integral to impressions of competence in interpersonal settings. They further discovered that “ICC texts published since 1990 that summarize important interpersonal competence skills indicate general agreement for 10 of these” (p. 34). Rubin and Martin (p.34-37) developed the Interpersonal

Communication Competence Scale (ICCS) as a self-report measure of global interpersonal competence in these ten dimensions:

Self-Disclosure: the ability to open up or reveal to others personality elements through communication.

Empathy: affect for or an emotional reaction to another's internal state that results in understanding of the other's perspective.

Social relaxation: a lack of anxiety or apprehension in everyday social interactions: a feeling of comfort, low apprehension, and ability to handle another's negative reactions or criticisms without undue stress.

Assertiveness: standing up for one's rights without denying the rights of the other.

Interaction Management: a person's ability to handle ritualistic procedures in everyday conversations such as negotiating topics to be discussed, taking turns, beginning and ending conversations, and developing conversational topics.

Altercentricism: interest in others, attentiveness to what they say and how they say it, perceptiveness not only of what is said but also what is not said, responsiveness to their thoughts, and adaptation during conversation.

Expressiveness: ability to communicate feeling through verbal and nonverbal communications.

Supportiveness: communication that confirms the other and is descriptive rather than evaluative, spontaneous rather than strategic, oriented towards solving a problem rather than controlling, empathetic rather than remote, and egalitarian rather than superior.

Immediacy: ability to show others that one is approachable and available for communication.

Environmental control: ability to achieve predetermined goals and satisfy needs by handling conflict settings and solving problems in a cooperative atmosphere.

Rubin and Martin's (1994) ICC Scale measures interpersonal communication competence in all of these areas of communication. Measures such as this have been used to explore gender differences in communication competence, competencies

associated with marital satisfaction, and to develop communication workshops in which attendants increase their competence to develop greater marital satisfaction (Rubin & Martin).

Gender Differences in Communication Competence

Expressiveness, the ability to demonstrate feeling through communication, is an important skill (Miller, Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1992). Often men are unsuccessful at expressing positive emotion in messages to their wives, a phenomenon that leads to frustration for women in relationships (Noller, 1987). Women are better at displaying happiness both verbally and nonverbally than men (Coats & Feldman, 1996). Men are better at displaying anger than women (Coats & Feldman). Coats and Feldman explain that this is because these displays are correlated with sociometric status (i.e., popularity and social status) among same-sexed peer groups. “Men and women develop those social skills (including encoding ability) most needed in their (same sex) peer group” (Coats & Feldman, p. 1019). A cultural viewpoint enables the examination of these gender differences because it is the culture of the peer group that instills these sexed behaviors through reward or punishment.

Two other important gender differentiated skills are altercentricism (i.e., interest in others), especially in regard to attentive listening, and empathy for the emotional state of another. Husbands tend to rely on only the audio channel when decoding their wives' messages. That is, they listen more to the paralinguage and words, and therefore may miss the emotion which women encode primarily through the visual channel such as facial expressions (Noller, 1987). This makes husbands appear less altercentric and empathic, and wives appear less expressive. Noller explained that men tend to decode

messages more negatively than they are, while women decode them more positively. Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) found that “husbands’ encoding and decoding of messages seemed more crucial than that by wives to marital satisfaction” (p. 836). These factors contribute to miscommunications between marital partners, especially about their feelings, and may lead to unsuccessful conflict management.

Because prevailing cultural stereotypes show that women are better and more competent communicators than men, Briton and Hall (1995) tested the perceptions and the accuracy of these stereotypes. They found that men, in fact, are dysfluent and less skilled communicators. Women are more skilled, fluent, and involved communicators. The stereotypes were supported. Winstead et al. (1997) explained that the common stereotypes are harmful to relationships because they work as self-fulfilling prophecies. Whatever communications are expected will come. If we expect men to communicate poorly and women effectively, they will. Cultural expectations of individuals result in those behaviors. Again, a cultural theory explains this phenomenon.

Another difference between the sexes that affects communication competence lies in the purposes they see for communicating and for relationships. Women are taught by their culture to see communication as part of a relationship, while men view communication as an indicator of a problem and a tool for solution (Noller, 1993). This leads to difficulties when women try to communicate when there is no problem, and men perceive this as problematic in itself; thus, they exhibit less social relaxation and immediacy. Further, Winstead and colleagues (1997) explained that intimacy is expressed by men through sex, while women find verbal expressions of affection more important for intimacy. This suggests women need communication within relationships

to feel affection, and men are uncomfortable with communication because it indicates problems within the relationship. Further exacerbating this problem is that men want more independence within their relationships and women want more closeness (Christensen, 1988; Christensen & Heavey, 1990). These factors, taken together, show why it is so difficult for people from two different cultures to communicate within a close relationship and points to the importance of communication competence in a marriage.

Interestingly, there are limited sex differences in communication found in newly formed intimate relationships. Klein and Lamm (1996) studied 98 newly intimate couples and found no significant sex differences between men's and women's communication for self-expression, listening, or problem-solving. These are all skills of competent communicators. They hypothesized that sex roles are established over time in the relationship to explain their results. Klinetob and Smith (1996) also found that sex roles were not observed in early relationships, although they were mentioned in self-reports. This research indicates sex roles form and polarize over time to align with stereotypes. A cultural perspective explains that this happens because when the two cultures meet, they know there are differences between the cultures, and therefore make a conscious effort to overcome these differences to create a close relationship with its own cultural norms and expectations. The culture of the new relationship shapes the sex roles which become more polarized as the actors absorb the roles and the relationship matures (Klinetob & Smith).

From this literature, one can see that many gender differences in communication competence are absent in young relationships, although they are present in children, adults, and long-term relationships (Coats & Feldman, 1996; Klein & Lamm, 1996;

Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Noller, 1987; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). These differences include conflict resolution strategies, communication of emotion, overall communication skill (e.g. self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, altercentricism, expressiveness, and immediacy), and purpose of communication and relationship (Briton & Hall, 1995; Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Coats & Feldman, 1996; Miller et al., 1992; Noller, 1987; Noller, 1993; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Winstead et al., 1997). These differences could generate significant problems and conflicts within intimate relationships, especially in light of Noller and Fitzpatrick's finding that "gender differences are frequently intensified in unhappily married couples" (p. 835).

Competencies Associated with Marital Satisfaction

Researchers in the field of marital communication have found that more competent communicators have more satisfied marriages (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Schapp et al., 1988). Several specific skills have been associated with competent communication and marital satisfaction. In their investigation of expressiveness, Walsh, Baucom, Tyler and Sayers (1993) found that partners were happier when negative statements were expressed subjectively (i.e., self-focused with use of I statements) and positive statements are expressed declaratively (i.e., other-focused and direct). In fact, fewer negative comments are found in the relationships of satisfied couples than dissatisfied couples (Gottman, 1979; Noller, 1982, 1985; Pike & Sillars, 1985). Richmond (1995) reported that satisfied couples engaged in more communication than dissatisfied couples. Schapp et al. (1988) found that couples were more satisfied when there was more overall self-disclosure from both partners, a skill Noller and Fitzpatrick

suggest is necessary for competent marital communication. These findings suggest that communication competence contributes to longevity and satisfaction in marriage.

This review of communication competence indicates a communication skill deficit in less satisfied married couples. Satisfied couples demonstrate competence in supportiveness by showing more social reinforcement such as humor, assent, and agreement (Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Revenstorf, Vogel, Wegener, Halweg, & Schindler, 1980); positive problem solving behaviors such as compromise (Birchler et al.); and facilitative behaviors such as description and paraphrasing (Wegener, Revenstorf, Halweg, & Schindler, 1979). Dissatisfied couples, in contrast, are more likely to be negative in their emotional expressions (Birchler et al., 1975; Gottman, 1979; Patterson & Reid, 1970). In their review of research, Gray-Little and Burks (1983) found that dissatisfied couples use more coercive techniques. Thus a link has been established between marital satisfaction and communication competency.

Skills Workshops

Several attempts have been made to improve the communication competence of spouses in order to improve relational quality and longevity. These attempts take the form of various couple communication workshops and marital retreats. Couple Communication is one such program, established in the early 1970s at the University of Minnesota Family Study Center, which boasts high success in improving both communication skill and relational satisfaction with over 500,000 couples (Miller et al., 1992). This program specifically targets such skills as clarifying thoughts and feelings through explicit disclosure, expressing emotion, assertiveness, empathy and supportiveness, interaction management through focus and structure, and most of all,

active and effective listening. Couples completing this program perceive positive effects on the quality of their relationship (Miller et al.).

Numerous other communication workshops have been developed for couples (Burleson & Denton, 1997; O'Donahue & Crouch, 1996; Witkin et al., 1983). Buley (1979) reported that it has been shown that "a change in communication affects the total relationship" and claimed:

it is apparent that people can communicate in ways that will strengthen their relationships with one another, in ways that allow them to handle their differences constructively, and in ways that will allow them to change problem aspects of their relationships. (p.4)

Buley thus developed a couple's communication skills workshop to "increase the communication competencies of both partners by having them practice specific communication skills with one another"(p.4). Similarly, Glaser and Glaser (1977) developed a marital communication course to teach communication competencies in hopes that it would also improve marriages.

Currently there is a proliferation of marital communication workshops designed to help spouses by improving their communication skills (Burleson & Denton, 1997; O'Donahue & Crouch, 1996; Glaser & Glaser, 1977; Witkin et al., 1983). Many current popular journals and magazines are printing advice on relationships to meet the public demand for this type of information. However, Gottman reports that marital therapy will not help "because it is not based on solid empirical knowledge of what real couples do to keep their marriage happy and stable. . . Even credentialed therapists may use approaches that have no basis in research" (as quoted. in Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999, p.

55). This is also true of the marital workshops since many of the claims made are unsupported. Although this is the information age, behavioral science has not explained how to keep marriages happy and stable, even though there is evidence to support the importance of a strong marriage.

Relational Power and Marital Communication

Relational Power Defined

Power is generally defined as the potential or capacity to influence (Barracough & Stewart, 1992). French and Raven (1960) delineated the sources of power into five types: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert. This delineation concerns the target's perception of the type of power possessed by the agent. If the target perceives the agent to have expertise, the ability to reward or punish, the right to rule, or if the target has identified with the agent, then the agent is granted power by the target (French & Raven). In this sense, an agent does not actually have power. It is granted to the agent by the target as a function of the relationship between the agent and the target.

Interpersonal researchers have not been as concise in defining sources of power. Kulik (1999) explained that resource theory has guided the last 40 years of research in interpersonal and marital power. Resource theory has evolved from social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) which essentially states that relationships are based on an exchange of resources. As long as the costs associated with being in the relationship do not significantly outweigh the perceived rewards of the relationship, the participants continue the relationship. Social exchange and resource theories both explain that the giving, taking, and sharing of resources are common in relationships. In fact, in order to obtain rewards for themselves, people provide rewards to others and participate in

exchange. According to resource theory, the relational partner with access to and control of more resources (e.g., income) has more power in the relationship (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970).

Another perspective gaining in popularity concerns emotional commitment. The partner with the most emotional commitment has the least power (McDonald, 1980). The reasoning here is that the one who is more able and willing to leave the relationship has greater influence on the other because the other accepts the less powerful position in order to keep the relationship.

How Relational Power Has Been Measured

One of the most significant issues in relational power is how to measure it. While some researchers investigate power as merely an income issue (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970), others have investigated different sources of structural power (e.g., age, education, and physical attractiveness) and dependence power (e.g., commitment to and dependence upon the relationship) (Howard et al., 1986). Some studies employ variations of these (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986), including asking subjects directly to indicate their preference for power and the importance of equal power and personal autonomy, as well as to assess the balance of power within their relationships.

Several authors use coding schemes to analyze the verbal messages of respondents and determine the powerfulness of the messages generated. They then deduce that the party using the more powerful strategies has more power in the relationship (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo, 1977; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). Scudder and Andrews (1995) manipulated power in their experiments

by assigning various levels of power to participants to determine how it affected their messages. The assertiveness factor of the Relational Dimensions Instrument is also frequently used to assess relational power (Witteman & Fitzpatrick). The only item in this factor asks how often the subject tries to persuade his/her spouse to do something. The partner who attempts to persuade more was assumed to be more powerful, regardless of the content of the persuasion.

Effects of Relational Power

Those who see themselves as equal partners are more satisfied with their relationships (Aida & Falbo, 1992). Those who see themselves as equal use more interactive communications, while those who acknowledge having greater power use more independent communication actions (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Noller (1993) reported that more powerful people fail to reinforce or acknowledge other's contributions, act as though they are above the normal rules of conversation, and behave as though they are experts. Sagrestano, Heavey, and Christensen (1999) cite power inequity as an important predictor of verbal aggression and physical violence in a relationship. Many compliance-gaining studies have also measured power and found that powerful people use more bilateral strategies (e.g., independent/non-interactive strategies such as withdrawing or telling) (Falbo & Peplau, 1980) and strong influence tactics (e.g., assertion) with greater frequency (Kipnis, 1984). Less powerful people used more weak tactics such as manipulation and supplication (e.g., pleading, crying) (Howard et al., 1986). Falbo and Peplau (1980) found that equal partners use fewer influence strategies overall than other couples.

Problem-Solving and Marital Communication

One purpose of communication within intimate relationships is problem-solving and conflict resolution (Heavey, Larson, Zumtobel, & Christensen, 1996). When two people marry and/or cohabitate, they often intertwine their lives necessitating daily problem solving and virtually ensuring conflict (Schapp et al., 1980). Conflict occurs when one party opposes the request for action, assertion, or action of another (Sheldon, 1990). The effectiveness of communication in marriages, then, should predict the satisfaction a partner feels with the resolution of conflict and the relationship.

Numerous studies have been devoted to understanding how spouses discuss problems and resolve conflicts in marriage. Much of this research has been observational. Researchers ask participants to identify a problem or conflict area and then to discuss it while the researcher observes (e.g. Ball, Cowan, & Cowan, 1995). Elaborate coding schemes have been developed to assist the researcher in analyzing the conversations (Schapp et al., 1988). Of particular interest to researchers in marital problem-solving has been the different ways the genders experience problem-solving.

Gender Differences in Problem-Solving

From early childhood, there are differences in the conflict communication of boys and girls that affect their problem-solving and conflict discussions. Pierce and Edwards (1988) had children write fantasy stories and analyzed them for theme and conflict resolution strategies. Male characters resolved their conflicts more aggressively and even violently than female characters. Boys resolved conflicts in these stories with wars and fights, while girls either talked the problems out or let them resolve themselves. Sheldon's (1990) study of conflict resolution in same-sex triads of 3-year-olds found that

girls used language and discussion to resolve the conflicts, while boys used aggression and avoidance to resolve them. For instance, the boys threatened physical force, used physical force, and invoked ad hoc rules to get their way. When these were unsuccessful, they invented a new game, in effect changing the subject to end the conflict (Sheldon, 1990). These studies demonstrate the differences in the sexes are distinctive even in children, and support a cultural theory because these children have absorbed the norms of their culture and display them.

Interestingly, Infante, Rancer, and Jordan (1996) found that given the same communication, females would be judged as behaving more aggressively than males. Their study used scripted problem-solving discussions to test the effects of gender on perception of aggression versus argumentation. The results showed that females engaging in argumentative communication are perceived as aggressive. Thus, it seems that there is a gender-based double standard about what is acceptable in conflict communication.

Variables Affecting Outcome of Problem-Solving

Self-expression and listening are important communication variables for positive conflict resolution and problem-solving (Klein & Lamm, 1996). An individual, from his/her own cultural perspective, must be able to express his/her own views and desired outcomes of a problem. In addition, a person must be able to listen to his/her partner's views, from his/her cultural perspective, on the issue at hand to resolve it satisfactorily for both parties. Klein and Lamm found that when one perceives his/her own issue as legitimate, he/she is able to express himself effectively. Conversely, they found that when one perceives the other's issue as legitimate, he or she is able to listen more

effectively. This shows that for effective problem-solving to occur, one must merely perceive the issue as a legitimate one (Klein & Lamm), but not necessarily an important one. Little research has been done in this area, so the question remains -- how does one help his/her partner to see the issue as a legitimate one?

Couple communication programs are based on effective self-expression and listening as problem-solving behaviors (Miller et al., 1992). Therapists are teaching marital couples to express themselves using "I/we" messages instead of "you" messages when conveying negative statements because they hope this will lead to more positive conflict outcomes by legitimizing the issues. Vogelzang, Euwema, and Nauta (1997) supported this method with their study of conflict behavior. They found that there was a perceived atmosphere of friendliness and compromise when partners used personal references in negative statements. Walsh et al. (1993), however, did not find this result. They found that the way a message was stated had no effect, that "I" messages were neither helpful nor useful, and that the focus of the message was the only significant predictor of response. They found that when the focus of a negative message is the relationship or the respondent, the response was negative. This study found message response was reciprocal; negative messages caused negative responses, and positive messages cause positive responses. Thus, there are still conflicting research studies about the use of these messages in conflict situations and the effectiveness has not been demonstrated.

Several studies have looked at problem-solving discussions to determine the variables that contributed to a satisfactory outcome. Cataldi and Reardon (1996) found that interpersonal orientation was a strong predictor of satisfaction. They defined

interpersonal orientation as being sensitive to others and feeling the relationship was important. Walsh et al. (1993) found that both partners were very satisfied when the husband showed empathy toward the wife during the discussion. Winstead et al. (1997) argued that satisfaction with problem-solving is dependent upon a husband's social support of his wife, an issue related to empathy. One study found that in regard to problem-solving, both males and females blamed a noncommunicative husband for dissatisfaction within a marriage (Eels & O'Flaherty, 1996), while others have found that the wife is blamed because she is seen as the "keeper" of the relationship (Noller, 1993; Winstead et al.). These views arise out of the culture. When cultural expectations exist for a man to be noncommunicative and non-supportive and a woman is expected to be communicative, tensions most probably will ensue when these two attempt to communicate and problem-solve.

Noller (1993) explains that conflicts are governed by often subconscious, yet mutually agreed upon rules. These include such things as not showing anger, raising your voice, losing your temper, or becoming argumentative; behaviors culturally normed as negative conflict communications. She believes that women are more likely to break these rules to continue discussions of an issue, while men will withdraw to avoid breaking these rules. This brings up the issue of the demand-withdraw pattern.

Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern and Marital Communication

Defining the Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

Differences between the sexes, both in their communication and their conflict/problem-solving strategies, have been extensively studied over the last 20 years. A significant finding in this research is the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. This

pattern has also been studied under the interaction pattern labels “distance and pursuit” (Fogarty, 1976), and “rejection-intrusion” (Napier, 1978). An interaction pattern is a sequence of exchanges in which an act by one partner is followed by a contingent action from the other that continues as long as the reciprocal contingency continues (Christensen, 1988). In the demand-withdraw interaction pattern, one partner tries to discuss problems, criticizes and blames the partner for the problems, and requests or demands change while the other partner tries to avoid discussions of the problems, defends self against the criticisms, and withdraws from the discussion (Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1998). Demand-withdraw is a gender-differentiated interaction pattern that appears during marital problem-solving discussions and is assumed to arise from cultural differences (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer, Heesink, & DeVliert, 1997; Markman et al., 1993).

Effects of the Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

It is widely agreed that demand-withdraw is a negative, cyclical, mutually escalating conflict interaction pattern most common to distressed couples (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Heavey, Christensen, & Malamuth, 1995; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997; Markman et al., 1993; Noller, 1993; White, 1989; Winstead et al., 1997). In distressed couples, this pattern typically involves a wife demanding through nagging and criticizing, and a husband withdrawing by changing the subject or otherwise failing to respond. This is a cyclic interaction sequence; once one partner either demands or withdraws, the other responds in an equally destructive manner, continuing until the reciprocation ceases,

usually with physical separation of the participants (Christensen, 1988; Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997).

The presence of the demand-withdraw pattern is the most significant predictor of marital dissatisfaction and distress (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Heavey et al., 1995; Heavey et al., 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997; Markman et al., 1993; Noller, 1993; White, 1989; Winstead et al., 1997). Walsh et al. (1993) found that both husbands and wives were happier and more satisfied in their relationships when the husband did not exhibit withdrawal. Winstead et al. agreed with Heavey et al. (1995) that wife satisfaction decreased as incidents of husband withdrawal increased. Furthermore, Noller (1993) found that wives are more demanding when they are unhappy within the relationship, although the demand-withdraw pattern has been found in healthy relationships in which both parties are satisfied as well (Markman et al.). Further, when the pattern is reversed to the husband demand-wife withdraw form, it leads to increased marital satisfaction for both parties (Winstead et al.).

Reasons for the Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

The reasons for wife demand are fairly well agreed upon, although some studies are more specific than others. Many studies contend that the wife demands because her husband withdraws -- she is responding to his lack of response (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Heavey et al., 1995; Heavey et al., 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997; Markman et al., 1993; Noller, 1993; White, 1989; Winstead et al., 1997). Some indicate that wives demand because they want more intimacy in their relationships and press for it interactionally (Christensen, 1988). A related reason for a wife to demand is to continue the discussion; she demands that her husband participates

in the discussion (Noller). One particular line of research suggests that demand-withdraw occurs because she is discontent with the household division of labor and wants more help from her husband (Kluwer et al.).

The reasons for husband withdrawal are more controversial. Winstead et al. (1997) agree with Gottman's (1994) research that suggests that men withdraw because of physical arousal. Men are more susceptible to physical arousal during conflict; thus, men find it more uncomfortable and withdraw from the interaction. Heavey et al. (1993) found that a man's withdrawal was correlated with his increased levels of anxiety during the conflict. Edwards (1998) supported this view in his finding that males report significant difficulties in communicating with females. Noller (1993) claims that men withdraw to gain a position of power and domination. She believes that by withdrawing in a situation where the man has no power he is gaining power by controlling the conversation. Thus, men dominate by failing to acknowledge or respond to other's contributions in a discussion.

Males learn to withdraw to avoid conflict early in life. In same-sex peer groups, this is a successful form of conflict resolution as evidenced by Sheldon's (1990) study of conflict resolution in three-year-old same sex groups. The boys' interactions led to continued conflict which they resolved by stopping the play when direct aggression and dominance were not effective, while the girls' interactions involved negotiations and collaborations designed to maintain social harmony. This demonstrates that withdrawal is an acceptable form of conflict resolution behavior in male peer groups, while interaction is more accepted in female peer groups.

Another explanation of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern lies in the relationship itself. Some theorists (Christensen & Heavy, 1993) claim that because it is closeness women seek in relationships, and because they are culturally taught to obtain closeness through conversation, they will engage in communications to obtain that closeness. Men are culturally taught to strive for autonomy, so they will withdraw from this conversation in an effort to maintain their independence. The more the woman demands that he converse with her, the more he withdraws to avoid it and maintain independence.

Klinetob and Smith (1996) observed that this pattern became apparent when the couple was discussing the “wife’s issue.” When the wife wanted some change from her husband, her husband was likely to withdraw from the conversation to avoid making the change, maintaining the status quo as he was culturally groomed to do. This study, however, found that the demand-withdraw pattern changed across issues. The husband was demanding and the wife withdrawn during a discussion of his request for change from her. They found it was more prevalent and destructive on her issue and that husband demand was actually related to increased relational satisfaction. Klinetob and Smith (1996) explained that this phenomenon must be an element of the culture within the relationship and not the individuals themselves because roles change across issue types. Other studies still suggest, however, that this pattern is only evident in discussions of the wife’s issues (Caughlin & Vangelisti, 1999).

Rationale and Research Hypotheses

This chapter began by examining early persuasion research investigating compliance-gaining strategy selection. The results of these studies show that situational

factors such as power and intimacy contribute to likeliness of use of various compliance-gaining strategies and the effects of those strategies (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Levine & Wheelless, 1990; Miller et al., 1977; Roloff et al., 1988; Rudd & Burant, 1995). Much of this research has been devoted to creating taxonomies of strategies. These taxonomies often divide categories into positive and negative dimensions. For example, Noller et al. (1994) in their investigation of marital communication identify three positive categories (i.e., reason, assertion and partner support) and three negative categories (i.e., coercion, manipulation, and avoidance). Methodological concerns surrounding likelihood of use methods and the movement toward an open response methodology were also reviewed.

Communication in the highly intimate relationship of marriage was then reviewed. Research shows that marriage is a significant institution in our society, and communication is important in creating successful marriages (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Communication research has shown that differences between male/masculine and female/feminine groups cause difficulties in marital communication as well as with marital satisfaction (Canary & Dindia, 1998; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Wood, 1997). Cultural theory explains this phenomenon as a result of both biological sex and social differences (Wood). This research has further demonstrated that women are seen as the keepers of the relationships, the relational barometers as one author observed (Jacobson, 1990). For this reason, women will be the focus of the hypotheses in the present study. Furthermore, research reveals that women are more self-disclosive than men, indicating they may provide more full and rich responses in qualitative research (Dindia & Allen, 1992; Reis, 1998).

Unlike prior research, the present investigation seeks to identify the compliance-gaining strategies used in marriages. It is important to study compliance-gaining strategies in marriages for several reasons. First, compliance-gaining between spouses is commonplace and serves a crucial role in the relationship (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Daily life requires spouses to negotiate with each other and problem-solve. These activities require persuasion and compliance-gaining. In addition, Roloff et al. (1988) reported that when in need, individuals turn to their intimates for help (i.e., they gain the compliance of their intimates to fulfill their needs). Dillard (1989) stated that marital relationships “may be the social arena that is most active in terms of sheer frequency of influence attempts” (p. 162). Thus, it is important that we know more about how spouses attempt to gain compliance from each other. This research will not only increase our theoretical knowledge but also provide the general public with more accurate information that hopefully can be used to improve compliance-gaining communication skills.

Although a significant amount of research has investigated compliance-gaining, the unique qualities of close interpersonal relationships that influence compliance-gaining messages are not understood well. Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg, and Hermon (1977) found that people report increased obligations to provide assistance in more intimate relationships. This makes intimate relationships unique in compliance-gaining message choice because the persuader may believe the listener is obligated to comply because of the relationship, and thus alter the message strategy and even persuasive purpose. Eidelson (1981) found that in intimate relationships, requests involve a greater demand on time, energy, and emotion. Shapiro (1980) found that people seek help from intimates regardless of the cost. These findings demonstrate some of the unique qualities of

intimate relationships. Roloff et al. (1988) argue that although much research has looked at stranger and acquaintance relationships, the level of intimacy should be extended in studies to include dating and married relationships. Since intimacy has typically been defined as relational closeness, and since marital relationships usually include individuals who are intimately disclosive, a marital relationship is seen as more intimate than other types of relationships.

The primary objective of this research effort is to examine the compliance-gaining messages women use in their marriages and how these messages are related to other relational variables. In addition to compliance-gaining, the variables of communication competence, power, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern are examined. While power has been explored in previous compliance-gaining studies, many contain methodological shortcomings in the operationalization of power (Howard et al., 1986). Communication competence and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern have not previously been integrated with compliance-gaining research. In the sections that follow, research questions and hypotheses designed to test spousal compliance-gaining strategies will be presented.

Interpersonal Communication Competence and Compliance-Gaining

The first research question addresses the relationship between communication competence and the use of compliance-gaining strategies in marriage.

Research Question 1: When wives possess high versus low degrees of interpersonal communication competence, what compliance-gaining strategies do they use with their husbands?

Communication competence is a relational phenomenon that is a function of both appropriateness and effectiveness of communication within a relationship (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Appropriate communication does not violate norms or rules of the context of the encounter. Effective communication achieves interactant goals/objectives or satisfies “interactant needs, desires, or intentions” (Spitzberg & Cupach, p. 102). Thus, the competent communicator is one who can successfully gain the compliance of the other in an acceptable way.

Research reveals there are 10 basic dimensions of communication competence: self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, alterentricism, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, and environmental control (Rubin & Martin, 1994). These dimensions help the competent communicator to manage relationships in satisfactory ways.

Many of these dimensions are important to marriage satisfaction; however, few studies have identified these qualities as “communication competence.” Research demonstrates that more effective communicators are happier, more satisfied, and are married longer (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Partnerships are directly improved when self-disclosure is used (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Walsh et al., 1993). Richmond (1995) reported that satisfied couples engaged in more communication than dissatisfied couples. These findings suggest that communication competence contributes to longevity and satisfaction in marriage.

Compliance-gaining research has found that certain strategies are related to more relational satisfaction and listener compliance. Speakers that use simple, direct request messages produce significantly more persuasion than any other type of message (Aida &

Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). Coercive compliance-gaining strategies are associated with unsatisfactory relationships (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983). In addition, social reinforcement and description in compliance-gaining messages are associated with relational satisfaction (Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Ravenstorf et al., 1980). Strategies that are most socially acceptable and least disruptive to the relationship are also preferred in intimate relationship (Howard et al., 1986).

Communication competence research reveals that those who are more successful in their compliance-gaining are more competent (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Marital research shows that competent communicators have more successful marriages (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). While these areas of research have never been directly linked, there appears to be a logical relationship between communication competence and compliance-gaining strategy choice. It is reasonable to speculate that competent communicators will use more assertion, partner support, and reason while less competent communication is associated with less satisfaction and use of coercion strategies. To test these ideas, the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 1: If a wife possesses high communication competence then she will use more assertion, partner support, and reason compliance-gaining strategies than if she has low communication competence.

Hypothesis 2: If a wife possesses high communication competence then she will use fewer coercion compliance-gaining strategies than if she has low communication competence.

Power and Compliance-Gaining

The second research question investigates power and compliance-gaining strategies.

Research Question 2: When wives perceive different degrees of power in their marriage, what compliance-gaining strategies do they use with their husbands?

Power is a relational phenomenon. People grant power to a partner with whom they identify, perceive as possessing something they do not have, or are dependent upon (e.g., monetary resources, knowledge) (French & Raven, 1960; Kulik, 1999; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The relationship between marital partners has been demonstrated to affect the communication between the partners (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Kipnis, 1984; Howard et al., 1986; Sagrestano et al., 1999). Those who see themselves as equal in power with their partners use more interactive communication and are more satisfied with their relationships (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Those who see themselves as having more power than their partners use more independent communication (Falbo and Peplau, 1980), fail to reinforce or acknowledge others contributions (Noller), act as though they are above the normal rules of conversation (Noller), behave as though they are experts (Noller), are more prone to verbal and physical aggression (Sagrestano et al., 1999). In addition, they use more bilateral strategies (e.g., independent/non-interactive strategies such as withdrawing or telling) (Falbo & Peplau, 1980) and use strong influence tactics with greater frequency (Kipnis, 1984). Those with less power used more weak tactics such as manipulation and supplication (e.g., pleading, crying) (Howard et al., 1986).

Compliance-gaining researchers have demonstrated that compliance-gaining strategy choice is strongly affected by situational and individual factors. If the situation

involves people who have a relationship, the strategies chosen are vastly different than when the situation involves strangers (Boster et al., 1995; deTurck, 1985; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989; Roloff et al., & Manrai, 1988). If a person is in a powerful position in the relationship, that person will use different strategies than a person who is in a powerless position (Falbo & Peplau, 1980, Howard et al., 1986). Therefore, relationship and power are important variables to consider when studying compliance-gaining message strategies.

Unfortunately, much of the power research has been plagued by ineffective measures of power. Many of these studies determine the more powerful person in the relationship by examining control of resources such as income relationship (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970). These studies ignore other possible sources of power in the relationship, such as education, age, attractiveness, commitment to the relationship, and dependence on the relationship (Howard et al., 1986). This area needs further study with a more comprehensive measurement of power so as to increase the accuracy of the effects in this body of research. Therefore, the following hypotheses will be tested using a broader measure of power.

Hypothesis 3: If a wife perceives herself as possessing more power than her husband then she will use significantly fewer partner support and manipulation compliance-gaining strategies than if she perceives herself as having equal or less power.

Hypothesis 4: If a wife perceives herself as possessing more power than her husband then she will use significantly more assertion, coercion, and avoidance

compliance-gaining strategies than if she perceives herself as sharing power with her husband or having less power than her husband.

Demand-Withdraw and Compliance-Gaining

The final research question investigated in this thesis integrates demand-withdraw communication pattern research and compliance-gaining strategies.

Research Question 3: When a demand-withdraw communication pattern exists in a marriage, what compliance-gaining strategies do wives use with their husbands?

In the demand-withdraw interaction pattern one partner tries to discuss problems, criticizes and blames the partner for the problems, and requests or demands change while the other partner tries to avoid discussions of the problems, defends self against the criticisms, and withdraws from the discussion (Sagrestano et al., 1998). Demand-withdraw is a gender-differentiated interaction pattern that appears during marital problem-solving discussions and is assumed to arise from cultural differences (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997; Markman et al., 1993). Many have observed that this pattern becomes apparent when the couple discusses the “wife’s issue” (Caughlin & Vangelisti, 1999; Klinetob & Smith). When a wife wants some change from her husband, he is likely to withdraw from the conversation to avoid making the change, thus maintaining the status quo as he was culturally groomed to do (Caughlin & Vangelisti; Klinetob & Smith). Research clearly establishes that the presence of the demand-withdraw pattern is the most significant predictor of marital dissatisfaction and distress (Christensen & Heavey; Gottman; Heavey et al., 1995; Heavey et al., 1993; Klinetob & Smith; Kluwer et al.; Markman et al.; Noller, 1993; White, 1989; Winstead et al., 1997).

From its earliest studies, compliance-gaining research has investigated situations where one person wants something from the other (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). That is, one individual wants the other to comply on some issue. This is the exact situation that spurs the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Compliance-gaining research shows that several strategies are more effective than others in terms of relational satisfaction and persuasive effect. Speakers that use simple direct request messages produce significantly more persuasion than any other type of message (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Jordan & Roloff, 1990; Wittenman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). Social reinforcement and descriptive compliance-gaining messages are associated with greater relational satisfaction (Birchler et al., 1975; Wegener et al., 1979). Strategies that are most socially acceptable and least disruptive to the relationship are preferred in intimate relationships (Howard et al., 1986). However, coercive compliance-gaining strategies are associated with unsatisfactory relationships (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983).

Demand-withdraw is an interaction pattern that occurs frequently in marital conflict (Christensen & Heavey, 1993). In this situation, the parties are communicating persuasively to gain each other's compliance with little or no effect. It seems logical, therefore, that those who experience this pattern use less of the compliance-gaining strategies associated with positive affect (such as assertion and partner support), but use more of the strategies associated with negative affect (such as coercion). To test these ideas, the following hypotheses are presented.

Hypothesis 5. If the demand-withdraw pattern is absent then a wife will use more assertion and more partner support compliance-gaining strategies than if the demand-withdraw pattern is present.

Hypothesis 6. If the demand-withdraw pattern is present then the wife will use more coercion compliance-gaining strategies than if the demand-withdraw pattern is absent.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature investigating compliance-gaining, marital communication, interpersonal communication competence, power, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern that occurs during marital problem-solving discussions. The section on compliance-gaining strategies first considered the development of taxonomies, then explored the findings in two major areas: individual differences and situational differences. Methodological issues were then explored, demonstrating that the unilateral use of checklists and absence of intimate relationships has hindered research in this area. More qualitative, open/response type methodologies are preferred (Burleson et al., 1988).

The second section focused on marital communication and explored the gender differences frequently cited as causes for marital communication problems (Canary & Dindia, 1998). Researchers now presume that it is cultural differences in how boys and girls interact with their peers more than biological sex differences that cause the differences seen in research of marital communication (Canary & Dindia; Coats & Feldman, 1996; Wood, 1997). Marital quality/satisfaction was then shown to be an important variable for marital communication studies, and it is often used as a measure of quality of communication.

The third major section of this chapter focused on power research in marital communication settings. Issues involving the definition of power were presented and shown to be important in determining the effects of power. Measurement issues were

then explored, and it was shown that more holistic/comprehensive measures are preferred (Howard et al., 1986).

The fourth major area investigated was communication competence. Gender differences have been found in communication competence. Research suggests that men are not as competent in their communication as women. Men are less effective at demonstrating positive emotion in their messages (Noller, 1987) and are less effective in decoding the emotion of their wives (Noller). Furthermore, men and women see different purposes for communication in relationships, exacerbating the difficulties they face when attempting to communicate (Christensen, 1988; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Noller, 1983; Winstead et al., 1997).

The fifth major area explored in this chapter was power. Power is a relational phenomenon. It is most typically viewed as a resource, assuming that the one with the most resources has the most power (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970). The resource most often studied has been income, and some indicate the research is flawed due to this limited view of power (Howard et al., 1986). Additional power research demonstrates that those in power use communication strategies that are more negative and less promotional of relational satisfaction than those with less power (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Kipnis, 1984; Noller, 1993; Sagrestano et al., 1999).

Problem-solving in marital communication was then reviewed. There are definite gender differences in the ways the sexes/genders communicate when problem-solving (Sheldon, 1990). A cultural perspective is again cited to explain the differences found. This exploration leads directly to the demand-withdraw interaction pattern that occurs

when husbands and wives discuss an issue that needs to be resolved, specifically when one spouse desires change from the other. This pattern has been found to be detrimental to relationships (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979; Heavey et al., 1995; Heavey et al., 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Kluwer et al., 1997; Markman et al., 1993; Noller, 1993; White, 1989; Winstead et al., 1997).

This chapter concluded with six hypotheses. These hypothesis were constructed to integrate the study of compliance-gaining, interpersonal communication competence, power, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern using Noller et al. (1994) typology of positive (i.e., reason, assertion, and support) and negative (i.e., coercion, manipulation, and avoidance) strategies. The hypotheses examined the relationships between compliance-gaining strategy selection and interpersonal communication competence, power, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology employed in this ex post facto experimental study. The three major sections of the chapter provide information on the instruments used in the study, administration of the questionnaire, and the design and statistical analysis.

Instrumentation

The subjects in this study are married women. They received a packet consisting of a questionnaire with several components (see Appendix). Some of the scales included in the questionnaire were not analyzed in the thesis; therefore, only those scales relating to the hypotheses investigated in this study will be described.

In one section of the questionnaire subjects were asked to describe a recent scenario in which they attempted to gain the compliance of their husbands. They were also asked to answer a self-assessment measure of their interpersonal communication competence. Another section contained a measure of relational power and asked for demographic information. A final section included a measure of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern.

Compliance-Gaining Strategies

Early and Preferred Methods of Measurement

Researchers have typically studied compliance-gaining message strategy choice by presenting a hypothetical situation to subjects and asking subjects to indicate what they would do in that particular situation to persuade the target. Situations are designed to vary intimacy between the subjects and type of requests. For example, Canary and Spitzberg (1987) provided situations in which one asked another to go out, and one asked his/her roommate to “clean up his/her mess.” Dallinger and Hample (1994) varied situations to include: “do for me, do with me, and do for yourself.” DeTurck (1985) asked subjects about situations in which they asked others or were asked to change their plans. Having a neighbor turn down a stereo was frequently used because of its salience with student populations (deTurck, 1985; Grant et al., 1984), as was borrowing class notes (Roloff, 1988).

Levine and Wheelless (1990) called this method using a hypothetical situation a “role-play procedure.” They argued that this was a weak manipulation because it did not tap actual behaviors and may not be as salient to subjects. They recommended using a recall procedure instead to produce a stronger manipulation that was more immediate to subjects.

The dependent variables of interest in this thesis are the compliance-gaining strategies used by wives to get their husbands to comply. By employing an actual memorable and recent situation that the target (i.e., wife) describes through recall, the present study evoked situations that were supposedly more salient to the respondents and thus produced a stronger manipulation. Subjects were asked to reflect upon a recent time

in which they initiated a conversation to “try and get your husband to see it your way.” This procedure avoided the need for a hypothetical scenario to induce the compliance-gaining situation. This method has been shown to reduce the item desirability bias present in “likelihood of use” methodologies (Burleson et al., 1988). Furthermore, this method is preferable because it involves an actual situation rather than a hypothetical one (Levin & Wheelless, 1990).

In addition, “open response” methods are gaining in popularity over likelihood of use methods. One such method asks subjects to “write out exactly what you would say” to persuade a person in a given situation (Burgoon et al., 1991; Falbo, 1977; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Grant et al., 1990; Ohbuchi & Yamayoto, 1990; Paulson & Roloff, 1997; Roloff, 1988; Roloff, 1989; Schlueter et al., 1990). This is the method used in the present study in which wives are asked to write out what they said to their husband the last time they “initiated a conversation to try to get [their] husband to see it [their] way.”

Following the procedures prescribed by Noller et al. (1994), the current study employed an “open response” message construction procedure (see Appendix, Part 2). Wives recalled the compliance-gaining strategies they used rather than guessing how likely they would be to use a strategy given a situation. This has been shown to be a superior method because it is not as susceptible to social desirability bias (Boster, 1988; Burleson et al., 1988). In addition, this method is preferred because it provides a rich text for analysis, and allows for categories and choices that the researcher may not have considered. This method does not impose categories on the subjects, but rather allows them to create the categories themselves.

Open response methods such as this generally code the responses to fit into one of the existing compliance-gaining typologies. This methodology was discussed in Chapter One (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Falbo & Peplau, 1990; Grant et al., 1994). Cody, McLaughlin and Jordan (1980) used open-ended responses to create their taxonomy which included direct-rational, manipulation, exchange, and threat categories. Frequently the message strategies found in these studies were collapsed into a smaller category system, such as: direct and pregiving (Boster et al., 1995); distributive, avoidance and integrative (Canary et al., 1987; Canary, 1988); positive identification and threat (Hecht, 1984); direct-indirect and polite-impolite (Hirokawa et al., 1991); weak and strong (Howard et al., 1986); and reward, punishment, altruism and rationale (Schlueter et al., 1990).

Noller Methodology

The compliance-gaining strategies chosen for the present study were taken from Noller et al.'s (1994) study of conflict in marital relationships. While many different compliance-gaining taxonomies are available, this one was chosen because it is parsimonious and includes strategies most typically used in marital compliance-gaining studies. Schapp et al. (1988) favored a two dimensional explanation of conflict behavior that includes care for one's own interests and care for the relationship. They explained that this was compatible with other studies of marital conflict because it emphasizes such strategies as avoidance, competition, and cooperation. Noller et al.'s taxonomy is based on Schapp et al.'s work, but it uses labels more familiar to compliance-gaining research. The strategies in this taxonomy are common to other research in compliance-gaining, particularly in marital relationships (Noller, 1985; Pike, 1985; Schapp et al.).

The six compliance-gaining strategies presented by Noller et al. (1994) represent a balance of positive and negative strategies and cover both maintenance and direct influence strategies. The strategies are:

Reason – rational argument, problem-solving (use of reason or logic, presenting alternatives or seeking solutions).

Assertion – direct expression of opinions or wants (clear statement of one's position, redirecting conversation to topic, emphasis by repetition, gesture or eye contact).

Partner support – acknowledgement of partner's views (active listening or questioning, supporting or agreeing with partner, compromise or concession).

Coercion – seeking control through use of force (threat, blame, sarcasm, physical or verbal aggression).

Manipulation – attempts to gain compliance by indirect or false means (providing misleading information, attempts to make a partner feel guilty/defensive, feigning of moods).

Avoidance – physical/emotional retreat from the situation (changing or avoiding the topic, joking, avoiding eye contact).

In the present study, Noller et al's (1994) categories and procedures were used.

First, coders read each response to determine both the number of total compliance-gaining strategies present in the response, and the number of each of the six types of compliance-gaining categories present. Following procedures described by Noller et al., "the number of strategies of a particular type reported by an individual was expressed as a proportion of total number of strategies identified by that person" (p.239). Each

sentence was given a category, except when compound sentences were used, in which case multiple categories would be more appropriate. For each of the six strategy types, each subject's total for that strategy was expressed as a fraction of the total number of strategies present in the response. For example, if a subject's response included five compliance-gaining strategies, and two of these strategies were assertive, then the subjects score for assertion would be .40. In addition to identifying the percentage of each of the six compliance-gaining strategies, Noller et al. collapsed the strategies into two broad categories: positive strategies (i.e., reason, assertion, and partner support) and negative strategies (i.e., coercion, manipulation, and avoidance) (Noller et al.).

By using the procedure established by Noller et al. (1994), ratio level measures are achieved, thus allowing the researcher to use the more powerful parametric statistics. This follows the traditional methodology used in much of the compliance-gaining research where analysis of variance statistics (Aida, 1993; Baglan et al., 1986; deTurck, 1985; Hirokawa et al., 1991; Kipnis et al., 1980; Markman et al., 1993; Roloff et al., 1988) or Pearson product-moment correlations (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Boster, Levine, & Kazoleas, 1993; Dillard et al., 1990) are employed.

Interpersonal Communication Competence

One of the independent variables investigated in this study is interpersonal communication competence. It was measured using the Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale-Short Form (ICCS-SF) developed by Rubin and Martin (1994) (see Appendix, Part 1B). The measure was designed as a self-administered scale through which students could assess their communication competence and track their skill development (Rubin & Martin). This scale measures the ten communication competence

skills commonly published in texts since the early 1990s (Rubin & Martin). These skills include self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, altercentricism, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, and environmental control. The original 30-item version of the scale has been shown to be reliable (*coefficient alpha* = .86), with the 10-item short-form showing somewhat lower reliability (*coefficient alphas* range from .63 to .71) (Rubin & Martin). The 30-item version contains 3 items for each of the 10 dimensions while the 10-item short-form contains 1 item for each of the dimensions. The two versions of the scale are significantly correlated ($r = .86$) (Rubin & Martin) suggesting that the short-form is as reliable as the long-form. Research also indicates that the short-form of the scale has concurrent validity. It is significantly correlated with cognitive flexibility and communication flexibility (Rubin & Martin), which have both been shown to be related to someone who is interpersonally competent.

To complete the scale, subjects in the present study were asked to read and then indicate the response that best reflected their communication with others using a Likert-type scale ranging from “almost always” (scored 5) to “almost never” (scored 1). One item was negatively worded and reverse scored. This measure produced a summed score ranging from 10 to 50, with a mid-point of 30. The higher score indicated greater interpersonal communication competence.

The median split procedure was employed to create high and low levels of communication competence. A person who scored above the median was classified as more competent. A person who scored below the median was classified as less competent.

Relational Power

Another independent variable manipulated in this study was relational power.

Russell (1938) contends that “the fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in Physics. Like Energy, Power has many forms” (as cited in Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993, p. 41). In this study, power was measured using a procedure adapted from Howard, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1986) that includes many forms of power bases (see Appendix, Part 3). Unlike some other methods for measuring relational power that base it primarily on a personal resource, the procedure used in this study is more holistic and draws from different sources of power that may exist in intimate relationships. These items are designed to measure both structural and dependence power.

Structural power includes those personal factors “that are systematically associated with power through larger social institutions” (Howard et al., 1986, p. 103). The most typically used structural power factors are income, education, age, and sex. These are commonly referred to as power resources in the power literature (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; McDonald, 1980; SafiliosSafiolos-Rothschild, 1970). Kipnis et al. (1984) and Kipnis (1980) demonstrated that those who control resources are valued. In their review of literature, Babcock et al. (1993) showed that those with more education or greater income are higher in status and therefore more powerful in relationships. Additionally, Howard et al. (1986) included a subjective measure of physical attractiveness in their structural resources scale. This measure asked subjects which partner was more sexy looking and good looking than the other. Babcock et al. consider physical appearance as a “personal resource” of power as well.

Dependence power is power granted to another in the relationship because of an inability to take care of one's own needs, as well as relative dependence on and commitment to the relationship (Howard et al., 1986). Babcock et al. (1993) refer to this as a type of power based on affective resources (e.g., level of involvement or dependence). Individuals who are less involved and less dependent on their partner have greater power.

In the present study subjects were asked to compare themselves to their husbands on seven items (see Appendix, Part 3). Five items measured structural sources of power including comparative income, education, age, and perceived attractiveness (i.e., good looking and sexy looking). Two additional items measured dependence power. These items addressed the degree of commitment to the relationship and the one whose life would be most disrupted if the relationship ended. A respondent (i.e., the wife) would have greater perceived relational power if she had comparatively higher income, higher education, was older, was more good looking, was more sexy looking, was less committed to the relationship, and would experience less disruption if the relationship ended. This measure produced sum scores ranging from 7-49. A high score indicated the wife perceived herself as having more power in the relationship, a score of "28" indicated equal perceived power, and a low score indicted the wife perceived her husband as having more power. The median split procedure was employed to create high and low levels of relational power. A person who scored above the median was classified as more powerful, and a person who scored below the median was classified as less powerful.

Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

An additional independent variable investigated in this thesis is demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Beginning in the early 1980s, Christensen explored demand-withdraw interaction patterns in intimate relationships and sought to develop a valid measurement instrument (Sullaway & Christensen, 1983). The first study found that couples could accurately report the presence of interaction patterns in their relationships on the Interaction Patterns Questionnaire, thereby eliminating the need for observational analysis (Sullaway & Christensen). The Interaction Patterns Questionnaire was altered to include more interaction patterns and greater response ranges in the second study, and married couples in treatment for marital problems were recruited for the sample. The results of this study showed that couples could agree on the presence of some interaction patterns, and some of these were highly correlated with relationship satisfaction (Christensen, 1988).

Christensen and his colleagues rewrote the questionnaire for the third study, including descriptions about the context of the example interactions and eliminating causal clues. In addition, sub-scales measuring specific symmetrical and positive interaction patterns were included (Christensen, 1988). This study found greater inter-partner agreement, indicating that couples can independently agree on the presence of demand-withdraw in the relationship and on the separate roles that each partner plays. The study also found a high correlation of this pattern with marital dissatisfaction and gender differentiation in this pattern (i.e., women in the demanding role). These initial three studies established the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (i.e., the renamed final version of the Interaction Patterns Questionnaire) as a non-observational self-report

measure of the presence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern in married couples (Christensen). This self-report scale was highly correlated with behavioral/observational measures of demand-withdraw.

The Communication Patterns Questionnaire has the potential to measure six subscales: mutual constructive communication, total demand-withdraw communication, man demand/woman withdraw communication, woman demand/man withdraw communication, roles in demand withdraw communication, and mutual avoidance and withholding. The subscale of interest in this thesis is the total demand-withdraw communication subscale. It is used to determine the presence or absence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern in the marriage (see Appendix, Part 4, Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Subjects responded to six items. For example, one item included, “when some problem in the relationship arises I try to start a discussion while my husband tries to avoid a discussion.” Another item is, “during a discussion of a relationship problem I criticize while my husband defends himself.” A semantic differential-type scale ranging from “very unlikely” (scored 1) to “very likely” (scored 7) was used for each of the items. This measure produced sum scores ranging from 6-42, with a mid-point of 24. A higher score indicated the wife is involved in a demand-withdraw interaction pattern with her husband. This study did not distinguish whether the wife or husband was more demanding or withdrawing, but simply that this interaction pattern was present in the relationship.

The median split procedure was used to determine the likelihood of the presence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern at 2 levels: high and low. A wife scoring above the median was classified as being involved in a demand-withdraw interaction

pattern with her husband. A respondent scoring below the median was classified as not exhibiting the interaction pattern.

Administration of the Questionnaire

An application was made to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Southwest Texas State University. A proposal was attached to gain approval to conduct research using human subjects. The proposal was approved by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Subjects receiving the questionnaire were given one of two forms of instruction. They were asked to complete the form themselves if they were a married female. If subjects were not married and female, they were asked to pass the survey on to a married female they knew. This latter procedure is known as the “snowball method.” Here the persons taking a questionnaire serve as informants for locating qualified individuals who could participate as subjects (Aida, 1993; Aida & Falbo, 1991; Lindlof, 1995; Rudd & Burant, 1995). Advantages of this method include the ability to achieve a greater subject population and build a varied sample. Research indicates that “snowball sampling is appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate” (Babbie, 1998, p. 195). Disadvantages include the questionable representatives of such a sample because subjects are self-selected and meaningful comparisons to the greater population are difficult (Babbie, 1998).

The majority of questionnaires used in this study were administered to women in marital relationships enrolled in communication classes at Southwest Texas State University during the Spring 2000 semester. Subjects were drawn primarily from COMM 1310, the basic communication course required of all university students.

Additional courses from which subjects were drawn included two interpersonal communication courses, a communication research methods course, a graduate course in instructional communication, and a mixed graduate-undergraduate course in organizational consulting. Prospective subjects were approached at the beginning of their communication class and informed that this was a study of marital communication. Only married females were asked to directly participate, however, students were asked to take a survey if they knew a married female who might participate in the study. Two-hundred and seventy-five questionnaires were passed out to students in this manner. In addition, a Baptist congregation in the Austin area also received 27 surveys and contributed some subjects for the research. This procedure was followed in an effort to get a more varied sample of subjects.

The questionnaire used in this study was titled "Survey of Women in Marriage Relationships" (see Appendix). Instructions clarified that subjects should not identify themselves by name and that they could be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. It was clarified that the survey would take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. They were then instructed to put the completed questionnaire in the attached postage-free envelope and mail.

Design and Statistical Analysis

Noller et al. (1994) identify six compliance-gaining strategies used in intimate relationships: reason, assertion, partner support, coercion, manipulation, and avoidance. These compliance-gaining strategies are the six dependent variables investigated in this thesis. The three independent variables are interpersonal communication competence,

relational power, and demand-withdraw interaction pattern. The effect of each independent variable was analyzed separately.

This is a posttest-only design since subjects were measured only once on each dependent variable. Because the researcher does not create the independent variables and subjects are not randomly assigned to conditions, this is an ex post facto study where subjects are “blocked” into conditions based on their self-reported responses (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). For each independent variable, the median split procedure was used to block subjects at two levels: high and low. The primary statistic used in this study was the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

In this thesis, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 tested the effect of interpersonal communication competence on the wife’s use of six compliance-gaining strategies. Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 tested the effect of relational power on the wife’s use of six compliance-gaining strategies. Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 tested the effect of demand-withdraw interaction pattern on the wife’s use of six compliance-gaining strategies.

Summary

This chapter described the research methodology used in this study. It clarified the procedures employed in the collection and analysis of the data. It specifically focused on the instruments used, administration of the survey packet, and the design and statistical analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the investigation. It begins with a summary of the sample demographics. The next section reports inter-coder reliability data. The chapter concludes with the results for the six hypotheses tested in the study.

Sample Demographics and Responses

As reported in the Method chapter, the questionnaire was distributed to students in communication classes at Southwest Texas State University and a Baptist congregation. The data were gathered during the months of March and April 2000. Three hundred and two questionnaires were distributed, and 76 subjects completed the questionnaire. This produced a response rate of 25.2%. Eleven subjects were dropped because of incomplete questionnaires. Sixty-five subjects were included in the actual analysis.

Table 4.1 displays the demographic results. Subjects ranged in age from 21-73 years. Most of the subjects (89.2%) were reporting on their first marriage. The average years married was 16.9. Overall, subjects were satisfied with their marriage, reporting a mean satisfaction score of 37.9 on Noller et al's (1994) scale (see Appendix, Part 5, items 1 to 6). This measure has a potential range from 6 to 45, with a mid-point of 25. Noller et al. reported a mean of 38.2 on their satisfaction scale; therefore, the marriage

satisfaction of subjects in this study is comparable to that of other research investigating marriage relationships. Table 4.1 also reveals that 67.7% of the subjects had children, and 60.0% of the subjects had more than one child. Of those subjects with children, 72.7% of these children were 13 or older. The majority of the subjects were Anglo (76.9%), followed by Hispanic (16.9%) and Asian (1.5%). None of the subjects were Black. Most of the subjects were employed full-time (58.5%) as were their husbands (81.5%). Only 23.1% of the subjects and 10.8% of their husbands were not employed. The subjects represent a wide range of annual income categories, with 27.7% jointly making over \$100,000 annually.

The topics on which subjects chose to report a compliance-gaining activity were consistent with topics found in prior research. The topics coincided with those reported by Aida (1993) who investigated areas of disagreement between spouses. The topics Aida reported (e.g., Vacation, Finances, Chores, Parents, Time) were found in this analysis, with the additional category of Children. For most of the subjects (95.4%), the topic on which they reported was somewhat to very important to them. The conversations on which subjects chose to report were recent, with most of them (81.5%) reporting an incident that occurred within two weeks of the time the questionnaire was completed.

Table 3.1**Summary of Demographics and Responses**

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-24	8	12.3%
25-34	15	23.1%
35-44	13	20.0%
45-54	21	32.3%
55-64	5	7.7%
65+	3	4.6%
Marriage		
first	58	89.2%
second	6	9.2%
third	0	0.0%
fourth	1	1.5%
Length of Marriage		
0-2 years	11	16.9%
3-10 years	14	21.5%
11-20 years	14	21.5%
21-30 years	16	24.6%
31-40 years	6	9.2%
41-50 years	3	4.6%
51+ years	1	1.5%
Children		
None	21	32.3%
One	5	7.7%
Two	27	41.5%
Three	7	10.8%
Four	5	7.7%
Age of Children		
No children	21	32.3%
Twelve or younger	12	18.5%
Thirteen or older	32	49.2%
Ethnicity		
Anglo	50	76.9%
Hispanic	11	16.9%
Black	0	0.0%
Asian	1	1.5%
Other/No Response	3	4.6%

Table 3.1 continued:**Summary of Demographics and Responses**

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Subject's Employment		
Not employed	15	23.1%
Part-time	12	18.5%
Full-time	38	58.5%
Husband's employment		
Not employed	7	10.8%
Part-time	5	7.7%
Full-time	53	81.5%
Combined Annual Income		
\$0-9,999	1	1.5%
\$10,000-19,999	1	1.5%
\$20,000-29,999	3	4.6%
\$30,000-39,999	7	10.8%
\$40,000-49,999	9	13.8%
\$50,000-59,999	3	4.6%
\$60,000-69,999	3	4.6%
\$70,000-79,999	9	13.8%
\$80,000-89,999	3	4.6%
\$90,000-99,999	4	6.2%
Over \$100,000	18	27.7%
No Response	4	6.2%
Topics		
Time	10	15.4%
Vacation	4	6.2%
Parents	3	4.6%
Chores	10	15.4%
Finances	16	24.6%
Children	7	10.8%
Other	15	23.1%
Topic Importance		
(1) Not very important	1	1.5%
(2)	2	3.1%
(3) Somewhat important	13	20.0%
(4)	23	35.4%
(5) Very important	26	40.0%

Table 3.1 continued:**Summary of Demographics and Responses**

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Time since interaction(days)		
0	2	3.1%
1	9	13.8
2	8	12.3%
3	6	9.2%
4	6	9.2%
5	4	6.2%
6	2	3.1%
7	6	9.2%
10	7	10.8%
13	1	1.5%
14	2	3.1%
15	2	3.1%
20	1	1.5%
24	1	1.5%
30	1	1.5%
35	1	1.5%
42	1	1.5%
45	1	1.5%
60	2	3.1%
90-180	2	3.1%

Inter-Coder Reliability Results

Before the dependent variables (i.e., the six compliance-gaining strategies) could be analyzed, the open-ended responses needed to be coded and reliability established. First, a set of instructions that included definitions and examples of the six compliance-gaining categories from Noller et al. (1994) was created. To establish reliability, the author of the thesis and a recent M.A. graduate from the Department of Speech Communication at Southwest Texas State University discussed the instructions in an effort to clarify each of the six categories. Of the 65 total questionnaires, 35 were randomly selected to establish coder reliability. The first 9 of these 35 questionnaires were used to train the coders and create an understanding of the categories. Coders

worked together during this training period to clarify categories, ask questions, and discuss category definitions. Following the training session, the remaining 26 questionnaires were coded independently. In determining the unit of analysis (i.e., the total number of compliance-gaining messages), the two coders identified a total of 96 units for the 26 questionnaires analyzed. They agreed on 90 units, thus establishing a 94% reliability for unit of analysis. The six discrepancies resulted primarily from how to code introductory remarks by the subject, not what they actually said to their husband. Coders discussed their discrepancies and agreed that there were 96 separate strategies used in the 26 questionnaires.

After identifying the 96 separate strategies in the 26 questionnaires, coders then independently coded each unit into one of the six compliance-gaining strategies (i.e., reason, assertion, partner support, coercion, manipulation, avoidance). Disagreement on strategy choice occurred 20 times (i.e., the two coders coded 76 of the 96 strategies the same). This produced a reliability rate of 79% for coding agreement. Coders then discussed the 20 discrepancies and ultimately achieved a 100% agreement. Six of these differences were between reason and assertion, two very similar categories. There was discussion as to whether a statement of fact was a reason or an assertion. The context of the statement was analyzed and coders came to agreement on each of these items. Six of the 20 disagreements may have resulted from reluctance by the coders to code a strategy as manipulation. For these six disagreements, responses were discussed and changed by one or both coders from reason, assertion, or partner support to manipulation because of an apparent intention to instill guilt. Two of the 20 disagreements initially coded as assertion were changed to coercion after discussion of the “sarcastic tone” of the

statement. One response initially coded as coercion was changed to assertion because the sarcasm was not apparent. One assertion and one reason response were changed to partner support after discussion because they were questions, an example of partner support. One response was changed from manipulation to coercion because it was seen as more sarcastic than false. One partner support response was changed to reason because it was seen as solution seeking more than active questioning. One coercion response was changed to manipulation because it was seen as more false than sarcastic.

The two coders used a total of 35 questionnaires to establish reliability. Nine were used in initial training, and 26 questionnaires were used to establish unit of analysis and strategy coding reliability. Once the coders had achieved reliability, the author of the thesis individually coded the remaining 30 questionnaires to identify the compliance-gaining strategies used. Therefore, 54% of the questionnaires were coded by two coders and 46% were coded by one coder. This exceeds the percentage of questionnaires typically coded by two coders. For example, Noller et al. (1994) used only 20% of the questionnaires to achieve reliability, Walsh et al. (1993) used 25%, and Schlueter et al., (1990) used 20%.

Each of the 65 subjects used in this analysis were then assigned an compliance-gaining strategy score for each of the six strategies: reason, assertion, partner support, coercion, manipulation, and avoidance. Each score was expressed as a proportion of the total number of strategies indicated by the subject. For example, if a subject used one reason strategy and one avoidance strategy, her scores would be as follows: reason = 50, assertion = 00, partner support = 00, coercion = 00, manipulation = 00, avoidance = 50.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

Hypothesized Results for Interpersonal Communication Competence

The scores on the Interpersonal Communication Competence scale ranged from 22-48. The *Cronbach's alpha* for the ICC short-form was .77. The mean score was 37.52, the standard deviation was 5.32, and the median score was 38. Using these data, two groups were created. Subjects with a score of 38 or higher were blocked in the high interpersonal communication competence group ($n = 34$). Subjects with a score of 37 or lower were blocked in the low interpersonal communication competence group ($n = 31$).

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 examined the relationship between the independent variable of interpersonal communication competence and the dependent variable of compliance-gaining strategy. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the competent communicators would be more likely to use assertion, partner support, and reason than less competent communicators. Table 4.2 reveals that Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed. Hypothesis 2 predicted that the competent communicators would be less likely to use coercion than less competent communicators. Table 4.2 reveals that Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed, even though the results indicated a trend in the predicted direction.

Table 3.2:

Results for Interpersonal Communication Competence and Compliance-Gaining Strategies

Compliance-Gaining Strategy	F-Ratio (df = 1/63)	F Prob.	High ICC Mean	Low ICC Mean
Assertion	.53	.47	57.73	51.81
Partner Support	.02	.88	6.91	6.42
Reason	.52	.48	18.53	23.97
Coercion	3.17	.08	9.24	0.81

Hypothesized Results for Power

The scores on the relational power scale ranged from 17-37. The *Cronbach's alpha* for the power measure was .41. The mean score was 25.66, the standard deviation was 4.87, and the median score was 26. Using these data, two groups were created. Subjects with a score of 26 or higher were blocked in the high power group ($n = 30$). Subjects with a score of 25 or lower were blocked in the low power group ($n = 35$).

Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 examined the relationship between the independent variable of relational power and the dependent variable of compliance-gaining strategy. Hypothesis 3 predicted that wives who perceived they had more power would be less likely to use partner support and manipulation than less powerful wives. Table 4.3 reveals that Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed for partner support or for manipulation. Hypothesis 4 predicted that wives who perceived they had more power would be more likely to use assertion, coercion and avoidance than less powerful wives. Table 4.3 also reveals that Hypothesis 4 was not confirmed for any of the three dependent variables.

Table 3.3:

Results for Relational Power and Compliance-Gaining Strategies

Compliance-Gaining Strategy	F-Ratio (df = 1/63)	F Prob.	High Power Mean	Low Power Mean
Partner Support	.45	.50	5.50	7.69
Manipulation	.74	.39	8.57	12.26
Assertion	.08	.78	53.70	55.94
Coercion	.05	.83	4.63	5.71
Avoidance	.80	.38	0.47	1.66

Hypothesized Results for Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

The scores on the total demand-withdraw scale ranged from 6-37. The *Cronbach's alpha* for the total demand-withdraw measure was .73. The mean score was 17.88, the standard deviation was 7.52, and the median score was 19. Using these data, two groups were created. Subjects with a score of 19 or higher were blocked in the high demand-withdraw group ($n = 31$). Subjects with a score 18 or lower were blocked in the low demand-withdraw group ($n = 34$).

Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 examined the relationship between the independent variable of demand-withdraw interaction pattern and the dependent variable of compliance-gaining strategy. Hypothesis 5 predicted that the low demand-withdraw group would be more likely to use assertion and partner support than the high demand-withdraw group. Table 4.4 reveals that Hypothesis 5 was not confirmed. Even though the F-ratio for assertion was significant, it was in the opposite direction from that predicted in the hypothesis. Results revealed assertion was used significantly more in a high demand-withdraw relationship ($M = 64.07$) than in a low demand-withdraw relationship ($M = 46.56$). Hypothesis 6 predicted that the high demand-withdraw group would be more likely to use coercion than those in the low demand-withdraw group. Table 4.4 reveals that Hypothesis 6 was not confirmed.

Table 3.4:**Results for Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern and Compliance-Gaining****Strategies**

Compliance-Gaining Strategy	F-Ratio (df = 1/63)	F Prob.	High D-W Mean	Low D-W Mean
Assertion	5.01*	.03	64.07	46.56
Partner Support	.67	.42	5.29	7.94
Coercion	1.58	.21	2.07	8.09

*significant at $p < .05$

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the research. It began with a summary of the demographics. Results revealed the respondents were Anglo (76.9%), were varied in age, were reporting on their first marriage (89.2%), had children (67.7%), and were employed full-time (58.5%). Subjects chose to report on conversations that were important (95.4%), recent (81.5%), and representative of topics commonly reported between spouses. The second section reported inter-coder reliability results. The third section of this chapter displayed the results for the testing of the six hypotheses. None of the hypotheses were confirmed.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Chapter Four discusses and explains the results of the investigation. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section discusses the hypothesized results. The second section presents and discusses unhypothesized findings. The third section addresses the limitations of the study. The fourth section suggests areas of future research. The final section summarizes of the entire thesis.

Discussion of Hypothesized Results

This section explains the results for the six hypotheses investigated in the thesis. For each hypothesis, the theoretical rational is briefly clarified. A discussion of theoretical and methodological explanations for the findings are then presented.

Interpersonal Communication Competence

Hypothesis 1 predicted that more competent women would use more assertion, partner support, and reason in their compliance-gaining messages. Prior research indicated that competent communicators were more successful in their compliance-gaining endeavors and were happier in their marriages (Spitzburg & Cupach, 1984). Prior compliance-gaining research indicated that assertive messages were the most effective, and reason and partner support messages were associated with relational satisfaction (e.g. Aida & Falbo, 1991). Thus it was hypothesized that those subjects in

the more competent group would use the strategies associated with effectiveness and relational satisfaction more often than the less competent group. The analysis of variance did not find any significant differences between the more and less competent groups in their assertion, reason, or partner support compliance gaining messages.

Three explanations are presented for the lack of significance between interpersonal communication competence and the positive compliance-gaining strategies of assertion, reason, and partner support. First, interpersonal communication competence and compliance-gaining have not previously been linked in one study; thus, there was no prior research between these two variables to directly test how they might be related. The hypothesized relationships were based on research showing an association between competence and relational satisfaction. It was anticipated that because competence is associated with satisfaction, it would also be associated with the more positive compliance-gaining messages. This logic was not confirmed by the results. The failure to find an association between interpersonal communication competence and the selection of positive compliance-gaining strategies might be an indication that while competence is related to a cognitive state of satisfaction, it is not sufficiently powerful to elicit a manifest response of positive compliance-gaining messages.

Second, the lack of significance in Hypothesis 1 may be due to the high level of competence of the subjects used in the study. The median split for high versus low competence subjects was 37. This is a relatively high level of competence since the midpoint of the Interpersonal Communication Competence scale is 30. Another indication of the relatively high level of competence was found in the range of scores of subjects. The competence scale has a potential range from 10-50, yet in this sample the

range was between 22-48, with a mean of 37.52. Because subjects in this study were of relatively high competence, the ability to detect the compliance-gaining choices of less competent subjects might have been compromised. The overall results do indicate a trend toward the selection of far more positive compliance-gaining messages. The mean percentage of use for the three positive compliance-gaining strategies of reason, assertion, and partner support (i.e., 21.12%, 54.91%, 6.68% respectively) were much higher than the three negative compliance-gaining strategies of coercion, manipulation, and avoidance (i.e., 5.22%, 10.55%, 1.11% respectively). The hypothesis that greater competence would produce more positive compliance-gaining strategies might have been discovered if the study could have included a larger volume of less competent subjects.

Third, the lack of significance in Hypothesis 1 may be due to the high level of satisfaction of the subjects used in the study. The hypothesis predicted that competent communicators would use positive compliance-gaining strategies (i.e., assertion, reason, and partner support). However, the median marital satisfaction score was 40 and the mean was 37.85. This indicates a high level of satisfaction since the possible midpoint on the Quality Marriage index scale is 25. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that these satisfied subjects would use the positive strategies regardless of their levels of competence. The high satisfaction of the sample may have masked the effects of competence. Perhaps the hypothesis that greater competence would produce more positive compliance-gaining strategies would have been discovered if the study had included a larger volume of less satisfied subjects.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that women with more communication competence would use fewer coercive messages in their compliance-gaining than less competent women.

Prior research indicated that competent communicators were more successful in their compliance-gaining endeavors and happier in their marriages (Spitzburg & Cupach, 1984). Prior compliance-gaining research indicated that coercive messages are associated with unsatisfactory relationships (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983). Also, strategies that are more socially acceptable and least disruptive to the relationship are preferred in intimate relationships (Howard et al., 1986). Thus it was hypothesized that those in the more competent group would not use the strategies associated with relational dissatisfaction as often as the less competent group. Coercion strategies include use of force and violence, as well as sarcasm, threat, and blame (Noller et al., 1994). These are not socially acceptable and are disruptive, thus it was theorized that competent communicators would avoid them. Contrary to expectations, however, the analysis of variance results approached significance in the opposite direction (low competence $M = 0.81$, high competence $M = 9.23$, $F = 3.17$, $p < .08$).

The lack of significance for Hypothesis 2 and the trend for significance in the opposite direction may be explained by the effectiveness of coercion. Competent communicators should use the most effective compliance-gaining strategies available to them (Weimann, 1977). Noller et al. (1994) reported that although coercion is considered a destructive conflict pattern, it tends to be effective. Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Murphy (1984) reported that distributive acts such as hostile jokes and questions lead to greater understanding. These studies suggest that although coercive message strategies may be disruptive to the relationship or even inappropriate, they are effective, and thus would be used by competent communicators who desired to be successful in their compliance-gaining endeavors. Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) also reported that because wives are

likely to have unresponsive husbands, wives may use more negative communications “in an attempt to get through to them” (p.838). One plausible explanation for the results in the current study is that since women in this study were more competent communicators, they used coercion to effectively gain the compliance of their husbands.

A second possible explanation for the failure to confirm Hypothesis 2 may be due to the way coercion was defined in the present study. Most of the responses that were coded as coercion were not directly aggressive, forceful, or violent. They were simply more sarcastic in tone and therefore a much softer form of coercion. While sarcasm may be negative in relationships, its negative effects may not be as great as when violence and threat are used. For example, Sillars et al. (1984) found that more satisfied partners used more hostile jokes and questions, but far fewer directly distributive acts such as criticism and threat which are usually included in categories of coercion. On the other hand, Howard et al. (1986) coded bullying as threat, ridicule, insult, and violence and found it was used less often because it disrupted the day-to-day stability of the relationship. Differences such as these in the types of messages included in the category of coercion may account for the findings in this study. Competent communicators in this study used coercive strategies that did not include the more aggressive/violent uses of coercion coded in previous studies. Coercion coded in this study included mild sarcasm rather than insult, threat and violence, which would account for the insignificant results. Competent communicators used a form of coercion that was not as disruptive to the relationship.

A third possible explanation for the results of Hypothesis 2 involves the sole use of women as subjects in this study. Previous studies included both men and women.

Women have been shown to use aggressive strategies such as threat and violence less frequently than men (Scudder & Andrews, 1995). While coercive strategies might be more typical of men, this study might be suggesting that women have a limited repertoire of coercive strategies or simply do not use them with the same frequency as men. To understand better these relationships, the compliance-gaining strategies of both men and women would have to be directly compared.

A fourth explanation lies in the high competence of the sample. Hypothesis 2 predicted that those who were more competent would use less coercive strategies, but this may not have been discovered due to a lack of less competent communicators for comparison. As indicated previously in the discussion of Hypothesis 1, subjects in this study were of relatively high competence, compromising the ability to detect the compliance-gaining choices of less competent subjects. Had a larger number of the subjects been incompetent communicators, there may have been a larger volume of coercive responses in the study, and a difference may have been found between competent and incompetent communicators in terms of their use of coercion strategies.

A fifth explanation is due to the high marital satisfaction of the subjects. Subjects who are unhappy in their marriages use coercion more than those who are satisfied. Those involved in satisfied relationships do not use disruptive or socially unacceptable strategies such as coercion (Howard et al., 1986). As discussed with Hypothesis 1, subjects in this study reported being satisfied in their marital relationships. Differences may have been found between competent and incompetent communicators had there been a larger number subjects who were dissatisfied in their marriages.

Power

Hypothesis 3 predicted that more powerful wives would use less partner support and manipulation strategies. Prior research indicated that the power relationship between partners affected the communication between partners (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Howard et al., 1986; Kipnis, 1984). Those with more power have been shown to fail to reinforce or acknowledge other's contributions (Noller, 1993), behave as though they are experts (Noller, 1993), and use more verbal and physical aggression (Sagrestano et al., 1999). Thus it was hypothesized that those with greater perceived power would use less partner support, a strategy in which one acknowledges the other's views, listens and questions actively, and supports and agrees with a partner (Noller et al., 1994). Research has also shown that those with less power use more manipulation strategies (Howard et al.). Thus it was also hypothesized that those subjects with greater perceived power would not use manipulation as often as the less powerful group. The analysis of variance did not find any significant differences between the more and less powerful groups in their partner support or manipulation compliance-gaining messages.

A primary methodological reason for the lack of significant findings regarding Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 concerns the reliability of the power scale used in this study. In an attempt to create a scale that encompassed a greater range of power variables, this study used a comprehensive measure of both structural (i.e., resource) and dependence power based on research by Howard et al. (1986). This scale proved to be unreliable (*Cronbach's alpha* = .41). It might be that the scale was multidimensional, and summing the scores created poor reliability. Further research is need to determine the dimensionality of the scale and inter-correlation of items. Whatever the cause, the

inconsistency in the measurement of power added a great deal of error to the measure, thus limiting an ability to detect differences in the compliance-gaining strategies.

Most of the previous studies investigating power and compliance-gaining have measured power from a resource theory perspective, asking subjects which partner made more money or provided for the family (Aida & Falbo, 1991, McDonald, 1980, Safiolios-Rothschild, 1970). A follow-up analysis of the reliability of the power resource items used in the current study (see Appendix, Part 3, items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7) also indicated low reliability (*Cronbach's alpha* = .34). Likewise, the analysis of the dependence power items (see Appendix, Part 3, items 3, 4) also indicated low reliability (*Cronbach's alpha* = .45).

Another methodological factor may also help explain the results for the two power hypotheses. The power scale had a potential range from 7-49 and a midpoint of 28. Scores in this study ranged from 17-37, and the distribution indicated more women perceived themselves as less powerful or in relatively equal power relationships. The median split was set at 26, and the mean score for women in low power relationships was 21.94. However, the mean score in high power relationships was only 30.00. Since the midpoint of the scale was 28, this indicates that women in the "high" power condition were actually relatively equal in power to only slightly more powerful than their husbands. Prior research indicates that those who see themselves as equal in power with their partners use more interactive communication (Falbo & Peplau, 1980), suggesting a greater use of reason and assertion strategies in these relationships. This trend is evidenced in the current study, where a large percentage of reason ($M = 21.12\%$) and assertion strategies ($M = 54.91\%$) were reported. Furthermore, research indicates that

those who see themselves as being equal partners are more satisfied with their relationships (Aida & Falbo, 1991). Since subjects in this study reported being satisfied with their relationships ($M = 37.85$ on a satisfaction scale where a score of 25 indicated neutrality), this finding further clarifies why the subjects produced more positive compliance-gaining messages and fewer negative messages.

Because the power scale was not reliable and due to the inability to create high and low power groups, the theory underlying the power hypotheses was not testable. These methodological factors make the results for Hypothesis 3 and 4 uninterpretable. If, however, the theoretical rationale was incorrect and the insignificant results are not a result of methodological factors, there are two theoretical explanations for the insignificance findings.

One possible theoretical explanation for the lack of significance between high perceptions of power and less use of partner support and manipulation lies in better understanding the limitations of prior research and focus primarily on male power. Noller (1993) discussed rules that men tend to follow in conversation and interpreted them as rules that more powerful people would follow. Noller indicated that men “fail to reinforce or acknowledge another’s contribution, act as though you are above the normal rules of conversation, and take every opportunity to act as though you are an expert” (p.138). While this served as the rationale for Hypothesis 3, the hypothesis may not have been confirmed because the previous finding was based on men in power (Noller) rather than women in power. Further research is needed to clarify whether the male rules of conversation, which indicate less partner support, are generalizable to anyone with power, or if they are applicable primarily to men in positions of power.

Howard et al.(1986) found that those who were more committed than their partners, especially if they were the partners of men, were more likely to use manipulation. They interpreted more commitment to mean less power. This was part of the rationale for Hypothesis 3 that those with more power would use less manipulation. Partner support and manipulation are weak strategies most commonly associated with the partners of men, both heterosexual and homosexual (Howard et al.). Howard et al. explained that “the power associated with being male thus appears to be expressed in behavior that elicits weak strategies [such as manipulation] from one’s partner” (p.107). Howard et al. further concluded that having less power (e.g. having less income or perceiving oneself as less attractive than one’s partner) leads to greater use of manipulation. Being a woman is often equivalent to having less power in relationships because of cultural differences between men and women (Noller, 1993). The current study suggests that women’s use of manipulation and partner support are not related to the amount of power they hold in their relationships.

A second possible theoretical explanation for the lack of significant findings between greater perceived power and less use of manipulation may lay in the definition of manipulation and the method employed in this study. Manipulation was defined as “attempts to gain compliance by indirect or false means” with examples including “providing misleading information, attempts to make partner feel guilty/defensive, and feigning of moods” (Noller et al., 1994, p. 239). The present study obtained the written compliance-gaining messages of women, then coded them into the compliance-gaining categories. The coders may not have had enough information from the women’s statements to determine if they were misleading or false, or if the purpose of the

statement was to make the partner feel guilty/defensive. Coders were often unable to determine the mood of the subject due to the restricted verbal encoding, and even less able to determine if the mood was feigned for persuasive purposes.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that more powerful wives would use more assertion, coercion, and avoidance strategies. Prior research indicated that compliance-gaining communications are affected by the power relationship between the communicating partners (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Howard et al., 1986; Kipnis, 1984). It has been shown that wives with more power use more verbal aggression and violence (coercion) (Sagrestano et al., 1999). It was reported in Chapter One that those with more power have been shown to use more independent communications such as telling (assertion), withdrawal (avoidance), and negative affect (pout or threat, express negative feelings) (Falbo & Peplau). Thus it was hypothesized that those subjects with greater perceived power would use more assertion, coercion, and avoidance strategies.

Although the methodological factors previously discussed regarding the power scale may account for the insignificant results for Hypothesis 4, there are also theoretical reasons for the insignificant findings. After a more thorough review of the power literature, additional insights into the nature of the research have been gained. Specifically, the findings of Falbo and Peplau (1980) were misrepresented in the earlier chapter. Falbo and Peplau found that people with more power in the relationship (as well as most men) use more bilateral strategies. People who expect compliance and do not desire personal autonomy and independence also use the bilateral strategies. Bilateral strategies included bargaining, reasoning, persuasion, persistence, and talking (Falbo & Peplau). In the current study, the bilateral strategies were coded as reason, assertion and

partner support. Conversely, unilateral strategies are used more often by those with less power, such as women, and they include strategies that do not require partner participation such as telling, withdrawal, threat, and negative expression of feelings. In the current study, unilateral strategies were coded as assertion, avoidance, and coercion. Assertion (i.e., the compliance-gaining strategy) was defined in this study as a direct expression of opinions or wants including emphasis by repetition, thus it would be included in both unilateral and bilateral groups of power strategies. The unilateral power strategy telling and the bilateral power strategy persistence are both examples of the assertion compliance-gaining strategy, thus assertion would be included in both groups.

Contrary to the predictions in Hypothesis 4, this reconsideration of the research by Falbo and Peplau (1980) suggests that more powerful wives would use more bilateral strategies, specifically reason, assertion, and partner support. However, the analysis of variance used to test Hypothesis 4 did not find any significant differences between the more and less powerful groups in assertion, coercion, or avoidance compliance-gaining messages.

One possible explanation for the lack of significant findings related to more powerful women and their use of assertion, coercion, and avoidance strategies may again lie in sex differences found in previous studies. Falbo and Peplau (1980) suggest that people in power use more bilateral strategies, but they also found that it was the men in their study who had more power and used the bilateral strategies more. They found that women used unilateral strategies more often, and concluded that this was because women are more often in positions of lesser power in relationships. Falbo and Peplau explained that women tend to expect noncompliance from their husbands, and the men in their

sample had more power than the women, thus the women used unilateral strategies more often. They maintain that these were not true gender differences, but were power differences that happen to fall along gender lines. The results of this study demonstrate no such differences between more powerful and less powerful women in these strategies, but are suspect because of the reliability of the power scale.

Demand-Withdraw Interaction Pattern

Hypothesis 5 predicted that women in relationships that do not exhibit the demand-withdraw interaction pattern would use assertion and partner support more often than those in relationships exhibiting this communication pattern. Prior research indicated that couples are happier in relationships where a demand-withdraw interaction pattern is not present, and they were more effective in their compliance-gaining attempts (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979, Heavey et al., 1995; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Noller 1993, Winstead et al., 1997). Thus it was predicted that those who were not participating in this type of communication pattern would use strategies associated with happiness and effectiveness. That is, they would use assertion and partner support strategies. Contrary to predictions, however, Hypothesis 5 was significant but in the opposite direction.

One explanation for the failure to find significance for this hypothesis is due to the faulty logic of the researcher. Although assertion is reported to be effective and satisfactory in relationships where demand-withdraw patterns are absent, by definition it should be expected to occur more often when subjects are involved in the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. The message that communication scholars have labeled “assertion” may be the same message psychologists have labeled “demand.” Christensen

and Heavey (1993) define “demand” as starting a discussion, nagging, and criticizing. An assertion is a statement of opinions or wants, and examples include stating one’s opinion, redirecting conversation to topic, and emphasis by repetition (Noller et al., 1994), essentially equating an “assertion” to a “demand.” The assertion example “redirecting conversation to topic” is similar to the demand example “starting a discussion.” The assertion example “stating one’s opinion” is similar to both “nagging” and “starting a discussion,” as well as “criticizing” if the opinion was a negative one about the partner. The “assertion” example “emphasis by repetition” is similar to “nagging.” Thus the two different labels “demand” and “assertion” are essentially describing the same behavior but from slightly different perspectives. A better reasoned hypothesis would expect that when women are not involved in a demand-withdraw communication pattern, they would use fewer assertion strategies. Those who are not involved in a demand-withdraw relationship should use less “demand” strategies (i.e., assertion) than those who are involved in that interaction pattern because the nature of the pattern suggests that communication is based on assertion and avoidance.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that women in a relationship in which the demand-withdraw interaction pattern is present would use more coercion strategies than would women in a relationship not exhibiting this communication pattern. Prior research indicated that couples were dissatisfied with relationships where a demand-withdraw interaction pattern was present (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1979, Heavey et al., 1995; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Noller 1993, Winstead et al., 1997). Thus it was predicted that those who were in this type of communication pattern would use strategies associated with dissatisfaction. Coercive strategies have been associated with

dissatisfactory relationships (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983). Thus it was hypothesized that those in demand-withdraw relationships would use more coercion strategies than those not involved in this interaction pattern. This hypothesis was not confirmed.

One possible explanation for the absence of a significant relationship between the demand-withdraw interaction pattern and the compliance-gaining strategy coercion lies in the definition of coercion employed in this study. The hypothesis was based on coercion being detrimental to relationships (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983), yet it has been shown to be less detrimental than other more direct forms of aggression (Sillars et al., 1984). As previously discussed, the current study employed a definition of coercion that included both direct aggression and sarcasm. Sarcasm may not be disruptive to the relationship, thus strategies coded as coercion in this study may not be as disruptive as other forms of coercion, which would explain why those in the demand-withdraw relationship used coercion as often as those not exhibiting the demand-withdraw communication pattern. Furthermore, the subjects reported being satisfied in their relationships, suggesting that the detrimental effects of the demand-withdraw pattern have not disrupted the communications of the subjects. Thus the subjects used relatively little coercion overall, and even less of the directly aggressive form of coercion. This created a situation in which there were not enough coercive responses to differentiate between the two groups of subjects.

Most of the responses that were coded as coercion were not directly aggressive, forceful, or violent; they were simply more sarcastic in tone. Aggressive strategies may be detrimental to the relationship because they are not socially acceptable and are disruptive to the relationship (Howard et al., 1986). The negative effects of sarcasm,

however, may be less than the negative effects of violence and threat. For example, Sillars et al. (1984) found that more satisfied partners used more hostile jokes and questions, which would have been coded as coercion in this study. Including sarcasm with more directly aggressive strategies in the category of coercion may account for the findings in this study. The group in this study that did not exhibit demand-withdraw was not significantly different from the group that did exhibit demand-withdraw in terms of the coercion strategy, and this may be explained by the lack of aggressiveness of the responses coded as coercion.

Discussion of Unhypothesized Results

This study produced three interesting results that were significant, but not hypothesized. Subjects with low interpersonal communication competence used the compliance-gaining strategy of manipulation significantly more ($M = 14.90$) than those high in communication competence ($M = 6.59$; $F = 3.94$, $p < .05$). The fact that competent communicators use less manipulation is not completely without support from the literature. Manipulation was defined in this study as attempts to gain compliance by indirect or false means (Noller et al., 1994). Manipulation is another variable that may be seen as socially unacceptable and disruptive to the relationship, thus the more competent communicators avoided them (Howard et al., 1986). In this study, the competent communicators were less likely to use the negative strategy of manipulation. This result suggests that communication competence is another variable that affects the use of compliance-gaining strategies in marital relationships.

A second unhypothesized finding concerns the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Subjects with high scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern used the

compliance-gaining strategy of assertion significantly more ($M = 64.06$) than those with low scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern ($M = 46.56$; $F = 5.01$, $p < .05$). The finding that those in the demand-withdraw pattern use more assertion suggests that the demand part of demand-withdraw may be represented by the compliance-gaining message strategy labeled “assertion.” When a woman uses an assertive strategy, she is directly expressing her opinions or wants, and may in fact be demanding that her husband do something to fulfill them. This is perplexing because the demand-withdraw interaction pattern is considered destructive to relationships (e.g. Heavey et al., 1995), yet assertive messages are considered constructive (Noller et al., 1994). This demonstrates that the act of demanding may only be negative when it is paired with a pattern of avoidance response. Also, this is not a contradiction when the multitude of ways to express opinions and wants are considered. For example, while a direct statement of position in a non-argumentative way may contribute to constructive communication, a direct statement of wants made in a criticizing or controlling manner may be destructive. Demand is defined as trying to discuss problems, criticizing, and blaming a partner (Sagrastano et al., 1998). These results suggests that future studies of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern should examine the “demand” messages in more depth.

The third unhypothesized finding also concerns the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Subjects with low scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern used the compliance-gaining strategy of reason significantly more ($M = 30.03$) than those with high scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern ($M = 11.35$; $F = 6.67$, $p < .05$). That those in the demand-withdraw pattern use less reason is logical due to the nature of the interaction pattern. When one is demanding, one is stating what he/she would like to

happen, not giving reasons for why that should happen. Reason was defined through examples in this study as “presenting alternatives” and/or “seeking solutions” (Noller et al., 1994). By definition, one who has already determined the best solution/alternative and is demanding that it be achieved is not presenting the reasons or seeking input from their partner regarding the solution. That person has already determined the solution and only wants the other party to accept it. Thus, the nature of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern itself explains that when one is involved in this pattern, one is not using reason by presenting alternative, logic, or seeking solutions.

Limitations of the Study

This section addresses the methodological limitation of this study. First, problems pertaining to the sample are discussed. Next, weaknesses in the measures will be explored.

Sample

The sample in this research had some distinguishing characteristics which could have created biases and limited the internal as well as external validity of the study. First, the sample was composed exclusively of women. Therefore, the results must be interpreted with that in mind, so that when generalizations are made, they are made to married women. Also, 89.2% of the subjects in this sample were currently in their first marriage. Generalizability beyond first marriage women would be limited.

Another distinguishing aspect of the sample is that it consisted almost entirely (76.9%) of women who checked the “Anglo” box on their survey form, suggesting the results may only be applicable to Anglo women. More than half of the respondents also indicated that they shared a combined income with their husbands of more than \$70,000

per year. This would indicate a rather high combined income and may indicate that this sample is not representative of the larger population.

A third distinguishing aspect of the subjects used in the research relates to how the sample was gathered. Due to the sampling techniques used in this study, most of the respondents were either enrolled in a communication course at Southwest Texas State University or gave the questionnaire to a married women they knew. The sample could have been more highly educated and aspiring than the general population. Another small portion of the sample was contacted through a Baptists congregation in South Austin, which also may have limited the generalizability of the results because of the more homogeneous shared values of this group.

The response rate to the questionnaire (25.2%) also could have impacted the results. Over three hundred questionnaires were distributed, yet only 65 usable questionnaires were analyzed. This may, at least partially, be due to the length of the study. It was nine pages long, and completing it required approximately 20 minutes. This could have restricted the diversity of responses and produced a more homogeneous response pool. This also limits the generalizability of the results because the subjects were self-selected individuals who took the time to complete the lengthy survey.

Finally, the sample included primarily women who were satisfied with their marital relationships. Subjects reported that they were satisfied in their marriages ($M = 37.85$, $SD = 1.08$). While this mean is comparable to other samples that have completed this marital satisfaction scale ($M = 38.20$, Noller et al., 1994), it greatly exceeds the neutral, mid-point of 25 on the scale. Because the women who participated in this study were satisfied, it probably limited the number of negative compliance-gaining messages

that were generated as well as biased the results related to power and demand-withdraw interaction patterns.

Measures

There were several limitations related to the measures employed in this study. First, the power measure did not prove to be reliable (*Cronbach's alpha* = .41). The power measure used in this study was chosen as a comprehensive measure of both structural (i.e. resource) and dependence power. This study attempted to measure power from both resource and dependence theory, which was a shift from previous research based almost entirely on resource theory (Aida & Falbo, 1991; McDonald, 1980; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970). Not only was the measure of structural and dependence power unreliable, the separate measures for resource power and dependence power were also unreliable (*Cronbach's alpha* = .34 and .45, respectively).

Futhermore, the coding scheme used to categorize the compliance-gaining responses of subjects had several limitations. First, when analyzing women's responses to place them into the compliance-gaining strategy categories, coders had to determine where factual statements were to be placed, because the coding scheme did not include a category for "statements of fact." The coders analyzed the context of the statements to determine whether to code them as assertion or reason strategies. Second, the category of assertion was determined to be a positive strategy for the purposes of this study (Noller et al., 1994). As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, some of the assertive messages may have been negative in tone, but there was no way to indicate that using the taxonomy chosen for this study.

The coding scheme further limited this study because the manipulation category was defined as “attempts to gain compliance by indirect or false means” (Noller et al., 1994). The method employed in this study used the written responses of women to determine the strategies they used. These written responses did not provide enough information for the coders to determine if the statements were false or indirect. Thus there were few manipulation strategies coded in the study.

Additionally, there were problems with the coercion category. Coercion was defined as “seeking control through use of force” and included examples such as threat, blame, sarcasm, and physical and verbal aggression (Noller et al., 1994). This coding scheme thus had coders categories sarcasm as coercion, but the coercion category included responses that were not directly aggressive. As previously discussed, this may have caused the coercion category to include strategies that were not negative or disruptive to the relationship.

Suggestions for Future Research

Research needs to be conducted to address the limitations of the current study and to provide additional insight into the compliance-gaining strategies used in marriages. These investigations should not only help improve the theory investigating marital relationships, but also have practical implications for improving the quality of marriages. Three suggestions address limitations of the current study, and several proposals address additional variables that might be of interest in future compliance-gaining research investigating marital relationships.

Future Research Addressing Limitations of the Study

There are three suggestions for correcting the limitations of this study. The first is to include a more varied sample of subjects. The subjects in this study were all women who were, for the most part, in satisfying marital relationships. These women had relatively high communication competence scores and did not report having large amounts of power over their husbands. In addition, the women did not report a high involvement in the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Furthermore, these women were self selected and chose to complete a rather lengthy survey for the study. Future research that includes a more varied sample of married men and women, and a less cumbersome survey, may yield more insight into the compliance-gaining strategies used in marriages.

A second suggestion for correcting the limitations of this study concerns the limited compliance-gaining taxonomy used in this study. The taxonomy developed by Noller et al. (1994) included only six categories of strategies, three of which were considered positive, and three of which were considered negative. It was discovered in this study that coercion and assertion strategies may be positive or negative, thus further distinction in these categories is needed to accurately represent the compliance-gaining messages used in marriages. Furthermore, the taxonomy used herein did not supply a category for statements of fact. The coders were also unable to determine when the manipulation strategy was used because of the methodology employed. These limitation may be corrected by expanding the Noller et al. taxonomy by splitting the assertion category into two subgroups to include a category for statements of fact, and by splitting the coercion category into two subgroups (one aggressive and one sarcastic). Using a

more exhaustive taxonomy of compliance-gaining strategies, such as those suggested in the research by Kellerman and Cole (1992), may also enhance future research.

Finally, the limitations of this study could be corrected in future studies with a more reliable measure of power in intimate relationships. Falbo and Peplau (1980) directly asked subjects to indicate the overall balance of power in their relationship in an effort to avoid the problems researchers have had operationally defining power and measuring it in intimate relationships. Using Falbo and Peplau's direct measure could serve as a reliability check in an effort to substantiate the power measures currently available. Many researchers use resource theory in defining relational power, but in this study even the resource power items proved unreliable. Further research is necessary to accurately measure power in relationships and to correct for power findings that may be more related to gender than power.

A post-hoc analysis using the data in this study could also be conducted to determine if the sub-components of the power scale reveal any significant results. One of the power measures (Item 5) asks who in the relationship has more income. This item has been previously used as the sole measure of power (Aida & Falbo, 1991), thus analysis of this item as the power measure may produce significant results. Educational level (Item 6) may also be a sub-factor in power. Additionally, age and attractiveness contribute to affinity, another subset of power. Therefore, analysis of Items 1, 2, and 7 may provide information about this type of power. Items 3 and 4 measure dependence power, as does the presence of children in the relationship (Item 10), and employment (Items 13 and 14) (Howard et al., 1986). These items could be combined to assess the impact of dependence power.

Additional Areas for Future Research

A second area for future research investigating compliance-gaining strategies used in marriages involves additional variables. The current study showed that gender and power may be tightly entwined variables, and one way to resolve this confusion may be to measure psychological gender rather than biological sex. Investigating compliance-gaining strategies in marriages in conjunction with measures of gender-role and power could help clarify which construct is more appropriate.

Other communication variables may also provide additional insight into the compliance-gaining strategies used in marriages. One such variable for future research is communication motives, a variable correlated to communication competence (Rubin & Martin, 1994). The theory of interpersonal communication motives identifies why people initiate and engage in interpersonal communication. These motives influence how people communicate to achieve their goals. Compliance-gaining communication is also goal directed communication, thus these two variables are similar. Six motives have been identified in prior research (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). They are affection, control, escape, inclusion, pleasure, and relaxation.

Several factors have been shown to influence communication motives including locus of control (Rubin & Rubin, 1992), gender (Barbato & Perse, 1992), communication context/intimacy (Anderson & Martin, 1995; Barbato, Perse, & Graham, 1995; Martin & Anderson, 1995), and communication competence (Anderson & Martin). Although not previously studied together, it may be hypothesized that those who communicate for control use different compliance-gaining strategies than those who communicate for affection, especially with their romantic partners. Also, those who communicate for

pleasure may use significantly different strategies than those who communicate for inclusion or affection.

Another variable for future research is communication rules, which is an analysis of the implicit rules that regulate interaction in pairs (Farace, Monge, & Russel, 1977). In marital relationships, rules are developed that guide communicative interactions. These rules concern issues such as who initiates conversations, what topics are addressed, and who interrupts. Relational rules can affect the nature of the communication climate as well as the satisfaction of the participants. Compliance-gaining communication is likely affected by these rules, and future research could examine the impact of different rules. For example, if a rule exists in the relationship for one partner to initiate, control, and end that interaction, this would probably limit the types of compliance-gaining strategies used by the other partner. The partner with less control might not use as much assertion or coercion, and may use more partner support to gain compliance.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to examine the compliance-gaining messages women use in their marriages and investigate how these messages are related to other relational variables. Following the introduction, Chapter One reviewed the literature investigating early persuasion research, compliance-gaining, marital communication, communication competence, relational power, problem solving, and the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Chapter One examined each of the variables as they relate to communication in marital relationships.

Chapter Two reviewed the methodology used to test the hypotheses. The major sections of this chapter were instrumentation, administration of the questionnaire, and design and statistical analysis.

Chapter Three presented the results of the investigation. The first section included a summary of the major demographics. The second section reported the reliability data. The chapter concluded with the results for the six hypotheses tested in this study.

Chapter Four presented a discussion of the research. The first two hypotheses, which investigated the relationships between women's use of compliance-gaining strategies and their communication competence, were not confirmed. The nonsignificant results may be due to the relatively high competence level of the subjects, the limited use of coercion, and skewed sample of women who were satisfied with their marital relationships. The second two hypotheses investigated the relationship between women's use of compliance-gaining strategies and the amount of power they held in the relationship. These hypotheses were also not supported, likely due to the lack of reliability of the power scale and the trend in prior research to attribute gender differences to a power differential in the relationship (Noller, 1993). The final two hypotheses examined the relationships between women's choice of compliance-gaining strategies and their participation in a demand-withdraw interaction pattern with their husbands. These hypotheses were also not confirmed. This may have been due to faulty logic on the part of the researcher and a lack of understanding of prior research about the effects of coercion in relationships.

Chapter Four also presented additional findings discovered in post hoc analyses. First, it was found that competent communicators were less likely to use the manipulation strategy than less competent communicators. Second, those with high-scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern were found to be more likely to use the assertion strategy. Third, those with low scores for the demand-withdraw interaction pattern were significantly more likely to use the reason strategy. These results suggest a relationship between compliance-gaining strategy choice, communication competence, and the presence of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern in relationships.

Chapter Four concluded with suggestions for future research. Several areas of future research addressed the limitations of the sample and measures used in the current study. In addition, it was suggested that future research investigate other variables such as gender role, communication motives, and communication rules.

APPENDIX

Survey of Women in Marriage Relationships

The Communication Research Center in the Department of Speech Communication at Southwest Texas State University is sponsoring a study investigating married women and their relationships with their husbands. This is a MAJOR research project in which we would like for you to participate and express your feelings.

Only MARRIED WOMEN should complete this survey.

This survey is being distributed to students in Communication classes at Southwest Texas State University. Your voluntary cooperation in completing the survey is greatly appreciated. If you are a woman and are currently married, please complete the survey yourself. If you are a male and married, please give your wife this survey to complete. If you are not currently married, please ask a married female you know to complete the survey.

Please do NOT put your name anywhere on this form. Your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. The value of this survey depends on getting truthful answers, so please be honest in your responses. Realize that there are no right or wrong answers, only "truthful" answers.

The following questionnaire consists of several parts. In the first part of the questionnaire you are asked to complete several scales about yourself. The second set of questions asks you how you talk with your husband. If there is not sufficient space for you to answer any question, please continue your response on the back of the page. In the remaining sections you are asked to complete scales about your relationship with your husband.

It should take you approximately 15 to 20 minutes to answer the questions on the survey.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the included envelope and put the postage-free envelope in the mail. Please return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible, preferably within a day or two.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey. Your honest opinions are greatly valued.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. M. Lee Williams at Southwest Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, Texas, 78666, or call (512) 245-2165.

Please turn to the next page and begin.

PART 1A: Here are several reasons people give for why they talk to other people. For each statement, please circle a number that best expresses **your own reasons for talking to others**.

If the reason stated is **exactly** like your own reason, circle 5.

If the reason stated is **a lot** like your own reason, circle 4.

If the reason stated is **somewhat** like your own reason, circle 3.

If the reason stated is **not much** like your own reason, circle 2.

If the reason stated is **not at all** like your own reason, circle 1.

I talk to people:

	Not at all like me				Exactly like me
1. Because it's fun.	1	2	3	4	5
2. To help others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Because I need someone to talk to or be with.	1	2	3	4	5
4. To put off something I should be doing.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Because it relaxes me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Because it's a pleasant rest.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Because I want someone to do something for me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Because it's exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
9. To let others know I care about their feelings	1	2	3	4	5
10. Because I just need to talk about my problems sometimes.	1	2	3	4	5
11. To get away from what I am doing.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Because it allows me to unwind.	1	2	3	4	5
13. To thank them.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Because it makes me feel less lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Because I have nothing better to do.	1	2	3	4	5
16. To get something I don't have.	1	2	3	4	5
17. To have a good time.	1	2	3	4	5
18. To tell others what to do.	1	2	3	4	5

PART 1B: Here are some statements about how people interact with other people. For each statement, circle the response that best reflects **YOUR communication with others**. Be honest in your responses and reflect on your communication behavior very carefully.

If you **ALMOST ALWAYS** interact in this way, circle 5

If you communicate this way **OFTEN**, circle 4

If you behave in this way **SOMETIMES**, circle 3

If you act this way only **SELDOM**, circle 2.

If you **ALMOST NEVER** behave this way, circle 1.

	Almost never				Almost always
1. I allow friends to see who I really am.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can put myself in other's shoes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am comfortable in social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
4. When I've been wronged, I confront the person who wronged me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My conversations are pretty one-sided.	1	2	3	4	5

	Almost never				Almost always
6. My conversations are characterized by smooth shifts from one topic to the next.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My friends can tell when I'm happy or sad.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My communication is usually descriptive, not evaluative.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My friends truly believe that I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I accomplish my communication goals.	1	2	3	4	5

PART 1C: The items below inquire about what kind of person you think you are. Each item consists of a *pair* of characteristics, with the letters A-E in between. For example:

Not at all artistic A B C D E Very artistic

Each pair describes contradictory characteristics -- that is, you cannot be both at the same time, such as very artistic and not at all artistic.

The letters form a scale between two extremes. You are to choose a letter which describes where *you* fall on the scale. For example, if you think you have no artistic ability, you would choose A. If you think you are pretty good, you might choose D. If you are only medium, you might choose C, and so forth.

1. Not at all aggressive	A	B	C	D	E	Very aggressive
2. Not at all independent	A	B	C	D	E	Very independent
3. Not at all emotional	A	B	C	D	E	Very emotional
4. Very submissive	A	B	C	D	E	Very dominant
5. Not at all excitable in a major crisis	A	B	C	D	E	Very excitable in a major crisis
6. Very passive	A	B	C	D	E	Very active
7. Not able to devote self completely to others	A	B	C	D	E	Able to devote self completely to others
8. Very rough	A	B	C	D	E	Very gentle
9. Not at all helpful to others	A	B	C	D	E	Very helpful to others
10. Not at all competitive	A	B	C	D	E	Very competitive
11. Very home oriented	A	B	C	D	E	Very worldly
12. Not at all kind	A	B	C	D	E	Very kind
13. Indifferent to others' approval	A	B	C	D	E	Highly needful of others' approval
14. Feelings not easily hurt	A	B	C	D	E	Feelings easily hurt
15. Not at all aware of feelings of others	A	B	C	D	E	Very aware of feelings of others
16. Can make decisions easily	A	B	C	D	E	Has difficulty making decisions
17. Gives up very easily	A	B	C	D	E	Never gives up easily
18. Never cries	A	B	C	D	E	Cries very easily
19. Not at all self-confident	A	B	C	D	E	Very self-confident
20. Feels very inferior	A	B	C	D	E	Feels very superior
21. Not at all understanding of others	A	B	C	D	E	Very understanding of others
22. Very cold in relations with others	A	B	C	D	E	Very warm in relations with others
23. Very little need for security	A	B	C	D	E	Very strong need for security
24. Goes to pieces under pressure	A	B	C	D	E	Stands up well under pressure

PART 2: The following questions ask you to write about a specific conversation that you recall having with your husband. Please consider what you actually said and did in the situation, not what you wish you had said or done, or believe that you should have said or done. Please be honest and complete in your responses to all questions.

There are a number of times when couples do not agree about matters that affect them both. In some of these situations the disagreements are minor, such as deciding which movie to see. Other situations involve important issues or develop into an argument. One person generally begins the conversation by asking the other to change his/her thoughts, behaviors, opinions, or actions.

The next few questions ask you to reflect on a conversation such as this when you asked your husband to change his thoughts, behaviors, opinions, or actions. Recall a recent time you initiated a conversation to try to get your husband to "see it your way." Common topics in this type of discussion concern things such as: the distribution of household chores, where to go and what to do on vacations, the handling of financial matters, parents and in-laws, the amount of time spent together, etc.

Briefly identify in the space provided the recent issue or topic that you remember bringing up with your husband. Also please identify the change you desired.

1. Recent issue/topic:

2. Change you desired:

3. How important is this issue/topic to you?

1
not very
important

2

3
somewhat
important

4

5
very
important

4. When did this interaction take place? Approximately _____ days ago.

5. When you began the recent discussion on this issue, what did you say to your husband?

Please provide detail in explaining how you brought up the issue with your husband.

Please include the specific language you used as best you can remember.

(**Please continue on the back of this page in order to be as specific in the details as possible.)

6. On the previous item you indicated what you said. Now indicate **why** you chose to address your husband in this way in the space below.

7. In the space below indicate your husband's response to your effort to get him to change.

8. If this was the response you desired, please skip to item #9. If you did not get the desired response from your husband, what did you then say or do? Please describe in detail what you said and did after your initial request was not effective. (Use the reverse side of this page if you need more space.)

9. Why did you choose this method of responding to your husband when the first request was not effective?

10. Do you think that the exchange you just described on the previous pages is typical of a conversation between you and your husband when you try to get him to “see it your way”?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all typical				completely typical

PART 3: Please rate yourself on a scale of one to seven for the following questions:

1. Who is more “good looking,” you or your husband?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My husband is much more good looking			We are equally good looking			I am much more good looking

2. Who is more “sexy looking,” you or your husband?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My husband is much more sexy looking			We are equally sexy looking			I am much more sexy looking

3. Who is more committed to your relationship, you or your husband?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am much more committed			We are equally committed			My husband is much more committed

4. If you and your husband decided to end your relationship, whose life would this disrupt more?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mine much more			Our lives would be equally disrupted			My husband's much more

5. Indicate which of the following statements is the most accurate representation of your income: (check one)

- ☐ (1) I make significantly less money than my husband
☐ (2) I make less money than my husband
☐ (3) I make slightly less money than my husband
☐ (4) I make approximately the same amount of money as my husband
☐ (5) I make slightly more money than my husband
☐ (6) I make more money than my husband
☐ (7) I make significantly more money than my husband

6. Indicate which of the following statements is the most accurate representation of your education: (check one)

- ☐ (1) I have significantly less education than my husband
☐ (2) I have less education than my husband
☐ (3) I have slightly less education than my husband
☐ (4) I have approximately the same amount of education as my husband
☐ (5) I have slightly more education than my husband
☐ (6) I have more education than my husband
☐ (7) I have significantly more education than my husband

7. Indicate which of the following statements is the most accurate representation of your age: (check one)

- ☐ (1) I am significantly younger than my husband
☐ (2) I am younger than my husband
☐ (3) I am slightly younger than my husband
☐ (4) I am approximately the same age as my husband
☐ (5) I am slightly older than my husband
☐ (6) I am older than my husband
☐ (7) I am significantly older than my husband

8. When were you born? _____ Month _____ Year

9. When were you married? _____ Month _____ Year

10. If you have children, please indicate their ages: _____ yrs. _____ yrs. _____ yrs. _____ yrs.

11. Check the appropriate box: This is my [☐ 1st] [☐ 2nd] [☐ 3rd] [☐ other _____] marriage.

12. Check the appropriate box: ☐ Anglo, ☐ Hispanic, ☐ Black, ☐ Asian, ☐ other

13. Check your employment: ☐ not employed, ☐ part-time, ☐ full-time

14. Check your husband's employment: ☐ not employed, ☐ part-time, ☐ full-time

15. Indicate your combined annual income: ☐ \$0-9,999, ☐ \$10,000-19,999,
☐ \$20,000-29,999, ☐ \$30,000-39,999, ☐ \$40,000-49,999, ☐ \$50,000-59,999, ☐ \$60,000-
 69,999, ☐ \$70,000-79,999, ☐ \$80,000-89,999, ☐ \$90,000-99,999, ☐ more than \$100,000

PART 4: We are interested in how you and your husband typically deal with problems in your relationship. Please rate each item on a scale of 1 (= very unlikely) to 7 (= very likely).

	Very Unlikely							Very Likely
When some problem in the relationship arises,								
1. my husband and I try to discuss the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. my husband tries to start a discussion while I try to avoid a discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I try to start a discussion while my husband tries to avoid a discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
During a discussion of a relationship problem,								
4. my husband and I suggest possible solutions and compromises.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. my husband nags and demands while I withdraw, become silent, or refuse to discuss the matter further.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. I nag and demand while my husband withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. my husband criticizes while I defend myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. I criticize while my husband defends himself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

PART 5: For the following items, use the following scale:

Very strong disagreement = 1 Slight agreement = 5
Moderate disagreement = 2 Moderate agreement = 6
Slight disagreement = 3 Very strong agreement = 7
Neutral = 4

		Very strong disagreement					Very strong agreement	
1.	We have a good marriage/relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My relationship with my husband is very stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Our marriage/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 part of a team with my husband	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Indicate how happy you are by using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very unhappy									Perfectly happy

PART 6: Please answer the following items.

1a. When spouses communicate, one of them must initiate the interaction. Typically, when you and your husband communicate, who usually initiates the conversation? Does he usually initiate, do you usually initiate, or do you initiate about equally?

1	2	3	4	5
He usually initiates		We initiate about equally		I usually initiate

1b. How satisfied are you with this arrangement?

1	2	3	4	5
I'd like for him to initiate the communication more		I'm satisfied		I'd like to initiate the communication more

2. When spouses talk, one or the other sometimes interrupts to change the subject. When you and your husband talk, who usually interrupts to change the subject?

1	2	3	4	5
He interrupts more		It's split about evenly between us		I interrupt more

3a. When spouses talk, someone has to decide to end the conversation. When you and your husband communicate, who usually ends the conversation. That is, who decides it is time to stop?

1	2	3	4	5
He usually ends the conversation		We do it about equally		I usually end the conversation

3b. How satisfied are you with this arrangement?

1	2	3	4	5
I'd like for him to end the conversation more		I'm satisfied		I'd like to end the conversation more

4a. Overall, who would you say does most of the talking in conversations with your husband?

1	2	3	4	5
He talks a lot more than I do.	He talks a little more than I do.	We talk about the same amount of time.	I talk a little more than he does.	I talk a lot more than he does.

4b. How satisfied are you with this arrangement?

1	2	3	4	5
I'd like to do less of the talking		I'm satisfied		I'd like to do more of the talking

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Place the questionnaire in the postage-free envelope and mail to: Southwest Texas State University, Dept. of Speech Communication, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, Texas 78666-4616.

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VITA

Melanie Avant was born in Austin, Texas, on August 16, 1972, the daughter of Wanda Barton Avant and Ken Avant. After completing her work at Crockett High School, Austin, Texas, in 1990, she entered Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. She also worked full time at the law firm of Bankston, Wright and Greenhill, P.C. through 1992, then at Special Sales, Inc until 1995. From the Fall of 1991 through the Summer of 1993, she attended Austin Community College in Austin, Texas, receiving an Associates Degree in Communication in 1995. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Southwest Texas State University in August, 1996, with a minor in Speech Communication and a Texas Teaching Certificate for English and Speech Communication. During the following years she was employed as a high school Speech and English teacher with Burnet Consolidated Independent School District. She also served as Debate and Interpretative Events coach, Student Council sponsor, and served as a member of the technology committee. In June of 1998 she was married to Robert William Joseph, Jr., of Austin, Texas. In July 1998, she entered the Graduate School of Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. She is currently employed in Austin, Texas, as a software trainer/analyst for Infotech, Inc. of Gainesville, Florida.

Permanent Address: 7310 Ladybug Street
Austin, Texas 78744

This thesis was typed by Melanie Avant.

