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RECEIVED SPOUSE SUPPORT AS RELATED TO MARITAL
SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

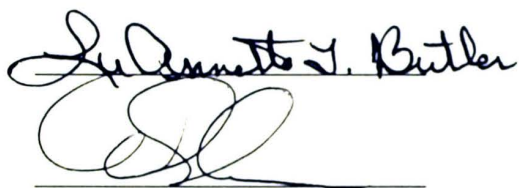
KRISTINA MARIE HEARN

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kristina Marie Hearn entitled "Received Spouse Support as related to Marital Satisfaction among University Students." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Guidance and Counseling.


Stuart Bonnington, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
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Date January 31, 2001

Received Spouse Support as Related to Marital Satisfaction among
University Students

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

Austin Peay State University

Kristina Marie Hearn

May, 2002

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Tony, who is the inspiration for this thesis. His support and patience have been invaluable to my pursuit of this degree and to our relationship. With the completion of this thesis, we both might see the light at the end of this tunnel called graduate school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Bonnington for his patience and guidance through this thesis process, and for his encouragement in these graduate school years. I offer my appreciation to Dr. Butler for her assistance with this thesis and for her guidance and encouragement in my counseling education, and also to Dr. Golden for his patience and guidance with the statistics involved in this thesis.

I offer my sincere gratitude to my family, particularly my parents, not only for supporting me through my undergraduate degree which has made graduate school a possibility for me, but also for encouraging me through this graduate school journey. Last, but certainly not least, I say thank you to all the friends I have met along the way who have helped to make grad school bearable.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between received spousal support and marital satisfaction among university students. The participants were married undergraduate and graduate students Austin Peay State University. They completed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and the Inventory of Social Support Behaviors (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsay, 1981). A positive correlation was found between marital satisfaction and received spousal support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marriages in our American culture seem to easily become unstable. In fact, in 1999, the divorce rate was almost half as much as the marriage rate (National Center for Health Statistics, 2000). These divorces may not necessarily be the fault of either party by means of abuse, infidelity, or any other offences made by any one individual that would lead to the failure of a marriage. With no-fault divorces occurring, there is a wide variety of situations that may lead to the end of a marriage. In today's society, there are many aspects of people's lives that may bring unwanted stress to their marriages, thus leading to couples lacking satisfaction in their marriages or to marital conflict (Gruver & Labadie, 1975; McGonagle, Kessler, & Schilling, 1992). These stressors may come in the form of financial problems, disagreements about children, recreational time, (Gruver & Labadie, 1975), gender role conflicts and division of labor (Wilkie, Ferree, & Ratcliff, 1998), as well as possible increases in anxiety and depression related to events in the larger society.

People are finding ways to attempt to improve their marriages, and options may include various forms of couples communication and enrichment classes as well as marriage counseling (Allgood, Crane, & Agee, 1997). Because couples are looking to marriage counselors to help them find a way to keep their marriages intact, counselors should understand the problems that may lead to an unstable marriage. They also should have knowledge about what people can do differently to help make their marriages succeed. A number of studies have focused on marital satisfaction (Blum & Mehabrian

1999; Bograd & Spilka, 1996; Coyne & Anderson, 1999; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Wilkie et al., 1998) and marital success (Fenell, 1993; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). As Fenell (1993) has found, successful marriages tend to have common characteristics. Just a few of the characteristics found by Fenell (1993) include one's commitment to the marriage, loyalty and respect for one's spouse, and the desire to please and support one's spouse. Additionally, Kaslow and Robinson (1996) found that in successful marriages, spouses find love, trust, respect, and support to be among several ingredients that are important in a marriage. One aspect of successful marriages, as found by Fenell (1993) and Kaslow and Robinson (1996) was support.

Whether they are married or not, college students are people who may find social support from others to be helpful (Wohlgemuth & Betz, 1991). College involves commitment to one's goals, and oftentimes extra financial strain and added stress. Because of these factors, sometimes success in college and satisfaction in marital relationships may clash. Support or lack of support, particularly from one's spouse, might be noticed (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986), and hence, may make a difference in one's satisfaction with his or her marriage. In seminary students, higher levels of increased stress were found to reduce the quality of close relationships (Craddock, 1996). Additionally, Craddock (1996) found that high quality marital and familial relationships have been found to act as a buffer against stress. Such findings seem to indicate that the stressors of school and the quality of marital relationships can significantly affect each other.

While the incidence of divorce is high, marriages are not necessarily doomed to failure. A review of the literature revealed that couples can have successful relationships, and these relationships have common characteristics. Since married students may experience stressors not necessarily experienced by single students or by couples who are not students, college counselors should make themselves aware of the unique considerations of this population. The present study asks how support, which is one of these characteristics of successful marriages (Fenell, 1993; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996), may play a part in marriages of college students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Marital Satisfaction

Marriage has been the focus of a great deal of research. Studies have examined marital adjustment (Spanier, 1976), marital satisfaction (Blum & Mehrabian, 1999; Coyne & Anderson, 1999; Wilkie et al., 1998), and marital dissatisfaction (Gruver & Labadie, 1975).

Marital satisfaction in particular has been paired with many other constructs in order to examine possible correlations with or predictors of satisfaction levels. For example, Blum and Mehrabian (1999) studied the correlations between marital satisfaction, personality, and temperament types. In their study, they found that those who tend to have pleasant emotional states, and those who tend to feel in control of their lives and relationships are more likely to be satisfied in their marital relationships. Schumm, Webb, and Bollman (1998) examined gender differences and marital satisfaction, finding that in marriages with reported differences in marital satisfaction, wives were significantly less satisfied with their marriages than husbands were. Significant differences in marital satisfaction, however, were only reported in seven percent of the couples in the study. Another study, by Bograd and Spilka (1996), looked at self-disclosure and marital satisfaction in remarriages. They found honesty of self-disclosure to be positively correlated with marital satisfaction.

Another aspect of marriage is gender roles. Sometimes the couple may perceive gender roles and appropriate division of labor differently. A study by Wilkie et al. (1998)

examined marital satisfaction in terms of gender and perceived fairness of division of labor. Variables included in the study were division of labor, role preference, empowerment, empathy, marital satisfaction, and demographic variables. Their study found marital satisfaction to be influenced by personal preference concerning division of domestic and paid work, and increased by perceived equity, empathy, and empowerment.

Another study that involved empathy as related to marital satisfaction also examined the concept of self-actualization (Rowan, Compton, & Rust, 1995). Each member of 30 couples completed a scale for each construct, and scores were compared between the men and the women. Men's scores were found to have significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and both self-actualization and empathy. Women's scores, however, were not found to have significant correlation between marital satisfaction and self-actualization or empathy.

One variable to consider when exploring predictors of marital satisfaction is social support from people outside of the marriage (Julien & Markman, 1991). Allgood, Crane, and Agee (1997) looked at marital satisfaction and outside social support of married couples who were and were not seeking therapy. Husbands from both the therapy and non-therapy group reported talking to the same number of friends about marriage and family problems. Wives, on the other hand, reported different practices. Wives in the therapy group reported talking to more friends about their marital problems than those in the non-therapy group.

Marital Satisfaction and Spouse Support

Social support is a variable that may have an impact on marriages and marital satisfaction in several different situations. Repetti (1989) examined daily workload and spouse support, while Cutrona and Suhr (1992) studied different types of support from spouses, and found that the participants appreciated emotional support the most. McGonagle et al., (1992) studied several variables as predictors of marital disagreement, finding that personality and social support from one's spouse to be the strongest predictors of frequency of marital disagreements.

Kaslow and Robison (1996) also found mutual support to be an essential ingredient for marital satisfaction among couples whom had been married 25 to 46 years. In this study, participants were asked to complete several questionnaires, and one of which asked them to choose up to ten of 42 ingredients they believed were essential for marital satisfaction. Of the 42 ingredients, eleven were reported to be essential by 50% or more of the participants. Mutual support was marked by 68% of the participants as an essential element for marital satisfaction.

A study by Coyne and Anderson (1999) examined how marital satisfaction was related to social support for women with breast cancer. Among other variables, perceived emotional support and marital satisfaction were measured. Findings indicated that the women who were in satisfactory marriages perceived more support from their husbands than those who were in distressed marriages. Also, those who were in distressed marriages perceived more unsupportive behaviors from their husbands than did women who were in satisfactory marriages.

The study by Coyne and Anderson (1999) was one of several studies that looked specifically at relationships and social support. Another study, examining the interaction between relationships and support, found that for women with infants, perceived emotional support from their husbands and their mothers was significantly correlated with satisfaction in each relationship (Levitt, Weber, & Clark, 1986). The more support received, the more satisfaction the women reported in these relationships.

Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986) examined dual career planning, spouse support, interrole conflict, problem-solving effectiveness in marriage, and marital satisfaction. They sampled 118 women in dual-career marriages. Among other findings, greater spouse support was related to higher levels of marital satisfaction. In a study of spouse support and the marital satisfaction of 75 runners and their spouses, Baldwin, Ellis, and Baldwin (1999) found a significant positive correlation between support and marital satisfaction.

Two variables included in a study by Brunstein, Dangelmayer, and Schultheiss (1996) were marital satisfaction and support of personal goals. Thirty-six couples completed questionnaires asking about their own personal and relationship goals, the personal and relationship goals of their partners, support received from and given to partners to attain goals, and marital satisfaction. Findings indicated that receiving support for relationship goals was predictive of marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, and that receiving support for individual goals was predictive of marital satisfaction for men only. Husbands' overall reports of giving and receiving goal support were positively correlated with husbands' marital satisfaction, and wives' overall reports of giving and

receiving goal support was positively correlated with wives' marital satisfaction. Reports of husbands giving support was related to wives' marital satisfaction, but report of wives giving support was not significantly related to husbands' marital satisfaction.

In reviewing the literature, one can see that according to Coyne and Anderson (1999), Steffy and Ashbaugh (1986), Baldwin et al., (1999), and Brunstein et al., (1996), spouse support is related to marital satisfaction. This literature has focused on marital satisfaction and spouse support for various populations. One specific population that has not been mentioned yet is college students. This population may have similar concerns as the people in the studies that focused on personal goals (Brunstein et al., 1996) and dual careers (Steffy and Ashbaugh, 1986), in that college students may also have their own personal goals as well as responsibilities and commitments outside of the home.

College Students

Individuals who are attending college may experience social support as something that is of increased importance for them. Wohlgemuth and Betz (1991) studied, among other factors, social support in single college students. Their findings indicate that social support also has an impact on one's well-being. According to Huston-Hoburg and Strange (1986), social support particularly from one's spouse may affect married college students and their decision to return to school.

Huston-Hoburg and Strange (1986) studied gender differences and spouse support in returning adult students, and looked at three types of support: attitudinal, emotional, and functional. This study focused on gender differences. For attitudinal support, participants were presented with questions about gender roles. For eight out of fourteen

items, women reported more discrepancies with their spouses than men did. For emotional support, women reported more support from their friends and classmates, while men reported more support from their spouses: 83% of men, and 53% of women identified their greatest source of emotional support to be from their spouses ($p < .001$). For functional support, women reported assuming greater responsibility for seven household tasks, while men reported that their spouses assumed greater responsibility for six of those tasks. Men reported assuming greater responsibility for four household tasks, while women reported that their spouses assumed greater responsibility for the same four tasks. Results indicated that, when returning to school, men seemed to have more support from their wives than did women from their husbands. The authors state that this difference would suggest that returning to school may be more difficult for women than for men.

Katz, Monnier, Libet, Shaw, and Beach (2000) studied crossover effects of stress on aspects of well-being in medical students and their spouses. Depression, marital satisfaction, perceived stress, and spouse support were all measured in this study. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), and spouse support was measured using the Spouse Specific Support Scale, which was adapted for spouses. This scale included intimacy and cohesion subscales. The intimacy subscale focused on enjoyable activities shared with one's spouse, and the cohesion subscale focused on perception of emotional closeness. Among medical students and their spouses, spouse support predicted marital satisfaction. This effect was stronger

among high-stress individuals. Furthermore, increased perceived marital support predicted lower depression scores, particularly among high-stress individuals.

Norton, Thomas, Morgan, Tilley, and Dickens (1998) conducted a study examining how being a full-time student might affect a long-term relationship. This was a two-year study of 92 participants, and was conducted in England. They were looking for correlations between length of relationship, marital satisfaction, partner's support, student's stress, and student's self-esteem. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, and both partner support and student stress were measured using four subjective questions. One question asked about the feelings of the partner, and another asked about how much the partner understood the demands that were on the student. The third question asked about how much the partner was involved in the student's life, and the final question asked how supportive the partner was. In examining this study, it is important to recognize that the questions measuring support are subjective, and that one may be experiencing support not covered by these questions.

In the first year of the study by Norton et al., (2000), marital satisfaction was positively correlated with perceived partner support and students' self-esteem. It was negatively correlated with students' stress. Partner support was positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with stress. In the second year of the study, compared to men, women reported lower self-esteem, less support and less satisfaction with their partners. Perceived partner support significantly decreased in the second year.

The reviewed literature provides helpful information regarding marital satisfaction and spouse support for individuals, specifically college students. However,

none of the studies examined marital satisfaction of college students when looking specifically at supportive behaviors of their spouses. The literature that does include both variables with the college population asks subjective questions about the support that one perceives (Katz et al., 2000; Norton et al., 1998). Much of the current literature also has contradictions regarding gender differences (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Bograd & Spilka, 1996; Brunstein et al., 1996; Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986). In addition, some of the studies used simple and non-standardized measures to collect their data (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986; Wilkie et al., 1998).

This study examines the relationship between received spouse support and marital satisfaction in college students. The importance of this study is that when looking at spouse support, it focuses on actual supportive behaviors. Considering that recent research has found support to predict relationship satisfaction, (Baldwin et al., 1999; Coyne & Anderson, 1999; Kaslow & Robison, 1996; and Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986), the hypothesis for this study was that there would be a positive correlation between received spouse support and marital satisfaction among college students.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF STUDY

Participants

Forty-seven married undergraduate and graduate students over the age of 18 at Austin Peay State University were recruited to volunteer for this study. The researcher recruited the students by attending various psychology classes to announce this opportunity for research participation. At the time of the announcement the researcher also provided students with an opportunity to sign up for participation at times specified by the researcher. An announcement and sign-up sheet with specific dates and times were also posted on the bulletin board outside of the psychology office.

Measures

The instrument measuring marital satisfaction was the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976). The DAS is a 32-item self-report measure, and scores may range from 0 to 151, with higher scores reflecting greater marital satisfaction (Fredman & Sherman, 1987). This instrument was created to measure quality of adjustment in marriage, and includes the following four subscales: (a) dyadic satisfaction, (b) dyadic cohesion, (c) dyadic consensus, and (d) affectional expression. Reliability for the entire measure has an alpha of .96, with reliability for subscales ranging from .73 (affectional expression) to .94 (dyadic satisfaction). Regarding criterion-related validity, the scale had a mean of 114.8 for married individuals, and 70.7 for divorced individuals ($N=218$, $p<.001$). Regarding construct validity, the correlation between the DAS and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test was .86 among married participants, and .88 among

divorced participants ($p < .001$) (Spanier, 1976). Although only one subscale is actually labeled as measuring marital satisfaction, it has been found that the total DAS score reflects overall satisfaction (Kazak, Jarmas, & Snitzer, 1988). With this finding in mind, the total DAS score was used for this study.

The instrument to measure spouse support was the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsay, 1981). This is a 40-item self-report inventory of frequency that certain behaviors have occurred. Frequency of behaviors is on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) “not and all” to (5) “about every day”, with scores ranging from 40 to 200. Test-retest reliability was found to be .88 ($N=69$), and coefficient alphas for internal consistency were found to be .93 for the test and .94 for the retest (Barrera et al., 1981). Studies have found this scale to have factor structures, including guidance, cognitive information, emotional support, tangible assistance, and social interaction (Barrera, unpublished). This study does not examine these factors when measuring support. Although this scale does not specifically measure spouse support, it has been used to measure the support of specific groups of people (Barrera et al., 1981; Coyne & Anderson, 1999). For the purpose of measuring perceived spouse support, participants were instructed to respond to the items specifically in regard to the behavior of their spouses.

Procedure

Several dates and times over the span of about six weeks were announced for volunteers to participate in this study. For all sessions, the location was a room in the Clement Building at Austin Peay State University, main campus. The purpose of the

study was provided with the announcements requesting volunteers. Confidentiality information was explained in the informed consent document. Informed consent documents, demographic questionnaires and both tests were distributed for the participants to complete and return immediately.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The original sample included 47 participants. However, response sets were not included if any responses on the DAS were “not applicable (NA)”, or if seven or more responses on the ISSB were “NA”. Excluding these response sets left a sample size of 37. Of the 37 participants, seven were male, and 30 were female. There were three sophomores, thirteen juniors, eight seniors, twelve graduate students, and one who did not fit any of the given classifications. The mean age was 30.9 (SD=7.3), and the mean number of years married was 6.9 (SD=6). When asked whether or not there were children in the home, 59% responded “yes”.

When scoring the ISSB, there were several “NA” responses, so instead of recording a total frequency score, an average frequency score was recorded. For recording data on the DAS, all responses were added for a total score. To compare responses a Pearson correlation was used, and the correlation between the DAS and the ISSB was .667 ($p < .001$). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the distribution of the scores. This correlation seems to indicate a relationship between spouse support and marital satisfaction.

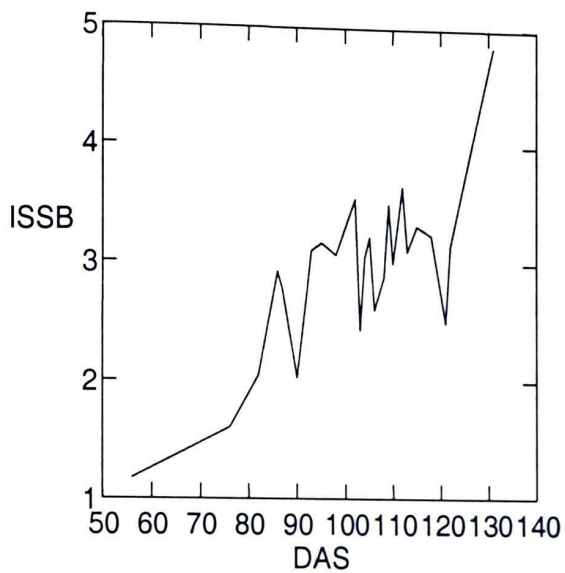


Figure 1

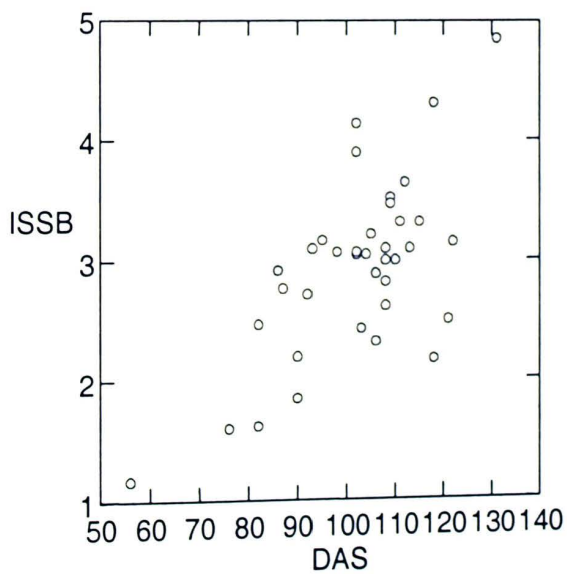


Figure 2

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between received spousal support and marital satisfaction. The more socially supported behaviors that were reported, the higher the marital satisfaction score. These results also support studies by Baldwin et al. (1999), Coyne & Anderson (1999), Kaslow & Robison, (1996), and Steffy & Ashbaugh (1986). This study only searched for a correlation between the two variables, but did not seek to answer whether or not one variable might cause the other to happen. Do supportive behaviors cause increased marital satisfaction? Does marital satisfaction cause supportive behaviors to occur? Is there something else that causes both of these variables to occur simultaneously? Further research might seek to answer these questions.

When conducting research regarding spousal support and marital satisfaction of students, one might seek to examine different aspects of the life of a married student, such as the education level of the spouse. Another consideration for further research could look at specific types of support. Since the ISSB has been found to include several factors, including guidance, emotional support, tangible assistance, or social interaction (Barrera, 2001), further research might seek to find which factor or factors might be most strongly correlated with marital satisfaction. Spouse support and marital satisfaction might also be interesting to study in populations with high-stress jobs, such as members of the military or high profile jobs, such as politicians. One might also examine

whether outside support is correlated with marital satisfaction for spouses of members of the military, or spouses of politicians.

When conducting the research and scoring the instruments, the researcher found that the ISSB might not be an appropriate measure of supportive behaviors in a marital relationship. Some participants commented about how some of the behaviors listed, such as “provided me with a place to stay,” and “loaned me under \$25” were not behaviors that applied to their marriages because they were in charge of the finances, or other similar reasons. The written responses also reflected this idea. Several participants had “NA” responses on a number of questions in the ISSB. This might mean that another scale is needed to better measure supportive behaviors that one would receive from his or her spouse.

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APPENDICES

**AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
(APIRB) APPLICATION FOR PROJECT APPROVAL**

This form has been designed to provide the APIRB with the information it needs to evaluate your project. Please complete each item carefully. Items that sometimes cause difficulty are clarified on the reverse side of this form. You are NOT confined to the space provided under each item on the hard copy or electronic versions of this form.

1. TITLE OF PROJECT:

Received Spouse Support as related to Marital Satisfaction among University Students

2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(s) INFORMATION: (provide same information for all CO-PIs)

Name: Kristina Hearn

Faculty___ Staff___ Graduate Student X Undergraduate Student___

Department: Psychology

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FAX #:

3. FACULTY SUPERVISOR: (If PI is a student):

Name: Dr. Stuart Bonnington

Department: Psychology

Campus Mailing Address: Box 4537

Office Phone #: 221-7234

Email Address: bonningtons@apsu.edu

FAX #: 221-6267

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT: (if any)

N/A

5. PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION: (i.e., research topic and question(s))

The purpose of this project is to explore whether or not there is a relationship between support received from one's spouse and one's own marital satisfaction.

6. A. THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED TO FULFILL REQUIREMENTS FOR A GRADUATE DEGREE. YES X NO___

B. THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED TO FULFILL REQUIREMENTS FOR A COURSE. YES X NO___;

IF YES: DEPT PSY COURSE # PSY 5990 INSTRUCTOR Dr. Bonnington

7. **DESCRIBE WHO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE, HOW PARTICIPANT(S) WILL BE RECRUITED, THE NUMBER AND AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND ANY PROPOSED COMPENSATION.** (Indicate any special classes of participants which might be included in this study (e.g., prisoners, minors, mentally disabled, hospitalized individuals, etc...):
Participants will be married students at APSU, and must be at least 18 years of age. There will be approximately 50 participants, and they will receive extra credit at the discretion of their instructors. Participants will be recruited by an announcement made in Psychology classes with an opportunity to sign up to participate. A sign-up sheet with appropriate information will also be posted on the Psychology bulletin board in Clement.

8. **DESCRIBE THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES IN NON-TECHNICAL LANGUAGE:**

The APIRB needs to know what will be done with or to the research participant(s). Participants will return signed consent forms before receiving questionnaires. Questionnaires will have no names on them, and will be returned to the researcher in blank envelopes.

The participants will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire in addition to two short questionnaires, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and The Inventory of Social Support Behaviors.

9. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND ANTICIPATED RISK:** (If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participants)

There may be minor risk of emotional disturbance. Information about obtaining counseling from centers such as the University Counseling Center and Harriet Cohn Center will be distributed when the questionnaires are handed back.

10. **DESCRIBE THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS. INCLUDE A COPY OF THE INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT** (if applicable, include script(s) for any briefing or debriefing to be conducted).

The informed consent process will involve allowing participants to read the informed consent document and ask questions. The participants will also sign informed consent form (included) and receive a copy to take with them.

This is to certify that the only involvement of human participants in this research study will be as described above. Application will not be reviewed without appropriate signatures

Principal Investigator's Signature

Faculty Supervisor's Signature (if appropriate)

Statement of Informed Consent

Researcher: Kristina Hearn, Graduate Student

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stuart Bonnington

Purpose of Study:

To determine whether or not there is a relationship between received support from one's spouse and one's own marital satisfaction.

Participants will be asked to:

Complete two questionnaires - one asking about your social support, and the other asking about your marital satisfaction. A short demographic questionnaire will also ask your gender, length of your marriage, and other similar questions. Questionnaires will be handed to you if you sign and return this form.

Completion Time:

Approximately 30 minutes.

Confidentiality and Potential Risks and Benefits:

No names will be on the questionnaires, so there will be no way to track you to your responses because this form will be collected and stored separately. Additionally, only the researcher will have the answer sheets, and will not report individual scores. All scores and information will be compiled and reported together. In order to increase confidentiality, you may want to cover your answers as you complete these questionnaires, and please return the questionnaires in the blank envelope provided.

You will be asked to answer questions about your intimate relationship with your spouse. The following are examples of questions you will be asked: How often do you and your mate get on each other's nerves? In the past few weeks, how often did your spouse express interest or concern in your well-being? You may leave any question blank. Due to the nature of the questions, there may be minor risk of emotional disturbance in completing these questionnaires. Information regarding sources of counseling services will be provided.

A possible benefit to you is that you may receive extra credit at the discretion of your professor. A possible benefit of the research is a better understanding of marital satisfaction, which may be applied to marital therapy.

If you have any concerns about how you have been treated or about the research project, you may contact Kristina Hearn (graduate student, Psychology Department) at 221- 7233 or Dr. Bonnington (faculty supervisor, Psychology Department) at 221-7233.

You may also contact APSU Grants and Sponsored Programs at 221-7881 for questions regarding your rights as a participant in research.

- I have read and understand the information above, and understand that my participation is completely voluntary.
- I understand that I have the right to stop at any time with no penalty to me, and that all data collected from me will be destroyed upon my request before leaving the testing area.
- I have received a copy of this form.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Gender

_____ Male

_____ Female

Number of Years Married _____

Age _____

Year in School

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

_____ Graduate Student

Do you have children in your home? _____ Yes _____ No

Appendix D

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse for each item on the following list.

	Always agree	Almost always agree	Occasionally disagree	Frequently disagree	Almost always disagree	Always disagree
1. Handling family finances _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Matters of recreation _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Religious matters _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Demonstration of affection _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Friends _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Sex relations _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Philosophy of life _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Amount of time spent together _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Making major decisions _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Household tasks _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Leisure-time interests and activities _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Career decisions _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating the relationship? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Do you confide in your mate? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Every day	Almost every day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your mate? _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Dyadic Adjustment Scale, continued

24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

All of them	Most of them	Some of them	Very few of them	None of them
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

How often would you say the following occur between you and your mate:

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating conversation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. Laugh together	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Calmly discuss something	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Work together on a project	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

These are some things about which couples agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks.

Yes No

29. _____ Being too tired for sex
30. _____ Not showing love

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The point "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot that best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Extremely unhappy	Fairly unhappy	A little unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship:

- _____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed and would go to almost any lengths to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do all that I can to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- _____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, and I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- _____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is not more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB)

INSTRUCTIONS

We are interested in learning about some of the ways that you feel your spouse has helped you or tried to make life more pleasant for you over the *past four weeks*. Below you will find a list of activities that your spouse might have done for you, to you, or with you in recent weeks. Please read each item carefully and indicate how often these activities happened to you during the *past four weeks*.

Use the following scale to make your ratings:

- A. Not at all
- B. Once or twice
- C. About once a week
- D. Several times a week
- E. About every day

Make all of your ratings on the answer sheet that has been provided. If, for example, the item:

45. Gave you a ride to the doctor.

happened once or twice during the past four weeks, you would make your rating like this:

A B C D E

45. ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please read each item carefully and select the rating that you think is the most accurate

During the past four weeks, how often did your spouse do these activities for you, to you, or with you:

1. Looked after a family member when you were away.
2. Was right there with you (physically) in a stressful situation.
3. Provided you with a place where you could get away for awhile.
4. Watched after your possessions when you were away (pets, plants, home, apartment, etc.).
5. Told you what she/he did in a situation that was similar to yours.
6. Did some activity with you to help you get your mind off of things.
7. Talked with you about some interests of yours.

8. Let you know that you did something well.
9. Went with you to someone who could take action.
10. Told you that you are OK just the way you are.
11. Told you that she/he would keep the things that you talk about private - just between the two of you.
12. Assisted you in setting a goal for yourself.
13. Made it clear what was expected of you.
14. Expressed esteem or respect for a competency or personal quality of yours.
15. Gave you some information on how to do something
16. Suggested some action that you should take.
17. Gave you over \$25.
18. Comforted you by showing you some physical affection.
19. Gave you some information to help you understand a situation you were in.
20. Provided you with some transportation.
21. Checked back with you to see if you followed the advice you were given.
22. Gave you under \$25.
23. Helped you understand why you didn't do something well.
24. Listened to you talk about your private feelings.
25. Loaned or gave you something (a physical object other than money) that you needed.
26. Agreed that what you wanted to do was right.
27. Said things that made your situation clearer and easier to understand.
28. Told you how he/she felt in a situation that was similar to your.
29. Let you know that he/she will always be around if you need assistance.
30. Expressed interest and concern in your well-being.
31. Told you that she/he feels very close to you.
32. Told you who you should see for assistance.
33. Told you what to expect in a situation that was about to happen.
34. Loaned you over \$25.
35. Taught you how to do something.
36. Gave you feedback on how you were doing without saying it was good or bad.
37. Joked and kidded to try to cheer you up.
38. Provided you with a place to stay.
39. Pitched in to help you do something that needed to get done.
40. Loaned you under \$25.

ISSB Answer Sheet

	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	33.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	34.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	35.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	36.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	37.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	38.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	39.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	40.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VITA

Kristina Marie Hearn was born on October 15, 1973 in Lubbock, Texas. She attended several elementary schools in Texas, Minnesota, and Illinois, then graduated from Leavenworth High School in Leavenworth, Kansas in May of 1992. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Sam Houston State University in May of 1996. She married and moved with her husband to the Ft. Campbell area. In August, 1999, she entered graduate school at Austin Peay State University. She will complete her Master of Science degree in Community Guidance and Counseling in May, 2002.