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Assessing the Influence of the Strength of the Parenting Alliance on Working Mothers' Social Adjustment to their Work, Community and Family Roles

Bettina Lozzi-Toscano

ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE PARENTING ALLIANCE
ON WORKING MOTHERS' SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT TO THEIR WORK, COMMUNITY
AND FAMILY ROLES

DISSERTATION

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ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE PARENTING ALLIANCE
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to all those working mothers who strive to maintain a healthy involvement in all areas of their lives. It is dedicated to all the unsung heroes in these mothers' lives who unconditionally give all they can to allow working mothers to function in their respective roles. To those spouses, partners, family, co-workers, and social networks, thank you for your consistent and unwavering support of working mothers to maintain and enhance the ever developing family unit.

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ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE PARENTING ALLIANCE ON WORKING MOTHERS' SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT TO THEIR WORK, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ROLES.

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Barry University, 2007

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Purpose The study evaluated the influence of the strength of the parental alliance on working mother's adjustment to their family, work and community roles. Participants completed an anonymous on-line survey consisting of measures assessing working mothers parental alliance with their spouse as well as their social adjustment in work, family and community roles. The dependent variables were three measures of the degree of social adjustment at work, in the community, and in the family. The independent variable consisted of the strength of the parenting alliance. The confounding variables depended on the area of social adjustment and included age, level of employment demand, time since birth, and first—time mother status.

Method The study was a correlational study using quantitative methods of investigation. A sample of 135 working mothers were recruited through email distribution lists and a website. Regression analysis was the statistical procedure utilized to investigate the relationship between the conceptual variables of the parenting alliance and social adjustment as operationalized through the instruments, the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) and the Social Adjustment Self Report Scale (SAS-SR).

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

It's the night before a big presentation and the alarm is set for 8am. At 4:30 am the cry of a wet nine-month old wakes you up. You get up half asleep still rehearsing your points in your head as you stagger to the room to console your little darling. An hour passes by and you find yourself asleep in the rocker still holding your baby in your arms and realize that in just another hour and half your other life takes over... You rush to get out of bed and get ready for your day as the older sibling wakes up asking for breakfast. Your husband and you begin to organize pick ups and drop offs as you both check your daily planners to see where in your day filled with meetings and clients you can fit in your family...and so it begins, the world of a working mom.

The role of mothers has drastically changed since the era of *Leave it to Beaver* or *My Three Sons*, women today more and more are carrying the role of provider as well as nurturer. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women will make up about 48% of the workforce by 2008 (1999-2000). Women in the new millennium are facing struggles that their counterparts from the past wouldn't have imagined: from finding decent day care, to choosing family over career, and working vs. staying at home. There are different pressures experienced regardless of which role is chosen. On the one hand, there are those women who choose to stay at home and become the primary caretaker focusing on child rearing and on the other side are those women who choose to return to work focusing on maintaining their independence as well as a family's financial stability. Either choice is demanding, complicated and overall draining for any woman who has had to make that choice.

The family system and all its' members then play a big role in how women perceive and are perceived by people around them regarding which role they choose to take, namely, working mom or stay at home mom. Partners, parents, siblings, friends, employers and others outside the family system formulate opinions, pass judgment and/or offer suggestions as to how working mothers should function. Unfortunately, society through media and magazines continue to perpetuate the idea that working mothers can and are expected to be super moms, that is, have the ability to handle and maintain work and family roles without disruption to either system. Working mothers are still juggling multiple roles and trying to find time to please everyone. In today's society childbirth and motherhood are considered choices and, therefore, when a woman chooses to have both (children and employment), the conflict surrounding how to manage that role and continue existing in her other roles such as wife, daughter, sister, lover, worker, homemaker, hostess, become difficult and sometimes overwhelming. (Douglas & Michaels, 2004)

Systemically, society wants to believe in the ideal world of super mom and that most working mothers want to strive to be at the top of the ladder of success. It has become a standard of what society defines as being a good working mom, which is being able to handle all of the multiple roles and be good at that all the time. That socially defined role-satisfaction continues and each working mother internalizes that goal; it's instinctual to want to be the best caretaker to all of those people that are important in a working mother's life. However, what a working mother faces is the reality that it's not that easy and managing all of the overlapping systems is difficult. All one has to do is look at the increase of drug use in women specifically working mothers (SAMHSA, 2004) as well as the ongoing issue of child abuse and neglect, and one can see that this idealistic world working mothers strive to achieve is just that an abstract notion.

Background/Rationale

In the book The Good War (Terkel, 1984), the author describes the real life experiences of women who were transformed from housewife to worker as a result of World War II. For the first time since the Civil War, many households were left without a male provider and women were thrust into the role of working outside the home. Women began working in factories as well as in medicine. However, at the war's end in 1945, working women were forced to give up their jobs and return to their roles as housewives. Many women felt disenfranchised feeling that they had contributed so much during the absence of their male counterparts that many were left disconnected and struggling with their new roles. As the years passed women returned to their more traditional societal roles and the emergence of the "Leave it to Beaver" personas emerged. However as with any societal trend a tumultuous turn of events happened and it was called the 60's. The 60's brought to an end the traditional view of conformity and lifestyles. With the Vietnam War brewing, racial discontent and inequality was challenged, women took part in transforming their consciousness during a revolutionary decade. (Bloom & Breines, 1995). It was the time wherein the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) that was passed in the 1920's was revised and the Equal Pay Act introduced and protected women in the workforce. The women's movement also saw the creation of NOW (National Organization for Women). Its primary focus was on protecting the newly introduced women's bill of rights which included the Equal Rights Constitutional Amendment, Maternity Leave Rights and the creation of Child Care Centers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006)

The 60's thrust women into a spiraling chain of events that would define and redefine a woman's place in today's society [See Table 1]. Considering the timeline of events, women's history is relatively new and as a result the major changes working mothers have had to

encounter take on an even slower adjustment period. Balancing home life and work is presently a big concern for many working mothers. With so much history behind them and with so much adjustment ahead, women today are finding themselves stuck in a tug-of-war between what is expected of them as a society, that is “to do it all”, with what they’re faced with on a daily basis.

Being a working mother in the new millennium is a challenging and very frequently a frustrating and overwhelming experience. According to the 2000 US Census Bureau the percentage of working mothers was 55%, a slight decline from the average rate of 60% in the 60’s. However, the steady growth of working mothers does reflect the ever increasing rise in dual earner households. So this leads to some interesting questions: Is something working for these working mothers? How have working mothers been able to exist within the socially defined idea of supermom? What or whom allows them the flexibility, the determination and the wherewithal to succeed?

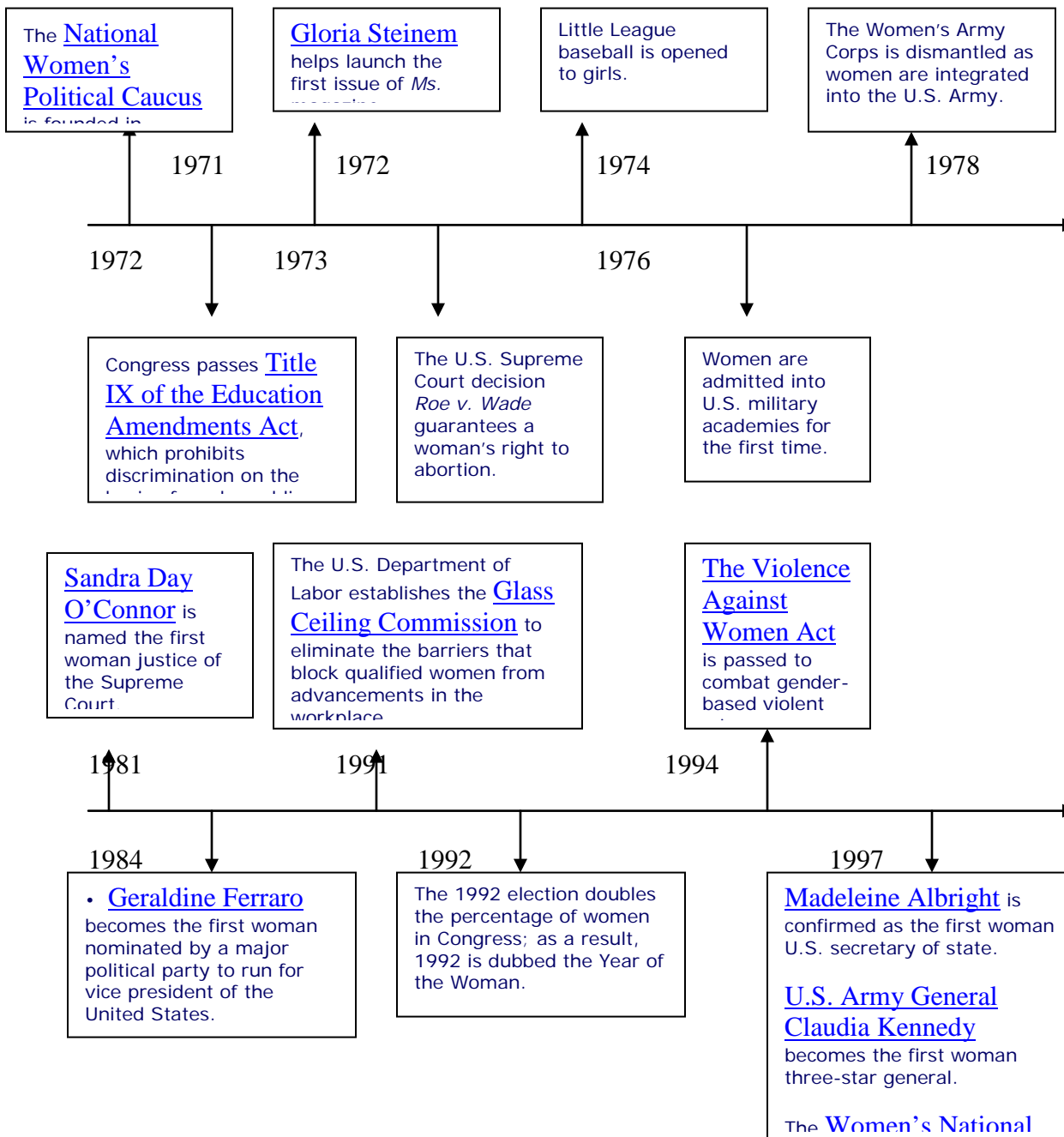
Statement of the Problem

Working mothers need support in order to manage and adjust to their multiple roles. With the perception that a working mother can and should be able to balance home and career, the question becomes, how do working mothers feel about juggling multiple responsibilities within their various roles and how are they doing it? With the advent of the newly liberated woman, studies have focused on the effects of such liberation on family life, child development, drug use, abuse and other tertiary effects of women’s choices.

Table 1

Women's Timeline

1970-1990s



Note: From "Women of the Century: Decade by Decade" (2006). Discovery Education. Retrieved on September 10, 2006 from <http://school.discovery.com/schooladventures/womenofthecentury/decadebydecade/1990s.html>. Adapted with permission from the site.

Returning to work

With regard to returning to work, research has focused on the effects those choices have had on the family structure, marital satisfaction, divorce rates, and child rearing (Love, 1996; Barker, K, 1990; Osofsky-Howard, J., 1985; Watkins, D., 1983; Feldman, R., Sussman, A., Zigler, E.;2004, Demo, D., 1996; Shapiro, A., 2005; Belsky, J., Rovine, M., 1990, Burkett, L., 1977, Pistrang, N., 1985; Fuchs, R.,1971). The problem that has yet to be investigated is within the realm of the working mother. How are working mothers managing and adjusting to their newly formed family system, their work system and their community system? In what respects do these systems affect how a working mother handles both work and family and what or who within these systems helps buffer the transition into motherhood? There is a gap in the research when it comes to investigating the working mother and the level of adjustment within their family, working and community roles (Schneider & Waite, 2005).

Societal Discourses

Traditional views on motherhood and the role of mother's has been one ingrained in our society. The messages that women hear from childhood is one of needing to be taken care of and looking for a provider. Much emphasis has been placed in ensuring that roles remain consistent from the colors we choose to differentiate the sexes (blue v. pink) to the toys we encourage our daughters to play with (trucks vs. doll) (Bennet, 2007). In this dominating discourse, the mother's voice remains one that is "better seen not hear". With the advent of the women's movement, the female voice gained more presence but still lacked power (Bennet, 2007). Interacting within this realm is challenging and at times contradictory to how women function within it.

More contemporary ideas regarding discourse allows women to embrace their voices and find ways in which to relate and give meaning to the different roles women embody. Kathy Weingarten describes this sense of ownership, “the mother’s voice” (1994). In essence giving onus to the ability for a women to become comfortable with being both a woman and a mother and not feeling guilty of wanting to celebrate those experiences. This discourse follows the idea that meaning is made through relationships and it is through these relationships that one can find organization and identity (Drewery, & Winslade, 1997). Therefore dominant power relationships suggest that roles should be clearly defined however, everyday interactions suggest something different. It is then worth investigating that shift a little more intently.

Purpose of the Study

This study proposed to evaluate the influence of the strength of the parental alliance on working mother’s adjustment to their family, work and community roles. Understanding the level of the parental alliance on a working mother’s social adjustment to her family, work and community generated some information on the impact of spousal support on a family system. Additionally, a more in depth understanding of the role that spousal support had on a working mother’s ability to adjust to her family, work and community roles provided clinicians and para-professionals with information on systems dynamics and the influences that affect a family unit. It also provided information regarding role conflict in order to supply professionals with more insight into working mothers and families adjustment to cycles of change within a family system. Furthermore, it offered information on other areas of heightened stress or maladjustment in order to prevent further decompensation or even crisis within an individual or family system at the time of adjustment to the birth of a child.

This research attempted to explore and answer the research questions in the hope of gaining a deeper understanding of the emotional juggling women face when deciding to start a family. It further advanced the marriage, couple, family counseling field in the areas of prenatal education, pregnancy as well as mental health services in the areas of pre-marital counseling, marital/couples counseling, women/gender studies, adoption, post-partum adjustment and family therapy. It helped mental health professionals gain a deeper understanding of mother's and the experience of motherhood by gaining a clearer perspective from the individual's viewpoint.

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between parental alliance and a woman's ability to handle multiple roles?
2. Is the type of support received more predictive of how a woman adjusts and performs in her other roles?

Research Hypothesis

The following were the hypotheses generated to examine the relationships between parental alliance and social adjustment on a working mother.

Null Hypothesis #1: There will be no difference in the level of parental alliance and the level of social adjustment in a working mother's other roles

Alternate Hypothesis #1: Working mothers who report having a high level of parental alliance will report having a greater degree of social adjustment in other roles

Null Hypothesis #2: There will be no difference in the scores of a working mother's parental performance and the level of parental alliance.

Alternate Hypothesis #2: Mothers who report lower scores in the area of performance within their parental role will report having lower levels of parental alliance

Null Hypothesis #3: There will be no difference in the level of social adjustment in working mother's parental roles and their level of social adjustment in other roles.

Alternate Hypothesis #3: Mothers who report a high level of social adjustment in their parental roles will also report a high level of social adjustment in other roles?

Theoretical Framework

Systemic theory looks at individuals holistically. Therefore, viewing a group of individuals within a certain context must be examined from multiple levels. Within each level, lie influences that affect and change the system being explored. Adhering to a systemic philosophy, human interaction is viewed as only a small part of a bigger system that includes family, peers and the larger society in which individuals experience the world. Systemic philosophy allows individuals to interact and assimilate to their environment through interpersonal interactions. In other words, systemic philosophy believes that although individuals are unique in how they function, the only way to understand ones' unique perspective is to take a "birds-eye view" of how the individual experiences their interactions within its' system.

Systemic philosophy revolves around the assumption that all truth is made up of individual stories of people's experiences within the systemic world. Rosenau (1992) sees individuals as active participants within their realm of experience and, therefore, believes that meaning and interpersonal relationships mark the essence of existence - "meaning does not inhere in a text; it resides in the interaction between text and reader" (p.25). Systemic philosophers are more concerned with interpretations and attempt to avoid judgment when assessing human experience.

Systemic ideologies regard individual reality as a compilation of experiences encountered in one's environment.

Theorists have been debating how individuals adapt and become functioning adults for centuries (Keeney, 1983, Gergen 1986, Ewen, 1998). George Kelly (1955) postulated that individual's develop personal constructs that guide healthy development. His focus was primarily on helping people overcome problems with their interpersonal relationships without giving much importance or relevance to motivation, reinforcement, emotions, unconscious needs or drives. He believed that humans experience the world much like research scientists. They make up their own theories about the environment, test their hypotheses against reality and then depending on their conclusions, retain or revise their ideologies by how correctly they interpret their experiences, "I propose that every man is, in his own particular way, a scientist" (Kelly 1970, 7-8). He described eleven corollaries that clarify and elaborate upon the nature of personal constructs. Some of these corollaries include individuality, organization, choice, experience and sociality. All of them help individuals develop their personality by the way they interact, interpret and conclude their experiences with the environment around them. He concluded that personality development must be seen in the context of time or temporal orientation (Kelly, 1955).

Carl Rogers (1974), like most of the other theorists, agreed that parenting and parental standards have an enormous impact on the development of personality. Accordingly, he valued the idea of unconditional positive regard as the ideal environment for healthy personality development. It is a state of total self-acceptance received from significant others especially parents. Although he emphasized the importance of such a concept, Rogers did not believe the idea was very realistic. He believed that self-acceptance was something individuals strive for all

their lives but felt that parents and significant others had a hard time reciprocating it (Ewen 1998). This single positive force is called the self-actualizing tendency. Under ideal conditions the actualizing tendency can construct a healthy path to development in any stage of an individual's life. His main focus was on the fact that people search and need warmth, respect and acceptance from other "significant" people. This constant need is called positive regard. Only a continuous supply of positive regard can enhance our healthy potentials to develop positive qualities and skills to overcome our problems. This inherent need for connection with other people leads individuals to develop a secondary and necessary want coined "positive self-regard". This learned need evolves from an individual's constant interaction with others in the environment. Similar to Freud's introjection, how one perceives and interprets the interplay between what significant others think of us strongly influences how we come to regard ourselves (Rogers, 1959).

Like Kelly, Rogers (1986) saw healthy development as a process that occurs within the individual. Included in this process is the important concept of experience. Experience includes everything that is available to an individual's awareness at any given moment. For Rogers, understanding a person's development can only happen if one can take an individual's experience and understand where that person is at the moment they are adjusting to or confronting any difficulty.

Change theory suggests that before an individual can fully adapt to a shift in their environment they must learn to do something slightly different in order to effectively immerse themselves into the new phase of development. Change is generally seen as something negative and as creatures of habit people resist change and remain, whether good or bad, in a state of *status quo*. Family theorists postulate that any change within a system causes changes in the

entire functioning of that system. First order change is described as a change that affects a certain aspect of a system but does not alter the entire flow of its functionality. People simplify their problems or do “more of the same” and describe it as change; however, these manifestations of attempted solutions are mere masks used to maintain the comfortable balance within the system. Genuine change, called second order change, is described as having an effect on the entire system in its direction and flow (Watzlawick & Weakland, 1974). Second order change transforms the system into a different yet same functional unit that now has learned to adapt, shift and resolve situations by reframing how they affect and guide the flow of relationships. Families move through stages in the development of a lifespan, many adapt and transition through each phase with few disruptions.

Taking change theory into consideration within the context of this study reflects the processes mothers go through when thrust into the family life cycle of parenting. The concept of positive regard or support has an effect on whether a system effectively transitions through the change cycle. Becoming a parent is one such change and having support is essential in how individuals acculturate and embrace that identity. Therefore this study will include a multi-level examination of several influences regarding social adjustment, parental alliance, family cohesion, individual differences and experience as it relates to working mothers and their parental role.

Delineation of the Problem

Many studies have been conducted in the area of parenting and women’s roles. Studies regarding the effects of returning to work versus staying at home on children’s development (Love, 1996; Barker, K, 1990; Osofsky-Howard, J., 1985; Watkins, D., 1983; Feldman, R., Sussman, A., Zigler, E.;2004), on the marital relationship and conflict (Demo, D., 1996; Shapiro,

A., 2005; Belsky, J., Rovine, M., 1990); and yet others examined the choice of returning to work on a woman's ability to care for her children or marital relationship (Burkett, L., 1977, Pistrang, N., 1985; Fuchs, R., 1971; US Dept. of Labor, 1996). There is a gap in the research when it comes to focusing on the working mothers' perception of the influences and effects having children and maintaining employment have on their individual identities as it relates to their ability to function in their multiple roles. Past studies have viewed motherhood through the effects that role has on the structure of the family (Barling, 1990; Barnett, & Marshal, 1992). The present study purported to investigate how women perceive themselves in their other roles as well as explore the factors that allow them the ability to manage and adjust to their many identities. Finally, it examined how functional this balancing act is on their overall psychological well-being.

Limitations of the Study

- This study's primary population was working mothers. It did not take into account those mothers that choose to stay at home.
- This study focused on the co-parenting relationship as a main focus of discussion as it relates to the working mothers ability to manage or not manage her multiple roles.
- The population was heterosexual to minimize extraneous factors that could have affected parenting and role adjustment
- This study explored families that have children under the age of 5 in order to gain information regarding mothers who work outside the home.

Definitions of Terms

Parental Alliance as described by Weissman and Cohen (1985) is the part of the marital relationship that is concerned with parenthood and child rearing. A sound parenting alliance

is established if each parent “(a) is invested in the child, (b) values the other parent’s involvement with the child, (c) respects the judgments of the other parent, and (d) desires to communicate with the other parent” (Konold & Aibidin2001).

Co-Parents as defined by the 11th judicial circuit court are two individuals that share a child in common who share the responsibility of the raising and caring of their child/ren.

Social Adjustment is defined as the interplay between the individual and the social environment (Platt, 1981; Weissman & Paykel, 1974). The three elements of the interplay of the individual and the environment that were examined were: 1) role performance, 2) maintenance of social relationships and 3) satisfaction in role. The authors of the instrument refer to these elements as social adjustment. Other researchers have referred to it as functioning and functioning is the interpretation that was used for this study.

Positive Regard or support as defined by Carl Rogers(1974) is a state of total self-acceptance received from significant others.

Change is a process of alteration and adaptability within an individual’s bio-psychosocial environment.

Working Mother’s was defined as mother’s who are paid employees working outside of the home, working 40 + hours.

Significance of the Study

This study evaluated a woman’s ability to maintain employment while at the same time adjusting to her new role as mother. It purported to explore the factors that enable working mothers to keep the supermom myth alive. It analyzed how working mothers adapt to their multiple roles and investigated which areas allowed them the most flexibility to juggle work life and parental life.

This research enhanced the field of marriage and family therapy by exploring the world of working mothers. It lent itself to uncover multiple layers of systemic relationships that cater to a woman's ability, or lack thereof, of handling multiple roles. It gave clinicians a deeper understanding of the individual changes that transpire within a woman's environment when transitioning into a new role specifically a parenting role and highlighted the powerful effect of support within a family's systemic world view. It offered an opportunity to learn more about areas of conflict and/or pathology during a stressful life cycle transition within a family or individual's existence.

It enhanced case conceptualizations within a therapeutic relationship and gave professionals an opportunity to approach treatment in various modalities. By understanding how systemic theory, personality development, and change theory encompasses a system's functioning, mental health professionals will be able to improve and heighten their therapeutic lens when working with women and/or couples transitioning into parenthood.

Summary

In contrast to other research that focus on the effects of a mother's working role on other individuals within the family system, this study investigated how outside influences such as support, work, social relationships, parenting, and marriage affects a woman's internal system of personal reference. A sample of working mothers with children under the age of 5 was studied on the level of their parenting alliance and the degree of social adjustment to their family, work and community roles. Participants were asked to complete questionnaires that focused on their parental alliance and social adjustment as defined as functioning.

The focus on a working mother's degree of social adjustment and level of parental alliance highlighted the importance and influence of support on a mother's ability to manage

multiple roles and maintain a sense of balance within the family system. A review of the research regarding social support, transitions to parenthood and other empirical literature follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

Carter and McGoldrick (1989) contend that: “The changing role of women in families is central in the shifting family life cycle patterns...Given their pivotal role in the family and their difficulty in establishing concurrent functions outside the family, it is perhaps not surprising that women have been the most prone to symptom development at life cycle transitions” (p. 11). A review of the literature on working mothers and their level of social adjustment within their family, work and community roles will cover the theoretical traditions of change theory and Carl Rogers’ positive regard as well as an empirical review of the literature on parenting, working mothers, role conflict, and social adjustment will be discussed. This review will formulate the development of the study regarding the influence of the strength of the parental alliance on a working mother’s social domains (family, work and community roles).

Systemic Theory

Systemic theory states that individuals can only be understood within the social context in which they exist. This theory emerged in the 50’s and 60’s from General Systems Theory developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and used in biology and Cybernetics used in computer science (Prochaska & Norcross 1999). Foremost proponents of systemic applications to family therapy include Virginia Satir from the Palo Alto group, Jay Haley from MRI modality and Salvador Minuchin the father of Structural Therapy. These pioneers directed systemic theory into clinical practice where a system is seen not only through the individual members but also as a “whole” process of interrelated relationships, boundaries, hierarchy and functionality. It is embedded in the social construction idea that human beings are active participants in their

environment and therefore affect and are affected by the interactions they experience within it. Systemic theory also looks at how a family or subsystem maintains its' balance and how it controls for stabilizing factors and primarily assesses how the family unit handles disruptions or variations to the homeostatic state (Boston & Cottrell, 2002).

Systemic theory and therapies have been used in a variety of settings from investigating the effectiveness of systems modalities on the treatment of eating disorders (Bride, Cohen, & Simpson, 2004) to exploring systemic theory with depressive patients (Priebe & Pommerien, 1992). Systems theory has also been used to study childhood autism in utilizing a structured systemic approach to helping autistic children with their behavior (O'Brady, 1978). Systemic theory has also influenced the development of assessment tools for the clinical field (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983). The present research focused on the theoretical emphasis of systemic interrelatedness of working mothers and their social adjustment to their community, family and work roles. It followed the systemic tradition by looking at the overall functionality of the family unit and how it handled the disruption of work to a working mothers' social adjustment.

Change Theory

Out of the systemic realm emerged the concept of Change theory; the idea that individuals go through systemic patterns of problem formation and problem resolutions before achieving actual integration of behavior or emotional changes. The theory was developed out of the Brief Therapy Center of MRI (Mental Research Institute) group in Palo Alto, California. Paul Watzlawick and John Weakland (1974) formulated their theory of change by drawing from the mathematical world theories of group and logical types (Russell, 1992). In the simplest explanation, they postulated that all members of a family unit exist in a group, meaning they share common elements (group theory). However, although there are similarities each member

has unique elements, (theory of logical types). The theory states in the simplest definition that each logical type (A, B) is unique and individualistic and is not interchangeable. Each logical type exists by itself and is interrelated or exists in relationship to another type. Russell strived to emphasize that communication and words are essential elements to understanding how to interpret and relate to different types (1992). Therefore, in order to view the relationships between members one must take into account its group and its individual identities (Watzlawick, & Weakland, 1974).

Then in understanding and conceptualizing change within that logic, change process is assessed by exploring a system's persistence in adapting to situations and the level of change it utilizes to transition through to a new outcome. Those levels are considered first and second order change. As previously described in Chapter 1, first order change is defined as a change that affects a certain aspect of a system but does not alter the entire flow of its functionality. People simplify their problems or do "more of the same" and describe it as change; however, these manifestations of attempted solutions are mere masks used to maintain the comfortable balance within the system. Genuine change, called second order change is described as having an effect on the entire system in its direction and flow (Watzlawick & Weakland, 1974). Second order change transforms the system into a different yet same functional unit that now has learned to adapt, shift and resolve situations by reframing how they affect and guide the flow of relationships. Change theory has been utilized in the areas of organizational change processes (Tan, 2006) as well as in the areas of addiction and assessment (Prochaska, Di Clemente, & Norcross, 1992). The present study attempted to evaluate change through motherhood and how it disrupted and/or influenced the parental alliance within a family dyad. In addition, this study

utilized change theory to understand how that disruption or “change” influenced how a working mother adjusts to her family, community and work roles.

Positive Regard

Carl Rogers the originator of client-centered therapy coined the term, positive regard to define the ability of one person to unconditionally give support and understanding without judgment or opinion (Rogers, 1986). It is a key element in his theory of personal development. Rogers believed in an individual’s potential to grow and overcome obstacles with consistent and non-directive support and understanding. He took a non-directive approach to therapy and believed that people, given support, are capable of self-directed growth. He took his basic assumption of trustworthiness and began working with children and throughout his years refined his theory to include education, psychotherapeutic processes and individual change theory. His influence in the systemic world brought about therapeutic ideas of power and control, surrender and relationships. By the 1970’s, Roger’s theory became known as the person-centered approach and introduced a view of human beings as ever-growing and able to develop in a positive and constructive manner when respect and trust are reciprocated (Corey, 1991).

Rogers (1957) conducted several studies to assess his theory. He looked at how empathy affected a couples’ understanding and communication patterns. He also studied therapist-client relationships and asked clients to rate the level of positive regard they received from their therapists (Rogers, 1956). His focus on empathy and positive regard helped influence the development of tools that could operationally define those constructs. For example, the Barrett-Leonard Relationship Inventory for couples, which defines empathy through patterns of behavior, allows them to identify empathy in their partners. This Inventory was developed from person-centered theory and became a widely used instrument in the medical field as an education

and training tool (Powell & Wampler, 1982). Recent updates (Sanders & Wyatt, 2002) on Carl Rogers and his constructs of positive regard and empathy suggest that researchers and practitioners continue to discount the importance and significance of “connection” and “perception” within a relationship and emphasize the need to pay more attention to how these two ideas affect any relationship whether therapeutic or not. The present study focused on Carl Roger’s positive regard and how that notion influenced a working mother’s social adjustment through the strength of the parental alliance. It proposed to evaluate the influence of the strength of the parental alliance through understanding the level of respect and communication within a family dyad.

Empirical Review

Research in the transition to parenthood is a very commonly studied life cycle pattern. Studies have focused on the effects parenthood has had on the family life cycle as well as marital satisfaction and stress (Michaels, & Goldberg 1988; Cowan & Hetherington 1991; Cox & Paley, 1997). A bulk of research investigated how the effects of the transition to parenthood affected the stress level between the couple and the effects of that stress on the children (Hobbs & Cole 1976; LeMasters, 1957; Russell, 1974). As researchers began to assimilate parenting with multilayered effects on the family life cycle, a shift in the research began to take place. Soon the focus became more narrowly geared towards how the transition to parenthood affected the dyadic relationship in various forms between the couple and between parent and child. Researchers found a decline in marital satisfaction and an increase in child problem behaviors across the transitional phase to parenthood (Belsky, Lang & Rovine, 1985; Miller & Sollie 1980; & Cowan, Cowan, Heming, Garrett, Coysh, Curtis-Boles, & Boles, 1985).

The focus shifted to assessing how this new relational system affected children's behaviors and role balance (Kalmuss, Davidson & Cushman 1992; Cowan & Cowan, 1989; Fauchier & Margolin, 2004). The fine-tuning that has been achieved through the rigors of past research on the transition to parenthood has given this area a conceptual clarity that has enhanced the marital therapy field. Studies take into account the effects change has on a family system and accounts for it in areas of stress, depression and self-esteem (Thoits, 1992 & Verbrugge, 1986). While certainly change within a transitional life cycle is relevant in studying the effects it has on the dyadic relationship, the conceptual frameworks of marriage, children and its influences need to be applied to other facets of the transition as well. In the present study, past research was reviewed in order to gain an understanding of how research has progressed and introduced the area of the role of the strength of the parental alliance on working mothers' social adjustment to their family, work and community roles.

Parenting Literature

Researchers view families as a system that is ever changing and adjusting depending on the interrelationships it encounters as it continues to evolve. The literature views parenthood as one of those transitions and studies have reflected how that transition affects different aspects of the family system (Bailey, 1999; Harrop, & Moss, 1995). One study looked at parenthood as a time of crisis within a marital relationship. Hobbs (1965) replicated previous work that investigated the transition middle-class couples go through with the birth of their first child and how the stress felt within that transition resulted in a crisis state that lead to discord, role conflict and dissatisfaction with the marriage. The investigator wanted to assess first time parent's adjustment to parenthood. Participants were scored on a 23-item index that measured the extent of crisis associated with the birth of the first child. Hobbs (1965) wanted to test previous

theoretical findings, which suggested that a third party very frequently is disruptive to a dyadic relationship (Weise & Becker 1932). Findings suggested that participants had a difficult time assessing the transition into parenthood as a crisis. Couples viewed the transition as more of an adjustment than a crisis. This implies that although the transition is found to be stressful, couples adjust. Although this an older study, it remains significant in its findings and worth reviewing as it reflects the progression of the research as well as formulates the basis of more recent and current theories of parenting and marital adjustment. Studies have evaluated how major life events affect stress management (Coyne, Kanner, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1980); the transitions families go through once children are born (Cowan & Hetherington, 1991) and the effects of parenthood on gender and division of labor (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997).

Kalmuss, Davidson & Cushman (1992) studied a sample of married, first time, middle-class mothers on their parenting expectations, experiences, and adjustment to parenthood. The investigators were looking to assess whether or not a women's expectations matched their experiences through the transition into parenthood. Participants were given tools that measured their perceived adjustment to parenthood and measured expectations and experiences across six domains, relationship with spouse, relationship with extended family, relationship with friends, physical well-being, financial well-being and desire to work at a job for pay. When describing transition to parenthood, researchers found that the amount of social support negatively impacted how a woman perceives her identity as a mother. This study focused on the perceptions women held prior to becoming a parent and then again one year after birth. The study suggests that women's perception about support, stress, and maternal satisfaction change most often depending on how high their level of expectation was prior to becoming a parent. Although

significant in assessing the domains in which a woman's perception changes in the transition to parenthood, it did not assess a woman's adjustment or sense of satisfaction in other roles.

Belsky and Rovine (1990) looked into assessing marital change across the transition to parenthood by examining spouse's experiences of their mate and marital relationship through three years postpartum. The researchers wanted to assess how the marriage patterns changed depending on how the spouses experienced the transition into parenthood. They assessed four distinct patterns of marital change, accelerating decline, linear decline, no change, and modest positive increase. What they found was that spouse's reported a decline in feelings of love, an increase in ambivalence regarding the marriage and a decrease in communication. The investigators wanted to gauge how patterns within the marital relationship changed after transitioning into parenthood and found that more could be achieved by viewing individual differences within the marital relationship. This study is significant in that it supports the notion that one can gain more information from viewing the system as a whole by focusing on how its individual members affect a pattern of behavior rather than generalizing trends to the entire system.

Some other evidence suggested that the level of difficulty in transitioning into parenthood varied among couples and proposed that in order to gain a better understanding of that transition, researchers assessed a couple's level of role strain on their overall communication and marital satisfaction (Steffensmeier, 1982). The investigator concluded that parenthood is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be broken down into three components: parental responsibilities/restrictions, gratifications and marital intimacy, and stability. Steffensmeier (1982) found that each couple varied in the level at which all three components related to each other and therefore concluded that each component should be looked at separately as it relates to

each member individually; and in that way an overall picture of the transitional relationship can be explored.

Little support or evidence was found within the realm of transitioning and marriage literature that clearly delineated the role of the individual member within the transitional roles. Most research viewed the transition through the couple (Gottman, 1994; Hudson & Murphy, 1980; Tucker & Aron, 1993) or investigated the effects of that transition on behaviors such as marital quality and parent child interactions or effects of parent child relationships on children's adjustment (Fauchier & Margolin 2004; Burman, John, & Margolin 1987; Brody, Pellegrini, & Sigei 1986). Overall, the research seems to suggest that the transition into parenthood can put a strain on all members of the family dynamic and those processes that enable an individual to adjust and cope with it vary.

Literature Regarding Working Mothers

According to Slife and Williams (1995), humanistic theory is developed around the idea that a person's innate potentials have an incredible influence over an individual's behavior and needs. Therefore "healthiness" is based on how well one has been able to satisfy their needs and reach self-actualization. As discussed in Chapter 1, personality development is a construct that is defined by compiling all aspects of an individual's surroundings. Incorporated within this development is a sense of how one sees themselves within their identified roles. Studies have explored how working mothers experience motherhood and others have investigated how work affects the family and a working mother's role (Pistrang, 1984; Wilkie, 1981). The substantial literature on maternal employment has rested mostly on how working mothers' employment affects the children and marriage (Harvey 1999, Hoffman & Nye 1974; Oakley 1980).

Some studies looked at working mothers and their social adjustment (Jimenez, 1978), exploring their motherhood experiences as being either positive or negative. Researchers concluded that working mothers tend to adjust better to their mothering role than non-working mothers.

Pistrang's (1984) study explained the transition to parenthood through the degree to which a working mother felt connected to her job. The hypothesis suggested that women who were highly involved at work would rate returning to work as positive as opposed to those women who were not so involved at work. This study suggested that looking at the type of employment a working mother has is significant in understanding how she will adjust to her family, work and community roles.

Another important factor found in the literature takes into account the amount of time between when a working mother gives birth and returns to work. Studies suggested that the timeframe of returning to work affects a women's level of satisfaction in her marriage and child rearing abilities (Kenzelmann, 1992; Sipe, 1991; Splonskowski & Twiss, 1995). Working mothers were assessed at different time frames. One study measured woman's satisfaction with their mothering roles at six weeks postpartum or within the first year of birth. Many looked at variables such as stress, marital satisfaction and depression (Hadadian & Merbler, 1996). Yet others explored the working mother and the effect of maternal attachment to assess whether returning to work affected a woman's ability to develop a healthy attachment with their child/ren. Jarvis and Creasey (1991) concluded that parenting stress significantly affected mother and child attachment and differentiated psychological separation from physical separation as a strong source of perceived stress by parents. The study indicated that returning to work has a big impact on the overall adjustment of all members of a family but appears to significantly manifest itself through the mother's ability to balance both roles.

Other's looked at how a mother's identity is silenced or minimized by the dominant societal pressures by focusing on deconstructing their identities (Weingarten, 1994). By demystifying the held belief of good vs. bad mothering, Weingarten highlighted themes that have had generational impact on how mothers view themselves and how society views their functionality. Leslie Bennet the author of a book entitled, "The Feminine Mistake" (2007) challenged the long held ideology of her predecessor, Betty Freidan's "The Feminine Mystique" (1963) wherein women were told that there was a "problem with no name" that women needed to fight against to liberate themselves and become strong in their resolve to become individualized. The Feminine mystique gave rise to the feminist movement with Betty Friedman at its helm. Bennett's chose to challenge that all for nothing attitude to question whether women had taken on too much and suggested finding a balance in functioning in multiple roles. The emphasis was on understanding the struggle working mother's go through when making the difficult decision to stay at home or return to work. The more recent literature suggests that understanding the effects of finding a balance and how to manage multiple roles is a growing area of interest within society today.

Role Conflict

Systems theory is based on changes within a family structure. It bases its foundation on the idea that a change in one part of the system will produce a change in another part. In addition, systemic thought holds the notion that a small change can lead to a larger change. In other words, a small difference in a family's functioning can cause a bigger systemic change to the entire family unit. In systems theory, families are open-systems - they (family) receive energy from the environment by interacting with it (Cummings & Graham, 2002). With this energy the family system builds new structures and avoids chaos or disorganization, meaning, it constantly needs

to rebuild its infrastructure to maintain emotional, physical and psychological equilibrium. In this context, parenting can be seen as a time of disequilibrium within a family's system and a time when a family needs the infrastructure to adjust and incorporate within the new changes that have occurred in order for any transition to be successful.

The research suggests the same notion when discussing parenting and the role balance that occurs within families. Earlier research (Brannen & Moss, 1988; Garey, 1999) suggested that working mother's face inter-role conflict due to the fact that their roles operate simultaneously rather than sequentially. In other words, mothers wear a multitude of hats on a daily basis and struggle to maintain a sense of balance more so than their men counterparts. Hall (1972) proposed that although both sexes battle with intra-role conflicts, functioning responsibilities within a specific role, women tend to report higher levels of anxiety and role strain due to the competing demands of multiple roles. This idea influenced a rising interest in the area of role balance and role conflict within dual-earner households. Studies began looking at how role strain effected marital functioning, through evidence or lack thereof of communication, satisfaction and intimacy (Suchet & Barling, 1986).

One study looked at the effects of work spill-over into family relationships specifically, the parent-child relationship, the marital relationship, leisure activities and the home management role (Small & Riley, 1990). The investigators wanted to measure how much work strain had on the psychological well being of the family members. They concluded that when work spill-over affected one role context, it was perceived to affect any other role in approximately equal amounts. Although significant in addressing the psychological impact on the relationships within a family, it failed to generalize to other populations, focusing primarily on executives with spouses and children.

A consistent theme among all the research (Cummings & Graham, 2002; Small & Riley, 1990) is that multiple roles have a potential to increase stress in individuals. Some studies explored the concept of role strain through looking at patterns of commitment between men and women, and work and parenting (O'Neil & Greenberger, 1994). Here the investigators wanted to look at whether the type of occupation parents had, that is high-demand or low-demand, disposed men and women to greater or lesser levels of conflict or strain. The idea here was to view the family system through the effects of having two working parents, and analyze who would report higher or lower levels of strain. The study concluded that although role strain, a social conflict that takes place when one is forced to take on two different and sometimes incompatible roles at the same time, is experienced by both men and women, men reported higher levels of stress when it came to quality of their parenting role versus women who reported higher levels of stress when it came to the quality of both work and parenting roles.

What was interesting in this study is that the researchers also wanted to investigate how support affected role strain. What they found was that men and women varied in the type of support that decreased their level of strain. For men, the findings were not significant implicating that work support did not affect men's role strain, however, for women, supervisor support was significant. This is an interesting finding especially in the context of this present study which will explore the level of the strength of the parental alliance on a working mothers' social adjustment in family, work and community roles.

Another interesting study looked at work-family conflict and analyzed how the domains interface or not within the lives of parents (Eagle, Miles & Icenogle, 1997). The researchers theorized that work roles tend to infiltrate the family system more so than the family role intruding upon work. They analyzed the permeability of the two and discussed the pattern of

asymmetry found within genders. They studied Pleck's (1977) theory of asymmetrical permeability and gender differences which posited that women would have a greater familial influence upon their work roles than men and that men would have greater work role influences upon their families than women. What they found was that there were no gender differences in the way work influenced family or vice versa, however, there was a strong relation between the degree of influence work responsibilities had on the family. This study highlights the increasing demand on dual-income households to balance multiple responsibilities.

With such a developing trend on role balancing, research has delved into understanding how one can truly reach a level of balance within our multiple selves. Research has focused on the psychological effects role conflict and stress has on individuals (Baruch & Barnett, 1986), as well as, how balancing or the combination of roles affects a person's overall well-being (Barnett, & Marshall, 1992). Marks and Macdermid (1996) investigated this concept by defining role balance as a "tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one's total role system...with an attitude of attentiveness and care" (p. 421). The researchers explored the relationship between role balance and role ease on a person's self esteem, depression, and other underlining factors that can contribute to role strain. They hypothesized that those individuals who reported high levels of role balance would have higher levels of self-esteem and those that reported lower levels of role balance would report higher levels of depression and stress. They took two samples, one of bank workers and the other of students. What they found was that for both samples high levels of role balance exerted higher levels of self-esteem, on the contrary, some others who reported lower levels of role balance had both high and low levels of self-esteem and depression. This may be in part due to the samples used and/or other extraneous factors the researchers did not account for such as age, gender or culture.

Social Adjustment Literature

Social adjustment literature views change as a process that involves internal and external influences. Studies (Buffardi, Casper, Erdwins & O'Brien, 2001) have indicated that social adjustment carries a heavy effect on how individuals overcome situations. Social adjustment has been studied as a system in itself and the variables that affect it have been specific to areas of adjustment after family life cycle transitions, medical and/or community experiences. Studies regarding social adjustment in work roles focus on perceptions of performance in the workplace (Sato & McCann, 2006) where adjustment is seen as either autonomy or sociotropy, which is understood as the inability to socialize effectively. Other work role studies view adjustment after a sentinel event such as a traumatic incident or medical procedure (Filomena, 2002). Maternal employment has also been explored as it relates to the social adjustment of school age-children when mothers return to work and the effects that transition has on a child's academic performance and achievement (Harr, 1999).

Studies regarding social adjustment and community roles have looked at community violence and the impact on children's and family's adjustment (Schwartz & Proctor, 2000). Community researchers have studied social adjustment as it pertains to gradual step down processes after hospitalizations or as an underlining symptom of patient's presenting issues (Froland, Brodsky, Olson, & Stuart, 1979). Other studies have looked at social adjustment within relationships and work through socioeconomic levels and individual mutuality defined as the perceived interconnectedness of partners (Greer, 1998). Still other studies in social adjustment evaluate the effects of culture on how individuals adjust in work and family (Yang, 2005). Other researchers looked at the effects that social adjustment has on transitions such as parenting, child birth, mood

states and found that social support is a key element in effective change within a pattern of behavior (Cutrona, 1984; Ward, 2005; Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner & Wan, 1991).

In addition, social adjustment literature has also explored how economics affect adjustment in all populations as well as in gender differences (Boath, Pryce, & Cox, 1995; Rashmita, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002; Richman, 1984). The literature suggests that culture, employment, social networks, health and economics are variables to control for when assessing adjustment in individuals. Taking this into consideration, this study utilized instruments that assessed aspects of these areas (social & cultural) as well as sampling procedures and methodology that focused on recruitment that controlled for health, economic and employment constraints. This process minimized any confounding variables in understanding working mother's adjustment to their family, work and community roles.

Deficiencies or Gaps in the Literature

Overall the literature reflects a vast and diverse spectrum of information regarding parenting and working mothers. It presents confounding variables that may affect the ability to parent effectively or even maintain employment without sacrificing certain aspects of the family dynamic. What has not been explored enough is the area of social adjustment for working mothers in specific roles. Adjustment has been studied as a separate phenomenon that affects the functionality of an individual but even in discussions regarding the limitations of certain studies, the idea of support has been minimized (Ward, 2005). The research has not addressed the role of the strength of the parenting alliance on a working mother's role adjustment. It has not looked at the potential buffering effect having a strong parenting alliance has on the ability of a working mother to adjust to her various roles. The present study attempted to fill that gap in the literature and sharpen our understanding of the influence of the strength of the parental alliance on a

working mother's adjustment to their family, working, and community roles. The next chapter outlines how the study was conducted and the type of statistical analysis that was utilized.

Summary

Change as discussed in this chapter is a difficult transition within an individual's realm of experience. Adding the transitional change of becoming a parent adds more stress to an already complicated phase of human development. Systems theory purports that significant genuine change happens when an entire unit whether it is an individual or family accepts and evolves with minimal disruption through any phase, parenting is one such phase and disruption. Literature in the realm of parenting has shown to affect a family's functioning in areas of marital satisfaction, role conflict and mental health. This study focused on a working mother's transition through this phase by evaluating the strength of the parental alliance on how she effectively adjusts to her multiple roles. The next chapter will describe how the study recruited participants, the measures that were taken to protect confidentiality as well as the methodology for the design and instruments chosen to highlight the strength of the parental alliance and social adjustment of a working mother.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study attempted to understand how, after the birth of a child, the strength of the parental alliance affects the working mother's social adjustment in the workplace system, the community system, and the family system. There are two major theoretical propositions that underlie this framework. First, that the birth of a child is a major disruption in a mother's ability to function within her work, community and extended family roles; consequently then, a mother will experience some difficulties in re-engaging in those systems sometime after the birth. Second, the strength of the parental alliance (i.e. positive regard) will moderate the negative impact of the birth on a mother's social adjustment in her work, community and family systems. This study looked at the relationship between the strength of the parental alliance and a working mothers' social adjustment to other roles.

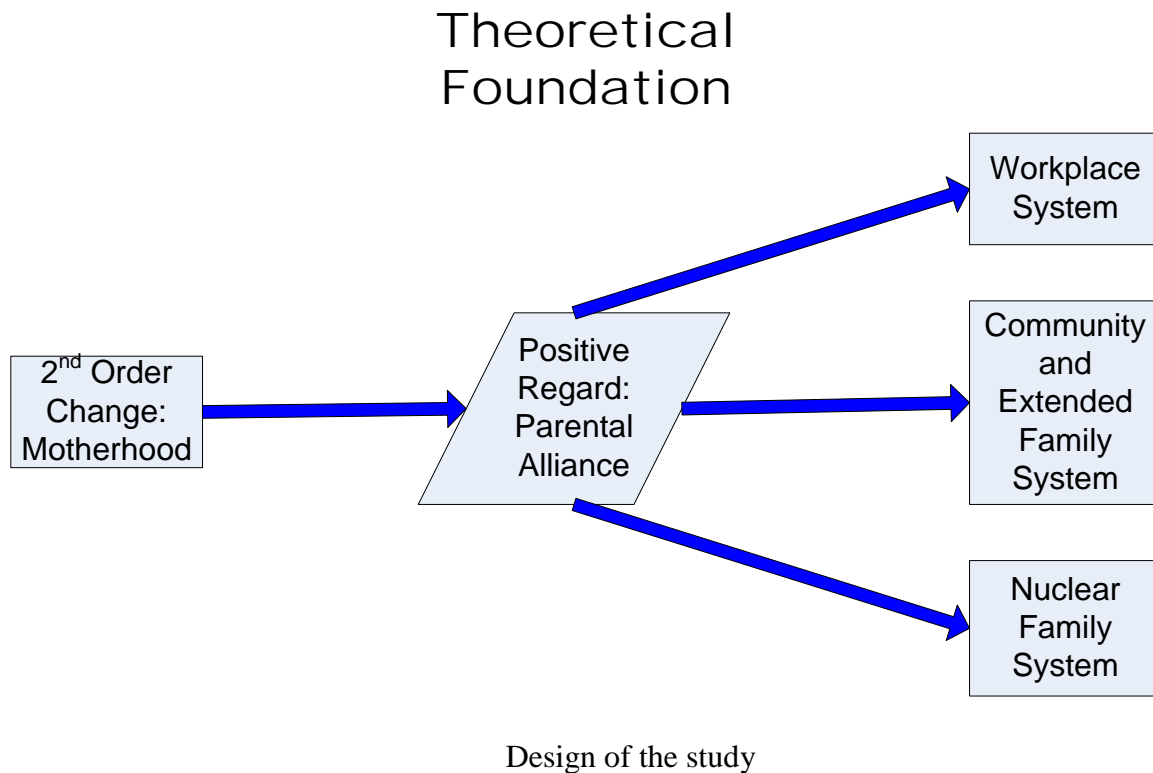
In Chapter 2 a theoretical framework was developed for conceptualizing the relationship between the parental alliance and a working mothers functioning in the workplace, community, and extended family (see Figure 1). The key elements of this framework are:

1. The transitional phase of Motherhood prompts a systemic second order change to the family system that will have an impact on a mother's other roles, e.g., workplace, community, and family roles.
2. The extent to which a mother receives positive regard through the strength of the parental alignment will moderate the negative impact of the birth on a mother's social adjustment to other roles. In other words the positive regard from the

father moderates the negative impact of the birth on the social adjustment of a working mother in other roles.

The instruments that were used were two self-administered questionnaires focusing on the strength of the parental alliance and the degree of social adjustment. A purposive sample of working mothers was chosen. A description of the design of the study, the target population, the sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and analysis is discussed.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Empirical Analysis



The study design was correlational. A correlational design was appropriate because it explored the relationships among the variables that measured the underlying theoretically related constructs. The data was utilized to obtain a correlation coefficient between 1 and -1 to show the direction of the relationship between variables. The analysis of the direction of the relationship revealed whether the variables had a positive or negative relationship and predicted the strength

of that relationship. Regression analysis was the statistical procedure utilized to investigate the relationship between the conceptual variables as operationalized through the instruments (see Table II).

Table II

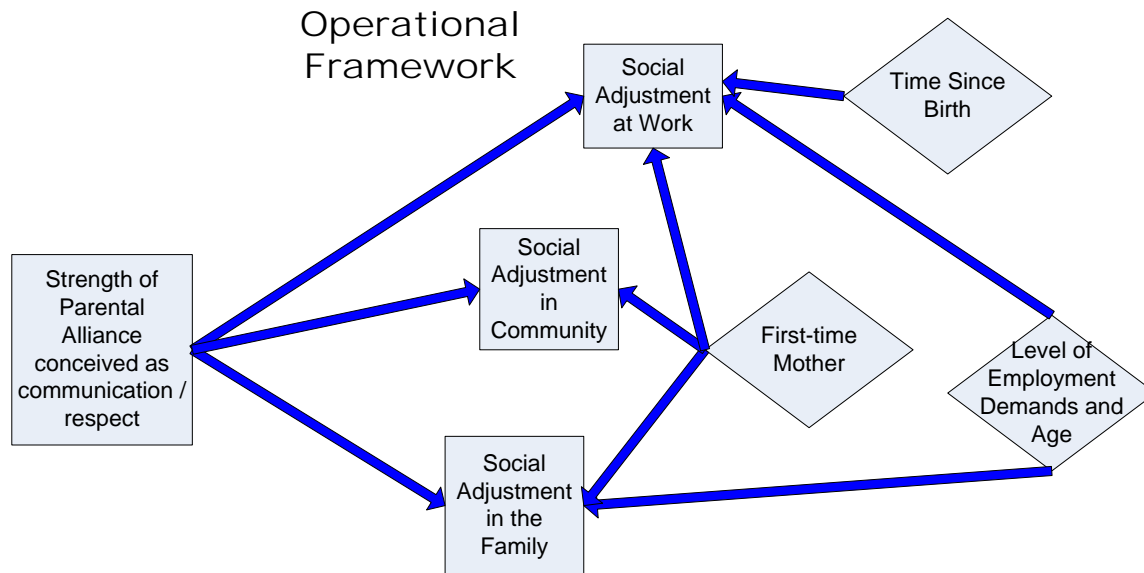
Correspondence Between Theoretical Constructs and Operationalized Measures

Theoretical Construct	Operationalized Measure
Strength of parental alliance	Sum of the 20 items on Parental Alliance Measure (PAM)
Degree of social adjustment at work	Sum of the scores on the Social Adjustment Scale—Self Report for the functional area of WORK FOR PAY
Degree of social adjustment in community	Sum of the scores on the Social Adjustment Scale—Self Report for the functional area of SOCIAL and LEISURE.
Degree of social adjustment in the family	Sum of the scores on the Social Adjustment Scale—Self Report for the functional area of FAMILY OUTSIDE THE HOME, PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP, PARENTAL, and FAMILY UNIT
Level of employment demands	A 10 point scale measuring the level of employment demand from 1 being much less demanding to 10 being much more demanding and based on response to demographic survey.
Age	Age in years based on response to demographic survey
Time since birth of last child	Time in months based on response to demographic survey
First—time mother	Dichotomous variable indicating first—time mother based on response to demographic survey

The dependent variables were three measures of the degree of social adjustment at work, in the community, and in the family. The independent variable consisted of the strength of the

parenting alliance. The confounding variables depended on the area of social adjustment (see Figure 2) and included age, level of employment demand, time since birth, and first-time mother status. Figure 2 represents the framework for three different regressions.

Figure 2: Path Diagram for Regression Models



Target Population

The criteria chosen for the target population was identified based on the scope of the present study. This study looked at how working mothers balanced roles dealing with work, community and extended family roles. In order to achieve the most accurate results the following criteria were identified to narrow the scope of the population. The target population was working mothers who

- Were employed full-time (40 or more hours)

- Had no medical concerns with their immediate family- (added stressor that is beyond the scope of this study)
- Had children ages 5 and under (Specific to mother's that are returning to work and have children that still need parental attention)
- Were married or living with a partner (Area of focus is the parenting relationship)
- In a dual-earner household (Both parents working focuses on the parenting relationship)
- Utilized daycare services for childcare (Working parents with children under the age of 5 utilize daycare services).

Sampling Procedure

A power analysis was conducted using GPOWER version 2.0 by Franz Faul and Edgar Erdfelder (1997). The multiple regression on Social Adjustment at Work required the largest sample size because there were four predictors. Assuming a medium effect size, an alpha of 0.05, and a desired power of 0.80, the minimum sample size required was 85. In order to assure at least 85 usable subjects, the researcher planned to collect a sample of 115. The sample size was appropriate based on the design study to evaluate the relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

Instrumentation

Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR)

This study utilized the Social Adjustment Scale-Self report (SAS-SR) (Appendix F). This is a 54-item assessment designed to assess an individual's ability to adapt to and derive satisfaction from his or her social roles. The concept of social adjustment developed in the late 60's as a result of a shift in psychiatric care from more traditional therapy to prevention and outpatient

care. Researchers became aware that mental disorders existed within a social context and therefore created a tool that could tap into those areas of social functioning. It was formally introduced in 1976 (Weismann & Bothwell) and covers six major areas of functioning: work, social activities, relationships with extended family, role as partner, parental role and role within the family unit. This scale has been utilized in assessing the level of functioning within community health settings, schizophrenics, alcoholics and depressed individuals (Weissman, 1999). The SAS-SR has been utilized to investigate such diverse issues such as psychiatric disorders (Keller & Russell 1991), medical disorders (Johnson, & Berndt, 1983) and marriage and divorce (Newberry, Weissman, & Myers, 1979).

“The SAS-SR is a comprehensive scale available for assessing detailed role performance within the family, as a parent, and at work” (Weismann, 1999, p. 1). It provides an overall indication of social adjustment. Scores generate a mean score for each area with an overall mean. It measures instrumental and expressive role performance in six major areas of functioning: work (either paid, unpaid homemaker or student), social and leisure activities; relationships with extended family, role as a marital partner, parental role, and role within the family unit, including perceptions about economic functioning (Weismann, 1999). Within each area, questions cover four categories: performance at tasks, friction with people, interpersonal relationships and satisfactions. In other words, the authors of the instrument refer to the elements of role performance, maintenance of social relationships and role satisfaction as the overall definition of social adjustment. Other researchers have referred to social adjustment as functioning. For the purpose of the present study, functioning was the term used to interpret the three domains:

1. How well you are doing your objective work, i.e., tasks, in this area
2. How well you are getting along with others in this area

3. How satisfied you are in this area

The scores were then converted into *T* scores. For this study the researcher only utilized the questions that pertained to the paid worker category since the sample was employed mothers, all other areas were scored.

Table III: Categories of Analysis with Conceptual Framework

SAS-SR Categories	WORKPLACE SYSTEM	COMMUNITY SYSTEM	FAMILY SYSTEM
Work for Pay	X		
Social		X	
Family outside the home		X	
Primary relationship			X
Parental			X
Family unit			X

Only 38 of the 54 questions were utilized and assembled into a new document. Some items were omitted because they did not apply to the study population. No changes were made to the text or the scale. It was intended to make the instrument more user-friendly and specific to the variables that were tested. The instrument did not require permission from the authors, it was available for purchase through Multi-Health Systems, Inc.

Psychometric properties. In assessing the reliability and validity of the SAS-SR, Edwards, Yarvis, Mueller, Zingale, & Wagman (1978) studied the effects of test taking on the stability of SAS-SR scores among other adjustment scales. Ninety-two people participated, 47 people were

placed in the experimental group and were given a battery of adjustment scales on three separate occasions two weeks apart. The remaining participants completed a placebo questionnaire on the first occasion and the test battery on the other two occasions. The results indicated that the SAS-SR internal consistency were good ranging from .71 to .76 with a mean of .74. The test-retest reliability ranged from $r = .72$ to $r = .82$.

To assess its validity Weisman and Bothwell (1976) used a clinical sample of 76 depressed patients receiving a 4- week outpatient treatment. Concurrent validity was obtained by comparing the results from the SAS-SR and the SAS interview, the result was a p-value of .001; thus indicating that the questions within the six areas generated scores that were clinically significant to role areas whether they were administered through interview or questionnaire. To account for differences in the instruments, intraclass correlations were calculated since one measure utilized different raters. This enabled researchers to assess the validity of the SAS-SR. In addition, the researchers measured the SAS-SR external validity by having patients relatives complete the scale two times during the patients' treatment at admission and after the 4 weeks of treatment. The double administration of the Scale gave significant correlations between patients and interviewer ratings ($r = .70$, $p < .01$), between informant and interviewer ratings ($r = .54$, $p < .05$), and between patient and informant ratings ($r = .74$, $p < .01$).

Norming information. Data collected for the norms reported for the SAS-SR demonstrates the accuracy, dependability and quality of this measure. Norms were established for this measure by the developer Myrna Weismann from a longitudinal study conducted in 1967 wherein a community sample of 482 individuals in a catchment area in New Haven Connecticut were surveyed and then re-interviewed by the developer in 1978 (Weismann, Prusoff, Thompson, Harding & Myers, 1978).

The normative sample was different than the proposed target population due to the inclusion of male participants and the recruitment of the participants from a community mental health center however; normative samples showed minimal differences between gender and were restricted to the work role area of performance and family unit role. Other important information relevant to the present study had to do with the obtained gender difference in the work role-area, that revealed scores that varied among men and women depending on whether they were employed or not. Work adjustment was significantly better for employed men than for employed women and better for women employed outside the home than for women who stayed home. A similar pattern emerged showing that women scored higher than men on the work and family role areas showing more impairment than men. The direction of the relationships in the normative sample demonstrated that social adjustment decreased as the level of the impairment increased; so higher scores meant less adjustment.

Parenting Alliance Measure

The other instrument that was used in this study was the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) (Appendix G). The PAM is a 20-item self-report instrument that measures the strength of the perceived alliance between parents. The instrument did not require permission from the authors, it was available for purchase through Psychological Assessment Resources. Weissman and Cohen (1985) coined the term Parenting Alliance to describe the part of the marital relationship that is concerned with parenthood and child rearing. It focuses on the couple's strength as it relates to their parenting roles more than the couple itself. The parenting alliance measure stemmed from the growing family research field. It was developed to narrow certain aspects of a family dynamic by focusing on the functionality of the family unit as it pertains to the relationship of the parents to their children. It builds upon previous work of Katz & Gottman

(1996) and Mahoney, Jouriles & Scavone (1997), regarding marital adjustment and negative parenting behaviors, and makes a unique contribution because it narrows the focus of assessment to the parenting realm and it also highlights the working relationship of parents as it relates to child rearing.

Psychometric properties. The reliability of the PAM was investigated using internal consistency and test-retest estimates (Abidin & Konold, 2001). The researchers developed the PAM from a longitudinal study of parenting behaviors of mothers and fathers. Data was collected on the readability and clarity of each item' intent and normative samples were generated to allow better generalizability across samples. The results indicated that the PAM had a high degree of internal consistency all alpha coefficients exceeded .95. The same sample was asked to complete a second protocol approximately 4 to 6 weeks later to generate test-retest reliability. The reliability coefficients for the test-retest estimates was .80 which suggested that the responses to items remain stable over a meaningful period of time and are not transitory reactions. The validity of the PAM was determined in several different studies utilizing parenting stress, perceived quality of the marital relationship, and even personality characteristics. Since there is no other direct measure of the parenting alliance it is presently not possible to examine correlations between the PAM and other measures of the same construct. However, utilizing the PAM within different settings, it has demonstrated to depict what it has been developed to measure, a parents ability to work together within different areas of family functioning.

Norming information. Normative comparisons of the PAM demonstrated a statistically significant difference between mothers and fathers; revealing that fathers demonstrated a somewhat higher parenting alliance scores (M= 80.83) than did mothers (M= 75.28) (Abidin & Konold, 1999). Further analysis revealed that the pattern of item responses differed between

genders resulting in separate norms for both mothers and fathers. In essence the PAM can be utilized as a group norm or to determine separate gender norms. T scores provide scores of individual parents with the normative sample. Overall, the higher the PAM score, the stronger and more positive the parenting alliance.

Data Collection and Recording Procedures

Participants were recruited from the email distribution list of two local daycare/preschools called Happy Hippo and Happy Hippo Too located in the Miami Dade County area as well as an online website specifically designed for mother's called www.mamasource.com . Data was collected utilizing an anonymous online survey. Permission to utilize the distribution list of both preschools/daycare as well as the website was obtained prior to the initiation of the study(Appendix A). Once the permission was obtained, an email was sent out to the distribution list of the preschools/daycare and an invitation to respond on the mamasource website(Appendix B). This email gave a brief description of the study and invited participants to click on the link to begin the survey. Once participants clicked on the link, they received the cover letter (Appendix C), which explained:

- The purpose of the study
- The aims of the research to be conducted
- Information on the questionnaires they were completing
- The approximate time the measures would take to complete
- The level of participation as voluntary and anonymous
- The risks of involvement
- The procedures in coding and tracking information

- Information and resources for participants to utilize if necessary

They were then asked to accept or decline participation, if participants accepted they moved on to the surveys. Within one week of the initial submission of the email, a follow up email was sent to all participants (Appendix D). The two instruments were tailored to be accessible online through a URL address where participants were instructed to access the survey. This was a convenience sample not a probability sample, so caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings to the target population.

Responses were anonymous and the data collected was coded by a numbering system to track the amount of responses for the desired sample size. Participants could have submitted their emails if they wanted feedback on the results of the study. The researcher did not have access to these emails addresses. A consultant was hired to set up the online survey and monitor the responses and retrieval of data as the study progressed. The projected timeframe from initial administration of questionnaires and data analysis was 2 months. The breakdown of the study was follows:

1. IRB approval: 2 weeks
2. Permission from day care center for emailing participants: 24 hours (Appendix A)
3. Begin data collection: 48 hours after permission initial email was sent out (Appendix B/C)
4. Follow email: one week after initial email solicitation (Appendix D)
5. End data collection: Upon collection of proposed sample size of 115 responses. Once sample size was reached, notifications to the preschool/daycare director and website of sufficient receipt of respondents was sent and survey was discontinued.
6. Begin analysis: From end of data collection

7. Complete write up of the results
8. Complete write up of discussion of findings
9. Complete study: One week from data analysis

Data Analysis and Reporting Procedures

Data was analyzed using multiple regression. Each hypothesis was investigated by examining the strength of the relationship between the mean score on the PAM and the mean score for social adjustment in each particular role area. A partial correlation coefficient was calculated to measure the strength of the relationship after controlling for extraneous sources of variation. Regression coefficients allowed the following hypotheses to be tested with each hypothesis being tested by a separate regression.

Null Hypothesis #1: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated or has a negative correlation with the mean social adjustment score in the role area of paid work, after controlling for time since birth, mother's age, and level of employment demands.

Alternate Hypothesis #1: There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of paid work, after controlling for time since birth, mother's age, first—time mother status and level of employment demands.

Null Hypothesis #2: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated or has a negative correlation with the mean social adjustment score in the role area of community, after controlling for first—time mother status.

Alternate Hypothesis #2: There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of community, after controlling for first—time mother status.

Null Hypothesis #3: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated or has a negative correlation with the mean social adjustment score in the role area of the family unit, after controlling for mother's age, and level of employment demands.

Alternate Hypothesis #3: There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of the family unit, after controlling for mother's age, first-time mother status and level of employment demands.

Null Hypothesis #4: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated or has a negative correlation with the mean social adjustment score in the role area of primary relationship.

Alternate Hypothesis #4: There is a positive correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of primary relationship

Limitations and Delimitations

Some basic limitations were drawn regarding the sample and the study. The sample was relatively homogenous in the sense that they were paid employees outside the home and had children in preschool/daycare as evidenced by the recruitment location. Limitations were associated with the location of recruitment; the sample population of working mothers versus stay at home mothers and the age of the children (0-5).

For each research hypothesis the data analysis was summarized in one of the four tables below.

Table IV

Data Analysis Summary

1. There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of paid work, after controlling for time since birth, mother's age, first-time mother status and level of employment demands.

Instruments	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Extraneous Variables	Statistical Procedure
Demographic questionnaire, PAM and SAS-SR	Mean Score on the SAS-SR role area of work for pay (WORK)	Mean score on the PAM	Time since birth Level of employment demands Age First—time mother status	Multiple linear regression to estimate the partial correlation while controlling for extraneous variables

2. There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of community, after controlling for first—time mother status.

Instruments	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Extraneous Variables	Statistical Procedure
Demographic questionnaire, PAM and SAS-SR	Score on the SAS-SR role area of Social and Leisure (COMMUNITY)	Mean score on the PAM	First—time mother status	Multiple linear regression to estimate the partial correlation while controlling for extraneous variables

3. There is a positive partial correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of the family, after controlling for mother’s age, first—time mother status and level of employment demands.

Instruments	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Extraneous Variables	Statistical Procedure
Demographic questionnaire, PAM and SAS-SR	Score on the SAS-SR role area of family	Mean score on the PAM	First—time mother status Age Level of employment demands	Multiple linear regression to estimate the partial correlation while controlling for extraneous variables

4. There is a positive correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of primary relationship

Instruments	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Extraneous Variables	Statistical Procedure
		Variable	Variables	

Demographic questionnaire, PAM and SAS-SR	Score on the SAS-SR role area of primary relationship (FAMILY)	Mean score on the PAM	None	Multiple linear regression to estimate the partial correlation while controlling for extraneous variables
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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

This study assessed the influence of the strength of the parenting alliance on a working mother's social adjustment to her family, work and community roles. Participants were recruited from the email distribution list of two local daycare/preschools called Happy Hippo and Happy Hippo Too located in the Miami Dade County area as well as an online website specifically designed for mother's called www.mamasource.com. Data was collected utilizing an anonymous online survey. The following chapter will present the analysis of the raw data collected from the online survey and explain the results generated from the participants responses through descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Out of 134 respondents to the on-line survey, two were discarded because there were too many items omitted (i.e., 59 & 39 respectively out of 59). Five were discarded because respondents did not meet selection criteria for age range of children, that is, four because the youngest child reported was older than five and one because the child was less than a week old. Attrition within the sample accounted for only 4% of respondents and therefore would indicate a minimal chance that bias occurred or that participants were "different" from the target population.

The respondents were anonymous and were recruited from an Internet site called mamasource as well as two local daycares called Happy Hippo and Happy Hippo Too. The majority of the respondents were Hispanics, representing 45% of the sample; although this is an over-representation compared to the national population, the representative sample of women in this study were working mothers with young children. The women who responded to the survey

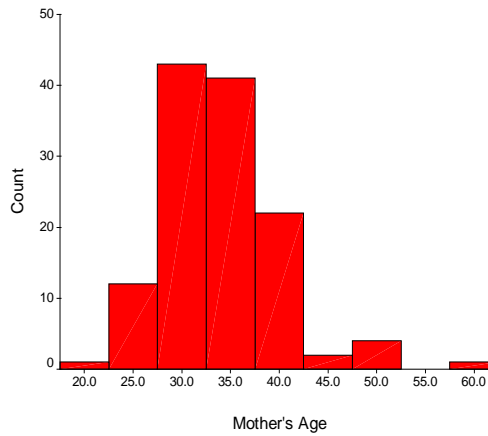
varied in their ethnic backgrounds, ages, occupations and education (Table V, Table VI, Table VII).

Table V

		Ethnicity of sample			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African American	13	10.2	10.2	10.2
	Caucasian	49	38.6	38.6	48.8
	Hispanic	57	44.9	44.9	93.7
	Asian	1	.8	.8	94.5
	Other	7	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

Fifty seven out of 127 respondents from the survey reported being of Hispanic backgrounds. The demographic questionnaire did not ask any subcategories of ethnicity so there is no data to report on any variation within the Hispanic population category represented in this study's sample. This overrepresentation of Hispanic working mothers may be in part due to the geographic location of the local daycares in the Miami Dade County area where part of the sample from this study was recruited.

Figure 3



The average age of the women who responded to the survey was 33.76 with a standard deviation of, $SD=5.776$ (Figure 3). There was nothing unremarkable about the respondent's ages, the ages ranged from 19 to 54. What the data regarding mother's ages does reflect is the growing number of working mother's who wait to have children in their thirties or older rather than the traditional view of the "child birth" years of the early twenties. This trend marks the societal paradigm shift discussed in chapter 1 from the more traditional view of women's roles in child rearing and marriage to the multifaceted role working mother's face in today's society.

Table VI

Highest degree earned:					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's	44	34.6	41.9	41.9
	Master's	43	33.9	41.0	82.9
	Doctorate	5	3.9	4.8	87.6
	Professional	13	10.2	12.4	100.0
	Total	105	82.7	100.0	
Missing	System	22	17.3		
Total		127	100.0		

From table VI, the data suggests that the women who responded to the survey are highly educated with the majority of women reporting Bachelor and Master level education. Again, this

reflects the evolution of women’s history that has shaped and continues shaping the role of women in modern day society. As discussed in the timeline of women’s history in Chapter 1 (See Table I), women’s roles and expectations have grown significantly within the last two decades and the sample of working mother’s in this study reflect a piece of that evolution.

Table VII
Occupations of Sample:

Occupational Category	# Of respondents	%
Clerical/Service	27	.21
Business	38	.30
Health	21	.16
Education	20	.16
Law	12	.10
Other	10	.08
Total # of respondents	128	100

In occupations (Table VII), the women in this study varied in the industry and category of profession with the predominant number of participants reporting occupations in the business realm (30%). Occupations ranged from administrative assistants to lawyers, doctors and even historic preservationists. The variety of occupations speaks to the growing number of women entering the workforce and pursuing more professional careers.

Exploratory Data Analysis

The distribution of the dependent and independent variables from this study’s sample were similar overall when compared to the normative scores utilized in the sample studied in the instruments. Compared to the normative data for a community sample of women, the mean scores of the working mothers study’s sample were relatively similar in the social adjustment in all areas (i.e. SAS-SR work, social/leisure, extended family, primary, parental and family unit scales) (see Table VIII). However, they differed in the reported level of parenting alliance when compared to the normative sample of married women. The working mothers in this study’s

sample reported a considerably lower parental alliance score. This may suggest that working mother who are experiencing difficulties in their parenting alliance with their partners seem to have reported lower scores than the normative sample of married mothers examined by the Parental Alliance Measure (PAM).

The normative sample of married mothers from the PAM had a mean score of 80.2 (56th percentile) and in the study's working mothers sample, the mean score was 65.6 (26th percentile) (Table IX). Although working mothers social adjustment scores were relatively similar to a community sample of women when asked about their social adjustment in their community, work and family roles, their parenting alliance scores were lower than scores in the normative sample of married women. This may speak to the concept of role balance and role conflict that was discussed in Chapter 2; that generally speaking, the working mothers sample separate and define relationships more sharply than the normative sample of community and married women.

Table VIII

Social Adjustment Norm Comparison

Social Adjustment Scale	Normative Sample Community women	Study Sample Working Mothers
Work	21.24	20.65
Social & Leisure	25.36	23.75
Extended	29.28	26.38
Primary relationship	29.07	26.61
Parental	14.28	14.81
Family	10.38	9.50

Table IX

Parenting Alliance Measure Norm Comparison

Scale	Normative Sample Married women	Study Sample Working Mothers
Parental Alliance	80.2 (56 th percentile)	65.6 (26 th percentile)

When analyzing the reliability of the instruments used in this sample, the results demonstrated a high reliability for the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) scoring a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.96. The Social Adjustment Self Report Scale (SAS-SR) indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75 in the areas of nuclear family, community and extended family. In the area of social adjustment at work, the Cronbach Alpha score was relatively low, 0.61. This suggests that the instruments were highly reliable when describing a working mother's level of parenting alliance, an adequate level of reliability when assessing the working mother's social adjustment in the community, and family and a marginal level of reliability when assessing the working mother's social adjustment in her work role. Although reported as a less reliable measure of assessing social adjustment at work, the SAS-SR is still useable in this analysis when describing the reported areas of most importance to a working mother.

In order to maximize the number of responses collected, any missing values found in the data were replaced with the average of all the items that were answered in the same subscale. This was done in order to obtain a mean average score for each variable analyzed and to generate scores for the regression analysis of each subscale.

Revisiting the theoretical framework which posits that in order for a working mother to effectively transition from her work role to her "mothering" role and adjust to community, work and family roles, having a strong parenting alliance is an important factor. This second order

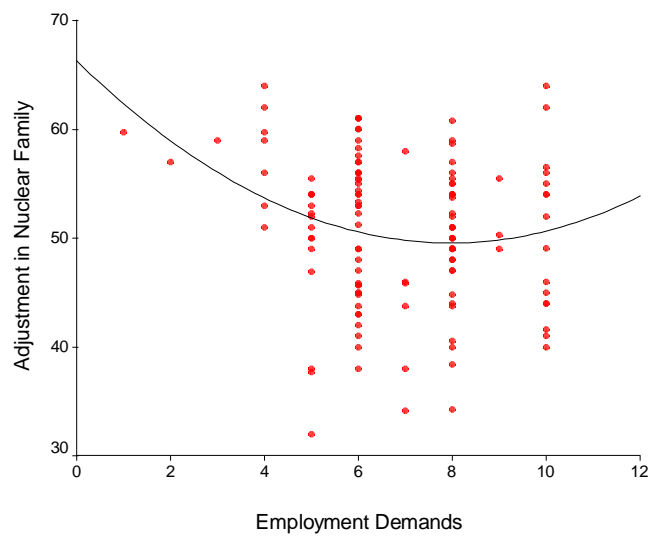
change emphasizes the transition of worker to mother and the data reflects the positive influence of the parenting alliance on this shift.

The parenting alliance scores were linearly related to all of the social adjustment areas. However, the employment demands had a quadratic relationship to social adjustment in the nuclear family (Figure 4). The employment demand variable was taken from the participants responses to a scaling question on the demographic questionnaire that asked them to rate their level of work demand on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being less demand... to 10 being high demand). In order to illustrate this relationship the employment demands scores were transformed. The employment demand variable was transformed in order to make the relationship with social adjustment in the nuclear family linear. The transformation was calculated as: Demands transformed = $64 - 0.264 * \text{demands}^2 + 4.205 * \text{demands}$ (Table X).

Table X:
Data Variables

VARIABLE NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Strength of Parental Alliance	Co-parenting relationship	PAM (Parenting Alliance Measure)
Social Adjustment at Work	Adjustment in work role	SAS-SR (Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report)
Social Adjustment	Adjustment in community & extended family	SAS-SR
Social Adjustment in Nuclear Family	Adjustment in parental, primary relationships and family unit	SAS-SR
Time since birth	Age of child/ren	Demographic questionnaire
First time mother	New mother role	Demographic questionnaire
Employment demands	Perception of employment/work load	Scale of 1-10 in Demographic questionnaire
Age	Age of mother	Demographic questionnaire
Employment demands ²	Demands transformed= $64 - 0.264 * \text{demands}^2$	Scale of 1-10 in Demographic questionnaire

Figure 4



Consequently then, the transformed variable measuring employment demands had a more linear relationship to social adjustment in the nuclear family as evidenced by its stronger correlation (Table XI).

Table XI.

Correlation of Employment demands & Social Adjustment		
		Adjustment in nuclear family
Adjustment in nuclear family	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	127
employment demands	Pearson Correlation	-.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058
	N	125
Transformed employment demands	Pearson Correlation	-.250(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	125

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Findings

Correlation coefficients were computed between the Parental Alliance score and all the Social Adjustment scores. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I error across the 3 correlations, a *p*-value of less than .017 ($.05 / 3 = .017$) was required for significance. The results of the correlational analysis are presented in Table XII. All three correlations were statistically significant and were greater than or equal to .36. In general, the results suggest that a stronger parental alliance is associated with the mothers' having better social adjustment at work, in the community, and in the family. The effect size is moderate between parental alliance and both adjustment at work and social adjustment in community. However, the effect size is large between parental alliance and adjustment in the nuclear family (Table XII).

Table XII
Correlations between Parenting Alliance and Social Adjustment at Work, Community and Nuclear Family

Measure	Strength			
	PAM	Work	Com.	Fam
1. Strength of parental alliance	1	.370(**)	.362(**)	.521 (**)
2. Adjustment at work	.370(**)	1	.441(**)	.441(**)
3. Social Adjustment (Community)	.362(**)	.441(**)	1	.531(**)
4. Adjustment in nuclear family	.521 (**)	.441 (**)	.531(**)	1

Note. **All coefficients are significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed)
 Utilizing a Pearson Correlation $N=127$

Next, the scores were analyzed taking into account all the confounding variables. The first area analyzed was social adjustment at work. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the parental alliance score predicted the social adjustment at work score. The predictors were parental alliance score, level of employment demands, mother's age, whether the mother is a first-time mother and time since birth, while the criterion variable was the social adjustment at work score. The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment at work score, $F(5,118) = 6.386, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .46, indicating that approximately 21% of the variance of the social adjustment at work score in the study's sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XIII.

Table XIII
Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment at Work Score(Full Model)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	15.726	1.827		8.606	
Strength of PAM score	.075***	.015	.410	4.899	0.016
Employ demand score	-.160	.108	-.121	-1.473	0.014
Age score	.021	.040	.046	0.529	0.002
Time score	.032*	.013	.207	2.358	0.037
First time score	-.611	.400	-.128	-1.529	0.016

Note. $R^2 = 0.21$ ($N = 124$, $p < 0.001$)
 * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

The strength of the parenting alliance score is significant at $p < .001$ and the time since birth score was significant at the $p < .05$. Time since birth appears to have predicted better adjustment at work than the other variables which suggests, that working mother's who have had more time in their work role since the birth of their child reported a better adjustment in their working roles. The first time mother score although negative was significant in predicting the direction of the relationship which suggests that being a first time mother predicted better adjustment at work. However, the employment demand score did not predict better adjustment at work.

The parental alliance score contributed only 2% to the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for employment demands, mother's age, time since birth, and first-time mother status. The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment at work score. A one standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.41 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment at work score after controlling for employment

demands, mother's age, time since birth, and first-time mother status. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment at work score is modest.

Variables that were not significant were dropped one at a time from the full model to generate the best model of statistical significance. This is done utilizing the variables that were found to be statistically significant for the study's sample. For social adjustment at work then, a multiple regression analysis was conducted and the predictors were parental alliance score, first time mother and time since birth scores with the criterion variable remaining social adjustment at work score. The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment at work score, $F(3,123) = 10.287, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .45, indicating that approximately 20% of the variance of the social adjustment at work score in the study's sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XIV.

Table XIV
Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment at Work Score (Best Model)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	15.203	1.088		13.97	
Strength of PAM score	.078***	.015	.428	5.173	0.017
Time score	.032*	.012	.208	2.533	0.042
First time score	-.665	.386	-.140	-1.722	0.020

Note. $R^2 = 0.21$ ($N = 124, p < 0.001$)
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

The strength of the parenting alliance score remained significant at $p < .001$ and the time since birth score also remained significant $p < .05$. The contribution to R square scores demonstrated

how much of the social adjustment at work is explained by time since birth scores and first time mother status after controlling and dropping variables that were not significant. The data remains similar in suggesting that the parenting alliance score contributed only 2% of the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for time since birth and first time mother. An interesting result to note is the contribution of the first time mother score predicting better adjustment at work. In other words, first time mother status was hypothesized to be a confounding variable to analyze in order to see if working mothers viewed being a first time mom as a contributing factor in their adjustment in all three areas, community, family and work. This result indicated that being a first time mother predicted better social adjustment only at work and not in the other two areas as was hypothesized.

The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment at work score. A one standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.43 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment at work score after controlling for time since birth, and first-time mother status. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment at work score remains modest even when utilizing the best model of statistical significance.

The second area analyzed was social adjustment in the community. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the parental alliance score predicted the social adjustment in community score. The predictors were parental alliance score, and first time mother status, while the criterion variable was the social adjustment in the community score. The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment in community score, $F(2,124) = 10.800, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .39,

indicating that approximately 15% of the variance of the social adjustment in community score in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XV.

Table XV
Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment in Community Score (Full Model)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	38.783	2.750		14.105	
Strength of PAM score	.188	.041	.380	4.541	.014
First time score	-1.721	1.079	-.133	-1.595	.017

Note. $R^2 = 0.15$ ($N = 124$, $p < 0.001$)
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

In this model the strength of the parenting alliance score was significant at $t = 4.541$, $p < .001$. First time mother score was not significant. In other words, being a first time mother did not predict better or worse adjustment in community roles. The parental alliance score contributed only 3% to the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for first-time mother status. The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in community score. A one standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.36 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment in community score after controlling for first-time mother status. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment community score is small.

The best model utilized the variables that were found to be significant. For social adjustment in community, a multiple regression analysis was conducted and the predictor was the parental alliance score with the criterion variable remaining social adjustment in community.

The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment at work score, $F(1,125) = 18.825, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .36, indicating that approximately 13% of the variance of the social adjustment in the community score in the study's sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XVI.

Table XVI
Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment in Community Score (Best Model)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	38.419	2.757		13.935	
Strength of PAM score	.179	.041	.362	4.339	.013

Note. $R^2 = 0.15$ ($N = 124, p < 0.001$)
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

The strength of the parenting alliance score again remains significant at $p < .001$ with contribution to R square scores demonstrating the variance after controlling and dropping variables that were not significant. The data remains similar in suggesting that the parenting alliance score contributed only 3% of the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for first time mother. The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in community score. A one standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.36 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment in community score after controlling for first-time mother status. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment community score still remains small.

The final area analyzed was social adjustment in the nuclear family. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the parental alliance score predicted the

social adjustment in the nuclear family score. The predictors were parental alliance score, the transformed variable of employment demands, mother's age, and first time mother, while the criterion variable was the social adjustment in the nuclear family score. The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment in the nuclear family score, $F(4,119) = 13.496, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .56, indicating that approximately 31% of the variance of the social adjustment in the nuclear family score in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XVII.

Table XVII
Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment in Nuclear Family Score (Full Model)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	95.433	25.445		3.750	
Strength of PAM	.260	.040	.507	6.545	.025(***)
First time	-1.231	1.056	-.092	-1.166	.008
Trsf. Employ Demands	-.779	.311	-.195	-2.504	.037(***)
Age	.027	.099	.021	.273	.001

Note. $R^2 = 0.15$ ($N = 124, p < 0.001$)
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

In this instance, the parental alliance score was significant $t = 6.542, p < .001$ and although the transformed employment score was negative it was also significant at $t = -2.504, p < .001$. Age and first time mother status were not significant. The data suggests that a high parenting alliance score predicts better adjustment in the family unit (i.e. with the primary relationship, parenting and family roles) and although the direction of the relationship of the transformed employment variable is negative, a low score predicted better adjustment in the nuclear family.

The parenting alliance score contributed 24% to the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for first-time mother status, transformed employment demands and mother's age. The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in nuclear family score. The standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.51 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment in nuclear family score after controlling for first-time mother status, transformed employment demands and mother's age. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in nuclear family score is large.

To analyze using the best statistical model only the strength of the parenting alliance score and the transformed employment demands score were found to be significant. For social adjustment in the nuclear family, a multiple regression analysis was conducted and the predictor was the parental alliance score and the transformed employment demands score with the criterion variable remaining social adjustment in the nuclear family. The linear combination of predictors was significantly related to the social adjustment at work score, $F(2,122) = 26.876, p < .001$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .55, indicating that approximately 31% of the variance of the social adjustment in the nuclear family score in the study's sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of predictors, see Table XVIII.

Table XVIII

Regression Analysis Summary for Social Adjustment in the Nuclear Family Score (Best Model)

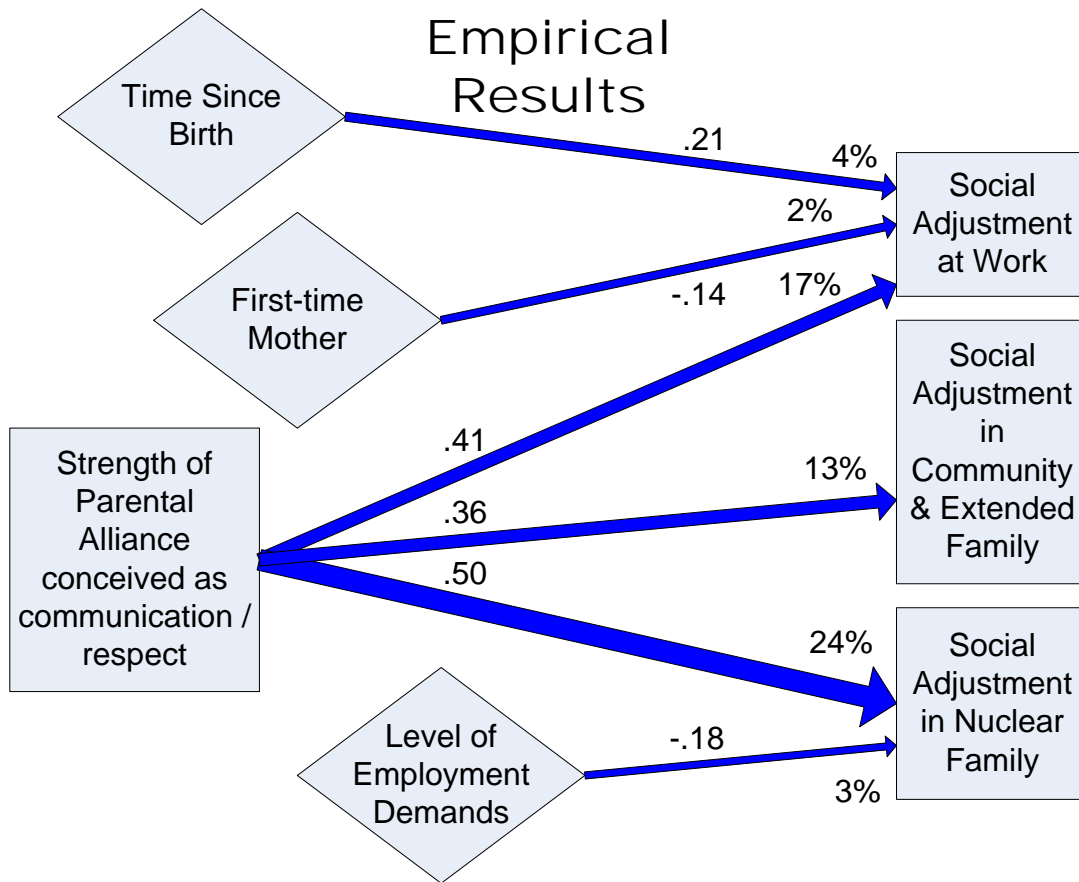
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T	Contribution to R Square
(Constant)	38.419	2.757		13.935	
Strength of PAM score	.255	.039	.499	6.541	0.024(***)
Trsf. Employ demand score	-.712	.305	-.178	-2.337	0.031(***)

Note. $R^2 = 0.15$ ($N = 124$, $p < 0.001$)
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

The strength of the parenting alliance score again remains significant at $p < .001$ with contribution to R square scores demonstrating the variance after controlling and dropping the variables of age and first time mother that were not significant. The data remains similar in suggesting that the parenting alliance score contributed 24% of the explanatory power of the regression after controlling for age and first time mother. The standardized regression coefficient provides another measure of the effect size for the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in the nuclear family score. A one standard deviation increase in the parental alliance score was associated with a 0.50 standard deviation increase in the social adjustment in the nuclear family score after controlling for age and first-time mother status. By this measure of effect size, the strength of the relationship between the parental alliance score and the social adjustment in the nuclear family remained large.

Summary of Results

Table XIX



The findings indicate that having a strong parenting alliance overall helps working mothers adjust better in all three areas of social adjustment, work, community/extended family and the nuclear family (Table XIX, Table XX). The resulting analysis demonstrated that although significant in all three areas, the parenting alliance was stronger in the nuclear family representing 24% of the overall effect size. The confounding variables that were analyzed were the level of employment demands, first time mother status, time since birth and age. The data indicated that being a first time mother was not significant in assessing how well a working mother adjusts at work, in the community and in the nuclear family. Interestingly enough, it was

found that it was not significant in the area of work, marking only 2% of the variance. In addition, first time mother had an indirect relationship with social adjustment at work (-.14) suggesting less of an effect on how well mother's adjusted in the work roles after becoming first time mother's.

The level of employment demands also had an indirect relationship to social adjustment in the nuclear family accounting for only 3% of the data suggesting less of an effect on a mother's ability to adjust within the nuclear family. Time since birth had a modest effect on social adjustment at work (4%) also indicating that the more time since the birth of a child, working mother's reported better adjustment at work. Age did not have any effect in any area of adjustment.

Table XX

Hypothesis Testing Results

Research Hypothesis	Decision
<p>#1 There is a positive correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the area of WORK after controlling for confounding variables (time since birth, mother's age, first time status and employment demands)</p>	<p>Research Hypothesis Accepted: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated with the mean social adjustment score in the role of WORK</p>
<p>#2 There is a positive correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of COMMUNITY after controlling for confounding variables (first time mother status)</p>	<p>Research Hypothesis Accepted: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated with the mean social adjustment score in the role of COMMUNITY</p>

#3 There is a positive correlation between the mean parental alliance score and the mean social adjustment score in the role area of the FAMILY UNIT after controlling for confounding variables (mothers age, first time mother status and level of employment demands)

Rejected: The mean parental alliance score is uncorrelated with the mean social adjustment score in the role of FAMILY UNIT

These results support the theoretical framework of change theory and positive regard in highlighting the shifts that transpire during life cycle stages as in this sample of working mothers with young children. It helps underline the benefit of support especially within the family environment in order to initiate a balancing effect in other areas of daily functioning. The mother's in this sample demonstrated that having a strong parental alliance increased their level of social adjustment most evidently in their home environments; which consisted of primary relationship, parenting and family roles. The next chapter will discuss the meaning behind these findings and how the results can be incorporated into practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of the parenting alliance on a working mother's social adjustment in work, community and family roles. Many studies have been conducted in the area of parenting and women's roles. Studies regarding the effects of returning to work versus staying at home on children's development (Love, 1996; Barker, K, 1990; Osofsky-Howard, J., 1985; Watkins, D., 1983; Feldman, R., Sussman, A., Zigler, E.;2004), on the marital relationship and conflict (Demo, D., 1996; Shapiro, A., 2005; Belsky, J., Rovine, M., 1990); and yet others examined the choice of returning to work on a woman's ability to care for her children or marital relationship (Burkett, L., 1977, Pistrang, N., 1985; Fuchs, R.,1971; US Dept. of Labor, 1996). There is a gap in the research when it comes to focusing on working mothers' perception of the influences and effects having children and maintaining employment on their individual identities as it relates to their ability to function in their multiple roles. This purpose of the study was accomplished by assessing the importance of a parental alliance on facilitating social adjustment for working mothers.

A sample of working mothers with young children was recruited anonymously from local daycares in Miami- Dade County and an internet site. The instruments utilized were the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) and the Social Adjustment Scale- Self Report (SAS-SR). Items were administered online through a secure website. Analysis was conducted utilizing a correlational design and the statistical method used was regression analysis.

Discussion of Findings

As was reviewed in Chapter 2, researchers looked at the effects that social adjustment has on transitions such as parenting, child birth, mood states and found that social support is a key element in effective change within a pattern of behavior (Cutrona, 1984; Ward, 2005; Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner & Wan, 1991). Social adjustment literature views change as a process that involves internal and external influences. Studies (Buffardi, Casper, Erdwins & O'Brien, 2001) have indicated that social adjustment carries a heavy effect on how individuals overcome situations. Social adjustment has been studied as a system in itself and the variables that affect it have been specific to areas of adjustment after family life cycle transitions, medical and/or community experiences. The results from this study are consistent with the literature regarding social adjustment and life transitions as well as understanding social adjustment in other areas of family functioning; in that the literature suggests that social adjustment during life transitions can affect an individual in their functioning and relationships (Buffardi, Casper, Erdwins & O'Brien, 2001, Greer, 1998). The findings from the working mothers sample reflect the importance of understanding social adjustment in the context of role definition.

Another interesting study looked at work-family conflict and analyzed how the domains interface or not within the lives of parents (Eagle, Miles & Icenogle, 1997). The researchers theorized that work roles tend to infiltrate the family system more so than the family role intruding upon work. They analyzed the permeability of the two and discussed the pattern of asymmetry found within genders. (O'Neil & Greenberger, 1994). The findings from the working mothers study remains consistent with this concept of the co-parenting relationships and work demands. The literature looked at whether the type of occupation parents had, that is high-

demand or low-demand, disposed men and women to greater or lesser levels of conflict or strain. The working mother's study found similar results through the parenting alliance by highlighting how having a strong parental alliance helped working mothers adjust better in their work roles taking into account the level of employment demands. Yet another interesting correlation from the literature is around role balancing. The literature suggested that that working mothers face inter-role conflict due to the fact that their roles operate simultaneously rather than sequentially. In other words, mothers wear a multitude of hats on a daily basis and struggle to maintain a sense of balance more so than their men counterparts. Hall (1972) proposed that although both sexes battle with intra-role conflicts, functioning responsibilities within a specific role, women tend to report higher levels of anxiety and role strain due to the competing demands of multiple roles. The findings of from the working mothers study suggest that when parenting alliance is present, mothers reported a better adjustment in all roles.

There were several interesting findings resulting from the extraneous variables that were analyzed. First age for the working mothers sample did not matter at all in any of the domains. Secondly, that being a first time mother affected adjustment at work more than in other areas and lastly that employment demands did not affect adjustment at work as was initially proposed. This is a surprise when we talk about traditional views of mothers and "mothering" and what the data suggest. Areas once thought of affecting a women's ability to be worker and mother like age, first time mom and work demands resulted in less of an effect when parenting alliance was added.

Implications of the Study

Practice

This study contributes a window of information to focus more into the areas of parenting relationships and the dynamics of the union between parenting and marriage. Understanding the

intensity or lack of intensity of the co-parenting relationship can give much information into the workings of a family system. Counselors can gain better and more comprehensive information from asking questions related to an individual's support system and be cognizant of other factors that can and do affect that relationship. By highlighting the influence of the parenting alliance, this study has underlined the elements of family functioning that allow working mothers to adapt and adjust to their multiple roles. It also benefits and values the important role a co-parent has in the balancing effect they have on a working mothers daily functioning. Additionally, assessing the importance of support and highlighting the role of relationships allows counselors to focus on the importance of relationship building in practice and minimize distractions from other areas that may not really be the focus of clinical attention.

It also enhanced case conceptualizations within a therapeutic relationship and gave professionals an opportunity to approach treatment in various modalities. By understanding how systemic theory, personality development, and change theory encompasses a system's functioning, mental health professionals will be able to improve and heighten their therapeutic lens when working with women and/ or couples transitioning into parenthood.

Research

This research enhanced the field of marriage and family therapy by exploring the world of working mothers. This study evaluated a woman's ability to maintain employment while at the same time adjusting to her new role as mother. It analyzed how working mothers adapt to their multiple roles and investigated which areas allowed them the most flexibility to juggle work life and parental life. It lent itself to uncover multiple layers of systemic relationships that cater to a woman's ability, or lack thereof, of handling multiple roles. It uncovered the importance of understanding social support moreover spousal support within family dynamics.

Researching areas of spousal support, social adjustment specific to role adjustment within families and cultural and gender differences within the context of social adjustment and performance can offer opportunities to learn more about areas of conflict and/or pathology during a stressful life cycle transition within a family or individual's existence.

Strengths, Limitations and Delimitations

Strengths

The study effectively focused on the parenting alliance, not much literature focused on assessing parenting alliance in other areas of a family's functioning. It also highlighted the importance of the couple's relationship in the functioning of a family system and how the strength of that relationship can help a woman function in other roles. In addition, the study also emphasized the functionality of a couple when faced with a life cycle transition like parenting and assessed how adept working mothers are at adjusting to that transition with support of their co-parent. The sample of working mothers represented a diverse population of women from different ethnic backgrounds, education and occupations. It also underlined the importance of a support system within an individual's environment and understanding how well they manage to function with a steady consistent source of positive regard.

This study also speaks to the conversation regarding the supermom myth and to the question of "How do they manage?" The results reflect the notion that working mothers "hold it together" in their work and community roles because it has been predefined through their lived experiences. It also suggests working mothers function in these roles with minimal disruption in their performance. Additionally though it highlights the role that the parenting alliance has on this "togetherness" through allowing them to be themselves within the family unit.

The results underline the buffering affect that spousal support and the security family structures give the working mother. In other words, because working mothers function and handle their other roles without much disruption can be partly due to the notion that once they are in the comfort of their homes and families they can be transparent about their day and stressors. This study also brings to light how the role of mother and “mothering” is a change within the lived experience of working mothers and emphasizes the benefits having a strong system of spousal support to integrate and better define what that role of mother means to the individual working mother.

Limitations

A limitation to the study may be associated with the possibility that an important confounding variable was overlooked, which might explain social adjustment more effectively. The instruments may not be measuring the most relevant aspects of social adjustment for a working mother. Individual differences among the participants may also have been a factor in fully grasping the most relevant aspects of social adjustment. Every women’s “story” is different and how effectively she adjusts in any role is a unique storyline.

Although the correlation between the parenting alliance and social adjustment was strong, it did not in itself demonstrate a causal relationship. The sample was not random consequently; caution must be taken when projecting results onto a wider population of working mothers. Finally, the relatively weak reliability of the social adjustment at work scale due to the number of questions as well as the employment demand question, which consisted only of one question on a rating scale were operationalized in a simplistic way.

Delimitations

The delimitations which consisted of purposeful decisions made to limit the scope of the evaluation consisted of focusing on working mothers with young children, mothers who had a co-parent, have a heterosexual orientation, exist within a dual earner relationship, had no medical concerns and utilized daycare services.

Further Research

Some of the areas not covered within the scope of this study and which warrant further exploration are single mothers, stay at home mothers, adoptive parents, foster parents, co-parents of other orientations, and within and between group differences (cultural and gender). More research regarding spousal support and women would help educate and empower mental health professionals in understanding the ever-growing population of dual-earner households.

Additionally, focusing on the experiences of single moms or stay at home moms within the same realm of social adjustment would add insight and information on the lived experiences of those women. Understanding the same dynamic from the supporter or co-parent's perspective would be another interesting dynamic to investigate. It would lend itself to a bigger systemic viewpoint of the internal connections within families. And finally, adding a cultural perspective to the data would also show and highlight similarities or differences among cultural groups and gender between and within groups. Cultural dynamics can highlight unique experiences between groups but enrich within group differences even more.

Utilizing other measures of Social adjustment and or incorporating measures of marital satisfaction would generate additional information regarding the functionality of family systems. Additionally, recruiting from a diverse sample of websites that cater to professional working mothers, stay at home mothers and/or culturally specific mothers would allow for results to be

generalized to a wider population. Possibly looking into other services besides daycares would generate some information as to the alternatives working mothers may be utilizing to help them care for their children outside of the traditional setting of daycare services.

More work needs to be done in order to understand how families function and maintain a balance in our ever more demanding society and as professionals we need to ask the questions that will help improve the lives of families that we service. It is only through assessing and investigation that we uncover what works or doesn't and what fits or doesn't for each family we serve.

Summary

The most notable influence was found in the connection between the parenting alliance and the social adjustment within the nuclear family unit. This is relevant to the theoretical framework that suggested that individuals could only be understood within the social context in which they exist. The study is therefore supporting the social construction idea that human beings are active participants in their environment and therefore affect and are affected by the interactions they experience within it. The findings of this study also support the notion of change in that working mothers reported that having a strong parenting alliance helps them transition into a multi-level role balancing of worker and mother in all its layers. By emphasizing the importance of that supportive aspect, this study highlighted the effect of spousal support in the second order change of motherhood and the transformation that happens within families. The second order change of motherhood within the family context transforms the family system into a different yet same functional unit that now has learned to adapt (or not), shift and resolve situations by reframing how they affect and guide the flow of relationships.

Additionally, this study has been able to also underline Carl Roger's positive self regard notion. Working mother's adjusted much better within their family unit (primary relationship, parenting and family roles) when they were given consistent support and understanding. The effect of this change was less in the community and work roles. This again may be in part due to the notion of role definition. Narrative theory would suggest that women have created their story lines within their community and work roles, which lessen the adjustment to any changes within those roles because they have lived the experience. However, motherhood is different because it has not been experienced yet and therefore the storyline has yet to be created.

By exemplifying the importance of support within a working mother's story of functionality, this study has merely opened up the door to more conversation surrounding the areas of motherhood and "mothering". Mothers continue to need avenues to express their stories from a more family centered approach. Mothers benefit from the support and understanding of their co-parents and family in order to better manage their home and work roles. The most important aspect to note is the importance of the interconnectedness of relationships and the reciprocity of those relationships in how effectively working mothers adjust to their multiple roles.

The findings of this study will help mental health professionals learn more about how important family dynamics are within the context of social adjustment. Although this study was limited to working mothers with small children, the results indicate an underlining phenomenon that is captured for all women, balancing roles is only as effective as the foundation it is built upon.

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Appendix A

Letter of Agreement

This is a letter of agreement between Bettina Lozzi-Toscano, PhD Candidate, primary researcher from Barry University and _____(Day care/Preschool Name) to conduct an online survey with interested participants at _____(address of location) for a period of one month. Participants will be sent an email with the details of the study and given a URL link to access the instruments. Their participation is anonymous and upon request will receive information as to the results of the study. The primary researcher agrees to follow the protocols and guidelines set forth on the emails sent to participants.

This agreement will begin _____(Date) and terminate on _____(Date).

Signature of Researcher

Date

Signature of Agency Representative

Date

Appendix B

Email notification

Dear Working Mom,

My name is Bettina Lozzi-Toscano and I am a Doctoral student in the counseling program at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation in partial satisfaction of the requirements of my degree. My study is on working mothers just like YOU!

The aims of the research is to help us better understand what working women go through when managing multiple responsibilities such as work, home, childcare, social networks and other activities that busy mom's attempt to handle on a daily basis. My hope is to highlight the role of parental support in the way working mother's function in their many roles.

Participation is strictly voluntary and anonymous. A web-based survey is available for you to complete. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes. No individual data will be reported and no identifying information will be reported except demographic information related to the sample's composition. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate, I invite you to access the following link where you will receive more detailed information on this study: <http://survey.barry.edu/ir/PASA/Pasa2007.html>

Barry University
Institutional Review Board
Cover Letter

Dear Prospective Participant:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The research is being conducted by Bettina Lozzi-Toscano, a graduate student in the Adrian School of Education Counseling department of Barry University, and is seeking information that may be useful in the field of counseling, marriage and family therapy. The aims of the research is to explore the relationship between a working mother's social adjustment in her family, community and working roles and the strength of the parenting aspect of her relationship with the children's father.

The eligibility criteria for this study is geared towards working mother's:

- Are employed full-time (40 or more hours)
- Have no medical concerns with their immediate family- (added stressor that is beyond the scope of this study)
- Have children ages 5 and under (Specific to mother's that are returning to work and have children that still need parental attention)
- Are married or living with a partner (Area of focus is the parenting relationship)
- In a dual-earner household (Both parents working focuses on the parenting relationship)
- Are utilizing daycare services for childcare (Working parents with children under the age of 5 utilize daycare services).

Participants will be asked to complete a web-based survey. It asks questions regarding the parenting aspects of your relationship with your children's father and question regarding your social adjustment. Statistical analysis will be done based on all responses received from this survey. No individual data will be reported. No identifying information will be collected except demographic information related to the sample's composition. This study is an anonymous study. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study when it is completed, you may provide your email address which will be held separate from the survey responses to assure your anonymity. At no time will the primary researcher have access to your email address which will be held by a third party. Results will be sent to you at the conclusion of the study. The anticipated number of subjects is 80-100.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: Answer questions in a web-based survey which include demographic information and questions related to the parenting aspects of your relationship with your children's father and questions related to your social adjustment at work, in the family, and in the community. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete in its entirety.

Your consent to be a research subject is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no

adverse effects for you. Even after completion of the survey it is up to your discretion to participate and submit your responses.

There are no known risks to you from participation in this study. You will be asked personal questions regarding your parenting relationships and social adjustment, if during the course of the survey thoughts or feelings are triggered, please contact the Switchboard of Miami at 305-358-4357 or 211 for further information and referrals.

Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of parenting and adjustment for working mother's in their family, community and working roles.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and no names will be collected or used in the study. Data will be kept in a password protected file on the statistical consultant's computer through the duration of the research project and then deleted.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Bettina Lozzi-Toscano, at 305-978-0329; my committee chair, Dr. Sylvia Fernandez, at 305-899-3701 or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Ms. Nildy Polcano at (305) 899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by continuing to the web survey.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Bettina Lozzi-Toscano LMHC, NCC, DCC
Researcher

Appendix D

Follow up email

Dear Research participant,

About a week ago you received a link via email on behalf of Bettina Lozzi-Toscano, a PhD Candidate at Barry University. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the strength of a working mother's parental alliance on her social adjustment in other daily roles. This is a friendly reminder that responses are still being collected. Remember that your responses are anonymous. If you have not had a chance to complete your surveys and would like to, please click on the URL link and follow the instructions. If during the course of the survey feelings and emotions are triggered, please contact the Switchboard of Miami at 305-358-4357 or 211 for resources and information. Thank you again for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete the survey.

Bettina Lozzi-Toscano, LMHC , NCC, DCC

Appendix E

Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. African-American
 - b. Caucasian
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Asian
 - e. Other:
3. Highest degree earned:
 - a. Bachelor's degree
 - b. Master's Degree
 - c. Doctoral Degree
4. How old is your youngest child?
5. Are you a first-time mother? Yes No
6. What is your job title?
7. On a 10 point scale, how would you rate the demands of your job compared to your expectations returning to work:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Much less		Less		Similar		More			Much more

Appendix F

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE-SELF REPORT

SAS-SR

SAS-SR Question Booklet

by Myrna M. Weissman, Ph.D.

We are interested in finding out how you have been doing in the last 2 weeks. We would like you to answer some questions about your work, your spare time, and your family life. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Answer the questions by circling your response on the answer form.

A. Work for Pay

Do you work 15 hours or more per week for pay?

If **YES**, please answer Question 1.

1. How many days did you miss from work in the past 2 weeks?

1. I didn't miss any days.
2. I missed one day.
3. I missed about half the time.
4. I missed more than half the time but did work at least 1 day.
5. I did not work any days.
6. I did not work any days because of scheduled vacation.

Did you work any days in the last 2 weeks?

If **YES**, please answer Questions 2 through 6

2. How well have you been able to do your work in the last 2 weeks?

1. I did my work very well.
2. I did my work well but had some minor problems.
3. I needed help with work and did not do well about half the time.
4. I did my work poorly most of the time.
5. I did my work poorly all the time.

3. How often have you been ashamed of how you did your work in the last 2 weeks?

1. I have never felt ashamed.
2. Once or twice I felt a little ashamed.
3. About half the time I felt ashamed.
4. I felt ashamed most of the time.
5. I felt ashamed all the time.

4. Have you had any arguments with people at work in the last 2 weeks?

1. I had no arguments and got along very well.
2. I usually got along well but had minor arguments.
3. I had more than one argument.
4. I had many arguments.
5. I was constantly having arguments.

5. How often have you felt upset, worried, or uncomfortable while doing your work during the last 2 weeks?

1. I never felt upset.
2. Once or twice I felt upset.
3. Half the time I felt upset.
4. I felt upset most of the time.
5. I felt upset all the time.

6. How often have you found your work interesting these last 2 weeks?

1. My work was almost always interesting.
2. Once or twice my work was uninteresting.
3. Half the time my work was uninteresting.
4. Most of the time my work was uninteresting.
5. My work was always uninteresting.

B. Social and Leisure

Everyone please answer questions 7 through 15.

7. How many friends have you seen or been in contact with (e.g., on the telephone, via e-mail, etc.) in the last 2 weeks?

1. Nine or more friends.
2. Five to eight friends.
3. Two to four friends.
4. One friend.
5. No friends

8. How often have you been able to talk about your feelings and problems with one of your friends during the last 2 weeks?

1. I was always able to talk about my innermost feelings.
2. I was usually able to talk about my feelings.
3. About half the time I was able to talk about my feelings.
4. I was not usually able to talk about my feelings.
5. I was never able to talk about my feelings.
6. Not applicable: I have no friends.

9. How many times in the last 2 weeks have you gone out socially with other people, for example, visited friends; gone to movies, bowling, church, or restaurants; or invited friends to your home?

1. More than three times.
2. Three times.
3. Twice.
4. Once.
5. None.

10. Have you had any open arguments with your friends in the last 2 weeks?

1. I had no arguments and got along very well.
2. I usually got along well but had minor arguments.
3. I had more than one argument.
4. I had many arguments.
5. I was constantly having arguments.
6. Not applicable: I have no friends.

11. If your feelings were hurt or offended by a friend during the last 2 weeks, how did you take it?

1. It did not affect me or it did not happen.
2. I got over it in a few hours.
3. I got over it in a few days.
4. I got over it in a week.

5. It will take me months to recover.
6. Not applicable: I have no friends.

12. How often have you felt shy or uncomfortable with people in the last 2 weeks

1. I always felt comfortable
2. Sometimes I felt uncomfortable but I could relax after a while.
3. About half the time I felt uncomfortable
4. I usually felt uncomfortable
5. I always felt uncomfortable.
6. Not applicable. I was not around people in the last two weeks.

13. How often have you felt lonely and wished for more friends during the last 2 weeks?

1. I have not felt lonely.
2. I have felt lonely a few times.
3. I felt lonely about half the time.
4. I usually felt lonely.
5. I always felt lonely and wished for more friends.

14. How often have you felt bored in your spare time during the last 2 weeks?

1. I never felt bored.
2. I did not usually feel bored.
3. About half the time I felt bored
4. Most of the time I felt bored.
5. I was constantly bored

C. Family Outside the Home

Answer questions 16–23 about your parents, brothers, sisters, in-laws, and children not living at home. Have you been in contact with any of them in the last 2 weeks?

*If **YES**, please answer questions 15–22. If **NO**, skip to question 23.*

15. Have you had any open arguments with your relatives in the last two weeks?

1. We always got along very well.
2. We usually got along very well but had some minor arguments.
3. I had more than one argument with at least one relative.
4. I had many arguments.
5. I was constantly having arguments

16. How often have you been able to talk about your feelings and problems with one of your relatives in the last 2 weeks?

1. I was always able to talk about my feelings with at least one relative.
2. I was usually able to talk about my feelings.
3. About half the time I was able to talk about my feelings.
4. I was not usually able to talk about my feelings.

5. I was never able to talk about my feelings.

17. Have you avoided contact with your relatives these last 2 weeks?

1. I have contacted relatives regularly.
2. I have contacted a relative at least once.
3. I have waited for my relatives to contact me.
4. I have avoided my relatives, but they contacted me.
5. I have had no contact with any relatives.

18. Did you depend on your relatives for help, advice, money, or friendship during the last 2 weeks?

1. I never needed to depend on them.
2. I did not usually need to depend on them.
3. About half the time I needed to depend on them.
4. Most of the time I depended on them.
5. I depended completely on them.

19. During the last 2 weeks, how often have you wanted to do the opposite of what your relatives wanted in order to make them angry?

1. I never wanted to oppose them.
2. Once or twice I wanted to oppose them.
3. About half the time I wanted to oppose them.
4. Most of the time I wanted to oppose them.

20. How often have you been worried about things happening to your relatives without good reason in the last 2 weeks?

1. I have not worried without reason.
2. Once or twice I worried.
3. About half the time I worried.
5. Most of the time I worried.
6. I have worried the entire time.

Everyone answer questions 36 and 37, even if your relatives are not living.

21. During the last 2 weeks, have you been thinking that you have let any of your relatives down or been unfair to them at any time?

1. I did not feel that I let them down at all.
2. I usually did not feel that I let them down.
3. About half the time I felt that I let them down.
4. Most of the time I felt that I let them down.
6. I always felt that I let them down.

22. During the last 2 weeks, have you been thinking that any of your relatives have

let you down or have been unfair to you at any time?

1. I never felt that they let me down.
2. I felt that they usually did not let me down.

3. About half the time I felt they let me down.
4. I usually felt that they let me down.
5. I feel bitter that they let me down.

D. Primary Relationship

Are you living with your spouse or have you been living with a partner in an intimate relationship?

If YES, please answer questions 23 through 31. If NO, skip to section E. Parental

23. Have you had any open arguments with your partner in the last 2 weeks?

1. We had no arguments, and we got along well.
2. We usually got along well but had minor arguments.
3. We had more than one argument.
4. We had many arguments.
5. We were constantly having arguments.

24. How often have you been able to talk about your feelings and problems with your partner during the last 2 weeks?

1. I could always talk freely about my feelings.
2. I could usually talk about my feelings.
3. About half the time I felt able to talk about my feelings.
4. I was not usually able to talk about my feelings.
5. I was never able to talk about my feelings.

25. How often have you been demanding to have your own way at home during the last 2 weeks?

1. I have not insisted on always having my own way.
2. I have not usually insisted on having my own way.
3. About half the time I insisted on having my own way.
4. I usually insisted on having my own way.
5. I always insisted on having my own way

26. How often have you been bossed around by your partner these last 2 weeks?

1. Almost never.
2. Once in a while.
3. About half the time.
4. Most of the time.
5. Always.

27. How much have you felt dependent on your partner these last 2 weeks?

1. I was independent.
2. I was usually independent.
3. I was somewhat dependent.
4. I was usually dependent.
5. I depended on my partner for everything

28. How have you felt about your partner during the last 2 weeks?

1. I always felt affection.
2. I usually felt affection.

3. About half the time I felt dislike and half the time affection.
4. I usually felt dislike.
5. I always felt dislike

29. How many times have you and your partner had sex?

1. More than twice a week.
2. Once or twice a week.
3. Once every 2 weeks.
4. Less than once every 2 weeks, but at least once in the last month.
5. Not at all in a month or longer

30. Have you had any problems during sex, such as pain, these last 2 weeks?

1. None.
2. Once or twice.
3. About half the time.
4. Most of the time.
5. Always.

31. How have you felt about sex during the last 2 weeks?

1. I always enjoyed it.
2. I usually enjoyed it.
3. About half the time I enjoyed it, and half the time I did not.
4. I usually did not enjoy it.
5. I never enjoyed it.
6. Not applicable: No sex in the last 2 weeks

E. Parental

Have you had unmarried children, stepchildren, or foster children living at home during the last 2 weeks?

*If **YES**, answer questions 32 through 35. If **NO**, skip to Section F. Family Unit*

32. How often have you been interested in what your children are doing—school, play, or hobbies—during the last 2 weeks?

1. I was always interested and actively involved.
2. I was usually interested and involved.
3. I was interested about half the time and uninterested half the time.
4. I was usually uninterested.
5. I was always uninterested

33. Have you been able to talk and listen to your children during the last 2 weeks? (Include only children over the age of 2.)

1. I was always able to communicate with them.

2. I was usually able to communicate with them.
3. About half the time I could communicate.
4. I was not usually able to communicate.
5. I was completely unable to communicate.
6. Not applicable: No children over the age of 2

34. How have you been getting along with your children during the last 2 weeks?

1. I had no arguments and got along very well.
2. I usually got along well but had minor arguments.
3. I had more than one argument.
4. I had many arguments.
5. I was constantly having arguments.

35. How have you felt toward your children these last 2 weeks?

1. I always felt affection.
2. I usually felt affection.
3. About half the time I felt affection.
4. Most of the time I did not feel affection.
5. I never felt affection toward them

F. Family Unit

Have you ever been married, ever lived with a partner in an intimate relationship, or ever had children?

*If **YES**, please answer questions 36 through 38.*

36. Have you worried about your partner or any of your children without any reason during the last 2 weeks, even if you are not living together now?

1. I never worried.
2. Once or twice I worried.
3. About half the time I worried.
4. Most of the time I worried.
5. I always worried.
6. Not applicable: Partner and children not living.

37. During the last 2 weeks, have you been thinking that you have let down your partner or any of your children at any time?

1. I did not feel I let them down at all.
2. I did not usually feel that I let them down.
3. About half the time I felt I let them down.
4. Most of the time I felt that I let them down.
5. I let them down completely

38. During the last 2 weeks, have you been thinking that your partner or any of your children have let you down at any time?

1. I never felt that they let me down.
2. I did not usually feel that they let me down.
3. About half the time I felt that they let me down.
4. I usually felt that they let me down.
5. I feel bitter that they have let me down

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix G
Parental Alliance Measure
PAM Instrument

PARENTAL ALLIANCE MEASURE

(PAM)

Richard R. Abidin, EdD

This questionnaire concerns what happens between you and your child's other parent, or the other adult most involved in the care of your child (for example, housemate or grandparent). Read each statement carefully and mark your response to the right of each statement. Although you may not find an answer that exactly describes what you think, please circle the answer that comes closest to what you think.

YOUR FIRST REACTION TO EACH STATEMENT SHOULD BE YOUR ANSWER.

Circle SA if you <u>strongly agree</u> with the statement.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Circle A if you <u>agree</u> with the statement.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Circle NS if you are <u>not sure</u> how you feel about the statement.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Circle D if you <u>disagree</u> with the statement.	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Circle SD if you <u>strongly disagree</u> with the statement.	SA	A	NS	D	SD

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1. My child's other parent enjoys being alone with our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 2. During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be a good Parent..... | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 3. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 4. My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 5. My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 6. Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 7. My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 8. My child's other parent and I agree on what our child should and should not be permitted to do..... | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 9. I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him or her play with our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 10. My child's other parent knows how to handle children well | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 11. My child's other parent and I are a good team | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 12. My child's other parent believes I am a good parent | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 13. I believe my child's other parent is a good parent | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 14. My child's other parent makes my job of being a parent easier | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 15. My child's other parent sees our child in the same way I do | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 16. My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 17. If our child needs to be punished, my child's other parent and I usually agree on the type of punishment..... | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 18. I feel good about my child's other parent's judgment about what is right for our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 19. My child's other parent tells me I am a good parent | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 20. My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child | SA | A | NS | D | SD |