HOW COUPLES COPE WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL:
DOES LENGTH OF TRAVEL MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

by

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Committee Chairman: Linda F. Little  
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(ABSTRACT)  

Intermittent business travel has become an essential part of professional life for many. This exploratory study focused on two types of business-related travel. Short-term travel included frequent trips which lasted a week or less. Long-term travel included trips which lasted a minimum of three weeks at a time. Twenty couples, in which the husband was the business traveler, completed questionnaires and were interviewed individually.  

The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales-FACES III (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985) was used to measure couple functioning. No significant differences on either adaptability or cohesion were found between the two groups of business travel couples. The couples in this study reported a significantly higher level of adaptability when the mean score on the adaptability scale of each of these two groups was compared with the mean score of the sample upon which FACES III was normed (p < .0001).  

Significant group differences were reported on the ways the couples dealt with the eminent departure of the husband, the couples' adjustment when the husbands returned, the stress resulting from travel reported by the husbands, and the amount of contact the couples had while the husbands were away.  

Methods of coping used by husbands and wives and support systems used by the wives were also explored. Implications of the findings and suggestions for further research are included.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to this thesis. I cannot possibly name them all. However, I would like to especially express my appreciation and thanks to the following.

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I am particularly grateful to the twenty couples, who by sharing with me their experiences with business travel, provided a better understanding of the challenges business travel poses to couples. Without them I would not have been able to write this thesis.

My three children, Christine, Michelle and Timothy, have become more resourceful and self-reliant during my years at Virginia Tech.

Most importantly I am indebted to traveling husband, Peter, whose belief in me and constant support throughout my studies and the writing of this thesis kept me going.
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HOW COUPLES COPE WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL:
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Introduction

Business travel has become an essential part of professional life for many. In 1988, 39.4 million business related trips longer than 75 miles one way were made in the U.S. in one month. The average business trip extended over 3.3 nights and covered 1,180 miles (US Travel Data Center, 1988). In 1988 nearly 80% of international business travelers were male, and one third of all international air travel was business related. The typical business travelers were making their fifteenth air trip outside the United States (US Travel and Tourism Administration, 1988).

Business travel typically falls into two broad categories. There is the travel which involves frequent, short trips where the traveler may be away during part of, or all of a week, and return home on the week-ends. The second type of travel involves longer trips in which the traveler is away for weeks at a time. Often this type requires travel outside of the United States. Due to the extensive and rapid transportation systems which allow travel anywhere in the world in hours, businesses have a global market that can be readily accessed.

Little is known about the coping techniques spouses use when separated because of extended business travel. Much of the research in the area of spouse absence has been carried out with military families. As early as 1949 Hill (cited in McCubbin, Dahl, Lester & Ross, 1975) published the results of a study done on the adjustments to separation during World War II. Hill found that there was a need to take into consideration a family's history, the characteristics of the family members,
the family dynamics at the time of the reunion, and also the adjustments the family
had made during the separation.

The majority of studies on this subject focused on coping responses of
military wives separated temporarily from their husbands. MacIntosh (1968) studied
military wives who were experiencing psychiatric symptoms as a result of their
husbands' absence due to military assignment. He compared them with wives
whose spouses were not absent, but who were receiving psychiatric services. He
identified several risk groups among military wives whose husbands were absent.
These groups included wives who were younger, who had less education, and who
had less commitment to their husbands' military career. These results suggest that
younger, less educated wives had comparatively fewer opportunities to develop
adaptive coping skills.

Pearlman (1970) also studied military wives who were being seen in military
psychiatric outpatient facilities. He found that Navy wives went through successive
emotional phases (i.e. protest against acceptance of the separation, despair,
detachment) after their husbands left them due to military assignments.

Both of these studies focused on the dysfunctional responses of military
wives (i.e. depression, anxiety), and on the underlying psychological dynamics, and
not on positive adaptive coping in a non-clinical population.

McCubbin, Dahl, Lester, Beason, and Robertson (1976) explored the coping
patterns of military wives who experienced prolonged separations during the Viet
Nam conflict. They identified six complex and highly individualized coping
patterns. They found that these coping patterns were closely related to the husband's
and wife's background, marital history, family development, and stresses of
separation. The four adaptive, functional coping patterns were: (a) seeking
resolution and expressing feelings; (b) establishing autonomy while maintaining family ties; (c) maintaining family integrity; and (d) establishing independence through self-development. Two other coping patterns, (e) reducing anxiety and (f) maintaining the past and dependence on religion, were classified as potentially dysfunctional patterns.

Later, McCubbin (1980) explored the reunion and reintegration of 82 Navy families. One coping pattern, trusting and building relationships, had a positive correlation to wife-husband reintegration. This involved the wife being able to establish her own social supports through close relationships with other individuals. It also involved her trusting her husband.

One study was found which investigated non-military families coping with business-induced travel. Boss, McCubbin, & Lester's (1979) study on corporate executive wives revealed that these women minimized vulnerability to stress and maximized adaptability by becoming involved in self-development and interpersonal relationships, by being independent and self-sufficient, and by fitting into the corporate scene.

All of these studies had evaluated only elements of wives responses to the stresses of separation. The purpose of this study was to explore responses of couples who experienced intermittent separation required by business travel on the part of the husband.

Two groups of travelers were studied. One group involved longer, less frequent travel (LT) and the other shorter, more frequent travel (ST). Responses of couples representing these two groups of travelers were compared with responses of couples on whom the testing instruments were normed. Two relationships were explored: (a) Whether the length of travel was related to level of couple
functioning, adaptability, and cohesion. The LT and ST groups were compared. (b) Whether travel in and of itself was related to couple differences in these same areas. The two groups of travelers were compared with the norms.

Because of the limited research reported on this topic, this study was exploratory in nature. The study focused on identification of adjustment issues for couples whose husbands were involved in work related travel. Additionally, coping strategies utilized by both LT and ST couples were identified and compared. Data were gathered through the use of paper and pencil questionnaires and in-depth interviews with individuals.

This study was based on two systemic assumptions, namely that families have the ability to change, and that when demands become too great for a family to make needed changes, symptomatic or problematic behaviors appear within the family (Hoffman, 1988). From a systems perspective, the leaving, absence and reintegration of a family member are all stressful events that affect the entire family system. It is assumed that some couples will find ways to reduce the stress through the experiences of subsequent leavings, absences and reintegrations. These couples will reach new levels of family adjustment in which individuals needs continue to be met. Equally, it is assumed that some couples will not find ways to effectively deal with the repeated transitions. These families will be more likely to develop symptoms related to their inability to establish and maintain new levels of functioning.

Methodology

Criteria

The following criteria were used in selecting the couples. The husband was the traveler, and had been traveling for more than two years. The couples were
white Americans, over the age of 25, who had been married more than two years to their current spouses. The annual income level was over $25,000.

The length of travel for the ST traveler was not more than one week at a time. The LT travel involved more than two trips per year, which were at least 3 weeks in length.

**Subjects**

Initial attempts to obtain a large sample of couples where married men were involved in extended intermittent business travel were made by contacting several large companies in which large numbers of employees travel. Three companies expressed interest in the content of the study, but eventually failed to approve access to their staff for the purposes of this study.

Several other attempts to secure an intact sample were made by contacting 18 smaller agencies or companies which required that their employees travel extensively. The employees of twelve of these agencies did not meet all of the criteria for the study (i.e. both partners were not American, the travel time was not over 3 weeks twice a year). The head of one agency specifically stated that he wanted his staff to travel less than 3 weeks at a time. Of the remaining six, there were too few employees who met the criteria to comprise an intact sample.

The sample for this study eventually was obtained from couples living in the Greater Metropolitan Area of Washington, D.C. Initial participants were obtained as follows: (a) Letters were distributed to graduate students at Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Graduate Center. The study was briefly explained and the selection criteria was given. (b) Similar letters were mailed to one company in the same geographic area, whose representative agreed to distribute them to the employees. (c) Known
contact persons in two additional major organizations provided names of qualified couples.

Several couples chose to participate as a result of the letter at Virginia Tech. There were no responses from the company. Several names were received from the contact persons. These couples were contacted by phone, the study explained to them, and they were invited to participate. Several couples contacted in this fashion did volunteer to participate. Several couples who volunteered to participate also gave the names of colleagues or friends to contact. From the approximately 32 couples contacted, twenty couples volunteered to participate. Ten couples fit into the short-term intermittent travel group (ST) and ten couples into the long term intermittent travel group (LT). These couples did not comprise a random sample.

Survey Instruments

Couple functioning was measured by the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales -FACES III (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985). FACES III is designed to measure both perceived and ideal descriptions of a marital or family system. It is taken twice, once for perceived and once for ideal descriptions. FACES III is a 20 item self report scale constructed to measure two major dimensions of the Circumplex Model (Olson, 1986). This model theorizes that there is a curvilinear relationship between cohesion and adaptability. According to the review of Olson, et al (1983), these two dimensions have been found to be the two most important dimensions of family functioning across the life cycle. "Balanced families" fall into the center of this model and are hypothesized to function better than those who are on the extreme of these two dimensions (i.e. rigid or chaotic and disengaged or enmeshed).

FACES III contains 10 cohesion items and 10 adaptability items. The responses range from "almost never" to "almost always" on a 5-point scale. The scores from
the LT and ST groups were compared with each other as well as with the normative sample to see if there were differences in the group types.

FACES III has been found to be a reliable and valid scale that is theoretically based with the construct validity assessed by factor analysis of data from a sample of 2,453 adults across the life cycle and 412 adolescents. Internal reliability for cohesion was ($r = .77$); for adaptability was ($r = .62$). Pearson correlations between the two factors ($r = .03$), supports the independence of the two dimensions (Olson, 1986).

The second instrument was adapted from Form B Coping Responses from Health and Daily Living by Moos, Cronkite, Billings, & Finney (1987). With 32 different coping responses, the couples were asked to rate their frequency of use with a 3 point scale (never, sometimes, often) as related to business travel. The responses are categorized in two ways. First, the method of coping is identified: active cognitive, active behavioral, and avoidance. Second, the focus of coping is defined: appraisal, problem, and emotional. Normative information and indices are based on a sample of 424 adults.

For the purpose of this study, a set of questions was developed which focused on the support systems used by these couples. A list of family responsibilities was created to explore how these responsibilities were affected by the travel. These responsibilities included four broad categories: decision making, finances, household tasks, and child care issues. The choice of responses were: (a) wife only does this; (b) we share this; (c) wife does this only when spouse is traveling; (d) husband only does this; (e) does not apply.

Different questionnaires were used for men and women. The questionnaire for men included a comparison between the number of hours worked while on a
business trip and when not traveling. The questionnaire for women included questions on support systems used when their spouses were on business travel.

The open question interview technique was also used. Open questions are used when seeking broad or general information and put few restrictions on how they are answered (Downs, Smeyak, & Martin, 1980).

A pretest of the questionnaire and the interview questions was done to assess the format, length, clarity, and design. Suggestions, modifications, and improvements from the pretest were incorporated.

Procedure

The study was explained to the couple, and the selection criteria were used to ascertain if the couple fit. Once they volunteered to participate, a questionnaire and a cover letter were mailed to both husband and wife. They were requested to complete the questionnaires individually, without discussion, prior to the interview. Completed questionnaires were collected at the time of the interview.

The interviews were conducted individually and, with permission from each person, audio taped. Brief notes were taken during the interview. The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes, depending on the amount of sharing the person wanted to do. The interviews were held in the couple's home or place of employment at their convenience.

Data obtained from the questionnaires and instruments were analyzed statistically. Information obtained through the interviews were organized according to question and group. For example, all Question #1 responses were grouped LT males, LT females, ST males, and ST females. Trends were explored in this manner. Finally, group differences were assessed for each question.

See appendix B for the questionnaires and the interview questions.
Results

Descriptive analysis was done on demographic variables to produce a demographic profile of the sample. The length of marriage of the couples interviewed ranged from 3 to 31 years, and for 19 couples it was their first marriage. The age of the husbands and wives ranged from 29 to 62 and 29 to 59 years, respectively. Three couples in the sample had no children. The number of children of the remaining couples ranged from 1 to 5. The ages of the children ranged from 1 to 27 years. The length of current employment of the husbands ranged from 2 to 27 years. ST travellers took about 14 trips a year. Each of these trips averaged about three days. LT travellers, on the other hand, took about 2 to 3 trips a year. Each of these trips lasted about 3 weeks. A more detailed profile is shown in Appendix D, Table 1 for ST couples and in Appendix D, Table 2 for LT couples. To determine if the demographic profiles of the ST and LT couples were equivalent, a two sample t test was performed on selected demographic variables. No significant differences were found between groups on these characteristics. The results of these analyses are provided in Appendix D, Table 3. Although the number of children approached the significance level (p < .06), this most likely was due to the fact that three couples in the ST group had no children.

An area of comparison between groups of women was their employment outside of the home. Fifty percent of the ST women were employed full time, while 20 percent of the LT women were employed full time. Part time employment was held by 30 percent of the ST women. Forty percent of the LT women worked part time. Data from this comparison are displayed in Appendix D, Table 4. The results of a chi square analysis on employment outside the home between LT and ST
women revealed no significant differences. The validity of these results due to small sample size is in question.

The income levels of these two groups were similar. Fifteen couples reported income range of $50,000-$100,000, eight were ST and seven were LT. Of the five couples who reported their income range of $100,000-$150,000, three were LT and two were ST.

**FACES III: Adaptability and Cohesion**

Two-way ANOVA using sex and group as factors was performed on FACES III to determine whether these factors affected adaptability and/or cohesion scores of this sample. Results of these analyses are shown in Tables 1 and 2. These results indicated that being husband or wife, belonging to either the LT or the ST group, and the interaction between these two factors had no significant effect on cohesion or adaptability scores of this sample.

To determine whether ST and LT couples had adaptability and cohesion scores equivalent to those couples across the life cycle on whom FACES III was normed, t tests were performed. Results of these tests are in Tables 3 and 4. These results revealed that both LT couples ($t=7.905, p < .0001$) and ST couples ($t=7.245, p < .0001$) reported significantly higher levels of adaptability than did the normative group. The mean scores for both LT and ST groups were in the chaotic level of adaptability and fell into the mid-range family type. No statistical differences were evident between LT couples, ST couples and the normative couples on their reports of couple cohesiveness. ST couples' responses approached significance when their cohesion scores were compared with the normative group ($t=1.995, p < .06$). This trend of ST couples reporting higher levels of cohesiveness, most likely reflects sample differences in life cycle stages of group members rather than differences due
Table 1

Using Two Way ANOVA on FACES III Cohesion of LT and ST Couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<td>Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.14</td>
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</table>
Table 2

Two Way ANOVA on FACES III Adaptability of LT and ST Couples

<table>
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<th>Factor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.26</td>
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Table 3

*t-Test on LT FACES III Cohesion and Adaptability Versus Norm*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>LT-Mean</th>
<th>Norm-Mean</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>.0001</td>
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Table 4

**t-Test on ST FACES III Cohesion and Adaptability Versus Norm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ST-Mean</th>
<th>Norm-Mean</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
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<td>39.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>.0001</td>
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to length of travel. The ST group included younger couples with no children and couples with younger children. Olson et al (1983) found that young couples and often couples with young children tended to be higher in cohesion at that stage in the life cycle.

**Moos: Health and Daily Living Form**

When comparing the LT and ST couples with the normative sample, there were no significant differences between groups or within groups in regard to how these couples viewed their couple relationships on the Quality of Significant Relationships scale. The results are reported in Table 5.

Billings and Moos (1981) classified coping strategies in two ways. First in terms of methods of coping, which divided active attempts to resolve a stressful event (in this study business travel was the stressful event) into cognitive and behavioral strategies. "Active cognitive coping includes attempts to manage one's appraisal of the stressfulness of the event such as 'tried to see the positive side of the situation' and 'drew on my past experiences in similar situations.' Active-behavioral coping refers to overt behavioral attempts to deal directly with the problem and its effects, such as 'tried to find out more about the situation' and 'took some positive action.' Avoidance coping refers to attempts to avoid actively confronting the problem or to indirectly reduce emotional tension by such behaviors as eating or smoking more" (p.141).

The second classification was called "focus of coping". "Problem-focused coping includes attempts to modify or eliminate the sources of the stress through one's own behavior. Emotion-focused coping includes behavioral or cognitive responses whose primary function is to manage the emotional consequences of
stressors and to help maintain one's emotional equilibrium" (Billings and Moos, 1981, p.141).

In studies done by Holahan and Moos (1987) they found that respondents with better education and supportive families were more likely to rely on problem-focused coping strategies and less on avoidance coping. The findings from this study, presented in Table 6, were consistent with the normative sample in the Holahan and Moos studies. When a two way ANOVA was applied, there were no significant differences between groups or within groups in any of the areas of coping responses. This would imply that the coping responses used by these spouses where business travel was involved were not different from a non-traveling population in the general areas of method or focus of coping.

Share of Family Responsibilities

To determine whether the ST and LT groups differed in the area of family responsibilities, the list of responsibilities was divided into 4 categories: decision making (e.g. decisions about attending social events or legal issues); finances (e.g. pay the bills, plan the monthly budget); child care (e.g. help with children's homework, take children to the doctor) and household responsibilities (e.g. food shopping, house cleaning). Tabulations were done to look at the relationship between these categories and the person responsible. Nearly all of the responses were in one of three choices, 'the wife does it', 'we share it', and 'the husband does it'. The two remaining choices, 'the wife does it only when spouse is traveling' and 'does not apply', had very few responses and were not included in the tabulations. Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 contain the tabulations of these responses.
Table 5

Two Way Anova and Mean Scores for Quality of Significant Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moos Norm</td>
<td>16.77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Group</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST Group</td>
<td>17.47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Comparison of the Scale of Coping Responses by Moos with the Scale Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Coping</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Cognitive Coping</td>
<td>Moos</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT Group</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST Group</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Behavioral Coping</td>
<td>Moos</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT Group</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST Group</td>
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<td>Avoidance Coping</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT Group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST Group</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of Coping</td>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Means</td>
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<td>Moos</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Moos</td>
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<td>Regulation</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST Group</td>
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In the category of decision making (Table 7), the LT and ST couples did not differ. Both groups reported that these responsibilities were shared by husband and wife. In the category of finance responsibility (Table 8), the ST wives reported more involvement than the LT wives. This was the only category in which there were several responses of "the wife does it only when spouse is traveling" by the LT wives. In the category of household responsibilities (Table 9), a trend emerged. The ST wives reported less responsibility than did the LT wives, and the ST wives and husbands shared these responsibilities more that the LT wives and husbands did. ST husbands with children reported more involvement in child care responsibilities (Table 10) than did the LT husbands, and the LT wives reported twice as many child care responsibilities than did the ST wives with children.

Support Systems

In this study 50% of the ST wives and 60% of the LT wives responded on the questionnaire that they had more contact with friends while their husbands traveled. This was their main support system. While 50% of the ST wives had family in the Washington D.C. area, only 20% of the LT wives reported family living in the vicinity (Z=1.406, p < .16). Twenty percent of the ST wives and 10% of the LT wives reported more frequent contact with extended family members while their husbands traveled. All wives from both groups responded that they had family living outside of this area. Twenty percent of the ST wives and 30% of the LT wives responded that they had more contact with family outside D.C. while their husbands were on business trips.
Table 7
Tabulation of Responses on Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>LT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>266</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 8

Tabulation of Responses on Finances

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>LT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>133</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>219</td>
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Table 9

Tabulation of Responses on Household Responsibilities

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>ST</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
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<td>46</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Tabulation of Responses on Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>LT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There was no change reported in community involvement during their husbands' absences by either ST or LT wives. Seventy percent of LT and 50% of ST wives reported involvement in community activities ($Z=91.28$, $p < .3628$). Ninety percent of LT men and 80% of ST men indicated no community involvement.

While 70% of the LT wives and 80% of the ST wives reported some involvement with a religious community, they all reported no change in religious involvement while their husbands were on business trips. None of the ST women and 10% of the LT women replied that their contact with business colleagues increased while their husband traveled.

**Results from the interviews**

The open ended questions used for the interviews allowed the couples to elaborate on the issues they felt were significant to them. In evaluating the results, therefore, it was important to be cognizant of the fact that different factors impacted couples and individuals differently.

The statistical test used on the interview data was the two-sided Z test, to test for equality of two proportions. The results of this test were affected by the number of persons who gave a specific response (actual proportion) and by the total sample size of twenty, if related to a specific gender, or forty, if related to the total sample.

**Impact of travel on couple relationship**

When asked to discuss what impact business travel had on their relationship, the responses varied by group. Forty percent of the LT wives and 40% of the LT husbands discussed how travel had increased the wives' independence and competence. Fifty percent of the LT wives and 30% of the LT husbands felt that travel strengthened their marriages. Fifty percent of the LT wives reported the disruption of family life and routine as an impacting factor of travel.
Twenty five percent of the ST group reported that travel had no impact on their relationships. Thirty percent of the ST husbands reported that they worked more at the relationship as a result of business travel. Fifty percent of the ST wives noted that travel caused problems in scheduling events and child care, and created additional responsibilities for them. Also 50% of these wives reported more independence.

**Frequency and length of travel**

A trend that emerged with ST couples was their concern over frequency of travel. Thirty percent of the wives and 40% of the husbands mentioned that trips too close together and/or too frequent were more stressful for both partners. One ST wife said, "Trips in a row get to be too much; there are no breathers." A husband's comment was, "Travel once in awhile is good. If I'm gone 2-3 days a week for weeks in a row I feel I lose contact with our marriage." Another husband put it this way, "There's not enough quality time with each other."

The length of the trips was reported by 40% of the LT wives and 40% of the LT husbands as having an impact on the LT couples, individually and their relationship. Three weeks as a tolerable limit of time away was mentioned by 40% of the husbands and 40% of the wives in the LT group. One woman, whose spouse had been traveling all of their married life, put it this way: "I can put things on hold for three weeks. Past that time things can't be put on hold any longer. It's me. I make all the decisions and do everything. I have to fill in for him."

Another woman described her experience this way: "The first week we are in the old pattern. The second week is transition, and the third week is my pattern. The children miss Daddy more by getting into a totally different mode as well".
One wife, whose husband was away five weeks, said, "I started to feel jealous. It's like I was moving into psychosis and was ready to completely change my life".

One husband discussed this issue extensively. "Past one week I'm less productive. Two weeks I begin to feel cut off. More than three weeks and I begin to put down roots. Things become too familiar. Home is the hotel. I feel disconnected from family and work. Anything more than three weeks is a month, and a month is a large chunk of the year. It's tiring and wearing. I'm asking too much of my family. From a business standpoint, I lose contact with what's going on. Major change takes place and I want to think that things will be consistent."

One husband who travels about four times a year for three weeks or more had this view: "Two weeks is manageable; three barely, and four intolerable psychologically. Between the third and fourth week the family became a dreamy-like thing. I felt loss of contact and began wondering where reality is and why am I doing this. I felt trapped on a four week trip. I had to finish and yet the need to get home became stronger than the need to finish."

One man of 55 years, who has been traveling all of his professional career, found that "three weeks is the limit I enjoy". A 46 year old man who had been traveling more extensively the past three years reported: "Two weeks are OK, three weeks on the boarder, and four weeks seem relentless and I am resentful."

**Risks in travel**

One question which was explored with these couples was how concerned they were with risks involved in travel and how they handled these concerns. Sixty percent of the LT group and 45% of the ST group expressed concerns over the safety of traveling \( (Z=.949, p <.3439) \). For the men who expressed a concern, airline selection was their first line of defense. Forty percent in the ST and 30% in the LT
group indicated that they were careful about which airlines they flew and tried not to choose those which were in financial difficulties or had a record of poor maintenance. LT travelers preferred foreign to U.S. airlines.

**Fidelity issues**

Did those couples express concerns about their spouses' or their own sexual energies? The wives were more open in talking about these issues. For 80% of the LT wives and 50% of the ST wives infidelity was not a concern ($Z=1.369, p<.1710$). For those with whom it was a concern, talking about it with their spouses was reassuring to them.

All of these husbands indicated that they were not concerned about the possibility of their wives having affairs during their absence. Trust between the couple, as an assurance that partners would be loyal, was mentioned by 20% of the LT group, and by 25% of the ST group. Twenty percent of the ST husbands stated that they were not gone long enough for their sexual needs to become an issue, and 20% mentioned using physical exercise while away as their way of dealing with their sexual energies. LT husbands reported several ways of handling their sexual energies: work, physical exercise, and "fidelity is enhanced by the HIV".

**Preparing for separation**

In response to the question about what was different before each trip began, significantly more of the ST group (55%) reported that there was nothing different before travel began than did the LT group (25%) ($Z=1.936, p<.053$). Additionally, there was a significant difference between groups in awareness of emotional changes, which was mentioned by 65% of the LT group and by 15% of the ST group ($Z=3.227, p<.0012$). The LT group was varied with respect to how they responded emotionally to the pending separation. Getting closer was indicated by comments such as, "We
talk more. We do more together. We have sex more often. We reassure each other more..." Distancing was evidenced by such comments as, "Both of us turn off before he leaves. I start distancing and scheduling to get in control. I am more on edge and tense..."

**Contact during travel**

There was a significant difference in the frequency of contact made during travel. Ninety percent of the ST group reported contact by phone more often than once a week, frequently daily, while 30% of the LT group reported contact more than once a week ($Z=2.73$, $p < .0064$). This may be explained by the fact that employers of the ST men (50%) were significantly more likely to pay for the calls than were the employers (10%) of the LT men ($Z=1.95$, $p < .0512$).

How was the contact during travel perceived by these two groups of people? Fifty five percent of both groups felt that the calls reduced stress and were more reassuring, and 30% of both groups of men reported that how they felt about the calls depended on their spouses and the content of the calls.

Did these couples have other ways to keep each other "up to date"? There was a significant difference between groups in response to this question. Ninety percent of the ST group and 55% of the LT group reported that they did nothing ($Z=2.478$, $p < .0132$). Of the LT group members who did have other ways of keeping in touch, various ways were mentioned, such as, keeping journals, writing down daily events, taking pictures, and writing letters.

**Responsibility shifts**

Was there a shift in responsibilities, and if so, how did these couples handle the shift? In the ST group 75% felt that there was a shift in responsibility, while in the LT group 95% expressed a shift ($Z=1.77$, $p < .0768$). Parenting, child care, and
decision making were the areas in which the responsibility shift was most frequently mentioned. Thirty percent in both groups reported that they discussed decisions and plans together, before travel time.

Coping with absence

While their spouses were away, LT wives reported more concrete ways of coping. In response to the interview question on the most helpful ways of dealing with their spouse's absence, a significant difference was evident. Sixty percent of LT wives reported that they spent more time with friends, and only 10% of ST wives reported that they increased such contact (Z=2.439, p <.0146). Being immersed in a project involving use of her own creativity was reported by 60% of the LT wives, and by 30% of the ST wives (Z=1.348, p <.1776). Forty percent of LT wives consciously became more child-oriented as a helpful way of dealing with their spouses' absence. This was mentioned by 20% of the ST women (Z=.975, p <.3296). Thirty percent of LT wives talked about the importance of their attitude and how it impacted on the family. As one said, "If the wife adjusts then the whole family settles down." Thirty percent of the ST wives responded that having a job was helpful in coping with their spouses' absence. Jobs were not mentioned by the LT wives in this context.

What did these husbands find as the most helpful way of dealing with the absence from their spouses? Eighty percent of the LT husbands reported working more. Comments like "work is consuming" or "work all the time" were frequent in their description of time while away. Forty percent of the ST husbands said they worked more (Z=1.826, p <.068).

When asked what they had tried and found not to be helpful, 70% of the ST group and 50% of the LT group (Z=1.29, p <.1646) responded that they could think of
nothing which was not helpful. The remaining had varied responses from not sleeping enough, being away on special occasions, phone calls, complaining...

Did these couples find positive aspects to the travel? There was no consensus in the responses to this question. LT wives were more likely to discuss the positive aspects they saw, while the ST wives were more likely to address the negative aspects. Fifty percent of the LT wives felt that they were more relaxed while their spouses were traveling. This was evidenced by comments such as "the house doesn't have to be as functional", "we focus a lot on him when he's here, so when he's gone there is less fanfare". Forty percent of the LT wives reported that travel had encouraged and fostered their independence. "I'm capable of more than I had thought. I know I can do it. That leads to a positive self image" was one example. Thirty percent related that they used the travel time to do things they enjoy that they knew their husbands would not enjoy.

The ST wives talked about different aspects of travel. Sixty percent used the travel time to do something they enjoy doing, such as projects, time alone, more time with friends, reading... Forty percent found scheduling problems, especially around child care issues, to be a real negative to travel. Thirty percent mentioned being more lonely. Twenty percent in both groups of wives found no positives related to the travel.

The husbands were not as diverse in their responses to the question of the positive aspects of travel. However, there was no similar agreement between groups. Seventy percent of the LT husbands mentioned professional rewards as the positive aspect of travel. Forty percent of the ST husbands mentioned that travel was a break from office routine, and 30% related that travel was "exhilarating" or "energizing".
A significant difference was found between the LT and ST husbands in their response to the question of whether they found the trips to be stressful. Ninety percent of the LT husbands and 20% of the ST husbands responded that they did find trips stressful (Z=3.147, p < .0016).

Changes in health, food and alcohol consumption

The men talked more about changes in their health while traveling than did the women. Fifty percent of the LT and 70% of the ST husbands replied that there were no changes in their health while traveling. Thirty percent of the LT men reported getting colds quickly; change in climate was one explanation offered. Food and water supply in certain areas, jet lag, lack of regular exercise, and weight changes were other components which they saw as impacting on their health. Eighty percent from both groups of wives reported no change in their health. Twenty percent from both groups reported much more fatigue and/or getting sick when their husbands returned.

Changes in food consumption, either amount and/or type was noted by 90% of the LT wives and by 60% of the ST wives (Z= 1.549, p < .1416). Ninety five percent of the husbands from both groups reported changes in their dietary habits, with the majority admitting that they ate more.

The use of social drinking revealed a trend toward a difference between the ST and LT husbands. Eighty percent of the ST men reported that they drank more socially while on trips, where 40% of the LT men reported such an increase (Z=1.826, p < .068). None of the wives reported using alcohol consumption as a way of coping with business travel.
Work

Another trend that emerged between the groups of men was that 80% of the LT men related that they chose to work more as a way to deal with the strains of separation. Forty percent of the ST men responded that they worked more (Z= 1.826, p < .068). The average number of hours worked while not traveling for both the ST and LT husbands was 40 to 60 hours per week. While traveling the ST men worked 45 to 70 hours per week (M=57.9) and the LT men averaged 45 to 95 hours per week (M=67.0) (t=1.65, p < .1156).

Forty percent of the ST men reported that they had more social time with colleagues on business trips. Colleague contact was not mentioned by the LT men during the interviews.

Readjustment issues

The length of time it took to feel things are back to "normal" seemed to be dependent on the length of travel. The ST group reported "not at all" to less than 2 days, while the LT group reported from about 3 days to a week or two. Fatigue was mentioned as a readjustment issue by 50% of the LT husbands and by 10% of the ST husbands (Z=1.95, p < .0512). This most likely can be attributed to the fact that LT trips were most often overseas, whereas the ST trips were within the continental U.S.A.

Forty five percent of the LT couples reported that the adjustment was greatest when the husband returned. For the LT husbands there was an awareness that their spouses needed time to readjust and that their families had been functioning while they were away.

The LT wives were equally aware of the need for a time to readjust, to incorporate their spouses back into daily life functioning. These couples had worked
out several ways to make their adjustment less difficult. First, and very important, was an awareness on the part of the couple for the need for a "period of adjustment". During this period, lower expectations of each other was helpful. Twenty percent of LT couples handled this adjustment period by allowing the wife time by herself away from the family once the husband had returned. This allowed her to refocus and him to have time to be with the children.

Sixty percent of the ST group reported that they occasionally went out for dinner upon the husband's return. This celebration was most likely to occur if the husband's return fell on a weekend.

Impact on children

The children reportedly responded in several ways. Three of the LT fathers talked about the difficult times their sons had while they were on business trips.

Couples were questioned regarding whether their children were ill more often when fathers traveled. From this sample, no records had been kept on the children's illnesses. Sixty percent of the LT group felt that the impact of a child's illness was intensified because, as one mother summed it up, "No one is there to bounce off of and I have to make all the decisions. I need him for the processing of the decisions."

Does the travel impact on the relationship between mother and child? Sixty percent of the LT mothers and 50% of the ST mothers expressed that they spent more time with their children while their husbands were away.

What change in the father-child relationship did the fathers observe? Eighty percent of the LT fathers discussed being aware that their travel did impact on their children, ali relating different ways that they saw their children showing the impact. The ST fathers were divided on their view. Forty percent reported that they spent
more time with their children when they were home; 30% felt that there was no change in their relationship with their children; 30% had no children.

Discussion

This study explored the impact of business travel on two groups of couples. In the first group the length of travel was less than a week at one time (ST group), and in the second group the length of travel was 3 weeks or more at one time (LT group). The husband was the traveler. The purpose of this study was to identify the adjustment issues and means of coping that these couples had in regard to business travel. A comparative analysis was carried out to consider whether there were differences between couples' functioning, adaptability and cohesion, related to the length of the travel as well as to determine whether travel in and of itself was related to couple differences. Previous research on this subject had focused primarily on military families, in particular military wives (MacIntosh, 1968; Pearlman, 1970; McCubbin, Dahl, Lester, Benson, & Robertson, 1976), and their responses to separation from their husbands due to military assignments. One study, done in 1979 by Boss, McCubbin, & Lester, focused on corporate executive wives' responses to business-related travel, and suggested that these wives had responded to business travel by involvement in self-development, independence and self-sufficiency.

The sample for this study was not a random sample, and the results cannot be generalized. The couples were well-educated, highly paid, white Americans. For nineteen of the twenty couples this was their first marriage. All indicators suggested that they were coping adequately as married couples.

Adaptability

An important criterion for sample selection was that the couple had been married at least two years and that the husband had been involved in business travel
for at least two years. The assumption made was that they had time to create change by developing new adaptive coping techniques. The majority of the couples in this study made comments such as, "When he first started to travel", that alluded to their awareness that changes had taken place in how they coped with the separation. Initially, separation seemed to have caused more stress, and as the couple developed coping skills through repeated experiences, the impact of the separation became less stressful. McCubbin (1979) stated, "A dependence upon experience may be vital and successful in reducing strain and enhancing family stability, but may also be catastrophic for family adaptation if this retards the enactment of coping behaviors directed toward the stressor event and other family needs which may emerge as a consequence of stress" (p. 238). Hoffman (1988) proposed that change occurs in discontinuous leaps. When conditions arise that the system has no patterns for, solutions are tried; some work and others do not. As difficulties continue, the system is challenged to create changes or breaks down.

The first elements explored in this study were cohesion and adaptability, using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales-FACES III (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985). There were no differences found between the ST and LT couples on either the adaptability or the cohesion dimension; however, significant differences were found when these couples were compared to the normed population of FACES on the adaptability scale (p <.0001). There may be several possible explanations for these differences. Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle (1983) define family adaptability as "the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress" (p. 70). Since the focus of the adaptability dimension is on the ability of the family or marital system to change, it was not surprising that in
functioning families where one person, (in this study it was the traveling husband),
was entering and leaving the family system on a repeated basis, the adaptability
scores were high, regardless of the length of time away. An example of frequent
changes in power structure and role relationships was demonstrated in that 75% of
the ST and 95% of the LT couples noted a shift in responsibility. "I feel totally
responsible when he is gone" was a frequent response for the wives.

This shift in responsibility occurred every time the husbands left and
returned. Schedules and roles were noted as changing quickly and with little
warning. ST couples, for example, often had little time to prepare for the departure
of the husbands. This was a typical concern for the wives, especially around issues of
child care. With the ST husbands having significant involvement in child care, they
often had little or no time to make necessary arrangements, and therefore, the ST
wives suddenly had to reorganize their schedules to fill in for absent husbands or
make other child care arrangements.

The trips of the LT husbands were usually planned in advance, so that child
care plans could be made. The LT couples were faced with longer times of separation
and responsibility shifts. One of the LT husbands expressed what others had also
mentioned, "I'm not there to help her. She needs a break from the kids. I can take a
break and she can't." A LT wife responded, "He's my best friend and I miss talking
to him". The husbands' return also called for adaptability on the part of both
husband and wife during the readjustment process. "I had to walk into the family
functioning as it is" was one husband's comment that was typical of the LT group.
The LT wives also were aware of the need for time to incorporate the traveling
husband back into daily family life. For these women, some wanted the husband to
"take over" and others needed time to adjust to sharing the responsibilities and
decision making. Since the husbands had not been part of the daily decisions and
events, both groups mentioned the need for the couple to "catch up" with what had
transpired during the separation, regarding couple and parent relationships. This
was greater with the LT couples because of the length of the separation and the less
frequent contact.

**Differences between LT and ST groups**

The next factor explored was whether there were differences between the
groups specifically due to length of travel. Several significant differences were
apparent, which may be related to the length of separation caused by business travel.
One significant difference between groups was that the LT couples reported their
awareness of more emotional changes before each trip than did the ST couples. The
LT couples were preparing for the separation by either becoming emotionally closer
or by distancing. Since emotional changes were not important issues for the ST
couples, one possible explanation could be that the length of the separation created a
need for the LT couples to emotionally prepare themselves for this time apart.

While 45% of the LT couples did have ways of keeping each other "up to
date" during business travel, only 10% of the ST couples did. This may be related to
another significant difference between groups, that of the frequency of contact during
travel. Ninety percent of the ST couples reported contact more than weekly,
frequently daily. Only 30% of the LT couples had contact on more than a weekly
basis. Frequent phone contact and shorter trips for the ST couples reduced the need
to keep each other "up to date" in other ways.

A factor that may have influenced the frequency of contact difference was that
the LT husbands traveled outside the U.S.A. Time changes and varying schedules
made contact less feasible. A statistically significant finding was that the ST
companies would pay for the phone calls made by the husbands to their spouses during business trips. This could be an important factor, especially given the higher costs for international phone calls. Since 55% from both groups reported that the contact was reassuring and stress reducing, the length of travel seemed to be a relevant factor in these differences.

Differences related to coping with absence

On the questionnaire 50% of the ST and 60% of the LT wives reported more contact with friends when their husbands were traveling. During the interviews these ST wives did not include time with friends as a helpful way of coping with absence, while the LT wives did report spending time with friends while their husbands were traveling significantly more than did the ST wives. McCubbin (1980) found that the wife establishing her own support system was positively correlated to wife-husband reintegration. The LT wives seemed to use their friends as their support system during their husbands' absence. Two explanations could account for this difference. There was more opportunity during their husbands' absence for the LT wives to spend time with their friends. Week-ends were mentioned by the LT wives as a particularly difficult time, when they especially missed their husbands. ST husbands were not often away on week-ends.

A trend emerged in the way the husbands dealt with their absences from their wives. The LT husbands were more likely to spend more of their time working. Their choice of words used in describing their work indicated intensity, such as "all consuming" or "all the time" or "toss myself into work". The ST husbands used words such as "stay busy" or "work more". The purpose of the LT husbands' immersion in work, could relate to the fact that work sites were more difficult to get to; they could not be easily accessed again in the near future; and the purpose of the
travel required that solutions be achieved until the next scheduled business trip. Additionally, husbands may have immersed themselves in work as a way of coping with loneliness, homesickness, etc.

Although no single question elicited "regular exercise" as a response, the importance of exercise was mentioned throughout the interviews by the husbands as an important part of their time on a business trip. Various forms of exercise were mentioned from jogging to swimming to using fitness facilities in hotels to tai quando... Other coping strategies that the husbands mentioned as helpful to them were reading more, using the time for personal reflection, shopping for something to take to family members, attending religious services, and writing. People contact did not emerge as a strong trend from either group of husbands.

A second trend that emerged between groups of husbands was that the ST husbands reported that they drank more socially while on business trips, whereas the LT husbands were less likely to report increased drinking. A typical comment from a ST husband was, "there was social time with colleagues on evenings".

The trips were reported to be significantly more stressful for the LT husbands than for the ST husbands. Several factors may have influenced this finding: length of time away from family, distances and places of travel, less contact by phone with family, their intensity at work, no break from work (e.g. worked on week-ends).

Several differences between groups emerged that were unique by length of travel. One such difference was the readjustment time. How long it took for the couple to feel they were functioning "normally" again was related to the length of the trip. ST couples reported the adjustment period as lasting from none to two days while the LT couples reported it lasting as long as two weeks. Several factors may account for this. The overseas travel involved time changes, jet lag, fatigue, cultural
changes. One LT wife explained that once her husband was over the jet lag the family was also back to "normal". Also, as one LT husband stated, "The first few days I'm home is 'getting to know you' time". The need to reconnect with family, work, friends and other parts of their lives was evident from the LT husbands' comments.

With 40% of both LT husbands and wives reporting that three weeks was the tolerable limit of time apart, the readjustment issues involved upon the husbands' return included incorporating the husband into decision making. This readjustment issue was indicated by one LT wife's comment, "It causes difficulties when he gets back because I stay boss for awhile".

Another difference between groups was that 40% of the LT group expressed an awareness that the business travel had encouraged and fostered the competence and independence of the LT wives. When they were in situations that called for them to function independently, this group of wives learned to respond competently. This assumption of competence reportedly enhanced the self-esteem of these wives and was seen as a developed strength associated with the husbands' travels by both LT husbands and LT wives. ST wives also indicated that their independence was an important function during their husbands' absence; yet they did not report their independence as emerging "due to necessity" caused by business travel. The study done by Boss, MCCubbin, & Lester (1979) also found that the corporate wives in their study reduced vulnerability to stress and maximized adaptability by being independent and self-sufficient. These two studies suggest that independence of the wife is important and should be encouraged as a positive coping strategy.
Forty percent of the LT group felt that the travel had strengthened their marriages. This suggested that looking at the separation as a way of enhancing marriage quality had an adaptive function. One wife described it this way: "Travel has improved our relationship. He likes the travel. It's stimulating for him; he gets broader and by his sharing his experiences, I get broader and more depth...." A LT husband commented, "The separations encouraged me to rethink our relationship and commitment. We don't take each other for granted." It is possible that couples chose travel as a way of maintaining a comfortable level of intimacy and balance in their relationship.

Coping strategies for couples involved in business travel

This study explored ways that these couples have found to be helpful in dealing with separation due to business travel. The length of travel intensified the impact and called for additional strategies. Several strategies seemed relevant to business-related travel in general.

For both groups of wives, being involved in creative activities or projects was worthwhile during their husbands' absence. Spending time with friends was important, particularly to the LT wives. The wife's attitude was another factor which influenced how the family adapted to the absence. If she was looking for the positive aspects of the separation, the family seemed to adjust better. As one wife stated, "I don't fight what I can't change. I make it into my advantage". Both groups of wives expressed that their independence was important and enhanced by the travel. As stated earlier, independence is a positive coping strategy.

Implications from this study

For therapists working with families, couples and/or individuals where business travel is involved, several significant findings could be beneficial. One
such finding suggests the importance of the wife's independence. Is her independence maintained when her husband returns? Is this seen as a strength by both husband and wife? A focus in therapy could be for her to explore ways for her self-confidence and self-esteem to be maintained and grow.

This study also revealed that the wives relied on friends as a support system and had a creative outlet. Therapists could encourage the wife to have and utilize a support system, especially during her husband's absence, as well as explore her creative resources.

Another area is to help couples be aware, identify, and deal with the emotional changes that can occur as a result of pending separation, as well as the need for "an adjustment period" when the traveler returns. During both times, it is helpful to lower expectations and underscore the importance of communication between the couple.

For therapists and management as well, the stressfulness of the travel on LT travelers should not be ignored. Stress management skills should be taught. Management should be more sensitive to the time pressure and demands placed on these travelers and allow more time at the beginning and end of the trips.

For management, there are further implications. First is for them to be aware of the impact of the length of travel and frequency of travel. From this study, three weeks was the maximum time that was tolerable for both husband and wife to be separated. If further study with larger random samples replicates these findings, business trips could be scheduled to be not longer than 2-3 weeks. For short term travel, the trips should not be scheduled back to back. Another recommendation for employers as a result of this study, is to consider phone calls between couples who are separated because of business travel as a justifiable expense. A third
recommendation is to provide time off when the husband has returned to compensate for the jet lag, reduce the fatigue of the traveler, and allow time to begin reconnecting with family. This could also increase productivity when they return to the office by being less tired and able to focus more. One wife recommended, "I felt he was having all the glamour until I went on one trip with him and saw his pressure. That reduced the glamour. Businesses can help by paying for the spouse to go on a business trip."

Limitations of this study

The size of the sample causes one to question the validity of the results. This is not a random sample and the results cannot be generalized to the business traveling population. The sample was composed of highly educated couples in well paying positions. For nineteen couples this was their first marriage; this was not as high as the divorce rate in the general population (Peck & Manocherian, 1988, p. 336). The way the sample was obtained, especially by participants recommending friends, added to the lack of randomness of the sample. Another concern would be that the sample did not have equivalent numbers of children, which may have affected the results.

Suggestions for further research

1. Families where the female is the traveler.

2. Families at various stages in the life cycle, to determine what coping strategies are used at the different stages. This study sample had couples across the life-cycle from recently married to empty nest.

3. To verify an assumption made in this study, a future study could be done using FACES III with couples where business travel was just beginning, to see if the results were more similar to the normed population.
4. Since all couples in this study indicated a functional adaptation to marriage, a study including a clinical sample could reveal some different findings.

5. During the interviews several of the ST women related that being relocated by their husbands' companies and having their husbands travel was particularly stressful. They had no immediate support system available and it took time to establish a support system in the new location. Future research could explore the impact of relocating families of business travelers with relocated families where no business travel was involved or with families of business travelers where no relocation was involved.

6. Including data collection for children's responses to parents' travel would also be beneficial, as would a comparison between childless couples with one spouse traveling and those with children at varying developmental levels.

7. Future research could also explore the relationship between couples' use of distancing or closeness before travel begins and couple functioning.
References


U.S. Travel Data Center. (Spring 1988). National Travel Survey. Washington, D.C.
Appendix A

Review of Related Literature
RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Military families

The majority of studies concerned with business related travel and, consequently, separation were done with military families (MacIntosh, 1968; Pearlman, 1970; McCubbin, Dahl, Lester & Ross, 1975; McCubbin, Dahl, Lester, Benson, & Robertson, 1976; McCubbin, 1980; Kohen, 1984).

In 1970, Pearlman studied navy wives' responses to separation, and found successive phases of these wives' responses. The first phase was a "protest against acceptance of the separation." For example, "Why does he really have to go" or "I'll never live through the three months without him." The second phase was one of despair, which was often accompanied by nightmares. The third phase was one of detachment, which evoked such feelings as, "I don't care if he never comes back." These feelings defended against the feeling of loss. Pearlman also identified a converse pattern which occurred upon the husbands' return. The first phase included impulses to punish the husband for being away, which made a period of uneasiness until the couples' first fight. A second phase, called transient disorganization, followed as the normal problems of getting used to living together were worked out. Finally there was the readjustment. Pearlman concluded that "successful adaptation to the separation crisis requires the capacity to be alone" (p.947). He believed that this capacity was fostered by childhood experiences.

Studying the returned prisoner of war in 1975, McCubbin, Dahl, Lester and Ross found that the length of marriage had the highest correlation with family reintegration. Extensive renegotiation between husband and wife was involved in reestablishing marriage and family structure. Another strong indicator was the
wives' emotional health during the separation. Emotional dysfunction during the separation had a strong negative correlation to family reintegration.

**Stress**

"Stress is defined as a state which arises from an actual or perceived imbalance between demand and capability in the family's functioning. It is characterized by a nonspecific demand for adjustment or adaptive behavior....distress is a negative state which results from the family's defining the demands-resources imbalance as unpleasant; eustress is a positive state which results from the family's defining the demands-resources imbalance as desirable, as a challenge family members enjoy." (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983, p.10).

How families are affected by stress has been the focus of much research. Some families function well under difficult situations and others have difficulty handling minor stresses. One of the early frameworks for looking at this variability in families was the ABCX family crisis model developed by Hill (cited in McCubbin and Patterson, 1983). This model took into consideration the 'A factor', which were the demands placed on the family as a result of a stressful event. The 'B factor' was the existing resources the family had to handle the stressor. The 'C factor' was the family's definition and perception of the stressor. The 'X factor' was the elements of the crisis and the demand for change.

Expanding on this original model, the Double ABCX Model was developed by adding post-crisis variables and stress pile up (McCubbins & Patterson, 1983). The concept of stress pile up involved the demands and family needs that occur over time, such as normative transitions and unresolved earlier stressors. The stress pile up increases the demand for change. An important dimension of this model was the family's adjustment and adaptability in response to these demands. Based on
this model, the sources of stress, the resources the family has, and the process of change will be examined from a systemic theoretical framework.

**Source of stress: Family Life Cycle**

According to the Double ABC-X Model, the 'Aa factor' is an event which has an impact that may create change within the family system, plus any hardships the stressor event causes and any prior unresolved strains. In addition to business travel as a stressor, events which are part of the family life cycle may be stressors.

The stages in the family life cycle identified by Carter and McGoldrick (1988) included leaving home, the new couple, families with young children, families with adolescents, launching children and moving on, and lastly, families in later life. Boss (1980) concentrated on boundary changes that are involved in normative life span changes. Additional transition times she included were children first going to school, job related parent/spouse absence or presence, taking in children not your own or blending children from different dyads, loss of a spouse, loss of parent(s), remarriage, and remaining single.

Family stress is often greatest as a family is attempting to transition from one developmental stage to the next. Additional stress is added at this time by the "transgenerational stressors" of family patterns, myths, expectations, legacies...The developmental transitions are often further affected by various systems in which the family interfaces, such as: social, political, economic, gender, religion, ethnicity, extended and nuclear family. (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988).

Boss (1980) focused on normative family stress as it related to the change in family boundaries in response to life cycle transitions. "Stress continues in any family until membership can be clarified and the system reorganized regarding (a) who performs what roles and tasks, and (b) how family members perceive the absent
member. Challenges to the family's capacity for boundary maintenance come not only from outside forces but also from normal developmental maturation throughout the life cycle..." (p.449).

**Family resources**

Family cohesion is a potential family resource. Cohesion takes into account the family boundaries, emotional bonding, friends, and interests. Olson et al (1983) consider the most functional level of cohesion within a family to be "balanced" between disengaged (very low cohesion) and enmeshed (very high cohesion).

Minuchin (1974) related cohesion to family boundaries. When a family has blurred boundaries (enmeshed), they may respond too frequently with intensity and may not have the resources to adapt in times of stress. When the family boundaries are very rigid (disengaged), the family may not be responsive to the needs of its members in times of stress. Clarity of boundaries is important for proper family functioning. Through transitional phases the boundaries should remain firm and be flexible enough to allow for change.

System adaptability was a contribution from general systems theory, which Buckley (cited in Olson et al., 1983) related to family systems theory. Buckley identified two types of feedback, positive and negative. Positive feedback was regarded as enabling the family to change and grow, whereas negative feedback encouraged the family to maintain itself. Olson et al. (1983) hypothesized that both change and stability were necessary for viable family systems. Therefore, adaptability is another dimension to consider in regard to the family's or the individual's resources. It takes into account the family's ability to change its structure, rules and roles when appropriate and necessary. Where the family is in the family life cycle influences how that family responds to stressors and influences their adaptability.
Olson et al (1983) found that there was a gradual decrease in adaptability scores from the newly married through the adolescent stages and then began to increase after the launching stage.

McGoldrick (1988, p. 33) related adaptability from a female developmental perspective. "Developmentally women have been expected from the point of early adulthood to 'stand behind their men', to support and nurture their children and, paradoxically, to be able to live without affirmation and support themselves. Adaptability had probably been the major skill required of women. They were expected to accept being uprooted every time their husbands said it was necessary to move for a better job...."

McCubbin (1979) found that adaptation to stress depended on the family having internal resources such as integration and adaptability. Additionally, the family must have coping behaviors which strengthened internal organization and functioning, and procured community and social supports. McCubbin then identified one coping pattern, which was independent of the severity of the stress, as a basic coping strategy: establishing independence and self-sufficiency.

Billings and Moos (1981) explored the nature of the coping process. They found that active attempts in dealing with an event rather than avoiding dealing with the event were associated with less stress. Types of coping strategies, the influences of and consequences of coping responses were the focus of studies done by Holahan and Moos (1985, 1987).

Change

The literature on family life cycle emphasizes that change is an integral part of the process of moving from one stage to the next. Minuchin and Fishman (1981) stated, "Normal family development includes fluctuation, periods of crisis, and
resolution at a higher level of complexity." (p.27). "A theory of discontinuous change suggests that there will be no way to avoid the period of stress and disruption that is the prelude to what we have called a transformation...Since family structures are under most pressure to change at natural transition points, it is no surprise that most symptoms occur at these times...These behaviors are concomitant to family change". (Hoffman, 1988,p.104).

Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) described two types of change. First order change occurs within the system according to that system's rules (e.g., logical solutions, internal changes). In second order change, the rules and therefore the system change (e.g., reframing, which takes the situation out of old context and puts in a new context or set of rules). "Second order change is an everyday phenomenon: people do find new solutions, social organisms are capable of self-correction, nature finds ever-new adaptations, and the whole process of scientific discovery or artistic creation is based precisely on the stepping out of an old into a new framework—in fact, the most useful criterion for judging the viability or 'health' of a system is exactly this puzzling, uncommonsense ability..."(p.22).

It is, therefore, second order change that occurs as families move successfully from one life cycle stage to the next. Becvar & Becvar (1988) describe the concepts of morphestasis, a system's tendency toward stability, a state of dynamic equilibrium, and morphogenesis, system-enhancing behavior that allows for growth, creativity, innovation and change. A balance of both is needed in well-functioning systems. Rules of the system can change when change is in order.

With the introduction of business travel into a non-traveling marriage, the couple needs to make second order change in order to adapt. Variables that influence adaptation also include normative developmental issues, and crisis
events. The couple's ability to adjust to these changes in demands will determine the actual amount of stress experienced and the quality of adjustment that is eventually re-established.
Appendix B

Instruments
Interview with spouse of traveler

1. Do you think that travel has an impact on your relationship? Explain. (positive, negative, how?)

2. Do you have any say about when the travel takes place? Any aspect of the travel?

3. Before the travel begins, is anything different (e.g. rituals, fights)

4. Do you have any contact during the absence?
   - type of contact
   - frequency
   - reasons for
   - who is most likely to initiate the contact?

5. Do you do anything else to keep each other up to date (e.g. keeping journal, diary?)

6. Is the contact during travel more or less stress-producing (create more loneliness, reassuring?)

7. What have you found to be the most helpful way to deal with the absence from your spouse?

9. Often there can be a shift of responsibilities when the husband is away.
   - How do you handle this responsibility shift?
   - Does this present any difficulties when your husband returns?

10. Some are concerned that their spouse's sexual needs aren't being met.
    - Do you have that concern?
    - What about your own sexual energies?

11. Do you find that the absence of your husband is stressful?
    - Do you look forward to the absence?
Are there positive aspects to your husband's travel?

12. Do you have any special ways of handling the return time?
   How long do you think it takes until you feel "things are back to normal"?

13. Are you concerned about the current risks or dangers in travel?
   Do anything different?

14. Are the children more often sick when Dad is away?

15. Does your relationship with the children change?

16. Do you get sick more often? Is this different than when husband is at home?

17. Is there a change in consumption of food, alcohol, medications, drugs, tobacco?..

18. (If the spouse works outside of home:)
   Do you feel there is a change in stress of your job when husband travels?
   Is your job a source of stress or support?
Interview with the traveler

1. Do you think that business travel has an impact on your relationship? Explain.
   (positive, negative, how)

2. Who determines the travel, dates and length?
   (boss, traveler, other)

3. Before the travel begins, is anything different? (e.g. rituals, fights)

4. Do you have any contact with your spouse during your absence?
   Type of contact
   Frequency
   Reasons for the contact
   Who is most likely to initiate the contact?

5. Do you do anything else to keep each other up to date? (e.g. keeping journal, diary)

6. Is the contact during travel more or less stress-producing? (create more loneliness, reassuring)

7. What ways do you have to handle the time away from your family?

8. What have you found to be the most helpful way to deal with the absence from your spouse?
   Least helpful (things that you did, but were not helpful)

9. Often there can be a shift of responsibilities when the you are away.
   How do you handle this responsibility shift?
   Does this present any difficulties when you return?

10. Some are concerned that their spouse's sexual needs aren't being met; do you have that concern?
    What about your own sexual energies?
11. Do you find the trips stressful?
   
   Do you look forward to the trips?
   
   What are some positive aspects?

12. Do you have any special ways of handling the return time?
   
   How long do you think it takes until you feel "thing are back to normal"?

13. Do you have commitments outside of work (community, political, religious, social, involvement)?
   
   How are these maintained during your absence?

14. Are you concerned about the current risks or dangers in travel?
   
   Do you do anything different?

15. Are the children more often sick when you are away?

16. Does your relationship with the children change? If so, how does it change?

17. Do you get sick more often?
   
   Is this different than when at home?

18. Is there a change in your consumption of food, alcohol, medications, drugs, tobacco, while traveling
Coping
With
Business
Travel

A Survey of Attitudes and Coping Strategies

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Department of Family and Child Development
Northern Virginia Graduate Center
About this survey

The purpose of this survey is to gain information about how couples adjust to business travel. The information we are asking from you is not available from any other source. It is only through your cooperation that we can gain the information needed to better understand how business travel affects you and your family. We appreciate your taking time to participate in this survey.

This survey consists of two parts, the attached questionnaire and an interview.

Your responses will be held confidential and you will not be personally identified in any way. You may withdraw from the survey at any time.

The attached questionnaire contains copyrighted materials.

Linda F. Little, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Project Director

Mary Ellen Pollak,
Principal Investigator
Section One

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS OR FILL IN THE BLANK.

1.01 How long has your husband been employed with current firm? ______ years

1.02 Number of trips your husband has made within the past two years that lasted one week or less? _______

1.03 Average duration of each trip? ______ days

1.04 How long have you been married to your husband? ______ years
What number marriage is this for you? ______

1.05 Year you were born ______

1.06 Highest level of your education

(1) high school  
(2) some college  
(3) vocational training  
(4) college graduate  
(5) master's degree  
(6) Ph.D.  
(7) other (please specify) __________________________

1.07 Are you employed presently outside of your home?

(1) yes  
(2) no

If yes, please state type of employment __________________

If yes, part-time or full-time __________________________

1.08 Do you have children?

(1) yes  
(2) no

If yes, please indicate number of children __________________
If yes, please give ages _______ youngest, _______ oldest.
If yes, how many are living with you now ______

1.09 Do you have family other than your current spouse and children living in the Washington D.C. area?

(1) yes  
(2) no
IF YES, CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

(1) parents
(2) husband's parents
(3) brothers or sisters
(4) husband's brothers or sisters
(5) aunts, uncles, cousins
(6) husband's aunts, uncles, cousins
(7) children from previous marriage(s)

If yes, how frequently do you see or talk with them?

(1) daily
(2) weekly
(3) monthly
(4) several times a year
(5) never

If yes, does the frequency of your contact change when your husband travels?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, how does it change?

(1) much more frequent
(2) more frequent
(3) less frequent
(4) no contact

1.10 Do you have family living outside Washington D.C. area?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, does the contact with them change when your husband travels?

(1) no contact
(2) no change
(3) more contact
(4) less contact

1.11 How long have you lived in the present location? _______ years

1.12 What is your involvement in a religious community (temple, church, synagogue, etc.)

(1) none
(2) daily
(3) weekly
(4) less than weekly to more than once a month
(5) monthly or less
1.13  Does this change when your husband travels?
     
     (1) no change
     (2) more involved
     (3) less involved
     (4) not involved

1.14  Are you involved in any community or social organizations?

     (1) yes
     (2) no

If yes, does the involvement change when your husband travels?

     (1) no change
     (2) more involved
     (3) less involved
     (4) not involved

1.15  Does the amount of contact with friends change when your husband travels?

     (1) no change
     (2) less contact
     (3) more contact
     (4) much more contact
     (5) have no friends

1.16  Does the amount of contact with colleagues change when your husband travels?

     (1) no change
     (2) less contact
     (3) more contact
     (4) much more contact
     (5) have no colleagues

1.17  Family income level

     (1) $25,000 to $50,000
     (2) $50,000 to $100,000
     (3) $100,000 to $150,000
     (4) over $150,000
The amount of responsibilities a spouse has varies with each family. Below is a partial list of responsibilities either spouse may have.

Please circle your choice after each responsibility using the following code:

1 = Wife always does this
2 = We share this
3 = I do this only when my spouse is traveling
4 = Husband always does this
5 = Does not apply

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<td>pay bills</td>
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<td>plan monthly budget</td>
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<td>major maintenance on the house</td>
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<td>major maintenance on the car</td>
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<td>do minor repairs around the house</td>
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<td>do yard work</td>
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<td>be responsible for child care</td>
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<td>drive car pool</td>
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<td>make decisions for major medical care</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>make major purchase decisions over $500</td>
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<td>make purchase decisions ranging from $100 to $500</td>
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<td>make all other purchase decisions except food</td>
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<td>be involved in sports activities with children</td>
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<td>make decisions about attending social events</td>
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<td>make decisions about legal issues</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>help with children's homework</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>do the food shopping</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>do children's clothes shopping</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>do meal planning and preparation</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>do the house cleaning</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>take children to the doctor</td>
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</table>
(23) take children to and from non-school activities

(24) handle emergencies

(25) pack suitcases for spouse's travel

(26) make travel arrangements for spouse

(27) please add anything more from your own experiences

1.19 Any additional information or reactions you might have about the travel of your spouse will be greatly appreciated.
Section Two

USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT FAMILY SITUATION:

1 = ALMOST NEVER
2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
3 = SOMETIMES
4 = FREQUENTLY
5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

2.01 We ask each other for help. 1 2 3 4 5
2.02 When problems arise, we compromise. 1 2 3 4 5
2.03 We approve of each other's friends. 1 2 3 4 5
2.04 We are flexible in how we handle our differences. 1 2 3 4 5
2.05 We like to do things with each other. 1 2 3 4 5
2.06 Different persons act as leaders in our marriage. 1 2 3 4 5
2.07 We feel closer to each other than to people outside our family. 1 2 3 4 5
2.08 We change our way of handling tasks. 1 2 3 4 5
2.09 We like to spend free time with each other. 1 2 3 4 5
2.10 We try new ways of dealing with problems. 1 2 3 4 5
2.11 We feel very close to each other. 1 2 3 4 5
2.12 We jointly make the decisions in our marriage. 1 2 3 4 5
2.13 We share hobbies and interests together. 1 2 3 4 5
2.14 Rules change in our marriage. 1 2 3 4 5
2.15 We can easily think of things to do together as a couple. 1 2 3 4 5
2.16 We shift household responsibilities from person to person. 1 2 3 4 5
2.17 We consult each other on our decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
2.18 It is hard to identify who the leader is in our marriage. 1 2 3 4 5
2.19 Togetherness is a top priority. 1 2 3 4 5
2.20 It is hard to tell who does which household chores. 1 2 3 4 5
 USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS, PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY, IDEALLY, HOW YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR FAMILY TO BE:

1 = ALMOST NEVER  
2 = ONCE IN A WHILE  
3 = SOMETIMES  
4 = FREQUENTLY  
5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

2.21 We would ask each other for help.  
2.22 When problems arise, I wish we would compromise.  
2.23 We would approve of each other’s friends.  
2.24 We would be flexible in how we handle our differences.  
2.25 We would like to do things with each other.  
2.26 Different persons would act as leaders in our marriage.  
2.27 We would feel closer to each other than to people outside our family.  
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2.34 Rules would change in our marriage.  
2.35 We could easily think of things to do together as a couple.  
2.36 We would shift household responsibilities from person to person.  
2.37 We would consult each other on our decisions.  
2.38 We would know who the leader is in our marriage.  
2.39 Togetherness would be top priority.  
2.40 We could tell who does which household chores
Section Three

ALL COUPLES HAVE DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNICATING. USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE USUALLY COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER:

1 = SELDOM  
2 = SOMETIMES  
3 = FAIRLY OFTEN  
4 = OFTEN

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<tr>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>Calmly discuss something together?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Become critical and disapproving?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>Have a good time together?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>Become angry?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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Section Four

WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEMS, EVERYONE HAS PREFERRED WAYS OF COPING. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YOU DID IN CONNECTION WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER. IF IT IS HELPFUL, YOU MAY THINK OF A SPECIFIC TRIP WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

1 = NEVER  
2. = YES, SOMETIMES  
3 = YES, OFTEN

| 4.01  | Tried to find out more about the situation.                  | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.02  | Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem.     | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.03  | Talked with friend about the problem.                       | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.04  | Talked with professional person (e.g. doctor, lawyer, clergy). | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.05  | Prayed for guidance and/or strength.                        | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.06  | Prepared for the worst.                                     | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.07  | Didn’t worry about it. Figured everything would probably work out. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.08  | Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.09  | Tried to see the positive side of the situation.            | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.10  | Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.11  | Made a plan of action and followed it.                      | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.12  | Considered several alternatives for handling the problem.   | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.13  | Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.14  | Kept my feelings to myself.                                 | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.15  | Took things a day at a time, one step at a time.            | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.16  | Tried to step back from the situation and be more objective. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.17  | Went over the situation in my mind to try to understand it. | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.18  | Tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.      | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.19  | Told myself things that helped me feel better.               | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4.20  | Get away from things for awhile.                            | 1   | 2   | 3   |
4.21 I knew what had to be done and tried harder to make things work. 1 2 3
4.22 Avoided being with people in general. 1 2 3
4.23 Made a promise to myself that things would be different next time. 1 2 3
4.24 Refused to believe that it happened. 1 2 3
4.25 Accepted it; nothing could be done. 1 2 3
4.26 Let my feelings out somehow. 1 2 3
4.27 Sought help from persons or groups with similar experiences. 1 2 3
4.28 Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation. 1 2 3
4.29 Tried to reduce tension by:
   a. drinking more 1 2 3
   b. eating more 1 2 3
   c. smoking more 1 2 3
   d. exercising more 1 2 3
   e. taking more tranquilizing drugs 1 2 3

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire!
Coping With Business Travel

A Survey of Attitudes and Coping Strategies

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Department of Family and Child Development
Northern Virginia Graduate Center
About this survey

The purpose of this survey is to gain information about how couples adjust to business travel. The information we are asking from you is not available from any other source. It is only through your cooperation that we can gain the information needed to better understand how business travel affects you and your family. We appreciate your taking time to participate in this survey.

This survey consists of two parts, the attached questionnaire and an interview.

Your responses will be held confidential and you will not be personally identified in any way. You may withdraw from the survey at any time.

The attached questionnaire contains copyrighted materials.

Linda F. Little, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Project Director

Mary Ellen Pollak,
Principal Investigator
Section One

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS OR FILL IN THE BLANK.

1.01 How long have you been employed with current firm? ______ years

1.02 Number of trips you have made within the past two years that lasted one week or less? ______

1.03 Average duration of each trip? ______ days

1.04 How long have you been married to your current spouse? ______ years
   What number marriage is this for you? ______

1.05 Year you were born ______

1.06 Highest level of your education

   (1) high school
   (2) some college
   (3) vocational training
   (4) college graduate
   (5) master's degree
   (6) Ph.D.
   (7) other (please specify) ________________________________

1.07 Do you have children?

   (1) yes
   (2) no

   If yes, please indicate number of children __________
   If yes, please give ages _______youngest, _______oldest.
   If yes, how many are living with you now _______

1.08 Do you have family other than your current spouse and children living in the Washington D.C. area?

   (1) yes
   (2) no

   IF YES, CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

   (1) parents
   (2) spouse's parents
   (3) brothers or sisters
   (4) spouse's brothers or sisters
   (5) aunts, uncles, cousins
   (6) spouse's aunts, uncles, cousins
   (7) children from previous marriage(s)
If yes, how frequently do you see or talk with them?

(1) daily
(2) weekly
(3) monthly
(4) several times a year
(5) never

1.09 How long have you lived in the present location? ______ years

1.10 What is your involvement in a religious community (temple, church, synagogue, etc.)

(1) none
(2) daily
(3) weekly
(4) less than weekly to more than once a month
(5) monthly or less

1.11 Does this change when you travel?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.12 Are you involved in any community or social organizations?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, does the involvement change when you travel?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.13 Does the amount of contact with colleagues change while you are on a business trip?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no friends

1.14 Does the amount of contact with friends change while you are on a business trip?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no colleagues
1.15 Family income level

- (1) $25,000 to $50,000
- (2) $50,000 to $100,000
- (3) $100,000 to $150,000
- (4) over $150,000

1.16 The amount of responsibilities a spouse has varies with each family. Below is a partial list of responsibilities either spouse may have.

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE AFTER EACH RESPONSIBILITY USING THE FOLLOWING CODE:

1 = WIFE ALWAYS DOES THIS
2 = WE SHARE THIS
3 = WIFE DOES THIS ONLY WHEN SPOUSE IS TRAVELING
4 = HUSBAND ALWAYS DOES THIS
5 = DOES NOT APPLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) balance check book</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) pay bills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) plan monthly budget</td>
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<td>(7) do yard work</td>
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<td>(8) be responsible for child care</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>(9) drive car pool</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>(10) make decisions for major medical care</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11) make major purchase decisions over $500</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) make purchase decisions ranging from $100 to $500</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) make all other purchase decisions except food</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14) be involved in sports activities with children</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15) make decisions about attending social events</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) make decisions about legal issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) help with children's homework</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) do the food shopping</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(19) do children's clothes shopping
(20) do meal planning and preparation
(21) do the house cleaning
(22) take children to the doctor
(23) take children to and from non-school activities
(24) handle emergencies
(25) pack suitcases for travel
(26) make travel arrangements
(27) please add anything more from your own experiences

1.17 How many hours do you work per week on average? _______ hours
1.18 How many hours do you work per week while on a business trip? _____ hours
1.19 How many weeks of vacation do you take per year? ________ weeks
   Taken alone? _________ weeks
   Taken with spouse? ________ weeks
   Taken with family? ________ weeks
1.20 Any additional information or reactions you might have about the effects of your business travel on you and your spouse will be greatly appreciated.
Section Two

USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT FAMILY SITUATION:

1 = ALMOST NEVER
2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
3 = SOMETIMES
4 = FREQUENTLY
5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

2.01 We ask each other for help. 1 2 3 4 5
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USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS, PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY, IDEALLY, HOW YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR FAMILY TO BE:

1 = ALMOST NEVER
2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
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4 = FREQUENTLY
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2.40 We could tell who does which household chores 1 2 3 4 5
Section Three

ALL COUPLES HAVE DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNICATING. USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE USUALLY COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER:

1 = Seldom
2 = Sometimes
3 = Fairly Often
4 = Often

3.01 Calmly discuss something together? 1 2 3 4
3.02 Have a stimulating exchange of ideas? 1 2 3 4
3.03 Disagree about something important 1 2 3 4
3.04 Become critical and disapproving? 1 2 3 4
3.05 Have a good time together? 1 2 3 4
3.06 Become angry? 1 2 3 4
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WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEMS, EVERYONE HAS PREFERRED WAYS OF COPING. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YOU DID IN CONNECTION WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER. IF IT IS HELPFUL, YOU MAY THINK OF A SPECIFIC TRIP WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

1 = NEVER  
2 = YES, SOMETIMES  
3 = YES, OFTEN

| 4.01 | Tried to find out more about the situation. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.02 | Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.03 | Talked with friend about the problem. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.04 | Talked with professional person (e.g. doctor, lawyer, clergy). | 1 2 3 |
| 4.05 | Prayed for guidance and/or strength. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.06 | Prepared for the worst. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.07 | Didn't worry about it. Figured everything would probably work out. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.08 | Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.09 | Tried to see the positive side of the situation. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.10 | Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.11 | Made a plan of action and followed it. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.12 | Considered several alternatives for handling the problem. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.13 | Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.14 | Kept my feelings to myself. | 1 2 3 |
| 4.15 | Took things a day at a time, one step at a time. | 1 2 3 |
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1.01 How long has your husband been employed with current firm? ______ years

1.02 Number of trips your husband has made within the past two years that lasted three weeks or longer?: ______

1.03 Average duration of each trip?: ______ weeks

1.04 How long have you been married to your husband?: ______ years
What number marriage is this for you?: ______

1.05 Year you were born: ______

1.06 Highest level of your education
   (1) high school
   (2) some college
   (3) vocational training
   (4) college graduate
   (5) master's degree
   (6) Ph.D.
   (7) other (please specify): _______________________

1.07 Are you employed presently outside of your home?
   (1) yes
   (2) no

   If yes, please state type of employment: ____________________

   If yes, part-time or full-time: ___________________________

1.08 Do you have children?
   (1) yes
   (2) no

   If yes, please indicate number of children: ____________
   If yes, please give ages: _______ youngest, _______ oldest.
   If yes, how many are living with you now: _________

1.09 Do you have family other than your current spouse and children living in the Washington D.C. area?
   (1) yes
   (2) no
IF YES, CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

(1) parents
(2) husband's parents
(3) brothers or sisters
(4) husband's brothers or sisters
(5) aunts, uncles, cousins
(6) husband's aunts, uncles, cousins
(7) children from previous marriage(s)

If yes, how frequently do you see or talk with them?

(1) daily
(2) weekly
(3) monthly
(4) several times a year
(5) never

If yes, does the frequency of your contact change when your husband travels?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, how does it change?

(1) much more frequent
(2) more frequent
(3) less frequent
(4) no contact

1.10 Do you have family living outside Washington D.C. area?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, does the contact with them change when your husband travels?

(1) no contact
(2) no change
(3) more contact
(4) less contact

1.11 How long have you lived in the present location? ____ years

1.12 What is your involvement in a religious community (temple, church, synagogue, etc.)

(1) none
(2) daily
(3) weekly
(4) less than weekly to more than once a month
(5) monthly or less
1.13 Does this change when your husband travels?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.14 Are you involved in any community or social organizations?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, does the involvement change when your husband travels?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.15 Does the amount of contact with friends change when your husband travels?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no friends

1.16 Does the amount of contact with colleagues change when your husband travels?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no colleagues

1.17 Family income level

(1) $25,000 to $50,000
(2) $50,000 to $100,000
(3) $100,000 to $150,000
(4) over $150,000
1.18. The amount of responsibilities a spouse has varies with each family. Below is a partial list of responsibilities either spouse may have.

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1 = WIFE ALWAYS DOES THIS
2 = WE SHARE THIS
3 = I DO THIS ONLY WHEN MY SPOUSE IS TRAVELING
4 = HUSBAND ALWAYS DOES THIS
5 = DOES NOT APPLY

| (1) balance check book             | 1 2 3 4 5 |
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| (3) plan monthly budget            | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (4) major maintenance on the house | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (5) major maintenance on the car   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (6) do minor repairs around the house | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (7) do yard work                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (8) be responsible for child care  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (9) drive car pool                 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (10) make decisions for major medical care | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (11) make major purchase decisions over $500 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
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| (13) make all other purchase decisions except food | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (14) be involved in sports activities with children | 1 2 3 4 5 |
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| (17) help with children's homework | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (18) do the food shopping          | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (19) do children's clothes shopping | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (20) do meal planning and preparation | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (21) do the house cleaning         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (22) take children to the doctor   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
(23) take children to and from non-school activities

(24) handle emergencies

(25) pack suitcases for spouse's travel

(26) make travel arrangements for spouse

(27) please add anything more from your own experiences

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1.19 Any additional information or reactions you might have about the travel of your spouse will be greatly appreciated.
Section Two

Using the following numbers please describe your current family situation:

1 = Almost never
2 = Once in a while
3 = Sometimes
4 = Frequently
5 = Almost always

2.01 We ask each other for help.
2.02 When problems arise, we compromise.
2.03 We approve of each other's friends.
2.04 We are flexible in how we handle our differences.
2.05 We like to do things with each other.
2.06 Different persons act as leaders in our marriage.
2.07 We feel closer to each other than to people outside our family.
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2.13 We share hobbies and interests together.
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2.15 We can easily think of things to do together as a couple.
2.16 We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
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2.18 It is hard to identify who the leader is in our marriage.
2.19 Togetherness is a top priority.
2.20 It is hard to tell who does which household chores.
Using the following numbers, please describe your family, ideally, how you would like your family to be:

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Section Three

ALL COUPLES HAVE DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNICATING. USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE USUALLY COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER:

1 = SELL DOM
2 = SOMETIMES
3 = FAIRLY OF TEN
4 = OF TEN

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<tr>
<th>3.01</th>
<th>Calmly discuss something together?</th>
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<td>3.02</td>
<td>Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?</td>
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<td>Disagree about something important</td>
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<td>3.04</td>
<td>Become critical and disapproving?</td>
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<td>3.05</td>
<td>Have a good time together?</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3.06</td>
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Section Four

WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEMS, EVERYONE HAS PREFERRED WAYS OF COPING. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YOU DID IN CONNECTION WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL BY CIRCLING THE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER. IF IT IS HELPFUL, YOU MAY THINK OF A SPECIFIC TRIP WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

1 = NEVER  
2 = YES, SOMETIMES  
3 = YES, OFTEN

4.01 Tried to find out more about the situation. 1 2 3
4.02 Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem. 1 2 3
4.03 Talked with friend about the problem. 1 2 3
4.04 Talked with professional person (e.g. doctor, lawyer, clergy). 1 2 3
4.05 Prayed for guidance and/or strength. 1 2 3
4.06 Prepared for the worst. 1 2 3
4.07 Didn't worry about it. Figured everything would probably work out. 1 2 3
4.08 Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed. 1 2 3
4.09 Tried to see the positive side of the situation. 1 2 3
4.10 Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem. 1 2 3
4.11 Made a plan of action and followed it. 1 2 3
4.12 Considered several alternatives for handling the problem. 1 2 3
4.13 Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. 1 2 3
4.14 Kept my feelings to myself. 1 2 3
4.15 Took things a day at a time, one step at a time. 1 2 3
4.16 Tried to step back from the situation and be more objective. 1 2 3
4.17 Went over the situation in my mind to try to understand it. 1 2 3
4.18 Tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch. 1 2 3
4.19 Told myself things that helped me feel better. 1 2 3
4.20 Got away from things for awhile. 1 2 3
4.21 I knew what had to be done and tried harder to make things work.  

4.22 Avoided being with people in general.  

4.23 Made a promise to myself that things would be different next time  

4.24 Refused to believe that it happened.  

4.25 Accepted it; nothing could be done.  

4.26 Let my feelings out somehow.  

4.27 Sought help from persons or groups with similar experiences.  

4.28 Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.  

4.29 Tried to reduce tension by:  

   a. drinking more  
   b. eating more  
   c. smoking more  
   d. exercising more  
   e. taking more tranquilizing drugs  

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire!
Coping With Business Travel

A Survey of Attitudes and Coping Strategies

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Department of Family and Child Development
Northern Virginia Graduate Center
About this survey

The purpose of this survey is to gain information about how couples adjust to business travel. The information we are asking from you is not available from any other source. It is only through your cooperation that we can gain the information needed to better understand how business travel affects you and your family. We appreciate your taking time to participate in this survey.

This survey consists of two parts, the attached questionnaire and an interview.

Your responses will be held confidential and you will not be personally identified in any way. You may withdraw from the survey at any time.

The attached questionnaire contains copyrighted materials.

Linda F. Little, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Project Director

Mary Ellen Pollak,
Principal Investigator
Section One

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS OR FILL IN THE BLANK.

1.01 How long have you been employed with current firm? ______ years

1.02 Number of trips you have made within the past two years that lasted three weeks or longer? ______

1.03 Average duration of each trip? ______ weeks

1.04 How long have you been married to your current spouse? ______ years
   What number marriage is this for you? ______

1.05 Year you were born ______

1.06 Highest level of your education
   (1) high school
   (2) some college
   (3) vocational training
   (4) college graduate
   (5) master's degree
   (6) Ph.D.
   (7) other (please specify) ______________________

1.07 Do you have children?
   (1) yes
   (2) no

   If yes, please indicate number of children __________________
   If yes, please give ages _______youngest, _______oldest.
   If yes, how many are living with you now _______

1.08 Do you have family other than your current spouse and children living in the Washington D.C. area?
   (1) yes
   (2) no

   IF YES, CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

   (1) parents
   (2) spouse's parents
   (3) brothers or sisters
   (4) spouse's brothers or sisters
   (5) aunts, uncles, cousins
   (6) spouse's aunts, uncles, cousins
   (7) children from previous marriage(s)
If yes, how frequently do you see or talk with them?

(1) daily
(2) weekly
(3) monthly
(4) several times a year
(5) never

1.09 How long have you lived in the present location? ________ years

1.10 What is your involvement in a religious community (temple, church, synagogue, etc.)

(1) none
(2) daily
(3) weekly
(4) less than weekly to more than once a month
(5) monthly or less

1.11 Does this change when you travel?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.12 Are you involved in any community or social organizations?

(1) yes
(2) no

If yes, does the involvement change when you travel?

(1) no change
(2) more involved
(3) less involved
(4) not involved

1.13 Does the amount of contact with colleagues change while you are on a business trip?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no friends

1.14 Does the amount of contact with friends change while you are on a business trip?

(1) no change
(2) less contact
(3) more contact
(4) much more contact
(5) have no colleagues
1.15 Family income level

(1) $25,000 to $50,000
(2) $50,000 to $100,000
(3) $100,000 to $150,000
(4) over $150,000

1.16. The amount of responsibilities a spouse has varies with each family. Below is a partial list of responsibilities either spouse may have.

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE AFTER EACH RESPONSIBILITY USING THE FOLLOWING CODE:

1 = WIFE ALWAYS DOES THIS
2 = WE SHARE THIS
3 = WIFE DOES THIS ONLY WHEN SPOUSE IS TRAVELING
4 = HUSBAND ALWAYS DOES THIS
5 = DOES NOT APPLY

<table>
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<td>balance check book</td>
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<td>pay bills</td>
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<td>plan monthly budget</td>
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<td>major maintenance on the house</td>
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<td>do minor repairs around the house</td>
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<td>do yard work</td>
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(27) please add anything more from your own experiences

1.17 How many hours do you work per week on average? _______ hours

1.18 How many hours do you work per week while on a business trip? _______ hours

1.19 How many weeks of vacation do you take per year? _______ weeks
   Taken alone? _______ weeks
   Taken with spouse? _______ weeks
   Taken with family? _______ weeks

1.20 Any additional information or reactions you might have about the effects of your business travel on you and your spouse will be greatly appreciated.
Section Two

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<td>2.35</td>
<td>We could easily think of things to do together as a couple.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>We would shift household responsibilities from person to person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>We would consult each other on our decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>We would know who the leader is in our marriage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>Togetherness would be top priority.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>We could tell who does which household chores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section Three

ALL COUPLES HAVE DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNICATING. USING THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE USUALLY COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER:

1 = SELDOM
2 = SOMETIMES
3 = FAIRLY OFTEN
4 = OFTEN

3.01 Calmly discuss something together? 1 2 3 4
3.02 Have a stimulating exchange of ideas? 1 2 3 4
3.03 Disagree about something important 1 2 3 4
3.04 Become critical and disapproving? 1 2 3 4
3.05 Have a good time together? 1 2 3 4
3.06 Become angry? 1 2 3 4
Section Four

When faced with problems, everyone has preferred ways of coping. Please indicate which of the following you did in connection with business travel by circling the appropriate number. If it is helpful, you may think of a specific trip within the past 12 months.

1 = NEVER  
2. = YES, SOMETIMES  
3 = YES, OFTEN

4.01 Tried to find out more about the situation.  

4.02 Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem.  

4.03 Talked with friend about the problem.  

4.04 Talked with professional person (e.g. doctor, lawyer, clergy).  

4.05 Prayed for guidance and/or strength.  

4.06 Prepared for the worst.  

4.07 Didn’t worry about it. Figured everything would probably work out.  

4.08 Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed.  

4.09 Tried to see the positive side of the situation.  

4.10 Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem.  

4.11 Made a plan of action and followed it.  

4.12 Considered several alternatives for handling the problem.  

4.13 Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.  

4.14 Kept my feelings to myself.  

4.15 Took things a day at a time, one step at a time.  

4.16 Tried to step back from the situation and be more objective.  

4.17 Went over the situation in my mind to try to understand it.  

4.18 Tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.  

4.19 Told myself things that helped me feel better.  

4.20 Got away from things for awhile.
4.21 I knew what had to be done and tried harder to make things work.

4.22 Avoided being with people in general.

4.23 Made a promise to myself that things would be different next time.

4.24 Refused to believe that it happened.

4.25 Accepted it; nothing could be done.

4.26 Let my feelings out somehow.

4.27 Sought help from persons or groups with similar experiences.

4.28 Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.

4.29 Tried to reduce tension by:
   a. drinking more
   b. eating more
   c. smoking more
   d. exercising more
   e. taking more tranquilizing drugs

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire!
Appendix C

Cover Letters
Letter to Participants
(On Virginia Tech Stationary)

Dear (Participant's Name)

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study. How couples cope with work related travel can help determine and strengthen couples' relationships.

Enclosed is the survey. Please complete this before the interview and return it to me when we meet for the interview. Please complete the survey alone, without discussing it with your spouse, until both of you have finished it.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments regarding the survey or interview, please do not hesitate to call me at 698-6033.

The results of the study will be available to you. Please let me know if you would like to receive them.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Pollak
Principal Investigator
Dear Fellow Students at Virginia Tech,

I am writing my master's degree thesis at Virginia Tech on the impact of intermittent business travel on couples and looking at the coping skills used by these couples.

Therefore, I am requesting your assistance in finding couples who would be willing to participate in this study. If you know of anyone who fulfills the criteria listed below and may be interested in volunteering, please contact me. The amount of time involved per person is about 15 minutes to fill in a questionnaire and 30 to 45 minutes to participate in an interview. The interviews are done with each person individually.

There are two categories of couples I am interested in for this study. First is the short term intermittent traveler. Travel should average 60-100 days per year for less than two weeks at a time per trip. (This is on the average of 5 to 10 days per month). The second group is the extended travel group. Their travel should be for 3 weeks to 3 months at a time for more than two times a year.

The following criteria applies to both groups:

1. The husband is the traveler
2. The couple is white American
3. The family income exceeds $25,000 per year
4. Length of marriage to current spouse is more than two years
5. Both persons are over 25 years
6. The travel has been occurring for a minimum of two years.

If you have any questions or know anyone who may be a participant, please contact me at 698-6033 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays or at 620-4807 any other time.

Many thanks!!

Sincerely yours,

Mary Ellen Pollak
Appendix D

Demographic Profile of the Sample
Table D/1

Demographic Profile of ST Couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of marriage</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-group</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

Group | Years | 16.7 | 13.0 | 20.0 |
Men   | Years | 16.8 | 16.0 | 18.0 |
Women | Years | 16.5 | 13.0 | 20.0 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment in current firm a</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trips during past 2 years</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time away each trip</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of days away during the past 2 years</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>120.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while not traveling a</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while travelling a</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Refers to men only.
Table D/2

Demographic Profile of LT Couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of marriage</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-group</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table D/2 (cont.)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment in current firm</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trips during past 2 years</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time away each trip</td>
<td>Weeks</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of days away during the past 2 years</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>105.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>168.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while not traveling</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while travelling</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.**  
<sup>a</sup> Refers to men only.  
<sup>b</sup> Two observations are missing.
### Table D/3

**T-Tests for the Demographic Variables of the ST and LT Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of marriage</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest child</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table D/3 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment in current firm a</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while not</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traveling a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week while</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travelling a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>US Dollars</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* a Refers to men only.
Table D/4

Number of Wives Employed Outside the Home: Comparing ST and LT Sample Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Not employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST-wives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT-wives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Statistical results of the comparison of wives employed outside the home versus those not employed:

$X^2(1, N=20) = 0.95, p<.33$

Comparison of wives employed full-time with wives employed part-time or not employed:

$X^2(1, N=20) = 1.98, p<.16$
REFERENCES
References


U.S. Travel Data Center. (Spring 1988). *National Travel Survey*. Washington, D.C.

VITA

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Masters candidate, Marriage and Family Therapy, Virginia Tech
1965  BSN, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota

Professional Experience:
1986 to Present  Center for Family Services, Virginia Tech,
                    Falls Church, Va.
1987 - 1989  Assistant Coordinator, Center for Family Services.
1986 - 1988  Family therapy intern, completed over 500 client contact hours
1975 - 1985  Childbirth Educator, Parent and Child, Inc.,
                    Washington, D.C.
1970 - 1971  Public Health Nurse, Combined Nursing Service, Minneapolis, Minnesota
1967 - 1969  Psychiatric Nurse, Fort Logan Mental Health Center, Denver, Colorado
1965 - 1967

Obstetrical Nurse, Bethesda Lutheran Hospital, St. Paul, Minnesota

Professional

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

Membership(s)

Phi Kappa Phi

Mary Ellen Pollak