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**CONSUMER GIFTING:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
HUSBANDS AND WIVES AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CHILD**

by

DEBORAH Y. COHN

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Business
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York**

1997

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Business in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

**CONSUMER GIFTING:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
HUSBANDS AND WIVES AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CHILD**

by

Deborah Y. Cohn

Advisor: Professor Leon G. Schiffman

The nature of the relationship between giver and recipient, an important factor in choosing a gift, is at the heart of this research. This research examines gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child. As expected, gifting between husbands and wives changes due to the transition to parenthood.

A phenomenological study was conducted of gifting between husbands and wives during the transition to parenthood. *A priori* global themes, or expected patterns of experience, were originated from an extensive review of the relevant literature concerning gifting and life transitions,

family decision making, and gender. Thirty respondents (e.g., fifteen couples) with one child were interviewed concerning their gifting with each other. The interview texts are investigated for instances of the *a priori* themes. In addition, emergent themes emerged from the interviews.

Three methods of analysis are employed: global theme analysis, content analysis, and metaphor analysis. Seven global themes, some determined *a priori* and some emergent, are found to be relevant to the respondents: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) coping and personal resource allocation, (4) coping and gift shopping patterns, (5) preference prediction, (6) the role of gender, and (7) sexuality. The content analysis further illustrates the themes.

The metaphor themes examine symbolic consumer gifting metaphors. Metaphor themes are classified by gifting paradigms which examine what gifting is a metaphor for (e.g., gifting communicates love). In addition, consumer metaphor usage for gift discussion is examined. These metaphors include gifting as a child's game, gifting as a child's joy, and gifting as tradition. In this way, a thick description of gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child is developed. In closing, marketing strategy and future research are suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The birth of one's first child is a life status change in which the marital dyad is transformed into a family triad. Transitions such as this herald changes in purchase and consumption behavior (e.g., spontaneous changes in brand preferences) (Andreasen 1984; Fellerman and Debevec 1992; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander and Schouten 1989; Schouten 1991) which may become life long preferences (Stewart 1994). It has been suggested that a program of consumer research into life status changes is warranted (Andreasen 1984; Fischer and Gainer 1993; Granbois 1994; McAlexander 1991; Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994; Schouten 1991; Young 1991).

The nature of the relationship between giver and recipient is an important factor in choosing a gift. It is this relationship between both giver and recipient that is at the heart of this research. This dual orientation is in contrast to most of the available research on consumer gifting that has been "giver-centric"—i.e., stressing the role of the giver while underplaying the role of the recipient in the gift exchange relationship (Horne and Winakor 1991; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993). The tendency to stress the giver over the receiver would appear to be a mistake, especially since many givers' gift choices are

based on the characteristics of receivers (Belk 1976; Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey 1992; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993), and characteristics of the joint giver-recipient relationship (Belk 1976, 1979, 1982; Goodwin, Smith, and Spiggle 1990; Sherry 1983). Furthermore, it has been suggested that consumer research tends to focus on the individual consumer to the exclusion of groups (e.g., families) (Davis 1976; Doyle and Hutchinson 1973; Rudd and Kohout 1983). This research seeks to overcome these biases by bringing attention to both giver and recipient within the family structure.

Since in most private realm occasions women are the primary gift givers (Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and Wagner 1991; McGrath 1989, 1995; Sherry and McGrath 1989) it is not surprising that women are also the primary subjects in gifting research (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993). However, this seems to be limiting since in dating and marital relationships, men are more often the givers and women the recipients of gifts (Belk and Coon 1993; Sherry and McGrath 1989). Still further, only examining women would preclude a full understanding of gift receiving. Some consumer research has been devoted specifically to male gift exchange attitudes (Otnes, Ruth, and Milbourne 1994) while some has been devoted to gifting behavior (i.e., the process of gift exchange that takes place between a giver and a recipient)

between spouses (Hart 1974; Heroux and Church 1992; Horne and Winakor 1995; Wolfinbarger 1990). However, this research is limited. This is surprising since Christmas gifts between spouses are expected to be more expensive (Caplow 1984) and unique (Belk 1979) than gifts between those in any other relationship. To overcome the limits of previous research, this research will examine men and women in naturally occurring pairs of marital dyads. A "thick description" of men and women as gift givers and gift recipients within the marital dyad after the birth of the first child will be developed.

Gift exchange within families and marital dyads is a dynamic phenomenon. It has been suggested that research is needed into how gifting evolves over the life course (Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). In dating relationships, gift giving evolves from an economic exchange model through a social exchange model and ends with a romantic love model (Belk and Coon 1993). Belk and Coon (1993) pose the research question as to what gift giving model operates after marriage. This research is an extension of Belk and Coon (1993) in that stages in the relationship (i.e., those occurring when dating culminates in marriage and child) will be examined. To this end, this research will examine stability and change in gifting behavior between spouses after the birth of the first child.

Married couples are the largest and most powerful

consumer segment, making up 56 percent of all consumer households in 1990 and accounting for 70 percent of all consumer spending. In the same year, approximately 25 million consumer households were married couples with children under age 18. These parents are the largest segment of married couple households (Edmonson, Waldrop, Crispell, and Jacobsen 1993). Furthermore, Americans are delaying marriage (Edmonson et al. 1993; Crispell 1994) and childbirth (Edmonson et al. 1993). The median age for women (men) to marry in the mid 1950s was 20 (22.5) compared to 24.4 (26.5) in 1992 (Crispell 1994). Due to these and other trends, it is predicted that future parents will be older dual income couples who have more spending resources. This makes these parents a profitable target market (Edmonson et al. 1993) and a worthy segment of the market in which to focus this research.

This research will employ a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is best suited to delve into the rich symbolic meanings that are present in consumer gifting behaviors. The strength of phenomenological qualitative research is in deriving a first person description of a specified domain of experience (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1990). This description can include symbolic meaning and ritual actions along with "lived meaning" of consumer gift events which are viewed holistically (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1990).

In a phenomenological study, global themes or common patterns of experience are derived from an exhaustive search of previous research and qualitative data (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). *A priori* global themes, anticipated to be present in the interview texts, are derived from the literature while emergent interpretative themes are those which emerge from the data (e.g., interviews) (Hirschman 1994; Schouten 1991). *A priori* and emergent themes will be developed. Since the purpose of this research is to comprehend and develop a thick description of spousal gifting experiences before and after the birth of the first child a qualitative phenomenological research design is most appropriate.

In terms of organization, the next chapter, Chapter 2, will review the literature pertaining to gift giving within families and the impact of the transition to parenthood. The chapter will develop *a priori* global themes. Chapter 3 will present the methods used to study the phenomenon of gift giving between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child. The qualitative research method (phenomenology), including the process of data collection and analysis, will be presented. Three analysis methods will be discussed: global theme analysis, content analysis, and metaphor analysis. This triangulation of methods is employed in order to enhance trustworthiness (Wallendorf and Belk 1989). The fourth and fifth chapters present the

analyses. Chapter 4 presents the global theme and content analyses while Chapter 5 presents the metaphor analysis. Finally, Chapter 6 presents a summary and conclusions. The conclusions will include suggestions for marketing strategy and future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an exhaustive process of global theme development. A three step process of theme development is employed. These steps include: (1) finding literature connected with the research topic, (2) assessing the literature, and (3) originating global themes. Multiple channels are employed to search for previous literature and research. Computer literature searches of abstracts (e.g., PSYCHLIT, ABIinform); follow-up of references cited (e.g., in review papers, published research, and books); contacts with experts on the subject; conversations with professors and other students; and attendance at professional meetings are all employed for an exhaustive search for relevant literature. As the literature is gathered the relevant studies are assessed. Next, *a priori* themes are originated from the literature (Moustakas 1994). The themes constitute a point of departure for inquiry (Schouten 1991).

Previous research pertaining to life status changes in general and transition to parenthood in particular will be reviewed. Furthermore, connections have been made between these streams of research and marketing and consumer behavior research. Specifically, family decision making, preference prediction (a skill needed for gifting) and the

association between gender and consumer gifting are reviewed. Delving into these areas of research made it possible to originate five *a priori* themes which relate to gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child.

Life status changes herald changes in purchase and consumption behavior (e.g., spontaneous changes in brand preferences) (Andreasen 1984; Fellerman and Debevec 1992; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander and Schouten 1989; Schouten 1991) and changes in gifting between husbands and wives. The transition to parenthood is the particular life status change that is the focus of this research. The positive and negative of becoming a family, for example, can have an impact on the gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child. Furthermore, stress can occur with life status changes. Stress and the coping mechanisms developed to deal with it can lead to changes in consumer gifting behavior.

Preferences of spouses are predicted when choosing a gift. During life status changes, prediction of spouses' preferences may become more difficult. This difficulty can lead to changes in gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child. Furthermore, some couples may be tempted to deliberately "predict" their spouses' preferences inaccurately.

Gender can affect perceptions of appropriate products

(Gould and Weil 1991), appropriate timing of gifts (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1993), and the direction of giving (Heroux and Church 1992) between husbands and wives. Over time, gifting between husbands and wives may change due to expectations based on gender categories.

Five *a priori* global themes are originated from the theme development process: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) stress and coping, (4) preference prediction, and (5) the role of gender. Changes in gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child are expected in each of these areas.

In terms of organization, first, a brief definition of a gift will be offered. Second, the literature pertaining to gifting and life status changes, transition to parenthood, family decision making and the ability to predict another's preferences (a skill needed for gifting), and gender will be presented. The research evidence from these studies is distinguished from the new knowledge being sought and the *a priori* themes are assembled. Last, a summary and conclusions are offered.

The Definition of a Gift

Early gift giving research focused on the nature of reciprocity in gifting (e.g., Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1925) leading consumer researchers to view gifting as a form of exchange (economic or social) (Belk and Coon 1993). Sherry (1983) defines gift giving as a process model with three

stages: Gestation (i.e., all behavior antecedent to the actual gift exchange, including purchase), Prestation (i.e., the ritualized gift exchange), and Reformulation (i.e., the realignment of social bonds) in which gifts are just one component of the gifting typology along with givers, recipients, and situational conditions. As part of this model, the term "gift" is defined as "virtually any resource . . . tangible or intangible . . . transformed . . . through the vehicles of social relationships and gifting occasions" (Sherry 1983, p 160). Belk and Coon (1993) reach outside of the exchange model (i.e., the agapic love model) to include gifts in which reciprocity may not be expected.

Incorporating Sherry's model into an earlier definition by Belk (1979) a gift is defined as "a good or service (including the giver's time, activities, and ideas) voluntarily provided to another person or group (Belk 1979) through some sort of ritual prestation" in which the giver may or may not expect something in return (Belk and Coon 1993 p 394). In this attempt to exclude coerced and legally mandated goods, gifts of an obligatory nature (often a motive for gifting) are also excluded (Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle 1990; Wolfinbarger and Yale 1993).

Furthermore, Horne and Winakor (1991) observe that gifting research reveals few definitions of the term "gift" and posits four possible distinguishing factors: (1) context (e.g., holidays), (2) the "presence of other objects or

happenings that bear symbolic meanings (e.g., the birthday cake, the Christmas tree, the wrapped gifts, and the congregation of friends and relatives)" (3) degree of embellishment, and (4) level of consultation with the recipient (Horne and Winakor 1991 p 31). These "other objects or happenings" make up the gift constellation, one form of the product constellation, which is defined as "clusters of complementary products, specific brands, and/or consumption activities used by consumers to define, communicate, and enact social roles" (Solomon and Assael 1987 p 191). Still further, self-gifts have been defined as personally symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and highly context bound (Mick and DeMoss 1990).

The definition of a gift employed here is modified from Belk and Coon (1993) to exclude the reference to motivation (i.e., voluntary) in order to allow for gifts of an obligatory nature. Furthermore, this definition includes self-gifts and the concept of gift constellations to read: a good or service provided to the self, another person, or a group through some sort of ritual prestation, surrounded by gift constellations, in which the giver may or may not expect reciprocity.

The A Priori Life Status Change Theme

This section delves into the literature concerning life status changes in order to develop the life status change a

priori theme. Life transitions are often described as normative, expectable scheduled changes involving entrances into and exits from social roles and are associated with developmental role changes and task realignments. Changes in life status often herald changes in consumption behavior (e.g., spontaneous changes in brand preferences) (Andreasen 1984; Fellerman and Debevec 1992; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander and Schouten 1989; Schouten 1991) which may become life long preferences (Stewart 1994). Rites of passage are rituals which surround life status changes. Changes in role performance and gift sacredness may occur with rites of passage. Each of these aspects of life status changes will be developed.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage, a class of rituals that accompany changes in social status and surround the life cycle include: births, bar mitzvahs, confirmations, graduations, weddings, and funerals (Cornwell 1990; Rook 1985; Turner 1979; van Gennep 1960). Rites of passage create gifting occasions. These rites are comprised of three stages: separation, liminal or transitional, and reformulation (Turner 1979; van Gennep 1960). Role performance and sacred and profane are associated with rites of passage. Each of these will be discussed below.

Role Performance

During the liminal stage of rites of passage rituals, gifts are presented to the person who is undergoing a status change. Gifts are ritual artifacts (Rook 1985) which can help to maintain or change status (Schwartz 1967). These objects are expected to help gift recipients perform new roles (Schwartz 1967). For instance, gifts to women when their child is born help women perform the additional role of mother (Fischer and Gainer 1993). It is expected that after the birth of the first child gifts between the husband and wife may help them perform the new roles of mother and father.

Sacred and Profane

Gifts associated with rites of passage can be considered both sacred or profane. Sacred items are those that are "more significantly, powerful and extraordinary than the self" (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989 p. 13). Furthermore, gift items that are invested with "giftness" are considered sacred (Sherry and McGrath 1989). At American wedding rituals, bride gifts have "giftness" and are sacred when they are selected by the givers and profane when they are selected by the bride (e.g., bridal registry) (Otnes and Lowrey 1993). Furthermore, men and women tend to differ in their feelings about the sacredness of gifts (Lowrey and Otnes 1994). It is expected that after the birth of the first child there could be a change in the

sacred status of gifts.

The A Priori Transition to Parenthood Theme

This section reviews the literature pertaining to the transition to parenthood in order to develop the *a priori* transition to parenthood theme. Experts suggest that the transition to parenthood is often completed by the time the first child reaches the age of two (Belsky 1986).

Affiliated with transition to parenthood are: (1) the positive and negative of becoming a family, and (2) family versus couple. Below is a discussion of the literature pertaining to the transition to parenthood.

The Positive and Negative of Becoming a Family

Andreasen (1984) measured the magnitude and the positive or negative impact of 23 objective and general life status changes, including the transition to parenthood which takes place after the birth of the first child. This event was considered a major positive event which initiates consumption changes (Andreasen 1984; Wright 1992 cited in Ozanne 1992). The shift from twosome to trio is an emotionally charged process that involves both gain and loss. There are three main benefits of bringing a child into the world and into one's life and home: (1) positive emotion (e.g., love, joy, happiness), (2) self enrichment (e.g., becoming less selfish and more future oriented), and (3) family cohesiveness (Belsky 1986). There are also

disadvantages to this momentous event: (1) role strain (e.g., adding the role of mother to the role of wife), (2) strain in the husband and wife relationship (e.g., reduced time together, changes in sexual relationship), (3) emotional uncertainty (e.g., doubts over competence of caring for child), and (4) costs (e.g., financial and social) (Belsky 1986). It is expected that the tensions between the positive and negative or the gain and loss of becoming a family will be exhibited in the gifting between spouses.

Family Versus Couple

Tensions arise between being a "couple" or a "family" and parents prioritize either one or the other (Daniels and Wiengarten 1982). It is expected that the priority of the parents—the dyad or the triad—will be expressed in the gifting behavior of the couple. Furthermore, when children arrive in a family parents tend to perceive their marriage more as a partnership and less as a romance with overall satisfaction in the marriage declining (Belsky 1986; Belsky and Pensky 1988). This shift in perspective is expected to impact on gifting in the marriage with less romantic gifts exchanged after the birth of the first child.

The *A Priori* Stress and Coping Theme

The previous research concerning stress and coping is examined in order to develop the *a priori* stress and coping

theme. Stress is defined as "a relationship between a person and the environment that is appraised by a person as relevant to his or her well being and in which a person's resources are taxed or exceeded" (Folkman and Lazarus 1985). Life status changes are believed to cause intra-family stress (Fellerman and Debevec 1992; Lavee, McCubbin, and Olson 1987). Consumer behavior, daily stress, and coping with stress are associated with this *a priori* global theme. Each of will be discussed.

Stress and Consumer Behavior

Stress has a direct effect on consumer behavior (Andreasen 1984; Celuch and Showers 1991). Stress can impair or heighten information processing strategies (e.g., reducing or increasing time for information search) (Lepisto, Stuenkel, and Anglin 1991). Furthermore, stress surrounding life status changes often leads to dissatisfaction with currently used products and an openness to trying new products (Andreasen 1984; Schouten 1991). This change in preferences may make it more difficult to predict a spouse's preferences and thus lead to less accurate prediction and less successful gifting. In addition, this stress may make consumers more susceptible to messages from marketers (Andreasen 1984).

Daily Stress

In contrast to gifting during the transition or rites of passage, this research examines gifting over time, not just at the point of the transition. Changes in economic status, personal responsibilities, and social support due to a transition increase stress. It was proposed that following a life status change a household which experiences decreased economic resources and increased responsibility is likely to experience greater daily stress (which occurs over the long run as opposed to the immediate stress of the transition stage). It is suggested that long term daily stress due to a status change is a better predictor of consumption patterns than stress experienced during the transition process (Fellerman and Debevec 1992). Therefore, this increase in daily stress can lead to a change in gifting between husbands and wives.

Coping with Stress

Coping is the cognitive and/or behavioral effort to manage stress (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). The purpose of coping is to avoid being harmed by life's strains. Coping functions to change a stressful situation, to control the meaning of experiences so that they do not become stressful and to control stress (Pearlin and Schooler 1978). Consumers adjust to stress by developing coping strategies (Fellerman and Debevec 1992; Lavee, McCubbin, and Olson 1987). Change in consumption patterns are due to the coping

strategies which are developed in response to daily stress (Fellerman and Debevec 1992).

Coping strategies are problem focused, emotion focused (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, and DeLongis 1986) or system managed (Latack 1986). Problem focused coping serves to manage or alter a problem while emotion focused coping regulates emotional responses to a problem (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). System managed coping regulates the symptoms of stress (e.g., relaxation and exercise) (Latack 1986). Changes in consumer behaviors are often a form of system managed coping (e.g., drinking, joining health clubs, eating chocolate). Furthermore, social support positively affects one's ability to cope with daily stress (Fellerman and Debevec 1992).

Consumers develop coping strategies in response to the daily stress of a life transition. Some of these coping strategies include changes in consumer gifting. Avoidance (not giving a gift) and simplification (e.g., buying fewer gifts) are Christmas gift giving strategies used to cope with a transition. These strategies tend to have negative consequences, such as disappointment in not receiving a gift (Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). Therefore, it is expected that consumer coping strategies will lead to changes in gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child.

Giftgiving and Family Decision Making

By delving into the literature pertaining to giftgiving and family decision making the *a priori* preference prediction theme is derived. As an initial division, gift givers and gift recipients can be categorized as individuals and groups (Sherry 1983). Previous consumer giftgiving research has tended to focus on the individual as the unit of analysis. This focus may be a mistake since it has been suggested that many consumer decisions are not made by individuals alone but by families (Corfman and Lehmann 1987; Davis 1976; Lackman and Lanasa 1993; Spiro 1983), the archetypical example of a small group (Cooley 1909).

Family consumer decisions have been examined for products which are presumed to be utilized by the entire family (e.g., automobiles). Consumer researchers have employed a decision making typology of husband-dominated, wife-dominated, autonomic (unilateral), and syncretic (equal) to understand the relative influence of spouses in these decisions (e.g., Davis and Rigaux 1974; Lavin 1993). It may be that the focus on the individual decision maker has lead researchers to mistakenly interpret wife-dominated giftgiving decisions (where husbands have some influence) as decisions made solely by individual women who research evidence suggests are the primary performers of private realm giftgiving activities (Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and

Wagner 1991; McGrath 1989; Sherry and McGrath 1989).

While individual consumer decision making has been characterized as a cognitive or problem solving process (Schiffman and Kanuk 1997 p 558-582), family consumer decision making has been characterized as a muddling through process (Park 1982) and a conflict resolution process (Corfman and Lehmann 1987). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that the process and outcomes of consumer decision making by individuals is different from those made by families (Menasco and Curry 1989; Park 1982; Rudd and Kohout 1983). In particular, the amount of information acquired and the time it takes to make the decision will vary based on whether a decision is made by an individual or a group (Rudd and Kohout 1983). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that relative influence of spouses on a decision will vary depending on the product, role structure orientation, and specific stage in the decision making process (Schiffman and Kanuk 1997 p 355-357).

The gift purchase decision is one in which one family member makes a purchase decision on behalf of another family member (Hart 1974). The decision maker is thus a "surrogate consumer" (West and Brown 1994). In most cases, these decisions are made while taking the preference of the other into account (West 1996; West and Brown 1994; Wind 1976). This is true except in cases of the "solicited" interpersonal gift. As an example, husbands act as gift

"purchasing agents" when their wives request particular gifts (Sherry and McGrath 1989).

The A Priori Preference Prediction Theme

When choosing gifts for spouses, consumers can either elect to give gifts that the spouse would appreciate or gifts that are not in accordance with the spouse's preferences. A consumer can only take another's preference into account when knowledge of that preference is present. Surprisingly, to researchers and consumers, research evidence suggests that consumers are not very accurate in predicting their spouse's product preferences (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). When acted upon, (in)accurate preference prediction can lead to (un)successful gifting (Belk 1976; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993).

Accuracy of preference prediction will vary depending upon: (1) preference stability and similarity (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986), (2) feedback availability and informational value (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986; Green and Alden 1988; Ickes 1993; West 1996), (3) information processing resources (Krishnamurthi 1980), and (4) cultural norms and gender (Belk and Coon 1993; Belk and Coon 1991a, 1991b; Cvetkovich 1972; Hart 1974; Wallin and Clark 1958). Each of these variables will be discussed briefly, followed by a discussion of deliberate inaccurate preference prediction.

Stability and Similarity of Preferences

Research evidence suggests that consumers predict the preferences of others with an anchoring and adjustment strategy. One "anchors" the prediction on one's own preferences and adjusts this prediction based on beliefs about how one's spouse differs from self (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). Decision making (Dhar 1994) and preference prediction (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986) are particularly difficult when preferences are unstable (self and other). For example, unstable product preferences result from an inability to evaluate new products (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986) and/or life status changes (e.g., the birth of the first child) (Andreasen 1984; Schouten 1991). Low prediction accuracy could be due to the availability of unstable preferences which are utilized as anchors to predict the unstable preferences of a spouse (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986).

Over time, husbands' and wives' preferences become increasingly similar (Cox 1975; Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). It has been suggested that the increasing similarity of preferences is due to: (1) the family acting as a reference group, (2) spouses sharing reference groups, (3) spouses sharing information sources, (4) need congruence in families, (5) frequency of decision making (Cox 1975) and (6) exposure to spouse's preferences (Wind 1976). The more similar spouse's attitudes, the more accurate their

predictions (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that a spouse's strong negative preference has a strong influence on the other spouse's preferences (Wind 1976). Still further, when consumers hold strong negative attitudes predictive accuracy is decreased. This strong negative bias may alter information processing ability. Research evidence suggests that prediction of spouses attitudes is in the direction of the strong negative bias (Niemi 1974). It is expected that instability of preferences due to the transition to parenthood will lead to a change in the success of gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child.

Availability and Informational Value of Feedback

Low accuracy of spousal preference prediction is a surprise to most couples (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). It is suggested that this could be due to a reluctance to offer negative feedback (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986; Ickes 1993) in order to avoid hurt feelings (Green and Alden 1988; Ickes 1993). Without honest feedback consumers do not learn the true preferences of their partners.

Not all information gained from feedback is equally valuable. Research evidence suggests that consumers are able to differentiate between informative and noninformative feedback (West 1996). This distinction is based on the type of gift recipient. For example, a "picky" person offers informative feedback when communicating liking an item since

that person often dislikes products. In contrast, informative feedback from an "easy to please" person includes disliking an item since most products are evaluated favorably (West 1994 as cited in West and Brown 1994).

Information Processing Resources

A direct relationship is suggested between the availability of personal information processing resources and accuracy of preference prediction. Being the center of attention (e.g., "the birthday boy") will reduce one's ability to predict the preferences of another. Furthermore, preoccupation with concerns not related to the decision at hand will usurp information processing resources (Krishnamurthi 1980; Lepisto, Stuenkel, and Anglin 1991) and reduce predictive accuracy (Krishnamurthi 1980). Since stress, which occurs during the transition to parenthood, can impair or heighten information processing abilities (e.g., reducing or increasing time for information search) (Lepisto, Stuenkel, and Anglin 1991) it is expected that gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child will change.

Cultural Norms and Gender

Research evidence suggests that cultural norms and gender affect the accuracy of preference prediction. For instance, in a study of husbands' and wives' reports of their marital partners' preferred frequency of coitus it was

found that partners will predict the sex drive of their spouses based on the cultural norm of the time: men have a stronger drive than women (Wallin and Clark 1958).

Furthermore, women tend to be more accurate in predicting a spouse's preferences and attitudes (Hart 1974; Niemi 1974). Four possible explanations are suggested. First, a common perception is that men do not have gift giving ability or desire (Belk and Coon 1991a). The second possibility lies in the risk taking and conservatism of male and female decision makers. Research evidence suggests that both men and women shift conservatively in their decision making for spouses. With this shift, women come closer to the risk their husbands tend to take for themselves while men move away from their spouse's position. Thus, it seems that women's decisions are more accurate while men's decisions are less accurate when deciding for their spouse (Hart 1974). Third, it is possible that male preferences are more flexible than female preferences. Thus, they may adapt to the choices that are made for them. Fourth, males may be more reluctant to offer negative feedback, making women perceive their choices as more accurate. Therefore, it is expected that gender and cultural norms can affect the accuracy of prediction of preferences for products.

Deliberate Inaccurate Preference Prediction

Certain conditions in the home (e.g., alcoholism) lead to symptomatic consumer behavior (Berkstresser 1977).

Symptomatic consumer behaviors are purchases which are made in order to destroy or gratify hostility (Pollak 1964). It has been assumed that a gift which does not reflect a recipient's preference "occurs unintentionally through mistaken giver perceptions of the recipient or through unanticipated responses by the recipient" (Belk 1976, p 160). This assumption would appear to be a mistake since some gift givers are not motivated to be accurate in their predictions (Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). It has been suggested that gifts "become tools of social manipulation . . . objects of unease and resentment, and aggressive weapons for gaining and holding power over others" (Poe 1977 p 49). Gifts can be an expression of aggression or hostility (e.g., the gag gift which hurts or embarrasses the recipient) (Orgel and Shengold 1968; Schwartz 1967). Still further, gifts may be given to impose an unwanted identity upon a recipient (Schwartz 1967; Sherry 1983; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993). Particularly in close but insecure relationships accurate prediction may actually be a threat. For instance, it may be best to inaccurately perceive a person with negative preferences when one has a desire for a continued relationship (Ickes 1993). In addition, gifts which are not designed to appeal to the self concept of the recipient are often found in superficial gifting relationships (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993; Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). Therefore, it is expected that some

conditions in the home may lead to deliberate inaccurate preference prediction.

The *A priori* Role of Gender Theme

Previous research concerning gifting and gender is examined in order to develop the *a priori* role of gender theme. Research evidence suggests gender differences in gift giving (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1991b, 1993; Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and Wagner 1991; Gould and Weil 1991; McGrath 1989, 1995; Sherry and McGrath 1989). Gender affects gifting in terms of (1) appropriate gift products (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991; Rucker et al. 1991), (2) appropriate timing of gifts (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1993), and (3) appropriate direction for gift exchange (Heroux and Church 1992). Each of these manifestations of change will be discussed.

Gender and Appropriate Gift Products

Different gift products are appropriate for male and female givers and recipients. When giving a gift to a member of the opposite sex, men tend to choose feminine gifts (e.g., jewelry and perfume) (Gould and Weil 1991). This is expected to continue after the birth of the first child.

Research evidence suggests that in American culture flowers are a gift which is given from men to women (Caplow

1984; Rucker et al. 1991). Therefore, it is expected that flowers will continue to be a gift that is given from husbands to wives.

There is mixed research evidence concerning neutral gifts, those appropriate for men and women (e.g., hobby equipment, VCR, tapes). Research evidence suggests that these gifts tend to be chosen by women for men (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991). In contrast, research evidence suggests that these gifts are appropriate for men and women (Rucker et al. 1991). No change is expected in gender neutral gifts after the birth of the first child.

Research evidence suggests that men tend to receive more gifts of clothing than women (Horne and Winakor 1988). Therefore, it is expected that it will be more common for gifts of clothing to be given from wives to husbands before and after the birth of the first child.

The purpose of a greeting card is to express a feeling. Research into gender roles suggests that women are more likely than men to express their feelings (Broverman et al. 1972). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that the giving of birthday cards is more important to women than to men (Argyle and Henderson 1984). Therefore, it is expected that women will employ the use of greeting cards more often than men before and after the birth of the first child.

Different gift products are appropriate as gifts for each gender. Culturally construed gender appropriate gifts

are not expected to change after the birth of the first child.

Gender and Appropriate Timing of Gifts

There are two contrasting male perspectives as to the proper role of gifting in dating and marriage. Men are either expected to shower dates with gifts to win a hand in marriage, thereby making it unnecessary to continue gifting after marriage or "guard" their wealth until marriage by only gifting to an intended or current spouse (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1993). Either way, it is expected that culturally construed views of timing may lead to changes in gifting after the birth of the first child.

Gender and Appropriate Direction of Gift Exchange

While shifting dramatically in the last two decades, the private sphere has traditionally been the in-home realm of women while men operated outside the home in the public sphere of business and politics (Cheal 1987, 1988; Fischer and Gainer 1993; Kron 1983). In addition, across the transition to parenthood, household division of labor tends to become more traditional (e.g., women become responsible for in-home activities and caring for children (Belsky 1986; Belsky and Pensky 1988). Wives tend to view their husbands as not helping enough with responsibilities associated with the children and the home. In contrast, husbands tend to perceive themselves as contributing to the care of the home

and the child. This discrepancy may be due to wives comparing their husbands to themselves while husbands compare themselves to their fathers, friends, and co-workers. Therefore, it is not surprising that women have historically been the primary performers of private sphere gifting activities (Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and Wagner 1991; McGrath 1989; Sherry and McGrath 1989) and men have been the primary performers of public gifting activities (e.g., charity) (Tifft 1992). However, in dating and marital relationships, men are more often the givers and woman the recipients of gifts (Belk and Coon 1993; Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and Wagner 1991; McGrath 1989, 1995; Sherry and McGrath 1989).

Furthermore, as the years married increases reciprocal gift giving for wedding anniversary gifts between husbands and wives declines. Couples who are married longer tend to experience the husband-giving-gift-to-wife-only condition more often (Heroux and Church 1992). Therefore, the primary giver of gifts (i.e., direction of gifting) in the home is expected to change after the birth of the first child.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter presented an exhaustive process of global theme development. A review of the literature pertaining to the definition of a gift, gifting and life status change,

and family decision making was undertaken. Previous research findings are distinguished from the new knowledge being sought by this research. Five *a priori* global themes were originated: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) stress and coping, (4) preference prediction, and (5) the role of gender. Manifestations of gifting change between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child are expected based on these themes.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter discusses the phenomenological method employed for the data collection and analysis. A brief discussion of the demographics of the thirty respondents who participated in this study is also included. Furthermore, this chapter includes a description of the three methods of data analysis: global theme analysis, content analysis, and metaphor analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection followed a similar format to previous phenomenological research (e.g., Hirschman 1994; Thompson, Locander, Pollio 1990). The process of data collection proceeded in an orderly fashion of prospecting and qualifying, approaching, interviewing, and following-up.

Step One: Prospecting and Qualifying

The first step in data collection is prospecting (i.e., identifying possible respondents) and qualifying (i.e., checking that informants fit the criteria). A purposive sample of thirty respondents (e.g., fifteen couples) with one child were to be interviewed. The informants were chosen because of their recent transition to parenthood. They were selected because they are in the process of

raising their first or only child between the ages of fifteen months to six years.

It has been suggested that the respondents and the interviewer should be perfect strangers (i.e., never having met before the interview) (McCracken 1988). In contrast, informants and interviewer knew each other personally in previous research of this kind (Hirschman 1994). In this research, the majority (twenty-six out of thirty) of the respondents were perfect strangers. However, four respondents were not perfect strangers: (1) the interviewer briefly met one couple (two of the respondents) at a mutual friend's party, (2) the researcher personally knew the child of her parents' friend but had not seen her for approximately twenty years, and (3) a student/wife was recruited from a university class in which the researcher was the instructor. The quality of being a perfect stranger may have affected the interview. However, what seemed more important was the relationship to the referral and the rapport and trust that developed during the interview.

Marriage was a condition of the screening process and all of the couples except one were married. One unmarried couple had agreed to participate in the research. The wife revealed during the interview that the marriage had never actually taken place. At the time, this couple had been cohabitating for five years and their child was four years old. They expressed the opinion that their situation was

the same as being married.

Three methods were employed for prospecting for respondents. The first and most productive method was the referral system. The researcher asked everyone she knew if they knew of any possible participants who met the criteria set for this study. The majority of the participants were recruited via an introduction from friends and family (or their friends, family, and co-workers). Although most introductions were once removed (e.g., a friend of the researcher's sister), some were farther removed (e.g., a co-worker's friend of a friend of a friend of the researcher's sister). For example, the researcher's sister's friend's friend works for Channel 13 (PBS) in New York. This woman put a message on the electronic mail system at work to help the researcher recruit possible participants. An employee at Channel 13 saw the message and responded by suggesting one of her friends who fit the screening criteria. In total, the referral system yielded thirteen of the fifteen couples who participated in the study. All of these respondents gave their time on a strictly voluntary basis.

The next two methods of recruiting respondents yielded two couples who were paid for their time. One wife was recruited from an undergraduate course in advertising at a large Northeastern university. This student/wife received points on an exam for her participation. Her husband participated voluntarily or to help his wife on her exam.

The second paid respondent couple was recruited via an advertisement in the researcher's condominium community newsletter in conjunction with a recruiting effort at the community pool. This couple was paid ten dollars for their interviews.

Step Two: Approaching

In this step, prospects were first contacted by telephone and offered a brief explanation of the study and their role as anonymous participants. It was often necessary to contact these prospects more than once while they decided if they wanted to participate. Not all prospects who were contacted agreed to participate in the study. Fourteen couples declined to participate. A variety of reasons were given for not wanting to participate. These reasons, listed in Table 3-1, ranged from not having time to feeling that the interview would invade their privacy. Table 3-1 also includes a description of additional circumstances surrounding the refusal to participate (e.g., misunderstanding the interview topic). Furthermore, some of these non-participants never offered a reason for not participating. They proceeded to ignore the researchers voice-mail requests. Telephone contact concluded by either thanking prospects for their time in discussing their reasons for not participating or with an appointment for the in-depth interview.

Table 3-1
Reasons Given For Not Participating

Couple #	Additional Context	Reason
1		No time. Both work and attend university.
2	Couple stopped returning the researchers calls.	No reason given.
3	Agreed to the interview. The night before she called to postpone. Couple stopped returning the researchers calls.	Had to take her mother-in-law to the airport.
4, 5	The wives agreed to the interview for themselves. The husbands would not participate.	The husbands are shy, have no time because they work and would not find it interesting.
6, 7, 8	The wives agreed to the interview for themselves. The husbands would not participate.	No time because the husbands work.
9	The wife agreed to the interview for herself but the husband would not participate. Respondent did not respond to letters or phone calls. Furthermore, the researcher was told that the couple had a second child and no longer fit the criteria.	
10	Researcher met the husband at the community pool. He agreed to the interview but the wife did not.	The wife said the interview seemed strange and she did not want to do it. It was too personal.

Table 3-1
Reasons Given For Not Participating
(Continued)

Couple #	Additional Context	Reason
11	The couple agreed to do the interview and set up an appointment. The researcher arrived at their home but they were not home. The researcher's husband (who had given the researcher a ride to the respondent's home in Newark, New Jersey) insisted that the researcher should not reschedule because the neighborhood did not seem safe. The researcher left a written note with the respondents' neighbor. Neither the researcher nor the respondents made any further effort to contact each other.	
12		Husband doesn't have time. He works very hard and likes to relax after work.
13	This wife was told by her mother (a co-worker of the researcher's mother's friend) that the interview concerned "raising a two year old."	Wife's perception of a change in the topic made her suspicious of researcher. She asked the researcher if she was sure that was the topic. Wife felt uncomfortable speaking about gift giving.
14	The husband agreed to participate but cancelled the interview.	The wife (a psychologist) decided they should not participate because it was an invasion of privacy.

Step Three: Interviewing

Thirty respondents participated in twenty-nine interviews. Twenty-three of the twenty-nine interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents; two interviews were conducted in the researchers home; two interviews were conducted in the researcher's office; two were conducted in the respondent's place of business (a restaurant and a doctor's office); one was conducted in a diner. The interviews ranged in length from thirty-five minutes to two hours and a half. The one short thirty-five minute interview was conducted with a male respondent, age thirty-eight, who seemed physically and emotionally uncomfortable discussing the topic. The two longer two and a half hour interviews were conducted in the researcher's home. The researcher was able to help create an environment in which interruptions and distractions were reduced (e.g., turning off the telephone and not having the child present). The average interview length was approximately one hour.

The family literature is divided on whether married couples should be interviewed together or separately (Hertz 1995). Some researchers have argued in favor of joint interviews. For example, joint interviews are advantageous in that spouses can clarify issues and prompt recall (Allan 1980). In contrast, revealing one's own perspective which can differ from a spouse's may be hindered when a spouse is present (Hertz 1995; LaRossa, Bennett, and Gelles 1981;

Rubin 1976). Furthermore, it has been suggested that it is advantageous to interview spouses separately so that the researcher can:

Do a better job of documenting differences in spouses' interests and perceptions, (and) he or she can use those differences to arrive at a clearer understanding of complex and often invisible processes such as decision making, accommodation, and dependency in the marital relationship (Hertz 1995 p 431).

With this goal in mind, the researcher in this study interviewed husbands and wives separately.

During the interview some respondents questioned whether the researcher would reveal aspects of the interview to the spouse. When the respondent was reassured that secrets would remain secret they were able to continue. Therefore, it seems that valuable material might have been lost had both spouses been present during the interview.

On one occasion the interview did spontaneously occur jointly. In the midst of the wife's interview, the husband sat down and joined in. Each spouse goaded the other into revealing private thoughts. This too yielded valuable material. Similarly, during some of the interviews, the spouse would enter the room where the interview was being conducted and join in for a few moments and then leave the room. On these occasions spouses offered clarification and cues to memory. In this way, the researcher was able to gain some of the advantages of separate and some of the

advantages of joint interviews.

Each interview began with amenities which, it was hoped, would establish a rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. Respondents were once again assured of anonymity. They were asked to read a brief request for participation and to sign an agreement and release form (Moustakas 1994). The request for participation and release form, adapted from Moustakas (1994), are reproduced in Appendices 1 and 2.

The phenomenological interview began when the interviewer turned on the tape recorder and asked the "grand tour" question: "Can you tell me about gift giving between you and your wife (husband) over the course of time?" Some respondents began by asking where to begin. These respondents often suggested a starting point. For example, one response was, "A very general question. What do mean? How many times a year?" In this case, the interviewer responded, "Okay, you can start there." If no choice was offered, the respondent was told to go in any direction. There were no problems after this point. As the interview progressed the researcher continued to probe and question. These secondary questions which emerge from the dialog were aimed at bringing about a "thick description" of the experience (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). At the conclusion of each interview the respondent was thanked for his or her time and the tape recorder was turned off.

Sometimes the respondent continued to discuss the topic and so the tape recorder was switched back on for the re-telling of a particular event or feeling.

Step Four: Following-Up

When the interview was concluded each of the respondents was asked to complete a short demographic form. This form is reproduced in Appendix 3. After the interviewer and respondents parted company the researcher wrote field notes concerning the interviews. These field notes have become part of the qualitative written data record. Next, the audiotapes were transcribed. Each respondent was sent a thank you letter in which they were encouraged to comment on their enclosed transcript and return it to the researcher or to telephone the researcher with comments (Moustakas 1994). This letter is reproduced in Appendix 4. The respondents additional comments also became part of the qualitative written text of the collected data. The written transcripts, field notes, and comments yielded 590 single spaced pages of qualitative written data.

The Respondents

By design, respondents were married and were in the process of raising their first or only child. The children's ages ranged from fifteen months to six years old. Furthermore, respondents have been married anywhere from three to twenty-one years and were married less than one

year to seventeen years before they had their first or only child. These and additional summary demographics are presented in Table 3-2.

Table 3-3 presents names and demographic characteristics of each respondent. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of respondents. This information will aid the reader in the analysis chapters which discuss the respondents in a personal way. For example, one can learn from Table 3-3 that William is a Christian blue collar worker (telephone technician) whose highest level of education is high school. His activities, interests and opinions in general and in regard to gift giving can be expected to differ from, for example, Roger, a Jewish white collar stock broker whose highest level of education is a Juris Doctor.

Data Analysis

Trustworthiness of the research can be enhanced by triangulation of methods (Deshpande 1983; Jick 1983; Ozanne and Hudson 1989; Wallendorf and Belk 1989). The three methods employed in this study are global theme analysis, content analysis, and metaphor analysis.

Global Theme Analysis

First, an individual or ideographic understanding of each interview is sought. Second, separate interviews are related to each other and common patterns or global themes

Table 3-2
Summary Demographics of Respondents

Characteristic	Response
Age of Respondent	25-47
Age at Time of Marriage	22-42
Age at Time of Baby	23-43
Years since First Meeting Spouse	>1-18
Years Married	3-21
Years Before Child	>1-17
Age of Child	1.3-6
Male Children	9
Female Children	6
Jewish	9
Christian	21
Income	\$40,000-\$110,000
Suburban	11 Couples
Urban	2 Couples
Rural	2 Couples
Highest Level of Education	High School-doctorate

44

Table 3-3
Names and Demographic Characteristics of Each Respondent

Name	Age at Mar- Age raige	Age at baby	Sex	# Years Dating & Friends	# Years Married	# Years Before Child	Age of Child	Sex of Child
Amy	35	26	32	F	4	9	6	3 M
Adam	34	25	31	M	5	9	6	3 M
Betty	47	42	43	F	1	5	1	4 F
Barry	42	37	38	M	>1	5	1	4 F
Carol	31	28	30	F	2	3	2	1.5 M
Carl	32	29	31	M	2	3	2	1.5 M
Dawn	33	24	29	F	8	9	5	4 F
Dean	34	25	30	M	8	9	5	4 F
Ellen	33	29	32	F	5	4	3	1.3 F
Edward	32	28	31	M	5	4	3	1.3 F
Georgia	33	25	28	F	4	8	3	5 M
Gary	34	26	29	M	4	8	3	5 M
Helen	30	23	29	F	1	7	6	1.3 M
Harry	34	27	33	M	1	7	6	1.3 M
Jill	32	25	30	F	3	7	5	2 F
Jack	31	24	29	M	3	7	5	2 F
Louise	41	25	35	F	>1	16	10	6 M
Lloyd	47	31	41	M	>1	16	10	6 M
Mary	44	26	40	F	10	18	14	4 M
Max	47	29	43	M	10	18	14	4 M
Rhonda	39	29	34	F	1	10	4	5.5 F
Roger	36	26	31	M	2	10	4	5.5 F
Sally	36	25	31	F	9	11	6	5 F
Sam	38	27	33	M	10	11	6	5 F
Terry	43	22	39	F	5	21	17	4 M
Todd	44	23	40	M	5	21	17	4 M
Valerie	36	31	33	F	7	5	2	3 M
Vincent	41	38	38	M	9	3	>1	3 M
Wanda	25	22	23	F	18	3	2	1.6 M
William	29	26	27	M	18	3	2	1.6 M

Table 3-3
Names and Demographic Characteristics of Each Respondent
(Continued)

Name	Religion	Combined Annual Income	Urban Suburban Rural	Highest level of Education
Amy	Christian	\$80,000	Suburb	College
Adam	Christian	\$80,000	Suburb	College
Betty	Christian	\$50,000	Suburb	College
Barry	Christian	\$50,000	Suburb	College
Carol	Christian	\$100,000	Suburb	Medical School
Carl	Christian	\$160,000	Suburb	College
Dawn	Christian	\$91,000	Suburb	Masters Degree
Dean	Christian	\$90,000	Suburb	College
Ellen	Christian	\$75,000	Suburb	College
Edward	Christian	\$75,000	Suburb	Masters Degree
Georgia	Jewish	\$50,000	Suburb	Masters Degree
Gary	Jewish	\$55,000	Suburb	College
Helen	Christian	\$60,000	Urban	College
Harry	Christian	\$60,000	Urban	College
Jill	Christian	\$100,000	Suburb	Masters
Jack	Jewish	\$50,000	Suburb	College
Louise	Christian	<\$100000	Rural	Masters Degree
Lloyd	Ex-Catholic	<\$100000	Rural	College
Mary	Christian	\$95,000	Rural	Masters Degree
Max	Christian	\$95,000	Rural	College
Rhonda	Jewish	\$110,000	Suburb	College
Roger	Jewish	\$110,000	Suburb	Juris Doctor
Sally	Jewish	\$80,000	Suburb	Masters Degree
Sam	Jewish	\$80,000	Suburb	College
Terry	Jewish	<\$100000	Suburb	Masters Plus
Todd	Christian	<\$100000	Suburb	Masters
Valerie	Christian	\$50,000	Urban	College
Vincent	Jewish	\$60,000	Urban	Post Graduate
Wanda	Christian	\$40,000	Suburb	College
William	Christian	\$80,000	Suburb	High School

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Table 3-3
Names and Demographic Characteristics of Each Respondent
(Continued)

Name	Occupation	Ethnic Identity
Amy	List Broker/Direct Mail	Irish Catholic
Adam	General Contractor	Irish Catholic
Betty	Homemaker	Caucasian
Barry	Restaurant Manager	Italian
Carol	Doctor	Italian
Carl	General Contractor	Irish
Dawn	Teacher	Italian-Irish-German Lutheran
Dean	Computer Analyst	German
Ellen	Dental Hygienist	Irish-Catholic
Edward	Pharmacist	American
Georgia	Teacher	White
Gary	Salesman	Jewish
Helen	Actress/Waitress	German
Harry	Waiter/Artist	White
Jill	Registered Nurse	Italian
Jack	Flight Attendant	Jewish
Louise	Teacher	Italian
Lloyd	Facilities Technician	Polish-German-Swedish etc.
Mary	Teacher	Polish-English
Max	Sales	
Rhonda	Interior Designer	Jewish
Roger	Stockbroker	Jewish
Sally	Speech/Language Pathologist	Caucasian
Sam	Real Estate Appraiser	Caucasian
Terry	Special Education Teacher	Hebrew
Todd	Director of Residence Programs	Italian-American
Valerie	Homemaker/Mother	Brasilian/Latin-American
Vincent	TV Producer	White
Wanda	Student	White
William	Telephone Technician	White

are identified. The researcher attempts to grasp, rather than impose meanings which emerge from the dialogue. In this way, the interpretation seeks to describe common patterns of experience (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989).

It is important to stay at the level of lived experience. An emic approach to the interpretation relies on the respondents own terms and category systems rather than the researchers. Using respondents terms is one method of staying at the level of the lived experience. Another method for staying at this level is not to incorporate hypotheses, inferences and conjectures that exceed the evidence provided by the transcript. For example, if a respondent describes disliking a gift that she received from her spouse the researcher cannot assume this is due to marital difficulties unless such difficulties were discussed in the text (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989).

Interpretation involves going over each interview transcript numerous times. Each interpretation is evaluated by referring back to the transcript. Global themes, or patterns in the qualitative data, which emerge from respondent descriptions are supported with the respondents own words (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). In this way, a "thick description" of the lived experience and the meaning of gifting between spouses after the birth of the first child is developed.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined as "a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative, and generalizable description of communications content" (Kassarjian 1977 p 10). A "case cluster method" is employed for the content analysis (McClintock, Brannon, and Maynard-Moody 1983). The advantage of the case cluster method is the creation of quantitative data from the qualitative data. Researchers have suggested:

The addition of quantified codes (to the qualitative data) could result in the application of statistical procedures . . . (which) could be of substantial benefit to the qualitative case study that employed the case cluster method (McClintock, Brannon, and Maynard-Moody 1983 p 166).

Typically, with qualitative data the unit of analysis is the individual, group, or organization. The case cluster method allows the researcher to select a unit of analysis that could be any activity, process, feature, or dimension of behavior that would lend itself to quantitative analysis (McClintock, Brannon, and Maynard-Moody 1983). The researcher makes data available for quantitative analysis through the process of data reduction (Miles 1983). Previous qualitative gifting research has employed similar methods which result in "decontextualized data" (Belk and Coon 1993).

In this research, data points were culled from the

interview transcripts to create the decontextualized data of the quantitative data set. The culling of data points from the phenomenological interviews was completed by noting each gift mentioned by respondents and three coinciding items: (1) gift occasion (e.g., Christmas), (2) life stage at the time of the gift (e.g., before or after the birth of the first child), and (3) the exchange partner's role (e.g., giver or recipient). This process yielded 935 data points.

The number of gifts mentioned, the holiday for which it was exchanged, and the gender of the giver are employed in the content analysis. The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test, a test of significance, will be calculated to check if there is a statistically significant difference between gifts exchanged before and after the birth of the first child. As in previous qualitative research, the objective of this presentation is for descriptive purposes (Hirschman and LaBarbera 1989) and for an increase in the trustworthiness of the global themes that are developed and presented as part of the interpretive analysis.

Metaphor Analysis

Hermeneutic interpretation involves metaphor analysis, a method of examining the way in which cultural viewpoints are conveyed through the language used to express personal meanings. The investigator interprets the self-interpretations of informants in light of sociocultural forces that shape the consumer culture. A key aspect of the

interpretation is the identification of a symbolic metaphor in each text. This metaphor is an exemplary image or event that seems to convey the assumptions, concerns, values, and meanings of gifting of the informants. In finding the metaphor for each respondent, important distinctions among respondents can be examined. This analysis is contrasted to the global theme analysis in which the global themes point out the important similarities of experience (Thompson, Pollio, and Locander 1994).

Furthermore, gift giving has been considered a metaphor for aspects of the personal relationship (e.g., communication). Gift giving as a metaphor will also be discussed.

Summary

This chapter described the method of data collection and analysis. The data collection proceeded in an orderly fashion of prospecting and qualifying, approaching, interviewing, and following-up. A qualitative written data record was prepared by transcribing the taped interviews and recording field notes and comments. A quantitative data set was prepared by culling data points from the interviews. The qualitative data set was employed for the analysis of themes and metaphor analysis. The quantitative data set was employed for the content analysis which is used to further support the themes. The method for each of these analyses was described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

GLOBAL THEME ANALYSIS AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

This chapter seeks to examine the research questions: "Does gifting between husbands and wives change after the birth of the first child?" and if so, "What motivates the change?" and "What are the manifestations of the change?" Two methods are employed to examine these questions: (1) analysis of global themes, or common patterns of experience, and (2) content analysis of the quantitative data set to further illustrate the themes. First, the qualitative interviews are searched for instances of the *a priori* themes which are developed from the previous research. Second, emergent aspects of the themes and emergent themes are developed from the qualitative data set. Third, where appropriate, the themes are buttressed with the results of the content analysis.

The literature was searched and relevant research was evaluated in order to develop the *a priori* themes in Chapter 2. In this chapter, relevance of the *a priori* themes to the respondents are searched for in the interviews. In contrast, the emergent themes (and emergent aspects of the *a priori* themes) are originated from the interviews. Development of the emergent themes involves reading each transcript numerous times. Separate interviews are related

to each other and common patterns are identified.

Seven interrelated themes, some determined *a priori* and some emergent, were found to be relevant to the respondents: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) coping and personal resource allocation, (4) coping and gift shopping patterns, (5) preference prediction, (6) the role of gender, and (7) sexuality. The themes are not meant to be mutually exclusive categories. They are intertwined like seven concentric circles each overlapping onto the other.

Research evidence suggests that life status changes herald spontaneous changes in consumption behavior (Andreasen 1984; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander and Schouten 1989; Schouten 1991; Fellerman and Debevec 1992). Rites of passage, surrounding life status changes, create gifting occasions. Changes occur in rites of passage gifts after the birth of the first child. With the transition to parenthood, a particular life status change, husbands and wives experience changes in their gifting with each other. Couples often change their priorities in response to the transition to parenthood. This change in priorities leads to a web of changes in gifting relationships, coping and personal resource allocation, coping and gift shopping patterns, preferences and preference prediction, the role of gender, and attitudes toward sexuality. Each of these is examined as themes.

During the transition to parenthood, consumers tend to

shift their focus away from their interpersonal relationship (e.g., husband and wife) and emphasize their family relationship which usually includes their child. Intragroup gifts (e.g., a gift from a husband and wife to the husband, wife, and child) may be favored over interpersonal gifts (e.g., from a wife to a husband). Furthermore, the child can become an intermediary for gifts. For example, a Mother's Day gift may be purchased by a husband and given to a child to give to her mother. These changes will be examined in the second theme, the transition to parenthood. Some aspects of this theme were developed *a priori* while some aspects emerge from the interview text.

The *a priori* stress and coping theme has been split into two emergent themes: coping and personal resource allocation and coping and gift shopping patterns. It was expected that consumers would develop coping strategies. However, specific coping strategies emerge from the interview text. The third theme, coping and personal resource allocation, analyzes how consumers allocate their personal resources (e.g., time and money). After the birth of the first child, consumers tend to allocate their personal resources differently than before the birth of the child. For example, consumers tend to spend less money on gifts for each other and more money on gifts or necessities for their child.

Coping and gift shopping patterns are examined in the

fourth theme. Consumers find that they shop differently after the birth of their child. Some of the change in shopping patterns reflect efforts to conserve personal resources while others reflect efforts to incorporate the child into the shopping experience.

Prediction of preferences is an integral part of the gifting process. How this process changes or is avoided after the birth of the first child is examined in the fifth theme which was developed *a priori*. For example, preferences, which are unstable during a life transition, become more difficult to predict. In addition, some consumers avoid predicting preferences by directly involving the recipient in the gift decision.

The role of gender theme was developed *a priori*. As expected, instances of gifting in terms of gender appropriate gifts, gender and timing of gifts, and gender and gifting direction (e.g., husband to wife or wife to husband) are found in the interview text.

It was suggested *a priori* in the transition to parenthood theme that a disadvantage of becoming a parent is a change in the sexual relationship of the couple (Belsky 1986). However, manifestations of this gifting change emerge from the interview text. Due to its many emergent aspects and its importance to consumers, sexuality is treated as an emergent theme. Changes in sexuality are reflected in gifting between husbands and wives.

Furthermore, issues of privacy and comfort are discussed in relation to sexuality and gifts.

In terms of organization, each of these seven intertwined themes will be presented and analyzed. The themes will be illustrated with the words of the respondents and, where appropriate, the numbers obtained from the content analysis. Finally, a summary and conclusions are presented. It is hoped that the description and analysis of these intertwined themes will lead to a greater understanding of common patterns of experience of gifting between husbands and wives after the birth of the first child.

The A Priori Life Status Change Theme

Table 4-1 lists each of the interpretative themes and their status as a *priori* or emergent. As can be seen in this table, the first theme, life status change, was developed a *priori* in Chapter 2. A wide range of possible causes exist for changes in consumer gifting behaviors. However, since by design the respondents in this study are in the process of completing the transition to parenthood, it is not surprising that they overwhelmingly attribute changes in gifting to this life status change. Furthermore, respondents discuss gifts which are presented during rites of passages, rituals which surround life status changes. Attribution of gifting changes and rites of passage will each be discussed.

Table 4-1
Changes Indicated by Global Themes

Themes	Change	Status
Theme 1	Life Status Change	<i>A Priori</i>
Theme 2	Transition to Parenthood	<i>A Priori</i> and Emergent
Theme 3	Coping and Personal Resource Allocation	<i>A Priori</i> and Emergent
Theme 4	Coping and Gift Shopping Patterns	<i>A Priori</i> and Emergent
Theme 5	Preference Prediction	<i>A Priori</i> and Emergent
Theme 6	The Role of Gender	<i>A Priori</i>
Theme 7	Sexuality	<i>Emergent</i>

Attribution of Gifting Changes

Scientists in the field of social psychology have examined the ways in which people assign causality to the behavior of others. Experts refer to this process as attribution theory (Jones et al. 1972). It has been suggested that attribution theory can inform the study of gifting behavior by helping researchers understand the way in which gift recipients infer the meaning of gifts from the behaviors of the giver (Manikowske and Winakor 1994; Poe 1977). Respondents in this study try to understand the meaning of gifting changes within their marital relationship.

Overwhelmingly, respondents attribute the changes in their gifting to life status changes. In particular, four life status changes have been identified by respondents as causes of gifting change: (1) transition to parenthood, (2) marital transition, (3) the transition to homeowner, and (4) career transitions. These life status changes often occur in conjunction with one another. For example, couples may purchase a house to create a better environment to raise a child. At the same time, a woman may experience career transitions as she removes herself from the work force to care full time for her child.

Excerpts drawn from the interview text illustrate that respondents assign life status changes as the cause of gifting changes in their marital relationship. The

following passages are initial responses to the "grand tour" question (Can you tell me about gift giving between you and your husband over the course of time?):

Ellen: Since we're married and bought the house we haven't really—as far as gifts—other than Christmas and even birthdays—we don't really go crazy anymore, since now we have (a child).

Wanda: Well, the first thing that comes to mind is that (gift giving) has changed from the beginning because now we have a son. That has really changed things. I went from being number one, now the baby . . . is mostly the one that we think of first.

Lloyd: Everything seemed to happen around the time (our son) was born, the changing (of gifts) anyway.

Amy: (Gift giving) has deteriorated quite a bit. . . . Our priorities are different. . . . (My husband and I) are in the middle of purchasing a house so we're saving for the house. Having a baby and wanting to do things for the house (instead of gifts).

Barry: In the beginning we gave each other great gifts. . . . Then we had a child and then the focus becomes less for us and more for the child. . . . (My wife) doesn't work since we had a baby. . . . That put a lot of stress on (me). It's a one-income family and that's tough today with a child. . . . I don't have the time I used to.

These passages indicate that respondents attribute changes in gifting to the life status changes of marriage, birth of the first child, the purchase of a house, and career changes. As can be seen, these life status changes are often concurrent, and as suggested *a priori* can be stressful.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage, a class of rituals that accompany changes in social status and surround the life cycle include: births, bar/bas mitzvahs, confirmations, graduations, weddings, and funerals (Cornwell 1990; Rook 1985; Turner 1979; van Gennep 1960). Rites of passage create gifting occasions. Surprisingly, respondents discuss few gifts in which a rite of passage was the occasion for the gift. Although few in number (25 gifts in total), gifts are exchanged for the rites of passage occasions of engagement, wedding, graduation, and transition to homeowner. Most of these occasions occur only before the birth of the child (e.g., engagement and wedding). It is surprising that there is no evidence of any formal celebration with gifts for the rite of passage of becoming a parent. Some respondents note disappointment for not receiving a gift upon giving birth.

It was suggested *a priori* that rites of passage gifts would help gift recipients perform new roles (Schwartz 1967). Therefore, it was surprising that only four of the gifts mentioned for rites of passage occasions may be considered to help the recipient perform the new role. For example, a house buying gift of a recliner chair may help the recipient perform the new role of homeowner. A gift of a car for a college graduate may help the recipient perform this new role. The transportation may assist the graduate

in commuting to a new job. Furthermore, only two of the eleven wedding gifts may be considered items which will help the recipient perform the new role of spouse. These are both wedding rings. In contrast, engagement gifts tend to be engagement rings. Nine of the twelve, or 75 percent of the engagement gifts are diamond engagement rings. These rings signify that a woman is engaged to be married. The other gifts do not seem in any way relevant to the particular occasion.

Sacred and Profane

It was suggested *a priori* that sacred and profane are associated with life status changes. Gifts associated with rites of passage can be considered both sacred or profane (Otnes and Lowrey 1993). Sacred items are those that are "more significantly, powerful and extraordinary than the self" (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989 p. 13). Furthermore, gift items that are invested with "giftness" are considered sacred (Sherry and McGrath 1989). It was expected that after the birth of the first child there could be a change in the sacred status of rites of passage gifts.

Some women discuss the sacredness of their engagement rings, a rite of passage gift before the birth of the first child. In contrast, after the birth of the first child rites of passage gifts do not seem to be invested with sacredness. The following passages reveals the sacredness of wedding and engagement gifts:

Georgia: (My husband) . . . wanted to get a music box . . . for us (as a wedding gift). . . . He really got into this music box. . . . We went to this little tiny music box store in Scotsdale. . . . They had . . . these really huge tremendous things and all hand made and inlaid and all these beautiful things and then they had the ones that are massed produced. . . . And we started to talk to the people that owned the shop. It was a husband and wife who own the shop and we were talking to them. And they started telling us about this guy who makes music boxes in Italy. . . . And we wound up buying one. The guy's name was Bornagi. And we bought a little tiny music box that is really beautiful. And it plays "Color My World" which was our song at our wedding. That was our wedding present for each other. I don't remember exactly how much it was but it was expensive. Later on we got a letter from them congratulating us on our purchase because it's such a special thing. And every once in a while . . . we read about this guy. So its true that he is this master artisan or craftsman with music boxes.

Terry: I don't know if you're sentimental like I am. I get weird about changing things. Like I don't think they should be changed. . . . The sentiment that I attach to it is not the occasion. . . . Just it's existence. It existed, it exists in that form. Like my engagement ring. I would never ever ever in a million years change this. Change this stone. Give this stone up. (My husband) has offered me on many occasions to sell this stone and upgrade to a bigger stone. I have absolutely, as much as I love jewelry, as much as I love diamonds, and I love diamonds, in case you haven't figured it out yet, I would never give up this stone. And I would never replace it. . . . I would never give this up because it was my original engagement ring. If I ever lost it I would really be heartbroken. To me there is a lot of sentiment in that because it is my original engagement ring. I know I have girlfriends who have lost their rings and have replaced them with bigger and better but to me it wouldn't be the original and that would really make me sad.

The gifts in these excerpts can be considered sacred because they are imbued with sacred power. They are thought of as unable to be changed, or that they are very special in some way. After the birth of the child, the gifts that are given for rites of passage occasions (e.g., graduation, house buying) are not discussed in this awe inspiring fashion. In particular, some respondents question if the items are actually a gift. Thus, these gifts are not infused with "giftness."

The next six themes examine the ways in which consumers respond to life status changes in terms of gifting between husbands and wives.

The A Priori Transition to Parenthood Theme

As presented in Table 4-1, some aspects of the transition to parenthood theme were developed *a priori* while other manifestations of change are emergent. Two aspects of the transition to parenthood theme were developed *a priori*: (1) the positive and negative of becoming a family, and (2) family versus couple. As suggested above, all the themes are interrelated. The issue of positive and negative of becoming a family are discussed within other global themes. One negative of becoming a family, strain in the husband-wife sexual relationship, will be discussed in the sexuality theme. In addition, in order to fully examine consumer gift coping strategies, the costs (e.g., financial and social) of becoming a parent are discussed in the coping and personal

resource allocation theme. Here, the priority of family or couple will be discussed.

Family Versus Couple

An examination of gifting relationships leads to an understanding of changes that occur in gifting due to changes in the priority of family or couple. Gifting relationships are presented in the Cohn and Schiffman (1996) Gifting Relationship Taxonomy. The Cohn and Schiffman (1996) gifting taxonomy weaves together two core dichotomous variables: (1) "individual" or "group" (e.g., family) and (2) "self" or "other" to create a classification matrix.

The first dichotomy emphasizes the differences between gifting participants who are giving or receiving a gift alone (individual) and gifting participants who are giving or receiving gifts jointly with others (group). The second dichotomy emphasizes the distinction between gifting to oneself and gifting between others. The "self" or "other" gifting category can either be singular (e.g., gifts to or from me or gifts to or from him) or plural (e.g., gifts to or from us or gifts to or from them).

Emerging from the classification matrix, presented in Table 4-2, is a system of five giver-recipient relationship subdivisions: (1) intergroup (i.e., groups giving to groups), (2) intercategory (i.e., individuals giving to groups or groups giving to individuals), (3) intragroup (i.e., a group giving to itself and its members), (4)

Table 4-2
Classification Matrix of Gifting Relationships

Gift Recipients	Gift Givers	
	Individual	Group
Individual	Interpersonal	Intercategory
Group	Intercategory	Intergroup
Self	Intrapersonal	Intragroup

interpersonal (i.e., an individual giving gifts to another individual), and (5) intrapersonal (i.e., self gifts) (Cohn and Schiffman 1996). This research focuses on a common small group, the family triad, with the parents in the process of completing the transition to parenthood.

As suggested in the *a priori* transition to parenthood theme, during this transition husbands and wives adjust to being a family. Therefore, it is not surprising that changes in gifting relationship subdivisions are found in the interview text. First, after the birth of the first child, some couples shift from exchanging primarily interpersonal gifts between husband and wife to exchanging intragroup gifts which can take the child into account or are exchanged to help parents perform their new role. This change in priority seems to be moderated by the number of years a couple has known each other before they have a child together. Second, a sixth gifting relationship subdivision, intermediary gifting, is identified. An intermediary gift is one in which a third party (i.e., an intermediary) takes possession of the gift before it is transferred to the recipient. Furthermore, the child can act as a gift ritual intermediary by performing some of the gift rituals on behalf of others. The passages drawn from the interview text and the numbers obtained from the content analysis illustrate the changes in the gifting relationship subdivision after the birth of the first child. Each of

these changes in the gifting relationship subdivision will be discussed.

Interpersonal to Intragroup

As suggested in the *a priori* transition to parenthood theme, research evidence suggests that when some couples have a child their priority shifts away from themselves as a couple in order to focus on their status as a family (Belsky and Pensky 1988; Daniels and Weingarten 1982). Therefore, it is not surprising that some couples move away from exchanging primarily interpersonal gifts (e.g., between husband and wife) in order to exchange intragroup gifts (e.g., gifts for "our family"). This shift is illustrated with excerpts from the interview text:

Edward: The one item (my wife and I) bought (for Christmas) for all of us . . . (is) a VCR—which is sort of for the whole family. The old VCR we had . . . couldn't (be) use(d with) the camcorder. The new VCR . . . could. So that was something we wanted to get for everybody.

Amy: Our (husband and wife) gifts tend to be more useful for each other (together) or for the house than personal like jewelry. . . . It's more like a video camera because we both wanted it and think it's important to have memories for each other and for the children.

Louise: The gifts that (my husband and I) give haven't really changed . . . as far as quality. It's just they have (my son) in mind. For my fortieth birthday I received a mountain bike and (my son) received a little trainer to put on the back of his father's bike so we can go (riding) as a family. In the old days I used to get diamonds. So that

part has changed. . . . I think it's just more family oriented now rather than personal. It's more things we can do together as a family and enjoy each other.

Georgia: For our anniversary last year we needed a dehumidifier for the basement . . . and that's our anniversary present to ourselves. It makes it easier for us. Better than taking the money and spending it on frivolous things, which would probably be more fun but, the necessities.

These excerpts illustrate, in the respondents own words, the change in gifting subdivision from interpersonal to intragroup. Furthermore, as suggested in the life status change *a priori* theme, rites of passage gifts may be given to help perform a new role. Although these gifts are not for rites of passage occasions, the purpose may be role performance. Some of these gifts may have been given to help parents perform their parental roles. For example, some parents believe it is their parental duty to create a video library of memories for their child. Thus, a video camera is purchased to help them fulfill this role.

Gift preferences and products purchased change due to changes in priorities after the birth of the first child. The gifts which are given tend to be less personal (e.g., diamonds) and more inclined toward items that are used by more than one family member (e.g., VCR).

This change in gift items which are less appropriate for interpersonal gifts and more appropriate for intragroup gifts can also be illustrated with the numbers obtained from

the content analysis. Gifts mentioned in the interviews were grouped by eight gift item categories: (1) personal adornments (e.g., perfume, jewelry, lingerie), (2) technology, household, and experience (e.g., VCR, picture frame, vacation), (3) greeting cards, (4) clothing, (6) money, (7) flowers, and (8) sundries and miscellaneous (e.g., candy). Although clothing can be considered a personal adornment, it is treated separately since research evidence suggests that clothing is given as a gift more often than any other type of gift (Belk 1979; Caplow 1982).

Table 4-3 presents the number of gifts mentioned (in groups of gift item categories) before and after the birth of the first child. In addition, the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test is presented to test the statistical significance of the difference in the number of gifts mentioned before and after the birth of the first child. The sample sizes vary in this data due to non-mentions. When a respondent does not mention an item or occasion that respondent cannot be included in the sample. The Wilcoxon test is not applicable for sample sizes smaller than seven (Spence et al. 1968). The T for sample sizes smaller than seven are indicated on the tables as "NA" which stands for "not applicable."

The first two gift item categories, counts, test statistics, and sample sizes in Table 4-3 are in italics: "personal adornments" and "technology, household, and

Table 4-3
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifts Before and After
the Birth of the First Child

	Before	After	T	N*
<i>Personal Adornments</i> (e.g., perfume, lingerie, jewelry)	103	78	-5.18**	27
<i>Technology,</i> <i>Household, and</i> <i>Experiences</i>	50	110	1.80	27
Greeting Cards	8	32	18.00**	15
Clothing	28	58	32.00**	19
Money	1	9	NA	6
Flowers	17	23	18.50	16
Sundries and Miscellaneous	9	12	22.50	11
Total***	216	322	0.48	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

*** Totals may vary between tables (e.g. totals of gifts exchanged and totals of days on which gifts are exchanged) due to respondents who do not give full information about a gift. The holiday or the type of gift may not have been mentioned.

experiences." These two gift item categories are most associated with the change in gifting subdivision. These will be discussed here while the remaining gift item categories will be discussed below since they have a greater association with other themes.

Personal adornment gifts may be considered "personal" since the consumption of the gift product is by the individual. These gifts are more likely to be interpersonal gifts. In contrast, household, technology, and experience gifts can be considered more domestic or family oriented. The consumption of these gifts is likely to be by the family. These gifts are more likely to be exchanged as intragroup gifts. Therefore, it is not surprising that the amount of personal adornment gifts (e.g., interpersonal gifts) exchanged before the birth of the child decreases from 103 to 78. This change is statistically significant ($T = -5.18$, $N = 27$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, technology, household, and experience gifts (e.g., intragroup gifts) increases from 50 to 110. However, this change is not statistically significant ($T = 1.80$, $N = 27$, $p > .05$).

The situational variable of time spent together before the child is born may act as a moderator variable. In this study the number of years that have passed from the time the couple first meets until they have a child ranges from 2 to 24 with nine years being the median. The respondents are examined in two groups: (1) those who had a child nine years

or less after meeting and (2) those who had a child after nine years of meeting. There are eight couples in the first group and seven in the second. Table 4-4 presents the number of gifts mentioned (in groups of gift item categories) before and after the birth of the first child, the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test, and the sample size for couples whose child is born nine years or less after the couple's first meeting. Table 4-5 presents the number of gifts mentioned before and after the birth of the first child, the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test, and the sample size for couples who had a child after nine years of their first meeting. Again, "personal adornments" and "technology, household, and experience" gifts are in italics and will be discussed here since these two gift item categories are most associated with the change in gifting subdivision.

Tables 4-4 and 4-5 differ from Table 4-3 in which the combined totals for the two groups are presented. In particular, on the whole, personal adornments tend to decrease after the birth of the first child (see Table 4-3). This remains true for couples who know each other less than nine years before having a child. However, this decrease is not statistically significant ($T = 31.50$, $N = 14$, $p > .05$). In contrast, personal adornment gifts tend to remain stable for couples who were together longer (more than nine years) before they had a child. This is evidenced by no change in

Table 4-4
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifts Before and After
the Birth of the First Child
For Couples Who Had a Child Nine Years or Less After Meeting

	Before	After	T	N*
<i>Personal Adornments</i> (e.g., perfume, lingerie, jewelry)	59	34	31.50	14
<i>Technology,</i> <i>Household, and</i> <i>Experiences</i>	41	63	28.50	15
Greeting Cards	5	11	NA	6
Clothing	21	37	15.50	10
Money	1	4	NA	3
Flowers	5	10	NA	8
Sundries and Miscellaneous	8	6	NA	7
Total	140	165	15.00	46

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4-5
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifts Before and After
the Birth of the First Child
For Couples Who Had a Child After Nine Years of Meeting

	Before	After	T	N*
<i>Personal Adornments</i> (e.g., perfume, lingerie, jewelry)	44	44	33.50	13
<i>Technology,</i> <i>Household, and</i> <i>Experiences</i>	9	47	2.50**	12
Greeting Cards	3	21	6.00**	9
Clothing	7	21	0.00**	8
Money	0	5	NA	3
Flowers	12	13	10.00	8
Sundries and Miscellaneous	1	6	NA	4
Total	76	157	7.00**	14

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

*** Totals may vary between tables (e.g. totals of gifts exchanged and totals of days on which gifts are exchanged) due to respondents who do not give full information about a gift. The holiday or the type of gift may not have been mentioned.

personal adornment gifts before and after the birth of the first child ($T = 33.50$, $N = 13$, $p > .05$). Couples who are together longer before having a child do not decrease their personal adornment gifts. This may be due to more time and practice in focusing on each other before the child arrives in the family. Similar to gifts in total presented in Table 4-3, technology, household, and experience gifts increase after the birth of the first child for both groups. However, this increase is statistically significant only for couples who know each other more than nine years before they have a child ($T = 2.50$, $N = 12$, $p < .05$).

Child Intermediary Gifting

Gift exchanges in which a third party takes possession of the gift before the designated gift recipient are intermediary gifts. Children can act as intermediaries for gifts as well as intermediaries for gifting rituals. Child intermediary gifting is an emergent aspect of the transition to parenthood theme.

Child Intermediary Gifts

The child can become an intermediary for gifts between husband and wife particularly when children are too young to pick out or create their own gifts to their parents. Spouses purchase gifts for each other and give them to the child to give to each other. This new class of gifts is often referred to as "Mommy gifts" and "Daddy gifts." These

gifts emphasize the family relationship rather than the relationship of the couple by including the child in the spousal gifting. Illustrations of this phenomena can be drawn from the interview text:

William: Mother's Day is for gifts because you have to give a (child) gift. . . . That's my son's gift . . . to (my wife). You have to scrawl the card, "I love you." You know with the "U." And "Love, (child's name)." (My wife) loves it.

Interviewer: So what type of gifts are from (your son)?

William: Something small, you know, "# 1 Mom," a charm.

Dawn: My daughter gave me a half a dozen roses from (my husband); roadside, nothing fancy. (My husband) didn't give me anything at all.

Eileen: Like for Mother's Day the happiest moment would be getting a card from my son.

Interviewer: Does (your husband) do that, buy a card that's from your son to you?

Amy: No. . . . (But) those are the ones I would like.

Interviewer: Do you ever do that for (your husband)?

Amy: Yes, all the time.

Betty: I always make sure that (my daughter) has a gift to give (her father). No matter what it is, whether it be Valentine's Day, Easter, whatever. There is always a gift for her to give to her father. . . . She would like to (pick out the gifts) but I don't let her. I guess because she's only four years old and she picks things out that are a waste of money.

Jill: Well, that's what we do now too from the baby. (My husband) gets a gift from me and he gets a gift from the baby. He always gets a card, "To Daddy, From the baby." And he gets one from me. . . . Some of (the gifts from her) could be little. . . . I don't

know what I got him this year. I think it was a tee shirt I bought (my husband) but from (our baby). . . . None of (the gifts are) really so extravagant but whatever it is . . . it's little, even for Christmas.

Respondents tend to report a positive affect toward child intermediary gifts. Notice that wives love when they are given gifts from their children. However, a negative affect occurs for some consumers when a child intermediary gift is viewed as a replacement for an interpersonal gift or when an expected child intermediary gift is not forthcoming.

In general, appropriate gift categories and holidays differ for child intermediary gifts. These gifts tend to be smaller things (e.g., a "#1 Mom" charm), occurring mostly on Mother's Day.

The numbers obtained from the content analysis can also illustrate child intermediary gifts. Table 4-6 presents the number of child intermediary gifts mentioned within each gift item category as well as total gifts mentioned after the birth of the first child which are not intermediary gifts. Child intermediary gifts comprise 7.14 percent of the total gifts exchanged after the birth of the child. It is more common for gifts to be exchanged between spouses than to use the child as an intermediary ($T = 4.70$ $N = 29$, $p < .05$).

The greatest number of child intermediary gifts (13 gifts) is the gift of a greeting card. This is a much larger group of gifts within the child intermediary category

Table 4-6
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Child Intermediary Gifts and After the Birth of the Child
Not Child Intermediary Gifts

	Child Inter- mediary	Not Child Inter- mediary	T	N*
Personal Adornments (e.g., perfume, lingerie, jewelry)	5	73	4.00**	21
Technology, Household, and Experiences	1	109	4.31**	26
Greeting Cards	13	19	23.00	12
Clothing	1	57	0.00**	17
Money	1	8	NA	5
Flowers	1	22	0.00**	14
Sundries and Miscellaneous	1	11	0.00**	7
Total	23	299	4.70**	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

than in the total of all after the birth of the first child gifts. This may be because consumers feel that child intermediary gifts should be small. The difference between greeting cards as a child intermediary gift and as a gift from a spouse is not statistically significant ($T = 23$, $N = 12$, $p > .05$).

The next largest category of child intermediary gifts is personal adornments. The child intermediary items that are classified here are also small (e.g., charms, earrings, and soap). The difference in amount of these gifts exchanged as child intermediary gifts and gifts from the spouse is statistically significant ($T = 4.00$, $N = 21$, $p < .05$). It appears to be more common for spouses to exchange personal adornment gifts between each other than to include the child in this gift. It may be that there is a sexual component to some of these gifts (e.g., lingerie and perfume). Spouses may feel uncomfortable including their child in gifts which may be sexually charged. The emergent theme of sexuality will be discussed further below. In addition, it is more likely for flowers to be given from a spouse directly than with the use of the child as an intermediary. There is a statistically significant difference between flowers as after the birth of the child gifts and intermediary gifts ($T = 0.00$, $N = 14$, $p < .05$). This difference may also stem from a sexual or romantic component of giving gifts of flowers. Thus, this gift is

more appropriate from a spouse than from a child.

The largest difference between the amount of child intermediary gifts and all after the birth of the first child gifts is in the category of technology, household, and experiences. It is less common for these gifts to arrive as child intermediary gifts as compared to all after the birth gifts. This difference is statistically significant ($T = 4.31$, $N = 26$ $p < .05$). This may be because these types of gifts tend to be more expensive and therefore not appropriate for a gift from a child.

In total, 23 gifts were mentioned as child intermediary gifts. The majority of intermediary gifts are initiated by husbands. This is not unusual since the majority of after the birth of the first child gifts are also initiated by husbands. The differences between the gender of the initiator of all after the birth of the child gifts will be discussed below with the role of gender theme.

Table 4-7 presents a comparison of intermediary gifts for all holidays and gifts which arrive after the birth of the first child for all holidays. As can be seen in this table, it is more common for gifting to take place between spouses without the child as an intermediary. These differences are statistically significant ($T = 0.00$, $N = 20$; $T = 22.50$, $N = 26$; $T = 25$, $N = 22$; $T = 3$, $N = 21$; $T = 7$, $N = 16$; $T = 0.00$, $N = 15$; $T = 4.08$, $N = 29$, $p < .05$).

The majority of child intermediary gifts were for a

Table 4-7
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Child Intermediary Gifting Days and
Not Child Intermediary Gifting Days
After the Birth of the First Child

	Child Inter- mediary	Not Child Inter- mediary	T	N*
Christmas/ Hanukkah	3	86	0.00**	20
Mother's Day	9	53	22.50**	26
Father's Day	4	27	25.00**	22
Birthday	4	63	3.00**	21
Celebrating the Couple (e.g., wedding, anniversary, Valentine's Day)	2	48	7.00**	16
Small Calendar Days (e.g., April Fools Day, Easter, Halloween)	1	2	NA	3
Personal Achievement and no occasion	0	21	0.00**	15
Total	23	300	4.08**	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this holiday. Respondents who mention a holiday and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

holiday in which only wives are recipients: Mother's Day. The next largest group of gifts for intermediary gifts is Father's Day. This is not surprising since some consumers believe that these gifts should come from the child and not from the spouse. The following passages illustrate respondents feelings about giving their spouse an interpersonal Mother's Day or Father's Day gift directly:

Interviewer: Did you also get (your husband) a Father's Day card from you, or was it only from (your son)?

Georgia: Probably the first year. I didn't this year. . . . I have mixed feelings about that. . . . I don't know. Like, (my husband's) not my father.

Sally: My father doesn't get anything for my mother on Mother's Day because she's not his mother. . . . it's disgusting; it's terrible, terrible. But that's something you can't change. I was really conscious of that. I'm really lucky that at least (my husband) remembers those holidays.

Some consumers feel ambivalent about these gifts and tend to exchange intermediary gifts instead of interpersonal gifts for Mother's Day and Father's Day. In contrast, some consumers strongly feel that they should get a gift from their spouse as well as from their child on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Child Intermediary Rituals

The child may also act as an intermediary for gift rituals. Child intermediary rituals is an emergent aspect of the transition to parenthood theme. The gifting ritual

intermediary is one who performs the gift rituals on behalf of another. Consumer ritual is defined as behavior that is expressive, symbolic, dramatic, episodic, and repeated over time (Rook 1985). Respondents report changes in the gifting ritual actor (i.e., the performer of the ritual). Whereas prior to the birth of the child the gift opener for husband-wife interpersonal gifts would be the gift recipient, some respondents report that they now let their child act as gift opener or gift distributor on their behalf. Excerpts drawn from the interview text illustrate the gift ritual intermediary:

Max: (Our son) participates in us (husband and wife) opening our gifts as well. . . . He's opening them. . . . He enjoys it. It's the excitement, I guess, of ripping the packages open. He definitely understands, in my opinion, that they're not his; that he's doing it for me or helping me. He just gets a big kick out of it. So no reason not to let him do it. So we do. We let him do it. That's what he does.

Mary: Well, first, (my son) gets his (gifts) first and then he helps pass out the gifts for everybody else.

After the birth of the first child, the child may act as a the gift ritual intermediary. The use of the child as an intermediary for gifts and gifting rituals illustrates that changes in priority from the couple to the family lead to changes in the gifting between husbands and wives.

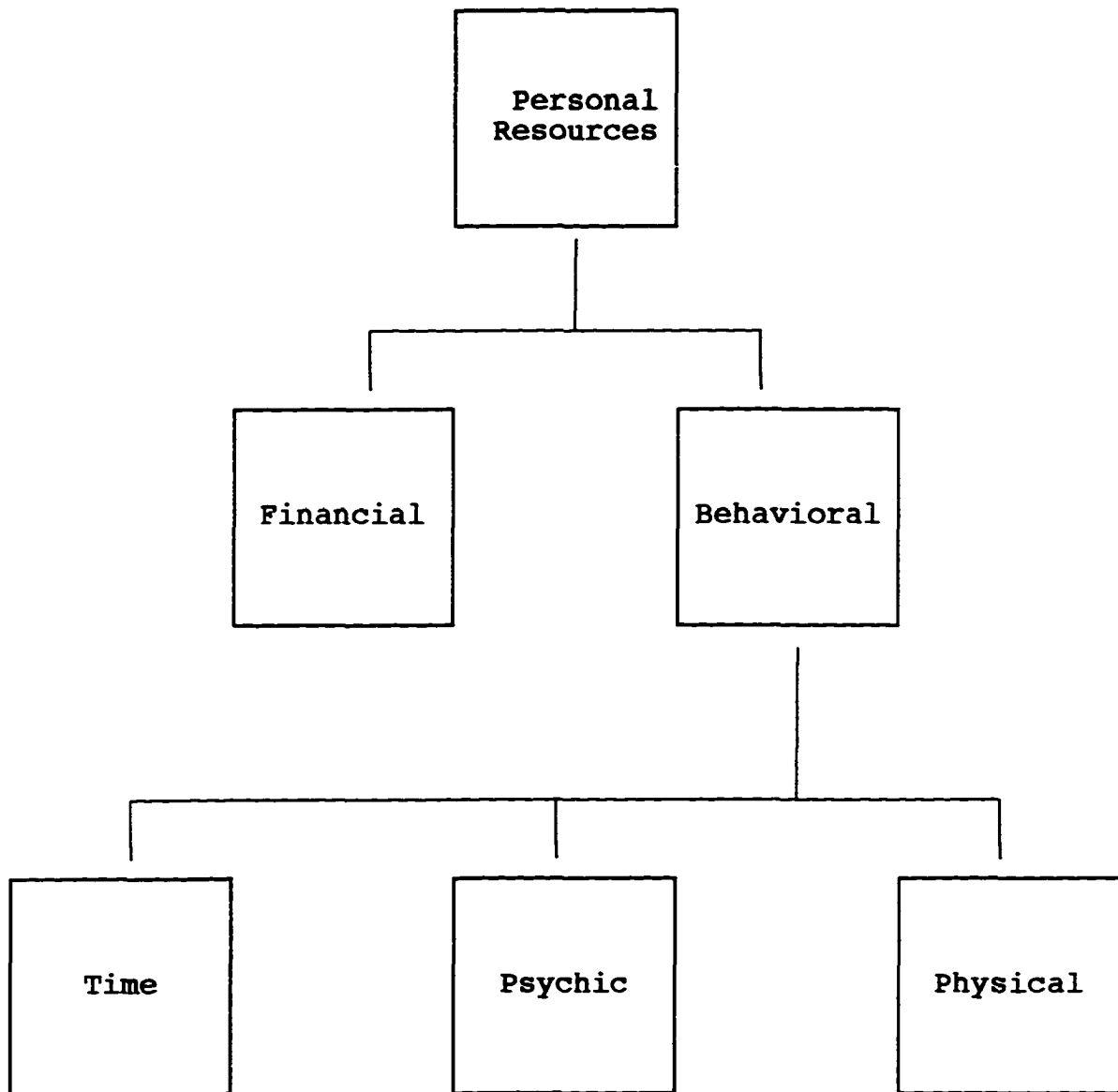
The Coping and Personal Resource Allocation Theme

Although it is expected that consumers would develop coping strategies, specific coping strategies emerge from the interview text and are treated as two separate emergent themes. The *a priori* stress and coping theme has been split into two emergent themes: (1) coping and personal resource allocation and (2) coping and gift shopping patterns.

Coping is the cognitive and/or behavioral effort to manage stress (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Consumers develop coping strategies to solve problems, regulate emotional responses to stress, and manage the symptoms of stress (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, and DeLongis 1986; Latack 1986; Lazarus and Folkman 1984). As expected, consumer coping strategies lead to changes in gifting between husbands and wives. The next set of changes (see Table 4-1) in gifting between husbands and wives relates to coping and personal resource allocation. These changes also occur due to changes in priorities and not only as a way to cope with the stress of changes in personal resources.

As suggested in the transition to parenthood *a priori* theme, personal resource costs are incurred when becoming a parent. As presented in Figure 4-1, personal resources which are expended for gifts can be divided into two types: financial resources and behavioral resources. There are three behavioral resources available for gifting: time, psychic and physical resources. The psychic resource is the

Figure 4-1
Types of Personal Resources



Adapted from Robben and Verhallen (1994)

mental energy needed for gifting such as thinking about what to purchase as a gift. Physical resources are the efforts needed to find the gift (e.g., traveling to the store) (Robben and Verhallen 1994).

Whether personal resources are viewed as decreasing, remaining stable, or increasing, respondents tend to allocate them differently after life status changes. Two changes in resource allocation emerge from the interview text: (1) the allocation of personal resources to the child and (2) the allocation of personal resources by amount per occasion and frequency of gifting.

Personal resources which may have been previously used for gifting between husbands and wives are allocated to the child's gifts and necessities after the birth of the first child. Furthermore, changes in gifting amount per occasion and in frequency occur. Some consumers tend to alter the number of gifts and the amount of money spent on gifts after the birth of the first child. Gifting frequency is characterized by how often or how frequently consumers exchange gifts. Still further, differences in the allocation of resources to husband-wife gifting occur in conjunction with the situational moderator variable: years together before the child is born. These changes in the allocation of personal resources will be illustrated from the interview text and, where appropriate, the numbers gained from the content analysis.

Allocation of Personal Resources to the Child

During the transition to parenthood, couples find they need to reconsider how they allocate their financial and behavioral resources. Respondents tend to allocate personal resources away from gifting between husbands and wives in order to allocate their resources to their child (gifts and necessities) and to their home. The changes in the allocation of personal resources may be in response to decreased personal resources and/or to changes in priorities. As discussed above, couples tend to change their priority from the marital dyad to the family triad. Excerpts drawn from the interview text illustrate this change in personal resource allocation:

Ellen: I would rather spend money on (my child) or put it into the house. Gifts . . . are nice but I don't depend on them. . . . (My husband and I) don't really give gifts anymore. Even Christmas with the baby, we bought mostly for (our child).

Georgia: I think (my husband and I) concentrate more on what we get for (our son) than what we get for each other. But I don't think that's so terrible. I don't know if that's so terrible.

Amy: I don't have cash in my pocket. I don't ever really have \$100 or \$200. If I have that, it's usually going towards food or pampers or whatever I need. It's not for me or for (my husband so) I don't buy him (gifts) any more.

Edward: I enjoy the kids at Christmas. So I would probably tend to spend more on them. . . . I get more joy out of seeing my daughter open the gifts than my wife probably because it's a new experience for me.

It is suggested that more joy is obtained from seeing one's child open gifts than from seeing one's spouse open gifts. Therefore, respondents allocate more personal resources to the child's gifts and necessities, and less of their personal resources to the marital dyad.

Gift Amount Per Occasion and Gifting Frequency

A change occurs in the financial resources allocated to husband and wife interpersonal gifts. Consumers discuss decreases, stability, and increases in the exchange of husband-wife interpersonal gifts. Each of these changes in gifting amount and frequency will be discussed.

Gifting Decreases

Some consumers cope with the transition to parenthood by decreasing their gifting with their spouse. Decreases in gifting occur as consumers set spending limits, decrease the amount of gifts per occasion, and decrease the frequency of gifting. Each of these strategies for decreasing the total outlay of personal resources for husband-wife gifts will be discussed.

Gift Spending Limits

Setting gift spending limits is one coping strategy for reducing the total monetary outlay for gifts between husbands and wives. Respondents attribute the impetus to create the gift spending ceiling to coping with a child in their family. The following are excerpts from the interview

texts which illustrate the occurrence of gift spending limits:

Wanda: Well, I try to say to (my husband), "watch how much you spend." I'm much more practical than he is. I probably have a better idea on how much things should cost and what we should pay. So, yes, actually, I try to tone down. . . . Like for the anniversary this year, I said, "Why don't we stay under \$50."

Dawn: At Christmas time, (my husband will) say, "let's set a limit," now since, again, having a family and everything. Then he'll go crazy. He'll go way above the limit. I'll feel like a fool because I've kept to the limit.

Louise: (My husband and I) try to say to each other let's try to cut back a little because we spend so much money. We bought a new car last year, we put a garage up and spent tons of money. We said, let's just concentrate on (our son). . . . We both . . . said we have to stop this (buying extravagant gifts for each other). We could save so much money if we stop this.

Dean: Between . . . me bailing out of the electrical engineering field and her losing her job, we started attempting to put caps on (gift expenditures).

Lloyd: (Because my wife and I set a limit) last year I had to go to about twenty stores to pick up a bunch of little things that I thought she would like. . . . Sometimes one big gift is a lot easier. . . . You don't fight the crowds at the jewelry store or for bicycles or things. Bigger gifts are not that hard to come by.

Respondents experience varying degrees of success with the setting of spending limits. Although couples can successfully reduce their interpersonal gift expenditures by

setting gift spending limits, the experience of setting a spending limit may be evaluated as unsuccessful when consumers perceive this strategy as leading to feeling foolish or leading to an unpleasant gift shopping experience. Shopping in a crowded retail environment was mentioned often by respondents as one of the most negative aspects of Christmas shopping. Consumers find that setting the spending limit can propel them into the crowded retail environment. Although some consumers admit that they still spend above their limit they believe that setting the gift spending limit helps them to control their spending.

As shown in Table 4-3, the exchange of greeting cards increased. This change is statistically significant ($T = 18.00$, $N = 15$, $p < .05$). As can be seen in Tables 4-4 and 4-5, this increase also occurs for consumers who had a child nine years or before and after nine years of meeting. Although the change cannot be statistically tested for group one, it is statistically significant for group two ($T = 6$, $N = 9$, $p < .05$). This increase may be due to a decrease in more expensive gifts which accompany a spending limit. Greeting cards may be offered as a substitute for the expensive gift.

Gifting Amount Per Occasion

A second strategy for minimizing the total outlay of personal resources for interpersonal husband and wife gifting is to reduce the number of gifts per occasion while

holding stable, as some respondents said, "the quality of gifts." The following are illustrations drawn from the interview text which describe reduction in the amount of gifts exchanged between husbands and wives:

Ellen: (Now we buy) a couple of clothes or a sweater or something. . . . A typical Christmas . . . (My husband and I) probably spent close to \$1,000 on each other. Like I said, jewelry for me. I'd buy him a watch or I bought him a ring once. Clothes galore, anything he saw that I was looking at in a catalog, he would jot it down in his memory and that would be wrapped up.

Georgia: Its five years (since my husband and I) just stopped buying things for each other. Like one year, when we were first married, the first year, because Hanukkah is eight nights, so we got each other eight . . . little presents. So, I mean, a package of three socks, that covered three nights (laughter). We did little things and we led up to something big. . . . I remember I got him socks. I got him colored underwear because that was something different. Maybe a book that he wanted, or a shirt, you know. But we made it fun that you were getting different things. And now we just concentrate what we are going to get for (our son). We really don't get each other things.

As can be seen from these passages, these couples reduced the amount of gifts exchanged for a particular holiday. They went from "clothes galore" to "a couple of clothes or a sweater or something" or to exchanging no gifts at all. Some consumers experience positive affect toward this change in gifting amount. Of course, other consumers may experience negative affect associated with this decline in gifting amount.

Frequency of Gifting

Gifting occasions take on a three-tier hierarchy: major holidays (e.g., Christmas), minor holidays (e.g., Valentine's Day), and non-holidays (e.g., "Just Because"). Non-holiday gifts are not associated with an occasion and are often associated with a feeling that is expressed with the gift.

Respondents suggest that the holiday hierarchy is a coping mechanism which helps to conserve personal resources. Personal resources are conserved when gifting frequency is reduced or eliminated on the less important occasions (e.g., minor holidays and non-holidays). As illustrations drawn from the interview text indicate, respondents report decreased gifting frequency by no longer offering gifts on minor holidays and non-holidays:

Harry: Nowadays, we have been married for close to seven and a half years, I think it's pretty much been codified into the traditional gift giving dates, you know, birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas.

Gary: Before we got married . . . we would get each other gifts for the (anniversary of the) first date, (the anniversary of) the first date we met, really like meaningful stuff, the (anniversary of the) first kiss. . . . For awhile we celebrated that day, too, January 13. We stopped celebrating that for some reason.

Interviewer: When did that stop; do you know?

Gary: I think actually after—not too long ago; maybe the last couple of years. We've got so many other things to celebrate. Mostly around the five year old. With a five year old, every other week it's a celebration.

Dawn: During the eight years that we dated gifts were abundant. . . . When we first got married . . . we still exchanged presents. . . . Maybe didn't spend the large amounts of money that we spent while we were dating. . . . Then we had my daughter. We had our daughter and things were very tight financially as well as just with trying to afford having a child and having a mortgage. We cut out exchanging on Valentine's Day. . . . Then we cut out giving presents on our anniversary. . . . This past birthday . . . I got nothing. (Also, my husband) used to be real good with that kind of stuff (spontaneous gifts), before we were married. . . . I noticed that he came (home) with a book, a Dr. Seuss book, for his daughter. I thought, how nice, what's the special occasion? . . . I said to him, "where's my spontaneous gift? Where's my Dr. Seuss book?"

Sally: (My husband) gets (our daughter) things for no occasion all the time. He has things stocked in his dresser. Like one day she was having a really good day or there was some issue that she had really resolved and wasn't doing it at all anymore and he said, "I'm so proud of you and I think that you deserve a treat." He said to me, "do you agree?" I said definitely. He said, "I have something special upstairs for you." "What do you have special?" He went upstairs and came down with one of these pocket Lion King activity things. I said, "where did you get that from?" He said, "oh, I've had it in my dresser for about a month or so. When I was in the store, I saw this and I knew she would love it so I just bought it and kept it for a special occasion." Gee, I've been good, but, you know, nothing.

As illustrated, after the birth of the child, couples experience a decrease in minor and non-holiday gifting frequency. In some cases this may occur after marriage but the elimination gets noticed when the child begins receiving these types of gifts. It seems that gifts to the child

"just because" can replace gifting between the couple "just because."

For some respondents, this decrease in frequency is accompanied by affect. Some respondents report negative feelings when they do not receive expected gifts. In contrast, some respondents feel no affect or maybe slightly positive affect towards the decrease in the frequency of gifts.

The numbers obtained from the content analysis further illustrate consumers' reduction in the frequency of gifting. As can be seen in Table 4-8, there are changes in when gifts are exchanged. Holidays which celebrate the romantic aspects of the couple (e.g., Valentine's Day, anniversary) are represented by a smaller number of gifts after the birth of the child than before the child's birth. However, this change is not statistically significant ($T = 104.00$, $N = 22$, $p > .05$). This gifting frequency is also examined separately for couples whose child was born nine years or less after their meeting (Table 4-9) and for couples whose child was born more than nine years after meeting (Table 4-10). As can be seen in the Tables, the same decrease in frequency occurs for holidays which celebrate the romantic aspects of the couple for both groups. Similar to Table 4-8, these decreases are not statistically significant ($T = 36$, $N = 14$, $p > .05$; $T = 54$, $N = 10$, $p > .05$, respectively).

In total, "no occasion" gifts are exchanged less often

Table 4-8
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifting Days
Before and After the Birth of the First Child

	Before	After	T	N*
Christmas/Hanukkah	56	89	70.00	22
Personal Days (e.g., Birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day)	32	160	3.04**	28
Celebrating the Couple (e.g., wedding, anniversary, Valentine's Day)	58	50	104.00	22
No Occasion (e.g., spontaneous, apology) and Travel	22	19	53.00	15
Small Calendar Days (e.g., April Fools Day, Easter, Halloween)	2	3	NA	5
Personal Achievement (e.g., graduation)	3	2	NA	4
Total	173	323	3.10**	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this holiday. Respondents who mention a holiday and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4-9
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifting Days
Before and After the Birth of the First Child
For Couples Who Had a Child Nine Years or Less After Meeting

	Before	After	T	N*
Christmas/Hanukkah	33	30	30.00	11
Personal Days (e.g., Birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day)	22	90	0.00**	15
Celebrating the Couple (e.g., wedding, anniversary, Valentine's Day)	32	25	36.00	14
No Occasion (e.g., spontaneous, apology) and Travel	21	13	13.00	10
Small Calendar Days (e.g., April Fools Day, Easter, Halloween)	2	2	NA	4
Personal Achievement (e.g., graduation)	2	1	NA	2
Total	112	161	22.00**	15

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this holiday. Respondents who mention a holiday and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4-10
 Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
 of Gifting Days
 Before and After the Birth of the First Child
 For Couples Who Had a Child After Nine Years of Meeting

	Before	After	T	N [*]
Christmas/Hanukkah	23	59	2.00 ^{**}	13
Personal Days (e.g., Birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day)	10	70	0.00 ^{**}	14
Celebrating the Couple (e.g., wedding, anniversary, Valentine's Day)	26	25	54.00	10
No Occasion (e.g., spontaneous, apology) and Travel	1	6	NA	6
Small Calendar Days (e.g., April Fools Day, Easter, Halloween)	0	1	NA	1
Personal Achievement (e.g., graduation)	1	1	NA	2
Total	61	162	0.00 ^{**}	14

· N = The total number of respondents who mention this holiday. Respondents who mention a holiday and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

^{**} Significant at $p < .05$.

after the birth of the first child than before the birth of the first child. However, this change is not statistically significant ($T = 53.00$, $N = 15$, $p > .05$). In the hierarchy of gifting, consumers find that "no occasion" gifts tend to be the first to be eliminated. Respondents attribute the decline of these gifts to the birth of the child.

Although small in number, there is a decrease in days of personal achievement (e.g., college graduation). It may be that these days occur less frequently after the birth of the child. Due to few mentions of these occasions it is not possible to test this difference statistically.

Gifting Stability and Increases

Some couples experience stability or increases in gifting amount and frequency. This will be illustrated with respondents own words and numbers obtained from the content analysis.

Gifting Amount Per Occasion

Some respondents discuss stability or an increase in gifting amount after the birth of the first child. The following passages illustrate this stability or increase:

Terry: (Gift giving has) always been very generous. It continues to be. It's always been very generous and I would say it tends to reflect . . . our financial situation (which) has improved over the years as we've gotten older. I would say it stayed in line with what we can afford.

William: Usually, the more expensive the better, in my mind anyway . . . Each year (the

gifts) go progressively higher. . . . I feel if its not more expensive than last year's present it's not good. . . . In my own mind I spend more money so I got the right thing. . . . But I'm a big gift certificate person. . . . It's always \$25 increments.

Carol: My husband is very generous to me. . . . There hasn't been much change. He's always been the same. He loves to give me things and he loves to make me happy even just giving roses and stuff like that, sending me roses for no reason and stuff like that.

Respondents who experience success in their work careers are more likely to increase the gifting amount and cost of gifts. This is accomplished in a variety of ways including an annual increase in the value of gift certificates.

The numbers culled from the content analysis further illustrate changes in gifting amount. It would appear that some gifting has increased after the birth of the first child (see Table 4-3). Research evidence suggests that gifts of clothing tend to increase over time (Schwartz 1967). Therefore, it is not surprising that gifts of clothing increased. This change is statistically significant ($T = 32.00$, $N = 19$, $p < .05$). This increase also occurs for the sample of respondents who had their child nine years or less after meeting and for those respondents who had their child after nine years of meeting (see Tables 4-4 and 4-5). The change is only statistically significant for the second group ($T = 15.5$, $N = 10$, $p > .05$; $T = 0$, $N = 8$, $p < .05$, respectively).

There were 216 mentions of gifts before the birth of

the child while there were 322 mentions of gifts after the birth of the child. Although gifting amount increases after the birth of the first child, this change is not statistically significant ($T = .48$, $N = 29$, $p > .05$). However, as can be seen in Table 4-5, this change is statistically significant for couples who had a child after nine years of meeting ($T = 7$, $N = 14$, $p < .05$). The lack of a statistically significant change overall and for consumers who knew each other nine years or less before their child arrived may be because not all gift mentions included the life stage when the gift was exchanged. These statistics may be an artifact of respondents reporting their most recent gifting experiences (after the birth of the child) rather than all their gifting experiences. Although it is not always the case, it seems to be more common that couples allocate personal resources previously available for husband-wife gifts to the child.

Frequency of Gifting

Some respondents view the birth of their child as the catalyst for increasing the frequency of gifting. Mother's Day and Father's Day add occasions. One respondent remarks that gift giving has "actually become more frequent." However, this occurrence is less common than the decrease in frequency.

The numbers obtained from the content analysis further illustrate this change in gifting frequency. As can be seen

in Table 4-8, there is a great increase in gifts for personal days from 32 to 160. This change in amount is statistically significant ($T = 3.04$, $N = 28$, $p < .05$). This statistically significant increase also occurs for both of the divided samples ($T = 0$, $N = 15$, $p < .05$; $T = 0$, $N = 14$, $p < .05$, respectively). This change is mostly due to the new gifting for the personal holidays of Mother's Day and Father's Day.

A greater number of gifts are exchanged for Christmas/Hanukkah after the birth of the child on the whole and for respondents who had a child after nine years of meeting. However, on the whole the change is not statistically significant ($T = 70.00$, $N = 22$, $p > .05$). For respondents who know each other longer before having their child the change is statistically significant ($T = 2$, $N = 13$, $p < .05$). This statistic may be an artifact of respondents reporting their most recent gifting experiences (after the birth of the child) rather than all their gifting experiences. Furthermore, as can be seen in Table 4-10, for couples who had a child after nine years of meeting, no occasion gifts tend to increase. Due to non-mentions, this change cannot be tested statistically.

For some couples gifting frequency remains stable. These couples are making a concerted effort to maintain their gifting. One strategy to maintain gifting stability is the use of threats (including playful threats), and the

expectation of trouble. Respondents describe the process of gift maintenance:

Carl: (My wife) won't let me skip an occasion. I'd be dead.

Rhonda: (My husband) always gets me flowers. . . . Only for occasions. . . . Always on our anniversary, and for my birthday. Those two occasions I'll always get flowers, otherwise he'd be in trouble.

Gary: (My wife) didn't get as mad as she would have (when I didn't get her a gift) if there hadn't been nothing going on. It was right in the heat of the whole situation in the hospital. My father . . . was in ICU. She didn't really get as unhappy as she would have if this hadn't gone on. . . . Mother's Day really wasn't a priority on the important scale with my father. She was disappointed but . . . it didn't last for weeks. . . . I would say it would have been a very tense situation. But she understood it begrudgingly.

It seems that previously missed gift occasions incite a woman's anger which may "last for weeks" creating tension in the home. Threats (even playful threats) and unpleasant behavior are used by some wives teach their husbands that they will "be in trouble" if gifts are not presented on the appropriate gifting holiday. As can be seen from the numbers obtained from the content analysis, there is a stability in gifts being presented for Christmas or Hanukkah for respondents who had a child nine years or less after meeting ($T = 30$, $N = 11$, $p > .05$). For these couples, gifting frequency remains stable for this holiday.

As can be seen in Table 4-8, there were 173 mentions of

days in which gifts were exchanged before the birth of the child while there were 323 mentions of days in which gifts were exchanged after the birth of the child. This increase in gifting frequency is statistically significant ($T = 3.10$, $N = 29$, $p < .05$). As can be seen in Tables 4-9 and 4-10, this increase is also statistically significant for both samples ($T = 22$, $N = 15$, $p < .05$; $T = 0$, $N = 14$, $p < .05$, respectively). These statistics may also be artifacts of respondents reporting their most recent gifting experiences (after the birth of the child) rather than all their gifting experiences. Although it is not always the case, it seems to be more common that couples discuss decreases in their gifting frequency after the birth of the first child.

The Coping and Gift Shopping Patterns Theme

The coping and gift shopping patterns theme is the second emergent theme stemming from the stress and coping a *priori* theme. This second set of coping strategies deals with gift shopping patterns after the birth of the first child. Respondents experience change in the way they shop for gifts after the birth of the first child. Four gift shopping patterns identified as changing after the birth of the child emerge from the interview text: (1) gift shopping partners, (2) timing and time spent, (3) store patronage, and (4) actions associated with price and method of payment. As suggested a *priori*, consumer behavior is one way of

coping with stress. These changes in shopping patterns can be considered strategies used for coping with the stress associated with the transition to parenthood. Furthermore, as suggested *a priori*, personal resource costs are incurred when becoming a parent. These coping strategies may be a response to saving financial or behavioral resources. These changes reflect efforts to include the child in the gift shopping experience or to save valuable personal resources. Each of these gift shopping patterns will be discussed below.

Gift Shopping Partners

Consumers in this study report that before the birth of the first child they tend to gift shop by themselves. After the birth of the child they tend to gift shop with others: child, spouse, or both.

Gift Shopping with the Child

As suggested *a priori*, stress, a common occurrence during life status changes, can have a direct effect on consumer behavior (Andreasen 1984; Celuch and Showers 1991). Consumers suggest that there is increased stress while gift shopping. This stress arises from shopping with their child. This stressful gift shopping experience is more goal oriented:

Mary: Now with taking (our son, shopping is) a little bit more difficult. But I'll shop to a certain extent. Then he gets antsy

and wants to come home.

Terry: I don't even go shopping anymore like I used to, just roaming around the mall for pleasure. It's like, I have something to do, I go and I do it because I have this three year old little boy who is not a shopper.

Louise: Now it's more stressful because it's hard to find a place for (our son) or take him with you. . . . I took (our son) shopping and we buy his dad a gun cabinet because having (our son)—his father has a lot of guns—we wanted someplace where they could be locked away. So we bought him a gun cabinet. And I bought him a bird feeder because we always love to feed the birds. Well, I took (our son) and of course I went through the whole thing, "Now . . . you can't tell Daddy. . . . This is a surprise for Christmas." . . . The next morning (our son) got up bright and early. . . . He ran upstairs and said, "Daddy, I can't help myself, we bought you a gun cabinet and a bird feeder." (My husband) didn't even have his eyes open yet. That was it. . . . He squeals all the time so it's hard to take him shopping.

Jill: Last year what I did is I shopped a little bit with (my daughter) because she's really good. I just bring her in the stroller with everything. I think because it's only one child, it's really easy. My mother used to tell me how she used to drag the three of us. I don't know how she ever did it. She had the winter coats on and off, juggling all the presents, everybody's hungry. She's really good. And at this age they're really good. Last year she was . . . a year and a half old. It was easier. . . . I don't have a problem. One is easier. I don't know if I had more if I would really do that.

Interviewer: Do you shop with (your son)?

Georgia: I try not to. I used to when he was younger. But I find that for my own sanity it's a lot easier to . . . go by myself

Gift shopping with a child is more stressful than gift

shopping alone. The child does not have the patience to stay in the store the length of time the mother needs to make a decision and a purchase. In addition, the way in which one shops when there is a child present is different. The gift shopping tends to be more goal oriented than previously.

In addition to a stressful gift shopping experience, gift shopping with a child can detract from the surprise of a gift. It has been suggested that surprise is a crucial element in gifting. Buying a gift for a spouse when the child is present in the store makes it more difficult to maintain the element of surprise.

Gift Shopping with Spouses

Some respondents prefer to hire a babysitter and do their gift shopping together as a couple. Some couples in which both spouses work report that they do not have enough time to spend together. They shop together as a strategy for increasing the amount of time available for each other:

Wanda: We usually do shopping together. We like to be together so we really spend all of our free time together. . . . If it's a busy day in the stores, like a Saturday, I try and get a baby sitter. Usually we do things together on the weekends. . . . We'll go out to a mall together and just split up for a little bit.

Jill: (My husband and I) went to . . . the (designer) outlet with \$500.00 in cash and shopped. We got . . . some stuff for (my husband)—he had to walk out of the store—some stuff for me—I walked out of the store.

Notice that consumers try to maintain the element of gift surprise when they are gift shopping together. Either the couple will "split up" in the mall or the gift recipient will depart from a particular store at the moment when a spouse transacts the gift purchase.

Gift Shopping with Spouse and Child

Some respondents begin to shop as a family after the birth of the first child. They do so because it seems easier to manage the child in the store when there are two adults. The following excerpts from the interview text illustrate this phenomenon:

Barry: (My wife) hates shopping. She tells you she hates shopping yet (when) we go shopping, she dominates shopping. I become the babysitter and she becomes the shopper which bothers the hell out of me because I like to shop.

Todd: (My wife and child and I) go (shopping) a lot together. More so now. . . . Now that (my son) is around. I like him to have those experiences. We go together. . . . it's more manageable with the two of us and him.

Gift shopping partners are effected by the birth of the first child. One parent gift shopping with the child tends to be a stressful experience. Generally, in order to cope with the stress of the transition to parenthood, partners are added to the shopping experience.

Timing and Time Spent

Research evidence suggests that time pressure, a situational variable, affects consumer behavior (e.g., Anderson et al. 1992; Mattson and Dubinsky 1987; Miyazaki 1993; Oropesa 1993; Reilly 1982; Shelton 1990; Strober and Weinberg 1980). For example, consumers tend to feel an additional time pressure when shopping for gifts due to imposed deadlines (e.g., the gift must be purchased by Christmas day) (Miyazaki 1993). Furthermore, time pressured shoppers are less likely to shop with a partner, less likely to examine newspaper advertising, and more likely to make a special trip to the store (Mattson and Dubinsky 1987).

Two aspects of time can be associated with gift shopping: timing (i.e., when a gift is purchased in relation to when it is given) and time spent (i.e., how much time is spent shopping). Respondents describe a linear value laden time frame for gift shopping. Gift shopping "early" is perceived as better than gift shopping "late." Consumers refer to shopping late for gifts as "crunch time," when it gets close to the designated gifting day and a gift has yet to be purchased. More thoughtful gifts are equated with earlier gift shopping and a greater amount of time spent in the store. Consumers explain this phenomenon:

Dawn: I got angry at (my husband) because my response was "why bother doing it the last minute, you're going to get the pick overs, you're going to be forced to buy things just to get things." He said, "Have I ever done

that to you? You've always gotten things that you like." I said, "Well, to me it's still like you're rushed and it's picked over. I want you to go when the shelves are stocked so you get what you really want to get me and not well, I have to settle for this one because it's left in her size." He knows that bothers me. I want him to go early and he never, ever does. He goes last minute. . . . The gift giving is what has suffered in the relationship. It's more obligatory like a Christmas or birthday, last minute running out to get. Yes, they're usually still beautiful gifts but it's like a chore. I feel like it must be a chore for him to find the time to go out and get it.

Betty: I'm a planner ahead and everything is done way ahead of time. (My husband) is a last minute person which annoys me because it will be, "Your birthday is the nineteenth isn't it?" I'll say, "No it's the eighteenth." And he'll have to run out and buy it. Everything is the last minute. I have seen other men do the same thing. . . . It seems like he's treating me like a last minute deal. Something he has to do rather than something he enjoys doing. . . . I don't think he can spend the time that I would spend thinking about what to buy and deciding on just the right gift. I don't think he can do it in the two hours he runs out before he needs the present. I don't think he's putting as much into it. . . . I think it's the whole emotional thing surrounding it. To me anyway. The time somebody spent.

Barry: She's not a last-minute shopper. I'm more of a last-minute. . . . I've always done it that way. I have a certain tolerance to pressure.

Sam: (My wife) thinks by giving (gifts) a lot of thought it's a better gift. If you get something that you know somebody wants and you go there and back in 10 minutes, what difference does it make?

Georgia: I mean, what thought does it take to go to Macy's and get a gift certificate? I mean, what time?

Todd: The kids come along and they kind of get in your way. Getting things done on time. . . . (We buy gifts) after the holiday. . . . They're (the gifts) not always on time. Sometimes they come after the holiday. We are so focussed on him (the child) that we say, alright, after the holiday we'll do something (for us).

When you shop is important to some consumers. They would rather believe that gifts are voluntary and that shopping for them is a pleasure. Quick and late gift shopping is equated with an obligatory motivation. Furthermore, quick and late gift shopping are equated with tasks that are not pleasurable for the shopper. This is translated into a suspicion that there is an unpleasant feeling toward the gift recipient. Still further, these qualities tend to be associated with the male gender.

Some women want their husbands to spend more time gift shopping and to start earlier. In contrast, their husbands feel that they are capable of purchasing a successful gift even if it is accomplished quickly or the "last minute." For some consumers, the time that was previously allocated to shopping for gifts for the husband and wife is now allocated to shopping or caring for the child. In addition, gifts can be delayed due to responsibilities to the child.

Store Patronage

Respondents report changes in store patronage when shopping for gifts for their spouses after the birth of their child. These changes reflect a reallocation of time

and money:

Georgia: At that point (before my son was born) I was buying a lot of stuff in Macy's. So like I would go and I would scour the department and look at all . . . the wool sweaters and "which one did I like the best?" and . . . "what did (my husband) have to wear with it?". . . . Now it's like, oh, Caldor's has the pants on sale for sixteen dollars, oh, that's a good price because they are usually twenty-five. So I go in. . . . (If) I try to get . . . him a shirt or something I'll look at all the different shirts. "What's the price?, what is the shirt?, what is the style?" So, I try to get like the best buy. But also something he's going to like.

Interviewer: Okay, so you had been going to Macy's often and now you shop more at Caldor's. I see your face, why are you rolling your eyes? What are you feeling?

Georgia: It's like, it's like down scale. It's so, to me, it's like so funny. It's almost like suburban. You move to Long Island and then you shop in Caldor's and K-Mart. And you get the best price and the best bargain. But I didn't have to worry about money then (before the child). . . . (Now), I look every week in the Sunday paper. You get all the sale circulars. . . . So to have to be so money conscious changes the way that I buy things.

Amy: (I shop more at) the mall because it's easy to go to different types of stores that have different types of products. . . . It's a different lifestyle now because everyone has kids. Before kids we could go to more gift stores. Now you go to Toys R Us and the clothes stores for the kids. Mostly Macy's I guess.

Todd: The reason why (my wife) shops more local now is because it's easier for her with (our son). So, go to a local store to get a gift as opposed to going (to the mall). We always used to go to Roosevelt Field (Mall) to shop. That was our first stop.

Some respondents have less available time for shopping and

so they prefer to gift shop quickly. In order to accomplish faster paced gift shopping consumers choose different retail outlets than before the birth of the child. For example, respondents explain that they choose to shop in local or smaller stores as compared to the mall. Shopping can be accomplished faster at these local stores because of a less crowded retail environment.

In contrast, some consumers report that they are more likely to shop at a mall after the birth of the child. As their families start to add members (e.g., spouses and children) consumers find that they can purchase a greater number of gifts in one shopping trip if they go to a place where there are many stores, including department stores and toy stores.

Consumers who experience financial constraints after the birth of the first child also change their store patronage. Previously shopping in upscale stores, these consumers now find themselves shopping in discount stores.

Price and Method of Payment

Consumers report that their actions associated with price and method of payment for gifts has changed since the birth of their child. On the one hand, consumers who experience financial distress after the birth of the child find that they are more careful about spending. Careful spending impacts on the way consumers shop. Some consumers are more likely to shop in discount stores. They may use

price as a guideline for purchases. Furthermore, in order to save money, some respondents report a decrease in the use of store services for which there is a fee. For example, before the birth of the child consumers might pay extra for gift wrapping services. In their current circumstances this is an activity performed by the gift giver. Still further, some consumers spend more time bargain hunting and comparison shopping. In contrast, consumers whose financial situation is stable or on the rise report that they spend less time bargain hunting and comparison shopping. They are conserving a different valuable personal resource: time.

In addition, some consumers report changes in their method of payment for gifts. In particular, consumers are concerned about the abuse of their credit cards:

Jill: What happens is (my husband and I) will always say alright, let's charge it now and we'll pay it off when the bill comes. Then something else comes up and we don't end up paying the whole thing off. I don't like to do that. If we don't have the cash, I don't like to buy it.

William: I thought you were going to ask me if I was stupid about credit cards. . . . Oh, I'm dumb. . . . I'm as dumb as a box of lox. I am stupid. If I have a \$4,000 credit line, that's my money. I have \$4,000 in the bank. I am such an idiot. . . . (My wife and I have) to cut the credit cards up when we get home. I made that deal with her this morning. I said, "I'm going to give you every credit card we have," and I already cut the American Express about four months ago.

Dawn: (My husband's) birthday is in February. We're always the tightest in February and I still, even if I have to take

out the American Express, I will get him a gift and pay it off. He doesn't believe in credit cards so if he doesn't have the cash, he will not buy me a present.

Consumers who are particularly concerned about the abuse of credit cards are those who have had financial troubles and do not want to have them again. They feel that they should only purchase gifts if the cash is available for gift spending. However, some consumers would rather use credit to purchase a gift. This is perceived as a better choice than not giving a gift.

In contrast, some consumers preferred method of payment for gifts is credit cards. This method of payment can lead to the gift recipient learning the price of the gift. This occurs when the credit bill arrives in the home. Reactions to learning the price of one's gifts are varied. The following excerpts from the interview text illustrate responses to learning the price of gifts:

Interviewer: How do you find out exactly how much he spends on your gifts?

Carol: Because he puts them on the credit card and charges it.

Interviewer: How do you feel about knowing that?

Carol: It doesn't matter. All the money goes in together anyway. To me, it doesn't make a difference.

Interviewer: Does he know how much you spend on gifts?

Carol: Probably not because I'm the one who does all the paperwork. If I charge something, he's free to look. I don't think he really cares though. I don't think it makes a difference to him. . . . I think (my husband) bought the diamond (for the

engagement ring) in the city and then brought the diamond with him and he went to The Karat Shop in Huntington and picked out a setting there and had them set the diamond in that setting.

Interviewer: Did you then know how much he spent for that?

Carol: I still don't know how much he spent.

Interviewer: Because at that time you weren't paying the bills?

Carol: I'd rather not know.

Interviewer: Why?

Carol: I don't know. I guess it's something just he should know. That's the way I feel about that. . . . Because I think that that's something that's a personal thing. Especially because it's not a small amount of money. He saved up for it and only he should know how much he spent. That's just how I feel about that.

Interviewer: So there's a difference between the gifts that he gets you now and this particular gift because you do know how much he spends?

Carol: Right because now it's coming from a collective fund whereas before when we got gifts for each other, it was whatever I made and whatever he made; they were separate.

Georgia: Because it came on the credit card bill and I handle the bills (I know what my husband spent for my gift).

Interviewer: How do you feel knowing what it costs?

Georgia: I'm glad my husband didn't pay a lot of money for it. I would rather not know sometimes. It would be nice to just get a gift, not anonymously, but not having to know the cost.

Todd: And then when the American Express bill came in (my wife) saw the price (of the gift). But I didn't care. I wasn't hiding anything.

Interviewer: Do you often see what each other pay for gifts?

Todd: (My wife) probably sees mine because she does the bill paying. I have no interest in paying bills. So I have no idea what she would spend. . . . I really would very very rarely ask her what she paid for

something. I don't care. It doesn't matter to me. If she paid a thousand dollars or five dollars. It doesn't matter.

Some consumers do not want to know what their spouses' spend for their gifts and others are not concerned that they know. The pivotal life status change for these feelings is marriage. For some consumers, it is taboo to know the price of gifts from their spouse before marriage. The taboo is lifted after marriage because assets are pooled.

The A Priori Preference Prediction Theme

As can be seen in Table 4-1, the next theme is preference prediction. Two aspects of preference prediction were developed *a priori*: (1) accurate preference prediction and (2) deliberate inaccurate preference prediction. A third aspect of preference prediction, preference avoidance, emerges from the qualitative data set.

A surrogate consumer is defined as "an agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact marketplace activities" on behalf of another (Solomon 1986; West and Brown 1994). One type of surrogate consumer decision is the gift purchase decision. Whereas some surrogate consumers strive for accurate gift recipient preference prediction, others deliberately predict preferences inaccurately. In addition, some consumers avoid preference prediction (e.g., by directly asking the gift recipient what to purchase). As suggested *a priori* in the preferences prediction theme,

changes in the approach to preference prediction can occur after the birth of the first child. Each of these approaches, as well as indications of change, will be discussed below.

Accurate Preference Prediction

In gift decision making, spouse's product preferences can only be taken into account when consumers have knowledge of the preferences. Surprisingly, to researchers and consumers, research evidence suggests that consumers are not very accurate in predicting their spouses' product preferences (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). When acted upon, (in)accurate preference prediction can lead to (un)successful gifting (Belk 1976; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993).

As suggested *a priori*, accuracy of preference prediction is enhanced when (1) preferences are stable (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986), (2) valuable feedback is available (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986; Green and Alden 1988; Ickes 1993; West 1996), and (3) information processing resources are appropriately allocated to gift decisions (Krishnamurthi 1980). Furthermore, gender and cultural norms may also influence the ability to predict preferences (Belk and Coon 1993; Belk and Coon 1991a, 1991b; Cvetkovich 1972; Hart 1974; Wallin and Clark 1958). Illustrations of this phenomena and changes after the birth of the first child are drawn from the interview text.

Preference Stability

Research evidence suggests that consumers predict the preferences of others with an anchoring and adjustment strategy. One "anchors" the prediction on one's own preferences and adjusts this prediction based on beliefs about how one's spouse differs from oneself (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986). Research evidence suggests that during life status changes (e.g., transition to parenthood) product preferences may be unstable (Andreasen 1984; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander and Schouten 1989; Schouten 1991; Fellerman and Debevec 1992). Therefore it is not surprising that respondents in this study report changes in their gift preferences.

Unstable preferences of the giver and the recipient cause gift decision making (Dhar 1994) and preference prediction (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986) to be particularly difficult. The following passages illustrate change in preferences and the difficulty in their prediction after the birth of the first child:

Wanda: When it was the two of us (my husband) used to always bring me flowers. . . . I really hadn't gotten flowers from too many other boyfriends, so it was really nice. . . . and I was like, "oh you're a gentleman." . . . My mind works a little differently now. I don't like (flowers) as much. Flowers die and all that, so I'm like, "don't get me flowers." . . . (My husband) used to get me roses and they are so expensive, too.

Terry: This past Christmas-Hanukkah, I said to (my husband), "Please don't buy me any

jewelry." I said, "I don't need another ring, I don't need another earring, I don't have anymore necks (for necklaces)."

Valerie: I think after (my child) was born . . . then I was given air conditioning. I was given (a) washing machine (for) clothes. . . . (My husband) knew (that) I wanted it because I told him I (would) like so much to have. . . . And I like so much to have air conditioning. . . . These things, I think (my husband) knew that I needed them. . . . After (my child) was born (my husband) gave me a microwave. I need so much. . . . I think three times, following times, one after the other (I) was (given) the household things. And then I was a little bit upset.

Interviewer: Did you tell him you were upset?

Valerie: I think maybe once (when) I was looking at TV. And somebody was getting divorced because (she) was given a house(hold) appliance. And I (said), "look, you see!". . . . When I was given . . . I like the things. Because if you are (given them) . . . many times . . . you begin to think, maybe I am part of the house?

Since the birth of their children, respondents' gift preferences have changed. Consumers may want and appreciate gifts when they receive them but can later develop negative affect for these gift items as their preferences change.

Because preferences are unstable they become more difficult for spouses to predict. As the above passages indicate, consumers communicate their change in preferences. The next section will discuss communication about gifts. In particular, feedback availability and value will be emphasized as an important aspect of communication.

Feedback Availability and Value

Communication about gifts can aid givers in making future gift choices. In particular, feedback from gift purchases can offer gift givers information about the success or failure of their purchases. Gift recipients can offer positive or negative feedback to givers in a verbal or nonverbal fashion. Research evidence suggests that consumers are reluctant to offer negative feedback for gifts (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986; Ickes 1993) in order to avoid hurt feelings (Green and Alden 1988). Furthermore, negative feedback can discourage future gift purchases. In contrast, some consumers regularly offer negative feedback for gifts which are not to their liking. Furthermore, after the birth of the first child, some consumers' willingness to offer negative feedback increases. Passages from the interview text illustrate these phenomena:

Ellen: (My husband) is getting a little more pickier (about gifts) to be quite honest. . . . I think maybe back then (before the birth of the child) he was taking (the gifts) to be nice. Now he feels more comfortable telling me that he doesn't like it.

Helen: My response (to my husband's gift of perfume) was, "have you ever seen me wear perfume?" This is in my mind. "Were you thinking about me and thinking: wouldn't it be nice if you smelled better?". . . . Because we were at my mother's house in front of everybody . . . I can't sit quietly and say, "What did you get that for?"

Interviewer: So what did you say?

Helen: "Oh, that's nice," you know, "Oh, that's nice."

Interviewer: Did you ever say to him,

"That wasn't really okay"?

Helen: No, no, no. I mean, I want to encourage him to buy me gifts . . . and to think about what I want. . . . I don't want to criticize him. I don't want to criticize him in front of my family and I don't want to discourage him from thinking of something.

Dean: I didn't get a chance to get out and get (my wife) a card from my daughter which upset (my wife). . . . I felt bad about that. . . . (My wife) will throw it up occasionally. She threw it up about six months later. . . . I apologized at that point in time and I might have gotten her some flowers. . . . I felt guilty. . . . At the time I could sense her disappointment. It wasn't until later on that she actually brought it up.

Georgia: (My husband) once bought me. . . . a very petite bracelet and I'm not a petite person. And it just like barely fit my wrist. It just was not something that I would wear. . . . And I really didn't like it. . . . And unfortunately, it was very obvious from my reaction that I wasn't jumping up and down, "oh this is great!" which is probably what I should have done.

Barry: (My wife) has no qualms about bringing things back. . . . Now when I buy a gift, I say, I know (my wife), if she doesn't like it, she'll just bring it back and it's not that big a deal. I don't feel bad about it because I know how she is. . . . Because I know that's the way she is, I don't have a problem with it.

Interviewer: Did you ever have a problem with it?

Barry: Probably a little bit in the beginning, yes, definitely. You spend a lot of time and you think you're doing something real nice or picking the right thing to make somebody happy. Definitely, in the beginning when she didn't like things, I got a little upset. Now, definitely not. As you get to know people, it's different.

Some consumers experience greater ease in communicating

negative affect towards gifts. However, as a result of this increased negative feedback, some consumers find it more difficult to purchase gifts. Furthermore, consumers who have always received negative feedback about gifts tend to adjust by no longer feeling bad about this communication.

In contrast, some respondents report that they continue to refrain from offering negative feedback. They do not communicate their preferences to their spouses. False positive feedback in the form of gift use is offered. Consumers believe that expressing positive affect toward a gift will make the giver happy. In the long run, these givers do not have the advantage of learning their spouses true preferences.

Some respondents do not offer negative feedback because they do not want to discourage their partner from buying gifts in the future. Gifts are often opened in front of a ritual audience (Rook 1985). When this is the case, respondents report feeling uncomfortable criticizing their mate in front of others. Disappointment may not be discussed verbally for months. However, body language can offer clues to recipients' feelings.

Information Processing Resources

Information processing resources is one aspect of the psychic energy needed to purchase a gift. It has been suggested that preoccupation with concerns not related to the decision at hand will usurp information processing

resources (Krishnamurthi 1980; Lepisto, Stuenkel, and Anglin 1991) and reduce predictive accuracy (Krishnamurthi 1980). Some respondents' failed gifts are attributed to reduced information processing resources or not properly allocating psychic energy. Excerpts drawn from the interview text illustrate how reduced information processing resources available for gifting can lead to unsuccessful gifts:

Gary: That's why I never got the right gift because my mind is always focused on all my problems. . . . What I'll do is just blow it all up to major catastrophic things, everything, never being able to dig my way out of whatever is going on, never actually taking the time to buy a nice gift, think about what is the right gift, think about what does (my wife) really want instead of half thinking what does she really want or half thinking how am I going to pay the Lilco bill. . . . I can recall walking the streets and thinking about a customer who's not buying from me anymore while I'm walking in the store trying to buy a gift. . . . I have come back with . . . substandard gifts. . . . I feel bad. . . . I do regret that I have (given) substandard gifts that I didn't take the time, just walked through the store and said, "oh, this looks nice," never really thinking about the person behind the gift instead of just not wanting to come home empty handed.

Sally: I guess over the past five years, around the time that (our son) was born . . . (my husband) was having a lot of difficulty in his work and that was really preoccupying him. When (our son) was born, (my husband) did not get me anything as a gift and that was very bad; it was not good. That was very hurtful. (My husband) said it was because of what was going on and he was just very busy and it was a difficult time. (Our son) was born nine days before our anniversary. . . . He didn't get me anything for our anniversary which was the first time because he was just very preoccupied.

Helen: I knew that he just walked into Bloomingdale's and said, "Oh, my God, what do I get?" saw them and bought them for me. . . . To me, it didn't feel thoughtful at all.

As can be seen in these passages, when thoughts are taken up with things other than gifts (e.g., paying the bills) no room is left for thinking about gifting. The result is gifting situations in which the giver does not accurately predict spousal preferences. This can cause negative affect for the recipient and the giver.

Lack of availability of information processing resources can also lead to a decrease in gifting frequency. As can be seen from this selection from the interview text, eliminating a gift on a culturally accepted gifting occasion is attributed to one's thoughts being preoccupied with work. This preoccupation often comes at a time after the birth of the child and when one spouse becomes the primary wage-earner.

In some gifting situations, the recipient perceives the giver as not expending an appropriate amount of psychic energy or information processing resources. Research evidence suggests that gifts perceived in this manner are often less preferred by recipients (Robben and Verhallen 1994). Not giving enough thought is one of the things that make a gift a failure.

Cultural Norms and Gender

Women tend to be more accurate in predicting a male's preferences (Hart 1974; Rucker et al. 1991). A common perception is that men do not have gift giving ability or desire (Belk and Coon 1991a). Some respondents discuss gender as if it were a characteristic that leads to being able to accurately predict gift preferences:

Edward: I might sort of try to get an idea if (my wife) liked (the product before I bought it). Sometimes guys can be way off on what's good and what's not good.

Georgia: I just think that that (being able to predict preferences) is the way (women) are brought up, or women are more nurturing, naturally, that that's part of our instincts. . . . I think it's a great thing. It's frustrating that men don't have it (the ability to predict preferences). But that's not their role. (My husband) feels: I go out and slay the beast and bring home the paycheck. . . . That first year I sent (my husband to the store to buy greeting cards). And I said to him . . . "Get Father's Day cards from (our son) for both of our fathers." And he got like these "Grandfather" cards. Like we would give to a grandfather. And I said, "no, no, no, no, no, no, no." I actually made him go back to the card store and explain to the guy, "look, I'm a new father and I bought the wrong thing." He told the woman in the store what he needed, so she kind of got it for him.

Roger: I went with my sister to help me give (a gift) to (my wife). . . . I figured one woman might know what another woman would like.

Women are characterized as nurturing (Spence 1984). The ability to notice their husbands' preferences is attributed

to this characteristic. Unintentional inaccurate spousal preference prediction is sometimes attributed to the male gender and never attributed to the female gender. Both males and females feel this way. Notice that in a wife's retelling of an event that happened to her husband, the wife perceives a guy to be in a store when the husband chooses the wrong greeting card and a woman to be there to help pick out the right greeting card. The use of this language can be interpreted as this respondent's understanding that women can pick the right item and men cannot.

Research evidence suggests that men's attitudes toward provider role responsibility (i.e., belief about who should provide for the family) will have an effect on their involvement in household work (Perry-Jenkins and Crouter 1990). Respondents suggest that husbands do not feel responsible for gifting since they are the family providers. In contrast, some women may have greater expectations about their husbands' gifts. This may be due to their beliefs that the husband is the provider and they thus feel greater disappointment when their husbands do not provide "the right gift." Furthermore, some men enlist the aid of another woman to help them choose a gift for a woman. This is expected to increase their predictive accuracy.

Male respondents discuss a class of gifts that they call "generic" or "cliché" gifts. These are gifts that are culturally appropriate for any member of the gender class,

are used as a guideline for predicting preferences, and are not specific to any particular person. The following are excerpts from the interview text in which husbands discuss gender and generic gifts:

Harry: Some pretty classic cliché gifts for women: earrings. I always felt were a really, really terrible present, but I felt as though that was the only thing I could come up with at the time. I felt like it was almost the equivalent of buying your dad a tie on Father's Day.

Barry: In the beginning, I just did the generic gift giving thing. . . . When I dated, I always bought the same things for different people. They were pretty solid, generic, like the ring, the bracelet, the sweater. (My wife) doesn't wear perfume but you knew the standard perfume, things like that. They were nice gifts. People weren't disappointed with them but they weren't special. You could have given them to anybody. When you start to get to know somebody and you get close to somebody, you have to be a lot more specific in your gift buying.

Vincent: I give also facial creams and stuff like Clinique stuff (to my wife). Creams she likes. Women seem to like creams.

Sometimes, these gifts carry a negative association. As giver and recipient become better acquainted over the course of a relationship their gifts will evolve from generic to specific. A generic gift can be a "terrible present" when it is given during a stage in the relationship in which a specific gift would have been more appropriate. In contrast, some respondents make predictions of spouses preferences based on these culturally created gender

classifications for gifts.

Deliberate Inaccurate Preference Prediction

As suggested *a priori*, preference prediction can sometimes be deliberately predicted inaccurately. It has been assumed that a gift which does not reflect a recipient's preference "occurs unintentionally through mistaken giver perceptions of the recipient or through unanticipated responses by the recipient" (Belk 1976, p 160). This assumption would appear to be a mistake since some gift givers are not motivated to be accurate in their predictions (Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). Research evidence suggests that this inaccuracy occurs in superficial gifting relationships (Otnes, Lowrey and Kim 1993; Otnes, Zolner, and Lowrey 1994). However, some respondents reported that deliberate inaccurate prediction occurred in their primary spousal relationship.

Certain conditions in the home (e.g., alcoholism) lead to symptomatic consumer behavior (Berkstresser 1977). Symptomatic consumer behaviors are purchases which are made in order to destroy or gratify hostility (Pollak 1964). Furthermore, gifts may be given to impose an unwanted identity upon a recipient (Schwartz 1967; Sherry 1983; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993). In this study, purposeful inaccurate preference prediction only occurred after the birth of the first child.

As expected, identity imposition was one reason for

deliberate inaccurate preference prediction. Two reasons for deliberate inaccurate spousal preference prediction emerge from the interview text: (1) spite and (2) ritual. Each of these reasons for inaccurate preference prediction will be discussed.

Identity Imposition

Research evidence suggests that gifts can be given to impose an unwanted identity upon the recipient (Schwartz 1967; Sherry 1983; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993) with gifts of clothing particularly suited for this purpose (Manikowske and Winakor 1994). As an illustration drawn from the interview text, one respondent discusses gifts that she had purchased for her husband that she recognizes are not his preference:

Jill: I buy (for my husband) a lot of clothes because he has horrible taste in clothes. . . . I usually buy him dress clothes. We really don't have the same taste. I got him a silk shirt that was a little too loud for him. He's very, very conservative; strictly blue, gray, black. . . . I bought him burgundy pants, really dark burgundy pants and a silk shirt—which was really nice, and he's worn it twice because I forced him to on an occasion. It looks really good but that's a little bit more than he usually likes.

In a later section of the interview, this couple bickers about these clothing gift purchases:

Jill: I think you always like everything I buy you.
Jack: Sometimes you buy things that you

like rather than—

Jill: Like clothes you're talking about. I told (the interviewer) that. We don't have the same taste. I knew you were going to say that.

Jack: I like things out of the LL Bean catalogue.

Jill: He's very conservative, preppy conservative. He does not—

Jack: I'll tell you the style I like, jeans. She's very, for lack of a better word, Studio 54 type thing. Very with-it.

In this banter it can be seen that this respondent has no problem now and has had no problem in the past with offering negative feedback to his wife. His wife knows that he will not appreciate the styles and colors of the clothes that she purchases for him and yet she purchases them anyway. This inaccurate spousal preference prediction is intended to impose an identity on her husband. This is further accomplished by forcing him to wear the clothes that are not his preference.

Spiteful Gifts

Some respondents report that they choose gifts that intentionally do not match their spouses preferences. These gifts actually match their own preferences. They are chosen "out of spite":

Betty: He kind of buys for me what he wants and I buy for him what I want. That's what it has come to be. . . . Just before (Mother's Day) we had replaced our lawn furniture. I had gone out and seen a few things that I liked so I sent him to the store and said, "gee, I like three different things so why don't you go and see what you like."

So he came back with something entirely different which was very masculine . . . and I hate it. I just really hated it and we had an argument about the whole thing but I kept it. . . . Mother's Day was a few weeks later. So for Mother's Day the man bought me . . . the chaise lounge, with the same cushion on it. I was like, I hated the other one why would I want another one? . . . It was just something that I think he wanted more than I wanted it, particularly since I didn't like the pattern he picked. Then, I guess, maybe out of spite . . . for Father's Day—I do a lot of typing and I've written a few short stories—we don't have a typewriter. . . . He doesn't type. . . . We're always borrowing a typewriter. I kind of wanted it more than him so for Father's Day I went out and bought him a typewriter. . . . It was something that I kind of wanted more for myself. . . . In his heart he knew that I bought it because I wanted it.

Clearly, as previous research suggests, these purchases can be interpreted as an act of aggression (Poe 1977; Pollack 1964). Furthermore, psychological reactance theory might explain this behavior. It has been suggested that "if a gift is perceived as a threat, the recipient may respond with resentment or overt aggression" (Manikowske and Winakor 1994 p 24). The gift of the chaise lounge was responded to as if it were a threat.

Ritual

An inaccurately predicted gift may be purchased so that a recipient may have the opportunity to partake in gift rituals. It is difficult to buy gifts for a "picky" person (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993). A giver may inaccurately predict a preference just so that the picky recipient can

participate in a gift opening ritual. This type of inaccurate spousal preference prediction is done so without malice. As an illustration drawn from the interview text, one respondent explains her actions:

Ellen: (My husband's) birthday is in May. I bought him an outfit to work and I think a pair of shorts and a couple of tee shirts. He kept the tee shirts because he likes tee shirts like this. Everything else went back. . . . When I was buying it, I had gone with my sister and I said, "he's not going to keep any of these, they're going back." I knew he was going to.

Interviewer: If you knew he wouldn't like it, why did you buy it?

Ellen: Probably just so he would have something on his birthday.

In this case, the ritual of giving and receiving a birthday gift is more important than the actual gift item.

Preference Prediction Avoidance

Preference prediction avoidance emerges from the interview text as a way of coping with an inability to predict preferences. It occurs when the gift recipient becomes actively involved in the gift decision process and purchase. Preference prediction avoidance falls on a continuum which is presented in Figure 4-2. On one end are gift recipients purchasing their own gifts on behalf of the giver. On the opposite end are gift givers acting as purchasing agents (i.e., being told what to purchase). For example, husbands act as gift "purchasing agents" when their wives request particular gifts (Sherry and McGrath 1989).

Figure 4-2
Continuum of Preference Prediction Avoidance

Recipient as purchasing agent	Gift discussions before gift purchase	Giver as purchasing agent

Less drastic measures of prediction avoidance are discussions of gift preferences between giver and recipient before the gift purchase. This falls in the middle of the continuum. The points on the preference prediction avoidance continuum will be discussed.

Recipient as Purchasing Agent

Prediction avoidance can take the form of relinquishing purchasing control to the recipient. The recipient becomes the purchasing agent. This can be accomplished with a cash gift. It was suggested that turning the recipient into a purchasing agent is a response to previously failed gifts and to changes in body weight:

Rhonda: I always pick my gifts. My husband, the first year we were married, bought me this little I.D. bracelet for my birthday and I didn't like it. So he said, "You know what, from now on, just get what you want." And I said, "That's fine." Because he just had no idea of what I like. . . . He never comes shopping with me. I don't even want him to come shopping with me.

Roger: Sometimes (my wife) might not have something specifically in mind (for a gift) and then (the gift) would be a dollar amount. "Why don't you spend, you know, two hundred dollars for something on yourself." Or something like that.

Jill: He wanted me to go buy clothes because I had been fluctuating with my weight. . . . He gave me money to go buy clothes. He said, "I don't know your size, da da da da." He has always bought me clothes before but I'm just so disgusted because up and down on the diets. . . . He gave me money to go (shopping).

Sam: Every time I buy (clothes as a gift

for my wife) they don't fit and (my wife and I) don't have the same taste so I just give her a gift certificate or I'll give her money and she doesn't like that because she doesn't think any thought goes into it but you know I'm not going to bother wasting my time if it's not the right thing so I'd rather just give her something and she can get what she wants. . . . I'd rather just give her the money and let her go buy it herself than go out and buy and try to get what she wants and it's wrong. Especially since she enjoys (shopping) and I don't so I could just give her the money and she could go get what she wants. But then she feels that that's not a personal gift, like giving her a gift certificate or cash. So we have a problem at times.

Carol: He wanted fireworks so I got that for him because he wanted them. . . . I also felt he spent too much money on them.

Interviewer: He spent the money on them?

Carol: Well, I gave it to him. I said, "go ahead, get what you want." Then he told me how much they were. I didn't know what he wanted so I said, "go ahead and get what you want and we'll take money out of the bank account." When I found out how much it was all together, I was upset. . . . He picked out what he wanted and ordered what he wanted.

A prediction avoidance strategy of giving money can replace giving purchased gifts. According to economists, cash gifts are most valuable (Waldfogel 1993). However, a cash gift turns the recipient into the purchasing agent. Gifts of cash become more common after the birth of the first child. As can be seen in Table 4-3, gifts of cash increase after the birth of the child. There were not enough mentions of this gift to statistically test this change.

Receiving a gift of cash can reduce satisfaction with the gift. However, it does allow recipients to receive

gifts that match their preferences. Some consumers view the prediction process as a waste of personal resources: time, energy, and money. However, there is some emotional value in receiving a gift that is not money.

Gift Discussions Before Gift Purchase

Another strategy for prediction avoidance is to discuss gifts with one's spouse before they are purchased. Respondents attribute this discussion to coping with time constraints arising after the birth of the child. They want to have a consensus so as not to waste time with a failed gift. Respondents explain why gifts are discussed in advance of purchase:

Todd: Maybe sometimes (my wife or I) will say, "I saw this. Do you think you would like it?" More so now that we've got (our son) because I think its time constraints. Because we know our time is limited so if we are going to make that investment into, not only the financial investment but the time and the energy, you want to have a little more of a consensus. At least their opinion of whether they would like it or not.

Amy: A lot of times we'll give each other an idea of what we need. . . . It normally goes that I might say, "I really could use a pair of earrings." Which I really could use a pair of earrings.

Carl: Right now I'm looking into buying (my wife) a home fitness center (as a gift) that I'm going to set up in the basement so we can both get into a workout program. More so for her because she needs to do it. . . . She wants it. I'd know she would rather be sitting on the couch but the doctors recommend it for her. She has osteoporosis and she has to develop her muscles. . . . We've discussed

it and she just wants me to use my best judgment. . . . She thinks I might have a little more experience in picking out something of that nature, but basically, I think what we're going to do is, I might shop around and find something. I won't buy it unless I have her approval because she's mainly going to be the one who is going to be using it.

Respondents point out that the gifting discussion helps to conserve personal financial and behavioral resources as well as to avoid the failed gift.

Giver as Purchasing Agent

Gifting discussions can turn a gift giver into a purchasing agent. "Solicited" interpersonal gifts (i.e., persuading someone else to buy for you what you really want), have been considered both a special case of self gifts (Mick 1993) and a special case of interpersonal gifts (Olshavsky and Lee 1993). Such gifts reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of self gifts (Mick 1993; Olshavsky and Lee 1993). Excerpts drawn from the interview text illustrate this phenomenon:

Terry: I've always been involved in picking out what it is and what I want (as gifts). . . . Several years ago I had seen a bracelet in Fortunoff's . . . and I loved it. It was a lot of money back then. So, when it came to my first Mother's Day. What had happened was I had started dealing with a jeweler in Bellmore. And one day I noticed that the woman who owns the jewelry store had that same bracelet on that I had seen in Fortunoff's and I loved it. And I had asked her whether or not she could still get it and she could. So when (my husband) asked me what

I wanted that year when he said he wanted to buy me something for Mother's Day. I said that I saw Harriet had that bracelet. This was years after I had first seen it and the price she quoted me was like half of what it was in Fortunoff's years before. . . . So (my husband and I) went into Harriet and she ordered it for me and I got it.

Sam: She'll say what she wants and I'll just go buy it. . . . I'll see him (a friend in the jewelry industry) and give him a page out of a catalog.

Interviewer: Does (your wife) get to see the page from the catalog first?

Sam: Well, she's the one that points it out. I don't look through the catalog with the jewelry. . . . It's easy that way.

Respondents are turned into purchasing agents when they are told what to purchase and where to purchase it. This may include the recipient handing the giver a catalog with instructions for what to purchase. The guesswork and the surprise are taken out of gifting. However, the gift is sure to match the recipients preferences.

The A Priori Role of Gender Theme

As can be seen in Table 4-1, gender roles can change after the birth of the first child. As suggested *a priori*, gender affects perceptions of (1) appropriate gift products (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991; Rucker et al. 1991), (2) appropriate timing of gifts (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1993), and (3) appropriate direction of gift giving (Heroux and Church 1992). Each of these will be discussed below.

Gender and Appropriate Gift Products

Different gift products have been identified as appropriate for male and female givers and recipients (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991). Research evidence suggests that when giving a gift to a member of the opposite sex, men tend to choose gifts that are perceived as feminine (e.g., jewelry and perfume) (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991) while household equipment and sports/hobby equipment are more likely to be given to men (Caplow 1982).

The numbers obtained from the content analysis illustrate the phenomenon of gender appropriate gifts. Table 4-11 displays a comparison of gifts given by husbands to their wives with gifts given by wives to their husbands before the birth of the first child. Table 4-12 displays a comparison of gifts given by husbands to their wives with gifts given by wives to their husbands after the birth of the first child.

The gift category of personal adornments is made up of lingerie, perfume, and jewelry. Research evidence suggests that these gifts are more appropriate as gifts from husbands to wives (Caplow 1982; Gould and Weil 1991; McGrath 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that personal adornments are given more often by men than by women before and after the birth of the first child. These differences are statistically significant ($T = 3.50$, $N = 24$, $p < .05$; $T = 4.50$, $N = 21$, $p < .05$ respectively).

Table 4-11
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Gifts Given by Husbands and Wives
to Their Spouses Before the Birth of the First Child

	Husband Before	Wife Before	T	N*
Personal Adornments	90	11	3.50**	24
Technology, Household, and Experiences	20	18	27.50	14
Greeting Cards	4	3	NA	5
Clothing	11	16	32.00	12
Money	1	0	NA	1
Flowers	17	0	0.00**	9
Sundries and Miscellaneous	6	3	9.50	7
Total	149	51	-9.43**	28

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4-12
 Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
 of Gifts Given by Husbands and Wives
 to Their Spouses After the Birth of the First Child

	Husband After	Wife After	T	N*
Personal Adornments	67	9	4.50**	21
Technology, Household, and Experiences	52	39	90.50	23
Greeting Cards	21	9	0**	11
Clothing	25	29	104.50	21
Money	7	2	NA	5
Flowers	23	0	0.00**	15
Sundries and Miscellaneous	7	4	NA	6
Total	202	92	37.50**	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

Technology, household, and experience gifts can be considered gender neutral. There is mixed research evidence concerning gender neutral gifts, those appropriate for men and women (e.g., VCR, tapes). Research evidence suggests that these gifts tend to be chosen by women for men (Gould and Weil 1991). In addition, household equipment and sport/hobby equipment (also included in technology, household, and experience gifts) are more likely to be given to men than to women (Caplow 1982). In contrast, research evidence suggests that gender neutral gifts are appropriate for men and women (Rucker et al. 1991). As can be seen in Table 4-11, technology, household, and experience gifts are given in approximately the same amount by husbands and wives before the birth of the first child and therefore, the difference is not statistically significant ($T = 27.50$, $N = 14$, $p > .05$). In contrast, after the birth of the first child, men tend to give a greater amount of these gifts. However, this difference is not statistically significant ($T = 90.50$, $N = 23$, $p > .05$). It may be that the life status change of the birth of the first child can account for this change in gender appropriateness of a gift and for the previous mixed results concerning appropriateness of gender neutral gifts.

The purpose of a greeting card is to express a feeling. Research into gender roles suggests that women are more likely than men to express their feelings (Broverman et al.

1972). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that the giving of birthday cards is more important to women than to men (Argyle and Henderson 1984). Therefore, it was expected that women would employ the use of greeting cards more often than men. Surprisingly, women do not initiate more greeting card exchanges before or after the birth of the first child. There were not enough mentions of this gift to statistically test this difference before the birth of the first child. However, after the birth of the first child, husband's initiation of a greater number of greeting cards than wife's is statistically significant ($T = 0.00$, $N = 11$, $p < .05$). It may be that women have a greater ability to express themselves while men rely on sentiments expressed by greeting cards as an aid to the expression of their feelings.

Research evidence suggests that men tend to receive more gifts of clothing than women (Horne and Winakor 1988). Therefore, it is surprising that no significant differences are found for clothing gifts given by men or women before or after the birth of the first child ($T = 32.00$, $N = 12$, $p > .05$; $T = 104.50$, $N = 21$, $p > .05$ respectively).

Tables 4-11 and 4-12 further show that it is more common for money to be given by husbands to wives before and after the birth of the first child. This may be due to the greater likelihood of men to hold an economic exchange paradigm (Rucker et al. 1991). This model for giving may

become stronger as time passes. However, there were not enough mentions of this gift to statistically test this difference.

Research evidence suggests that in American culture flowers are a gift that men give to women (Caplow 1984; Rucker et al. 1991). Therefore, it is not surprising that it is more common for flowers to be given by men to women before and after the birth of the first child. These differences are statistically significant ($T = 0.00$, $N = 9$, $p < .05$; $T = 0.00$, $N = 15$, $p < .05$ respectively).

Gender and Appropriate Timing

There are two contrasting male perspectives as to the proper role of gifting in dating and marriage. Men are either expected to shower dates with gifts to win a hand in marriage, thereby making it unnecessary to continue gifting after marriage or "guard" their wealth until marriage by only gifting to an intended or current spouse (Belk and Coon 1991a, 1993). As discussed above in the coping and personal resource allocation theme, interpersonal gifting between husbands and wives may increase, decrease, or remain stable. Tables 4-13 and 4-14 are presented to help examine the question, "How do husbands and wives change their gifting patterns after the birth of the first child?" These tables compare the total change in gift giving from husbands to wives with the total change in gift giving from wives to husbands.

Table 4-13
Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
of Changes in Gifts Given by
Husbands and Wives to Their Spouses
Before and After the Birth of the First Child

	Husband's Change	Wife's Change	T	N
Personal Adornments	-23.00	-2.00	139.00	27
Technology, Household, and Experiences	32.00	21.00	96.00	25
Greeting Cards	16.00	6.00	7.00	12
Clothing	15.00	13.00	59.50	19
Money	6.00	2.00	NA	6
Flowers	6.00	0.00	24.00	13
Sundries and Miscellaneous	1.00	1.00	39.00	12
Total	53.00	41.00	-0.42	29

• N = The total number of respondents who mention this gift either from husband to wife or from wife to husband. Respondents who mention an item and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

Table 4-14
 Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests
 of the Change of Days
 in Which Gifts are Given by Husbands and Wives
 to Their Spouses
 Before and After the Birth of the First Child

	Husband's Change	Wive's Change	T	N*
Christmas/Hanukkah	11.00	15.00	94.50	24
Personal Days	65.00	37.00	64.50**	29
Celebrating the Couple	-6.00	3.00	71.50	23
No Occasion and Travel	-3.00	-3.00	50.50	16
Small Calendar Days	0.00	1.00	NA	5
Personal Achievement	0.00	0.00	NA	5
Total	67.00	53.00	-2.09**	29

* N = The total number of respondents who mention this holiday either from husband to wife or from wife to husband. Respondents who mention a holiday and do not experience a change are not included in the calculation of T and are included in N.

** Significant at $p < .05$.

As can be seen in Table 4-13, husband's decrease in the giving of personal adornment gifts is greater than wife's decrease in the giving of these gifts. However, this change is not statistically significant ($T = 139.00$, $N = 27$, $p > .05$). This greater change may be due to husbands viewing their wives as mothers rather than romantic partners. Therefore, they reduce romantic type gifts of personal adornments. Men do not change physically as they become fathers. Therefore, it may be less common for women to view their husbands less romantically.

As can be seen in Table 4-14, there is a statistically significant difference in the total change in gifting on personal days ($T = 64.50$, $N = 29$, $p < .05$). Husbands tend to increase their gifting on personal days more than wives increase their gifting on personal days. This may be due to the greater importance women place on the receipt of a gift for Mother's Day than men place on the receipt of a gift for Father's Day.

Overall, Tables 4-13 and 4-14 show that the change in giving by men is greater than the change experienced by their spouses. However, the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test reveals no statistically significant difference in these changes overall by gift item categories ($T = -.42$, $N = 29$, $p > .05$). However, for gifting days there is a statistically significant difference between the change experienced by wives and the change experienced by husbands

($T = -2.09$, $N = 29$, $p > .05$). The transition to parenthood life status change seems to have a greater impact on gift giving from husbands to wives than from wives to husbands.

Gender and Appropriate Direction

While shifting dramatically in the last two decades, the private sphere has traditionally been the in-home realm of women while men operated outside the home in the public sphere of business and politics (Cheal 1987, 1988; Fischer and Gainer 1993; Kron 1983). In addition, across the transition to parenthood, household division of labor tends to become more traditional (e.g., women become responsible for in-home activities and care of children) (Belsky 1986; Belsky and Pensky 1988). Therefore, it is not surprising that women have historically been the primary performers of private sphere gifting activities (Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Fischer and Arnold 1990, 1994; Garner and Wagner 1991; McGrath 1989; Sherry and McGrath 1989). However, in dating and marital relationships, men are more often the givers and women the recipients of gifts (Belk and Coon 1993; Sherry and McGrath 1989).

The numbers gained from the content analysis illustrate this phenomenon. As can be seen on tables 4-11 and 4-12, the number of gifts for which the husband is the giver is greater for gifts before and after the birth of the child. These differences are statistically significant ($T = -9.43$, $N = 29$, $p < .05$; $T = 37.50$, $N = 29$, $p < .05$ respectively).

The Emergent Sexuality Theme

It was suggested *a priori* in the transition to parenthood theme that one disadvantage of becoming a parent is the accompanying change in the sexual relationship of the husband and wife (Belsky 1986). Manifestations of the change in the sexual relationship emerge from the interview text. Due to its many emergent aspects and its importance to consumers, sexuality is treated as an emergent theme.

Research evidence suggests that sexuality has been neglected by consumer researchers and that this is a mistake since consumers make product/service choices based upon their sexuality (Gould 1991, 1992, 1995a). In particular, some products and services can be used directly for lovemaking, attracting a sexual partner (e.g., sexy clothes), forming a loving relationship, and consuming sexual ideas (e.g., reading sex manuals) (Gould 1992, 1995a). Still further, males tend to give gifts primarily in romantic relationships (Belk and Coon 1993; McGrath 1995; Sherry and McGrath 1989). Therefore, it has been suggested that men are more likely to associate gifts with romance and/or sex (Gould 1995a; McGrath 1995).

The sexualized aspects of products are twofold. First, products can be sexualized due to their participation in a consumer's sexual behavior sequence. Second, a product can be sexually conditioned when paired with an unconditioned sexual stimulus. Marketers often create this pairing.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that feelings about one's sexuality can change due to experiences (e.g., transition to parenthood) and that this change can lead to changes in the sexualization of products (Gould 1995a).

As can be seen in Table 4-1, sexuality impacts on gifting. Changes in sexuality and gifts that occur after the birth of the first child will be discussed. Furthermore, the expectation that sexualized gifts are private will be discussed. Still further, respondents contrast sexual gifts of lingerie with comfortable lingerie. Comfort and sexuality will be illustrated with passages from the interview text.

Changes in the Sexualization of Gifts

Changes in feelings about sexuality occur after the birth of the first child. These changes impact on the response that consumers have to sexually charged gifts. In this study, respondents most often discuss sexuality in relation to a gift of lingerie. Lingerie is a product which may be present in a consumer's sexual behavior sequence. These sexualized gifts were most often gifts from husbands to wives. The following passages from the interview text illustrate changes in sexuality and subsequent responses to a gift of lingerie:

William: (My wife) doesn't like the underwear I buy her. . . . She took it out of the box. She giggled a little bit. She looked at it. She put it back in the box and

said, "you can bring this back, I need something with a little more material." I said, "but it looks nice." She says, "have you seen it on me yet?" I said, "no. I'd like to." So she says, "take it back." Alright, fine. . . . That was actually the first year. The first Christmas. Because, you know, we were still having fun. . . . We were still having a ball.

Interviewer: And now you're not having fun?

William: Well, yeah. You know. We both matured a little bit. We're not the wild and crazy people we used to be. I miss those days. . . . That first year was insane. We couldn't keep our hands off of each other. . . . Now all of a sudden it's like, Hofstra this. She was taking three classes here and she was starting to go under, you know. She was like, "oh my god I can't handle it with the baby."

Jill: (My husband) still buys me the lingerie.

Interviewer: Do you wear it for him?

Jill: Oh yes. (Speaking to husband) What are you making a face for? I do too.

Interviewer: What is the face?

Jill: The face is I would like to weigh less when I wear it.

Jack: That's one of the big arguments. I'm not worried about what she looks like.

Jill: I am. So. I never was before I had the baby. When you're that sick and you put on eighty pounds and then you lose fifty of it. I was like twenty pounds overweight to begin with. You're talking about fifty pounds that is just very, very hard to lose. Like I said, I joined the gym. . . . Eventually I'll get back to where I was. Then I'll go prancing around in that lingerie.

As suggested *a priori* in the transition to parenthood theme, a negative of becoming parents is the possible change in the sexual relationship of the couple. As can be seen from these passages, respondents' relationships may be less sexually charged after the baby. Furthermore, a gift of

lingerie might bring to the surface feelings towards one's sexuality after giving birth.

Research evidence suggests that "our cultural heritage has rendered the visibly overweight body as a problematic condition" (Thompson and Hirschman 1995 p 147). Some mothers may be unhappy with their body weight after the birth of their child due to culturally acceptable body weights. A gift of lingerie after the baby can be less appreciated than before due to changes in the mother's body weight and its impact on sexuality.

Sexuality and Privacy

Gifts that are sexually charged are designated by respondents as private. Some respondents were reluctant to speak about such gifts. If they would mention them during the interview they would be reluctant to elaborate on their use. Furthermore, some respondents explained that they opened many gifts in front of a large ritual audience consisting of family members and friends. However, the sexually charged gifts would be opened separately, in private. The following excerpts from the interview text illustrate how sexual gifts are considered private:

Carl: I bought (my wife) some Victoria Secrets.

Interviewer: Do you get that from the store or from the catalog?

Carl: I go right to the store. . . . She says, if you're inspired by anything and you see anything that catches your eye, please feel free to venture into it. . . . I bought a

couple of things. You're making me embarrassed.

Wanda: I remember I got him a book about sex and marriage and it was a spoof on what happens. It was a humorous book but I just didn't want his parents to see. . . . Or if he gets me any lingerie and stuff like that, we save that for us.

As can be seen from these passages, respondents can get embarrassed by a discussion of intimate gifts. This may be because sexuality is considered private. Furthermore, because sexual and intimate gifts are considered private couples prefer to open them when they are alone.

Comfort and Sexuality

Respondents contrast sexually charged gifts of lingerie with comfort. Lingerie is often considered uncomfortable. It is worn for sexual reasons and then replaced by comfortable items. The following passages illustrate the conflict between comfort and sexuality:

Terry: (My husband) would have liked for me, going into the hospital last week, he would have liked for me to have gone to Victoria's Secret and bought, like, lounging things. So that when I came home from the hospital Saturday, if I didn't want to have clothes on I could have had pajama sets, whatever, to lounge around in. . . . I won't spend money on that kind of stuff. I would rather spend the money on real clothes that I can wear or jewelry, or whatever. To me, you sleep in old tee shirts. So that kind of stuff we don't see eye to eye on.

Valerie: You put (on the lingerie) because you want to be beautiful, but then you can't stay all the time in these.

Interviewer: You change into something else?

Valerie: Yes, I use (the lingerie). Then something else. I can't stand it.

Vincent: I give (my wife) underwear, very fine underwear. Very pretty.

Interviewer: Does she wear it?

Vincent: Of course, yes. . . . It's stuff that she feels comfortable in. I don't ask her to parade in front of me but it's something that I know she feels comfortable in.

Interviewer: Do you wear the clothes your wife buys you?

William: Well, yeah, to make her happy, of course. . . . She bought me . . . underwear, boxers. I was all dressed up . . . and she was all happy, "oh my God you're wearing them," "I love them are you kidding?"

Interviewer: Do you love them?

William: They're boxers. I'm a brief person actually, to tell you the truth. . . . Because with boxers everything seems too loose. If you run around everything just seems to jiggle. . . . There's no support there. It's like you're a bra that's a D and you're an A cup or something. It's like, oh my God, this isn't holding up. It's falling off me.

Interviewer: But you wear them to make her happy?

William: Yeah, and then I went out and bought a pair of boxers for Valentine's Day. Little heart boxers. Silk heart boxers. . . . I went to Victoria's Secret which is the only place you can buy men's silk boxers now. I come home, she laughs. . . . I said, "what are you talking about? I went out and bought these things," and she said, "I know but you kinda look funny." . . . I was all mad.

Men and women may have different expectations about the use of a lingerie gift. Whereas a gift of lingerie may remind some consumers of their sexuality, other consumers try to play down the sexual issues associated with buying lingerie.

In addition, some respondents tend to feel that their lingerie is not for comfort but for show. Whereas others think that lingerie can be for comfort and for show.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examined seven interrelated themes concerning change in gifting after the birth of the first child. The research questions explored were: "Does gifting between husbands and wives change after the birth of the first child?" and if so, "What motivates the change?" and "What are the manifestations of the change?" Evidence of the *a priori* themes were found in the qualitative and quantitative data. As can be seen from the analysis, husbands and wives do experience change in gifting. Furthermore, the change is motivated by changes in priorities and available personal resources after the birth of the first child. Still further, the themes, some developed *a priori* with an exhaustive process of derivation from the literature and some emergent with an exhaustive process of derivation from the interview text, explored the manifestations of this change. The themes were illustrated with the respondents own words and the numbers obtained from the content analysis.

CHAPTER 5

METAPHOR ANALYSIS

This chapter will discuss symbolic consumer gifting metaphors. Since people think, talk, and express themselves in terms of metaphors, it was expected that a symbolic metaphor would emerge for each respondent. The symbolic metaphor is an exemplary image or event which characterizes the assumptions, concerns, values, and meanings associated with gifting between husbands and wives (Thompson, Pollio, and Locander 1994). Furthermore, metaphors are cognitive structures which shape our understanding and influence the nature of meaning (Johnson 1987). It has been suggested that any account of meaning is incomplete without the metaphors by which we structure and understand our world (Johnson 1987). Cultural viewpoints are conveyed through the language used to express personal meanings. Gifting is used as a metaphor for love and communication in the marital relationship. Asking respondents about gifting allowed them the opportunity to discuss their marital relationship. Furthermore, symbolic metaphors are used to discuss gifting (e.g., gift giving is like a child's game). Each aspect of gifting as metaphor will be included in this analysis. Emerging from the interview text are three metaphor themes which serve to classify the individual metaphors of each

consumer: (1) gifting paradigm (Belk and Coon 1993), (2) like a child, and (3) gift traditions.

Specifically, some respondents adopt perspectives that focus on their gifting paradigm. Three gifting paradigms have been identified (1) romantic love, (2) social exchange, and (3) economic exchange (Belk and Coon 1993). Similar to the "pure gift" and the "pure barter" conception of gifting (Malinowski 1922), the romantic love and economic exchange paradigms denote the extremes of a gifting continuum. The social exchange paradigm may be independent or it may fall on this continuum. Since the social exchange paradigm did not reveal itself empirically it cannot be considered in this analysis and the question of whether it falls on the continuum or is independent cannot be answered.

A "pure gift" is a sacrifice between partners in the romantic love paradigm. "Pure barter," found in the economic exchange model, characterizes a marketing exchange in which reciprocity is expected. Respondents use the word "gift" in both paradigms to convey both "pure gift" in one and "pure barter" in the other. The romantic love model includes expressive, sacred, emotional, idealistic gifts which singularize the recipient. In contrast, the economic exchange model includes instrumental, rational, pragmatic gifts which singularize objects (Belk and Coon 1993).

In each of these paradigms schemata and scripts are developed which are consistent with the model. Stored in

memory, schemata and scripts are organized representations of knowledge which specify general actions within a particular context (Schank and Abelson 1977; Soslo 1989). Gifting schemata and scripts are specified as rules. A comparison of each gifting paradigm reveals that the rules of the romantic love paradigm contradict the rules of the economic exchange paradigm.

Members of a marital dyad can sometimes perceive the world through different paradigms. When this happens, partners may adjust by learning a new script. Sadly, however, some couples do not adjust to each other. Anger, resentment, and confusion can sometimes be the result of their differing world views.

Second, a child's joy or a child's game is the symbolic metaphor for some respondents. These consumers may view their gifting through an economic exchange or romantic love paradigm. However, what is also salient to them is the sense of a child's perspective which guides their behavior. For example, Jill explains that she and her husband act like kids when it comes to Christmas gifts. She describes their excitement over child-like things such as a gift of a case of Lucky Charms breakfast cereal.

Third, for some consumers gift giving traditions are very important. These gift traditions can be cultural, religious, or personal and are used as a guide for gift giving behavior.

In terms of organization, first a comparison of the two gifting paradigms (love and economic exchange) is offered. This comparison includes gifting rules derived from each model. Second, profiles of couples with a concentration on their symbolic metaphor and the associated gifting paradigm will be offered. An analysis of the outcome of whether a couple is following the same or a different set of gifting rules will be offered. Third, the "like a child" gifting metaphor theme will be presented and the couples whose symbolic metaphor is associated with this metaphor theme will be profiled. Next, gift tradition as a metaphor theme will be presented. Respondents who are associated with this metaphor theme will be profiled. Last, a summary and conclusions are offered. What emerges is an understanding of how husbands and wives view their gifting based upon their consumer gifting symbolic metaphors.

The Gifting Paradigm Metaphors

This section is a discussion of the differences between the romantic love and the economic exchange paradigms. Rules for behavior in each paradigm are specified.

The romantic love model includes expressive, emotional, idealistic gifts which singularize the recipient. In this paradigm, gifting is a symbolic method of communication (Belk and Coon 1993; Cheal 1987). Hidden symbolic messages, encoded into gifts, include, for example, love and intimacy (Belk and Coon 1993; Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Cheal 1987),

hostility (Schwartz 1967), identity of self and other (e.g., Belk 1976, 1979, 1984), and value of a relationship (Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle 1990). In the romantic love model, the hidden symbolic meaning encoded into a gift is interpreted to answer the question: Am I loved? Furthermore, in the romantic love model, gifts connect people to each other (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). This model is characterized as feminine because these traits are traditionally feminine (Belk and Coon 1993).

In contrast, gift giving can be viewed as an economic exchange (Belk and Coon 1993). Consumers who follow an economic exchange paradigm view gifting as a method of exchange of material goods. The economic exchange model includes instrumental, rational, pragmatic gifts which singularize objects and is characterized as masculine. Early gift exchange literature suggests that the purpose of gift exchanges is to maintain the balance of the economic system (Mauss 1925). This balance is maintained by the bond that is created between members of a society when they are obligated to give and receive gifts. In this paradigm, gifts connect people to objects (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). Furthermore, the meaning of gifts is overt, making interpretation unnecessary. However unintended in the economic exchange paradigm, gifting actions and inactions can be interpreted as a symbolic communication by

those following the romantic love paradigm.

An important contrast between the romantic love paradigm and the economic exchange paradigm is the relevance of money (Belk and Coon 1993). Money is relevant in terms of measuring the value of the gift. For couples operating under the economic exchange paradigm it is also relevant in terms of the family budgeting process and the couple's attitudes towards it. Research evidence suggests that there are gender differences in attitudes towards money (Prince 1991). In particular, men tend to have a greater need to control their finances with the acquisition, earning, and handling of money closely tied to their self esteem. In contrast, women take pride in their ability to bargain hunt.

The gifting paradigm dictates gifting schemata and scripts. A schema is defined as an "hypothetical memory structure that includes knowledge about a class of information and the rules that govern the use of that knowledge" (Soslo 1989 p 348). A script, one type of schema, is defined as "a (knowledge) structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context" (Schank and Abelson 1977 p 41). Children learn scripts for behavior in a variety of contexts (e.g., eating at a restaurant) at an early age (Schank and Abelson 1977). These scripts capture common cultural and also idiosyncratic experiences (Bower, Block, and Turner 1979).

Research evidence suggests that cultural scripts or

rules for appropriate Christmas gift giving behavior are well established and enforced without visible means of enforcement and without widespread awareness of their existence (Caplow 1984). Contradicting schemata and scripts are stated in the gifting rules associated with the economic exchange and romantic love paradigms. In the romantic love (economic exchange) model, expressive (instrumental) behavior takes precedence. In the romantic love paradigm, the goal of gifting is to express love through the gift. In the economic exchange paradigm the goal of gifting is the exchange of consumer products. The goals of each paradigm are different and therefore the rules for achieving the goals are different. Table 5-1 presents gift giving and gift receiving rules derived from each paradigm. Each of these rules will be explained below.

Preference Rule

The first rule to be considered is the preference rule. The preference rule in the romantic love paradigm has been stated by Caplow (1984) in the first part of the gift selection rule which states:

A . . . gift should . . . demonstrate the givers familiarity with the receiver's preferences (Caplow 1984 p 1313).

This preference rule is meant to singularize the recipient by demonstrating that the recipient is special and unique and that this uniqueness is recognized by the giver (Belk

Table 5-1
A Comparison of Marital
Gift Giving and Receiving Rules in the
Romantic Love and Economic Exchange Paradigms

Gift Giving and Receiving Rules	Romantic Love Paradigm	Economic Exchange Paradigm
Preference Rule	Demonstrate familiarity of preferences (Caplow 1984). Thought not thing.	Match gift to recipient's preference. Thing not thought.
Knowledge Acquisition Rule	Indirectly learn recipients preferences.	Directly inquire of recipients preferences (recipients should offer suggestions).
Surprise Rule	Surprise the receiver by expressing more affection or knowledge than expected (Caplow 1984) or doing something unexpected.	No Surprises.
Calculation Rule	The value of the gift is not measured (Belk and Coon 1993; Carrier 1991).	Scale the economic value of the gift to the emotional value of the relationship (Caplow 1984).
Fitness Rule	E.g., money is an unacceptable gift (Caplow 1984).	E.g., money is the most rational gift.
Participation and Reciprocity Rule	Participation and reciprocity are required but perceived as voluntary (Belk and Coon 1993; Carrier 1991). Spontaneity is encouraged.	Participation and reciprocity are obligatory (Caplow 1984) with loopholes due to constraints on resources.
Preparation Rule	Gifts must be prepared before they are presented.	Preparation reduces the economic value and thus unnecessary.
Acceptance Rule	Love and use any gift received.	Dispose of (e.g., return, recycle) any unwanted gift.

and Coon 1993; Berg and McQuinn 1986). It is the thought that counts.

In the economic model, the preference rule states that gifts should match the recipients' preferences or unique tastes. The thing or object is more important than demonstration of knowledge. The goal of the preference rule in the economic exchange paradigm is to singularize the object. The giver may set out to purchase some product or brand. This product should match the recipients stated wants and needs.

Utility value (or use value) is gained through a successful pairing of a gift with a recipient's preference. A gift which contains utility value is better able to communicate love (Cheal 1987) or satisfy the needs of a consumer operating in the economic exchange paradigm. Furthermore, in both paradigms, a successful gift is one which represents the recipient (Heroux and Church 1992). However, the method of achieving this match differs by paradigm. Hence, the knowledge acquisition rule.

Knowledge Acquisition Rule

The knowledge acquisition rule specifies the method for learning a spouse's desires and preferences. In the love model, knowledge of a spouse's preferences or unique tastes is gained by careful attention to the details of the recipient's life (Cheal 1987). Directly asking recipients their gift preferences is taboo in the romantic love model.

It has been suggested that one of the ways we judge whether someone loves us is their ability to intuitively know what gifts to give us (Katz 1976). As one male respondent explained:

It's just a question of observing. . . . If you're a little bit observant, you're pretty sure to find what your partner likes, unless you're blind. . . . If you're patient enough to look, things will happen in front of you, won't they? They will show who they are in front of you. I just observe and I know what she likes.

This knowledge of a spouse's preferences is gained indirectly through unobtrusive observation.

In contrast, in the economic exchange model, a direct approach for knowledge acquisition is the rule. Research evidence suggests that recipients' participation in selection of their own gifts is common within families (Horne and Winakor 1988). This rational behavior occurs as givers directly ask recipients specifically what gifts to buy for them and as recipients initiate discussions and/or make requests for the products they wish to receive as gifts. In this way the giver is best able to match the gift to the recipients preference. The giver may act as a purchasing agent for the stated gift product or the recipient may actually purchase the item.

In the economic exchange model, givers and recipients are concerned about the risks of purchasing the wrong gift object. Gift recipients' involvement in the gift selection

process can reduce perceived risk. In particular, financial, social, psychological, and time risks are salient for some of the consumer gifting participants. Givers' financial risk (i.e., buying the "wrong gift" which sits in a closet unused) and givers' social risk (i.e., recipients' and others' approval of a gift) is reduced when the recipient approves of the gift in advance of its purchase. In addition, recipients' social risk is alleviated by not feeling obligated to own an item which may not be socially approved. Respondents have expressed feeling "stupid" when their spouse does not like their gifts. Giver's psychological risk of feeling stupid can be reduced when recipient's stated wants are purchased. The risk of wasted time (i.e., shopping for and returning the wrong gift, and then purchasing the right one) can also be alleviated with the recipients involvement in the gift purchase. The direct method of knowledge acquisition reduces risk and precludes the possibility of gift surprise.

Surprise Rule

It has been suggested that surprise is a crucial element in the gifting process (Caplow 1984; Schwartz 1967; Sherry 1983; Webley, Lea and Portalska 1983). One woman respondent suggested that the element of surprise in gifting is connected to romance. She explains:

My idea of romance is like spontaneous, definitely a surprise. I wouldn't know about

it (the gift) before hand.

The surprise rule in the romantic love paradigm is stated by Caplow (1984) as the second part of the selection rule:

A . . . gift should . . . surprise the receiver, whether by expressing more affection—measured by the aesthetic or practical value of the gift—than the receiver might reasonably anticipate or more knowledge than the giver might reasonably be expected to have (Caplow 1984 p 1313).

Surprising the recipient by expressing more affection or demonstrating more knowledge of the recipient than expected thus communicates love (Caplow 1984). Surprise can also take other forms. For example, a surprise can be created by presenting the gift at an unexpected time or in an unusual manner.

In contrast, surprises in the economic exchange model are unnecessary and risky. Perfect knowledge gained through direct request reduces risk. Surprises are eliminated as a consequence of perfect knowledge. Research evidence suggests that husbands and wives both perceive surprise to be more important when giving gifts to wives than when giving to husbands (Horne and Winakor 1995; Manikowske and Winakor 1994). An explanation of this finding may be that women judge gifts received by the rules of the romantic love paradigm and thus these rules are adhered to when giving gifts to women, but not when giving to men.

Calculation Rule

In the romantic love paradigm the value of a gift is not calculated (Belk and Coon 1993). The cost of the gift is beside the point (Belk and Coon 1993; Carrier 1991; Cheal 1987). The gift's value lies in the message that is communicated (Cheal 1987). Love is a more valued message than, for example, hostility. In contrast, in the economic exchange model, the calculation rule includes the third part of Caplow's (1984) selection rule. This rule states that:

A . . . gift should . . . be scaled in economic value to the emotional value of the relationship (Caplow 1984 p 1313).

In the economic exchange paradigm the financial as well as the labor costs (e.g., time, effort, energy) are added to the equation. Research evidence suggests that gifts in the marital relationship should contain the greatest value (Belk 1979; Caplow 1984).

Some respondents in the economic exchange model follow a variant of the calculation rule. The value of the gift may not be equal to the value of the relationship when the goal is to conserve valuable personal resources. The gift's value may just coincide with the amount of personal resources available to the giver at the time of purchase.

Fitness Rule

Fitness rules state appropriate gifts based on characteristics of givers and receivers (Caplow 1984).

Fitness is determined by a giver's and/or recipient's membership in a class. For example, recipients are classified by gender (e.g., jewelry and perfume are for women) (Gould and Weil 1991), and age (e.g., toys are for children). There are numerous fitness rules based on numerous classes in each paradigm.

In particular, in the romantic love paradigm, money is an unacceptable gift between spouses (Belk 1989; Belk and Coon 1991b, 1993; Burgoyne and Routh 1991; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987; Heroux and Church 1992; Hussein 1985; Webley, Lea, and Portalska 1983). This may be because gifts are considered sacred whereas money is connected to the profane world of commodities. Money, sterile and ordinary, does not reflect sufficient attention to the social or sacred nature of gifts (Belk and Wallendorf 1990; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Cheal 1987).

In contrast, from an economic perspective, money is an ideal gift (Waldfoegel 1994; Webley, Lea, and Portalska 1983). It maximizes the freedom of choice for the recipient. Recipients can choose the exact desired item without incurring any economic loss. Recipients following the economic exchange model appreciate a gift of money so that they are free to choose their own commodities.

Participation and Reciprocity Rule

The concern of the participation and reciprocity rule is to determine when gifting participation is required. In

the romantic love model, the gifting requirement is a paradox. Gifting is a moral (e.g., socially desirable) requirement (Cheal 1988) in which participation is perceived as voluntary. Recipients tend to interpret a givers participation on a ritualized calendar day (e.g., Christmas or birthday) as a communication that one is loved. Knowing that spouses equate love with participation obligates one to give on these days. Paradoxically, in order to communicate love a giver must act metaphorically as if the gift giving is voluntary. Signs that gifting actions are involuntary are interpreted by recipients as an unloving communication. Similarly, in the economic exchange model, participation and reciprocation are required. However, loopholes in this obligation exist in which spouses can choose to participate only if finances permit.

Furthermore, in the romantic love model, givers are encouraged to act spontaneously, giving gifts when they are least expected. These gifts are better able to communicate love because the possibility of obligation is removed. For married couples, gifting participation is continuous throughout the yearly ritual cycle. It is impossible to separate a gift which is a reciprocation from one which might be an initial participation.

Preparation Rule

Profane commodities are transformed into sacred gifts through preparation (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989;

Cheal 1987). Gift preparation can include removing the price tag, cleaning, wrapping, and signing and affixing a greeting card. Gift preparation adds reflexive value to a gift (i.e., signifying that a gift is a gift) and creates anticipation in the recipient (Cheal 1987; Sherry 1983). Furthermore, labor value of a gift is increased when givers prepare the gift with their own labor rather than the retailers labor (Cheal 1987).

In contrast, the gifts that are exchanged remain profane commodities in the economic exchange model. As such, no preparation is necessary (although it may occur). Price tags may remain on a gift so that it can be returned or exchanged if the recipient chooses to do so. Gifts may be wrapped in newspaper rather than designated gift wrap paper or remain unwrapped in order to save time and money.

Acceptance Rule

The acceptance rule is concerned with recipients' attitudes and actions toward the gift object. In the romantic love model, a gift should be loved and used because it is binding to the loved one. A gift return is an unloving symbolic communication from a recipient to a giver.

In contrast, in the economic exchange paradigm, a gift is a profane commodity and as such can be returned to the giver or the place of purchase or given as a gift to another person. It has been suggested that gift returns are a result of failure to follow the complex rules of gift

selection (Caplow 1984). In the economic exchange paradigm, returning a gift is just another profane market transaction which occurs because the giver should have asked the recipient to be involved in the gift selection process.

Gifting Metaphor Profiles Within Gifting Paradigms

When men and women enter into a marriage their gifting paradigms can either be different (mixed pairs) or the same (matched pairs). Mixed pairs are husband-wife dyads in which each member of the dyad is operating under a different paradigm. Matched pairs are husband-wife dyads in which couples are following the rules of the same paradigm. The descriptive characteristic of being either mixed or matched is static. Over time individuals can change perspectives and thus change the nature of their gifting relationship. The following is a discussion of husband-wife metaphor profiles for mixed and matched pairs.

Mixed Pairs

Mixed pair couples can be (1) adjusting (i.e., conforming to better match their partner), (2) clashing (i.e., experiencing conflict with their partner), or (3) accepting (i.e., accepting their partner without changing their own perspective or expecting their spouse to change). These relationships are static. Couples can change their perspectives throughout their relationship.

In the adjusting and clashing couples the women are

following the rules of and judging their men by the romantic love paradigm. Their husbands start their relationships by following the economic exchange paradigm. This behavior is unacceptable to these wives and so they embark on a 'training program in which they expect their husbands to learn the rules of the romantic love paradigm. Husbands of adjusting couples cooperate with the training program and begin to adjust their perspective and behavior. In the clashing couples, husbands resist the changes that their wives are trying to impose upon them. This resistance causes conflict in the marriage in the area of gifting.

In contrast, for accepting couples, the men are in the romantic love paradigm while the women are in the economic exchange paradigm. The accepting couples are less judgmental of each other's gifting behaviors. The husbands and wives accept each other's behavior even though they behave differently and may not understand their spouse's behavior. In mixed couples, women seem to have an easier time accepting their husbands romantic love paradigm behavior than economic exchange paradigm behavior. This seems to be the case regardless of the wife's paradigm.

In particular, Georgia and Helen have requested that their husbands, Gary and Harry, adjust to the romantic love paradigm rules. In order for this to happen these wives need to teach their husbands this set of rules. Gary and Harry have accepted the challenge to change but are

struggling to follow the rules which do not come naturally to them. Similarly, Dawn and Sally have attempted to change their husbands' paradigm from economic exchange to romantic love. They have been met with resistance. Their husbands, Dean and Sam, do not understand the new gifting rules. And so these couples clash.

Barry and Betty fall somewhere in between adjusting and clashing. Barry believes he has adjusted to his wife's wishes and that now Betty (his wife) needs to do some adjusting too. Betty, however, does not feel that Barry has adjusted at all and so the couple continues to clash.

Finally, two couples, Carol and Carl and Valerie and Vincent have accepted the behaviors of their spouses with all their differences. They neither desire nor expect change. The following sections group mixed husband-wife pairs by adjusting, clashing, or accepting and profile the couples within these mixed pairs. Table 5-2 presents the classification and the individual metaphors within each group.

Adjusting Couples

Two couples (Georgia and Gary and Helen and Harry) were found in which the husbands had been trying to adjust to the gifting rules that their spouses had set out for them. Georgia and Helen had taken on the role of teacher. They had been teaching their husbands gift giving rules. Their husbands were trying very hard to follow these rules.

Table 5-2
Gifting Metaphors of Mixed Pairs

Respondent Name	Gifting Metaphor
Adjusting	
Georgia	Teacher
Gary	The struggling student
Helen	Teacher
Harry	The struggling student
Clashing	
Dawn	Passed over and confused
Dean	Surpriser
Sally	Contra-socialization
Sam	Bah humbug!
Betty	Self gifter in the name of others
Barry	Antipathetic to wife
Accepting	
Carl	The communicator
Carol	Conservative gifter
Valerie	Felt like furniture
Vincent	Prolific giver

However, they have been struggling in their attempts. Each couple will be profiled.

Georgia and Gary

Georgia had been instructing her husband in a set of gifting rules in which some are from the romantic love paradigm and some are from the economic exchange paradigm. Some rules are learned through direct verbal communication and others are acquired from gifting experience. Georgia explains that Gary had learned to follow fitness rules and the preparation rule of the romantic love paradigm:

He's learned a lot about gift giving since we've been together. His family would be very happy to give you a gift certificate or so many times his mother would give a present and its not wrapped. And I take offense at it. Because I was brought up that giving a gift and the presentation, the wrapping paper and all that other stuff is part of what makes giving gifts special. He's learned a lot about that.

Georgia is teaching Gary about the romantic love paradigm rules for gift preparation and fitness. In the romantic love paradigm gifts must be wrapped and gift certificates are too similar to money to be acceptable. Georgia believes that it is a mother's job to teach her children about gifting. She is teaching her son. It is surprising to Georgia that Gary's mother did not teach Gary. Georgia has taken on the role of mother/teacher to her husband.

Georgia has now embarked on a course of teaching her husband romantic love paradigm rules about giving

spontaneous gifts that communicate romantic love. She teaches her lessons through words and deeds:

I think that the little things that you do, like sending cards . . . I would do . . . much more. But then I would say things, "you never send me a card," or "you never this," so that he started to do it. . . . He had to be told. . . . I just think that that's the way we are brought up, or women are more nurturing, naturally, that that's part of our instincts. . . . It's frustrating that men don't have it. But that's not their role. Gary feels, "I go out and slay the beast and bring home the paycheck." . . . I think that we're all trying to change the men in our lives, that "you should be this way."

Georgia places the blame of her husband's inability to notice her preferences on his upbringing and on his fulfilling male gender roles. He is the provider. Her gender role is the nurturer which in her mind includes being the giver of spontaneous gifts. She believes husbands have to be told what to do. Georgia dislikes the way her husband behaves. It is intolerable to think that he does not love her so she places the blame on a safe figure: his mother.

Georgia follows the acceptance rule of the economic exchange paradigm. She has shown displeasure with previous gifts from her husband. Gary has learned from Georgia's acceptance behavior that he is expected to follow the preference rule of the economic exchange paradigm: it is better to buy Georgia a gift for which she has stated a preference than to try to surprise her. Because Georgia did not follow the romantic love paradigm acceptance rule her

husband learned that he should follow the economic exchange paradigm knowledge acquisition rule. Georgia relates this process:

It would be nice to just get a gift, not anonymously, but not having to know the cost, not having to put the idea into his head. But that's not going to happen. So, if I want to have a gift then I have to. . . . Because I didn't like those (previous) presents. . . . At this point, I guess he feels that if he's gonna spend the money he might as well get something I like.

Georgia wants Gary to purchase for her gifts of products for which she has a stated a preference. Georgia claims that her husband is unable to follow the romantic love paradigm knowledge acquisition rule because he was not "taught to notice" her preferences unobtrusively. However, she also does not believe that this is really possible. Therefore, Georgia has turned Gary into a purchasing agent by telling him exactly what to purchase:

I don't know if it was my thirtieth birthday or my thirty-first birthday. He got me a chain that I wanted. It wasn't a real gold chain but I wanted a chain that I could wear. . . . Fake gold. I didn't want a real chain. But I told him what I wanted. I think it was for my thirtieth birthday because at the same time my mom had taken me, we were in the mall, and they have that place where you buy chain by the inch . . . and they had the chain there. And I said (to my mom), "ooh, I'm going to tell Gary that's what I want for my birthday." . . . I said (to Gary), "Did you get me anything for my birthday yet? . . . I don't know if you got me anything yet but I need a chain. . . . So, why don't you . . . get me, they have chain by the inch, so get

that." And I told him how long I wanted it. And he went. . . . He didn't get it there, he went somewhere else and got it.

Georgia realizes that she has to tell Gary what to buy for her because of her show of disappointment with the gifts that he selected on his own.

Gary is aware that his wife's script calls for him to remember things that she said in order to demonstrate his familiarity with her preferences and thus to communicate romantic love. He struggles in this regard and places the blame for his failure on all of his worries (job and health). Gary carries the weight of the world on his shoulders; he is the primary breadwinner in a one-income household. Recently he and his father have had health problems. His mind is filled to capacity leaving no room for the details of his wife's preferences.

Research evidence suggest that scripts are developed from personal experience (Bower, Black, and Turner 1979). Gary's gift giving experience with his wife gives him a script for how to purchase the "wrong gift" or a "bad gift":

I bought perfume because I liked the shape of the bottle. . . . She didn't like the perfume because I didn't take the time to say, "is this the perfume that she likes?". . . . I just went into the store and saw a bottle and bought the perfume in the bottle. Georgia still tells that story. . . . "If you go to the effort of buying the gift you might as well make sure you know exactly (what to buy)."

This excerpt contains a great deal of information about the generation of gifting scripts. First, they are developed from previous experience. Second, the telling and retelling of the event increases the chance that the lesson will be learned. The retelling of this story is for the same purpose as the retelling of a cultural myth.

Anthropologists suggest that myths are stories about the past that explain some feature of present life. They can be recited for listeners to learn appropriate behavior.

Georgia has retold the event to her husband and others (e.g., the researcher). She appends this lesson to the story: "make sure you know exactly (what to buy)."

Following the rules of the economic exchange paradigm, Gary is expected to match the gift to his wife's stated preferences. This action will singularize the object. Gary struggles with knowing exactly what to buy. He is forbidden to ask directly. Asking directly signals that he does not love the his wife (Katz 1976). He cannot remember what his wife says because he has too much on his mind. And so he continues to struggle.

Helen and Harry

Helen is teaching the rules of the romantic love paradigm to Harry. Harry has learned the gifting rule of letting the recipient "inspire" the gift. He explains:

It's a lot less about finding the thing itself
as it is about finding something for that

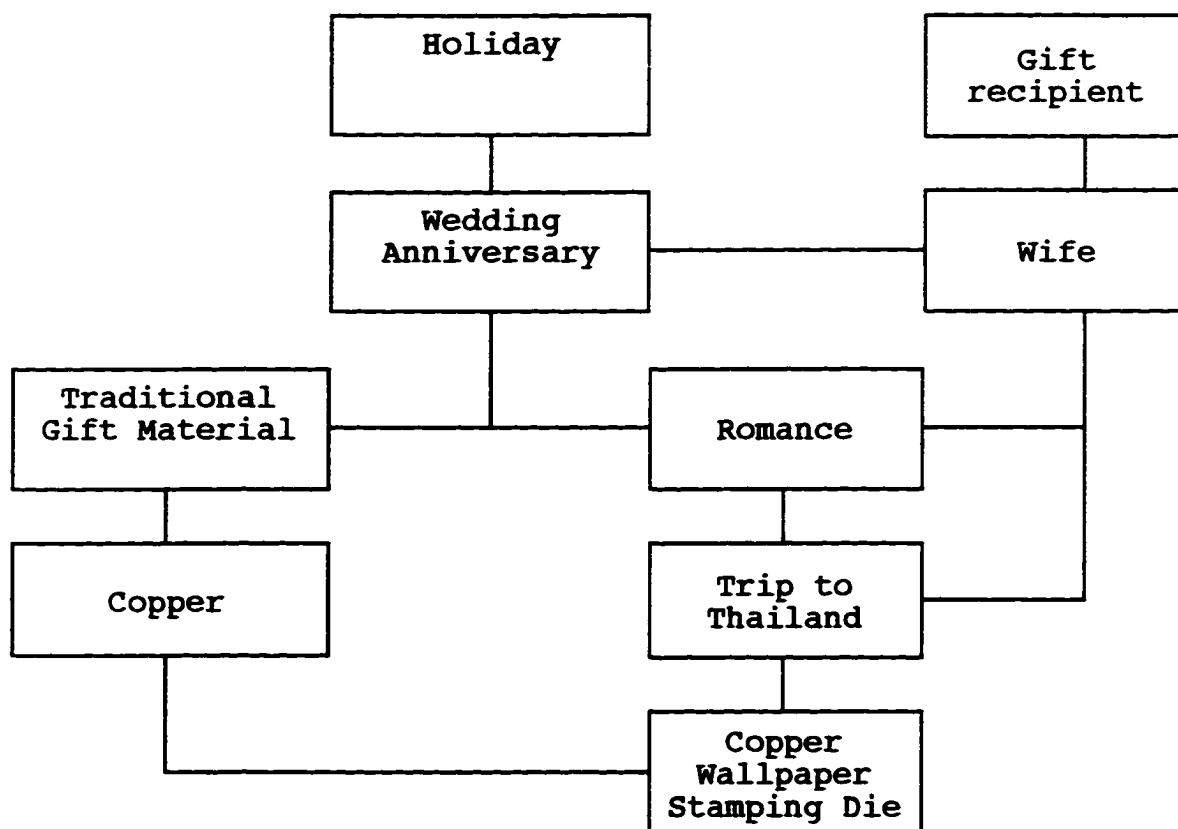
particular person that that particular person
will cherish or find interesting.

In contrast to Gary's script, in Harry's script the gift does not have to be some exact product or brand. He does have to surprise the recipient with something she "will cherish or find interesting." This gift singularizes the recipient. Harry, also struggling to adhere to the romantic love paradigm gifting rules, feels that he has become a more successful giver to his wife. He describes a gift in which he was "responsive to (his wife's) needs . . . by being thoughtful (and thus) contributed to the relationship." He purchased a copper wallpaper stamping die from Thailand for their anniversary:

It sort of fit all the different categories.
It existed within the category of the proper
material and . . . it reminds us of a
particular time of our past that we really
enjoyed. . . . It was a very romantic trip.
So it was connected to the romance of . . . an
anniversary.

The categories that Harry refers to can be interpreted as cognitive schema which are stored in memory. Memory structures and their subsets are retrieved from memory and linked together to form the new thought: a gift of a copper wallpaper stamping die. Figure 5-1 illustrates the possible thought pattern of this gift. The boxes contain memory schema. The lines link the schema and the chart flows downward.

Figure 5-1
Gift Thought Process



Harry prepared the copper wallpaper stamping die by removing the tarnish and gift wrapping it. It is significant that in removing the tarnish from the copper wallpaper stamping die in order to present it as a gift to his wife he also removed some of the tarnish from his own gifting reputation. Ironically, on this one occasion, Helen forgot to purchase a gift. Harry explained that "her unblemished record had been tarnished." Helen also related the events surrounding this anniversary gift. Her perception was that she was "late" with a gift due to extenuating circumstances. She did not "forget" their anniversary. She would not violate the romantic love paradigm participation and reciprocity rule. She eventually brought an appropriate gift to her husband. Nevertheless, on this occasion her husband believed that he properly adhered to the romantic love paradigm rules and thus removed the tarnish from his gift giving reputation; while at the same time his wife's gifting reputation had been tarnished in his eyes.

Although Harry struggles to follow the romantic love paradigm gifting rules he does have a sense that his performance is improving. He feels good about this because he wants to communicate to his wife that he loves her.

Clashing Couples

Gary and Harry are cooperating with their wives' efforts to change their gifting perspective and the rules

that they observe. They understand that adherence to these rules communicates love. Dawn and Sally also want to teach their husbands new rules. However, their husbands (Dean and Sam) resist attempts to change them. They love their wives but do not use gifts to communicate that love. These couples experience conflicts in their gifting.

Dawn and Dean

Dawn's husband failed to present her with a birthday gift, breaking a gifting rule which she believes signifies love. She spent the interview trying to figure out why her husband broke this rule. Dawn knows her husband's explanation for the missed birthday gift: lack of finances. Dean's concern for finances signals that he is adhering to economic exchange paradigm rules. In this paradigm non-participation is permitted if there are constraints on personal resources.

Dawn and Georgia behave similarly. They do not like their husbands' behavior and attempt to remedy the situation. Like Georgia, Dawn verbally communicates romantic love paradigm rules (e.g., the participation rule). When this does not bring results, like Georgia, she switches to the economic exchange paradigm and requests a specific gift. Gary adjusts his behavior by responding to Georgia's requests in the manner that will please Georgia. In contrast, Dean responds to Dawn's request with resistance. He claims that this is because he adheres to the romantic

love paradigm rules of surprise and fitness:

I don't like her to tell me what to get her. . . .
 I don't like her knowing what she's going to get
 for a gift. That takes some of the surprise out
 of it. So if I can fool her in some way, shape,
 or form, I'll try my best. . . . Something that
 she has asked for that I refused to get her is she
 wanted a screen door. I don't think that's a nice
 present to give somebody for a birthday or for
 Christmas, or something like that.

Dean resisted Dawn's attempt to change him. He does not
 feel that he has broken any rules.

Dawn interprets Dean's actions based on the romantic
 love paradigm in which a missing birthday gift is a
 communication that her husband does not love her. However,
 she also believes that he does love her. She cannot
 understand the paradox of the missing gift. His actions
 cannot be logically explained and thus Dawn is left with a
 puzzle. She reported feelings of anger and disappointment.
 Now she feels "passed over and confused."

Sally and Sam

Sally and Sam also clash over their understanding of
 gifting rules. Sally, operating within the romantic love
 paradigm, interprets Sam's economic exchange paradigm
 behavior as unloving. Sam is an economic man who would
 rather give his wife money. He explains:

I'd rather just give her the money and let her
 go buy it herself than go out and buy and try
 to get what she wants and it's wrong.
 Especially since she enjoys it (shopping) and

I don't. . . . But then she feels that that's not a personal gift, like giving her a gift certificate or cash. So we have a problem at times.

He does not understand the romantic love paradigm requirement for personal gifts. He does not realize that a personal gift, one that demonstrates his knowledge of Sally's preferences and/or a gift that is a surprise communicates love. The sentiment that Sam communicates during the interview is that Sally is being unreasonable. Sam has a "bah humbug!" attitude towards gifts. He feels that consumers are pressured into spending more money than they have in order to give gifts. This pressure comes from marketers who are taking advantage of the public. If it were not for marketing Sam would be a happier man. Sam's feelings about the commercialization of holidays is consistent with some male students' feelings toward Valentine's Day (Otnes, Ruth, and Milbourne 1994). In some way, Sam is right. Gift giving in this country did soar as retailers realized that promoting gift giving for holidays would increase sales (Schmidt 1991).

Sally and Sam both explain why the romantic love paradigm gifting rules are so important to Sally. Sally's metaphor is "contra-socialization" because her strict rule book is believed to be a reaction to the situation in her family of origin. Sally's father rarely bestowed gifts upon Sally's mother (his wife). He failed to follow the romantic

love paradigm rules. Sally communicated her feelings about her father's behavior to her husband:

I told Sam that from day one. I said this is the kind of household I grew up in and I do not want that. There is no way I could live with that.

Although Sally communicated her feelings to her husband she is often disappointed with his gifting behavior. Sam and Sally clash over a variety of the romantic love paradigm rules including the preparation rule. She describes how gifts are presented to her:

Sometimes not even wrapping paper. . . . I realize who it's from now and the thought was there. He said he's not a wrapper person so he just gives me the box. I'm lucky that I'm getting a present.

In addition, this couple clashes over the gift participation rules and rules for the giving of greeting cards. Greeting cards are a gift when they are given by themselves. When they are attached to a gift they are part of the gift preparation. Like Georgia, Sally communicates what she wants through words and deeds:

We went through a time when I said to him, "you never get me cards anymore just for no reason." He said, "you don't get me cards either." So I try to make a conscious effort now to do it. I said to him, "I know we're not keeping track but I gave you six cards so far and I haven't got any in return yet." "I couldn't get to the card store." He gave me a gift once without a card and I was very upset about that. I said, "I can't believe you

didn't get me a card. Cut out a piece of red paper in a heart and write I love you, anything, don't not get me a card." But he's like, "I got you a gift. If I just get you a card and no gift -- " I said, "that's right, you need to get me both." . . . I need the card, I need the present. . . . He doesn't understand that.

This quote also illustrates that Sally is not fully situated in the romantic love paradigm. She calculates the number of cards that they exchange and uses this number to measure her husband's love. However, she judges her husband by the romantic love paradigm rules. Sally attributes her husband's inability to follow the romantic love paradigm rules to his male gender:

I'll say, "you're male, male," I keep telling myself and that's why.

This gender interpretation inoculates Sally against the pain of the interpretation that her husband does not love her.

Betty and Barry

Deep conflicts in the union of Betty and Barry are manifested in their gifting activity. Betty's metaphor is "to you for me." She buys Barry gifts that are actually for herself out of spite. Betty believes that Barry is also behaving this way. Barry has been labelled "antipathetic to wife." They are a clashing couple.

A few months after Betty and Barry met they were faced with an unplanned pregnancy. They decided to have the child

and later to enter into a marriage. A small intimate wedding was planned with just a few friends. On the day of their wedding Barry cancelled their plans by telling Betty he had to work. Betty is resentful of Barry for backing out of their marriage and not honestly communicating his feelings. Barry remembers the events differently. He remembers telling Betty that he decided not to get married. He explains that he made a mistake and that they are incompatible. Barry and Betty do not agree on the nature of their relationship. Barry claims that he will only stay with Betty until their daughter is older. Betty believes she is in a long term committed relationship.

Barry's and Betty's resentment toward each other is manifested in their gifting in which they clash over the rules. Barry characterizes gift giving to his wife as clashing due to differing perspectives of their family of origin. Research evidence suggests that transition to parenthood may be less stressful for spouses who have similar experiences in their family of origin (Lane and Wilcoxon 1989). Barry claims to follow his parents gifting perspective in which gifting is a moderate activity with more emphasis placed on saving for the future. He is following the economic exchange paradigm. In contrast, he observes his wife following in the footsteps of her parents. They are extravagant gifters who view the present as more important than the future. This difference in perspective

in family of origin may be causing stress in this family of procreation.

Barry believes that he has adjusted his behavior to the desires of his wife in an effort to please her. He now researches her gift preferences (e.g., asks her mother). Barry is upset with his wife because he has adjusted his behavior while she has not adjusted her behavior. He feels completely misunderstood:

I'm not a cold person but it doesn't make sense. . . . It's not like I forgot (her birthday) totally. I've always given her a gift for her birthday. . . . Well, when there's such a huge gap between -- I could see us being this far apart but not like eons. At least if she knew me and how I felt, take that into some consideration too. I know how she feels; I don't forget (to give her gifts) and I don't not give her anything.

Betty would prefer to get her birthday gifts in the morning. This signifies that she is having a special day. When she is given her birthday gifts in the evening of her birthday she feels that Barry has slighted her.

Betty explains that she previously gave Barry spontaneous gifts. She has stopped this because he is unappreciative. This is true; he does not appreciate her efforts. In the romantic love paradigm these efforts signify love. In the economic exchange paradigm these efforts are a waste of personal resources. Betty feels thwarted in her efforts to communicate love. She is angry that she felt the need to discontinue this practice. Barry

should have been pleased that she discontinued this practice. He did not seem aware that she had in any way changed her behavior.

Barry describes "fights" he has had with his wife about gifting. Betty describes the same "fights." She remembers that she was upset because her husband broke the rules. She interprets his behavior as unloving. She feels slighted because her husband does not invest labor value in her gifts. In contrast, Barry believes he is capable of purchasing appropriate gifts quickly. He does not require the same amount of time as Betty to arrive at a gift decision. He is more focused on the outcome than the time it took to get there. Barry proudly communicates to Betty the swiftness of his gifting decisions. Betty interprets this swiftness as an indication that her mate does not love her.

Betty explained that their gifts "deteriorated." They are both following a new rule: to you for me. Research evidence suggests that certain conditions in the home (e.g., alcoholism) lead to symptomatic consumer behavior (Berkstresser 1977). In this case, the condition in the home is lack of love. Barry states that he does not love Betty. Betty exhibits symptomatic behavior by giving spiteful gifts. Betty purchased her husband a typewriter that she wanted for herself. He has no use for this item. He does not know how to type. She has great use for the

typewriter because she writes short stories. In addition, Betty describes lawn furniture that Barry gave her as a gift. The lawn furniture is in a pattern which he liked but which she had told him she did not like. This is viewed by Betty as a sign of deterioration in their relationship since she behaved in the romantic love paradigm and feels that she is now communicating that she does not love her husband. It has been suggested that gifts can be used as objects of resentment (Poe 1977). This is how Betty perceives these gifts. This couple separated a few months after the interview.

Accepting Couples

Georgia, Helen, Dawn, and Sally believe that they are acting in the romantic love paradigm. However, they wish to change their husbands in some way. They are not truly accepting of the gifts their husbands bestow. They judge their husbands' behavior and calculate the costs of gifts in hopes that they measure up to the value of the relationship. In contrast to these couples are Carol and Carl and Valerie and Vincent. In these couples the men follow the romantic love paradigm rules and communicate love with their gifts. The women lovingly accept these gifts. However, as givers, they follow the economic exchange paradigm. These couples do not experience conflict about gifting within different paradigms.

Carl and Carol

Carl is truly in the romantic love paradigm. He explains how gifts should be "an expression of love." His wife, on the other hand, believes that Carl spends too much money on gifts. However, this is a casual observation without an implied expectation of change. Following the economic exchange model, she explains that she is conservative when it comes to gifting. Nevertheless, Carol graciously accepts her husband's gifts and has come to appreciate his expression of love. As a giver, however, Carol remains conservative. Carl is not angry or disappointed with Carol's gifts to him. In the spirit of the economic exchange paradigm Carol asks Carl to act as purchasing agent for his own gifts because she did not know exactly what he wanted. Carol decided to give Carl fireworks for a combined birthday-Father's Day gift. She asked him to place the order. Thus, the object was singularized. Carl did not complain about his wife's actions in the way that clashing partners do. He accepts his wife as she is and follows all the rules of the romantic love paradigm including the gift acceptance rule.

Valerie and Vincent

In some ways Vincent and Valerie are accepting and in other ways they are adjusting. However, their adjustment seems more natural. Valerie sees Vincent behaving in a particular way and chooses to follow his lead. She has not

received explicit instructions in the same manner as Gary, Harry, Dean and Sam.

In particular, Vincent travels a great deal on his job. He bestows gifts upon his family whenever he returns from abroad. Valerie has happily picked up his tradition of giving travel gifts. However, they do not view all gifting rules similarly. Although Vincent fancies himself a "prolific giver," there are holidays which Vincent refuses to acknowledge. He will not give a gift for Hanukkah or Christmas. He is Jewish and his wife is Roman Catholic. Vincent may be rebelling against organized religion. Valerie finds this strange. She would like to celebrate the holidays of both of their religions. As much as Valerie does not understand her husband's behavior she accepts it. She does not complain. In this regard, Valerie does not try to change Vincent. In addition, Vincent is not trying to change any of Valerie's behaviors—she changed as a result of watching him.

Valerie is operating under the economic exchange paradigm. She tries to get Vincent's input about his gifts before she buys them. For example, she may show him pictures in a catalog or she may ask him questions. Vincent, however, is in the romantic love paradigm. He explains that spouse's preferences can be learned by unobtrusively paying attention to the spouse. He showers his wife with gifts and loves to surprise her. He accepts

that she wants his input about the buying process.

Valerie does describe a short time immediately following the birth of their child in which she did not like Vincent's behavior and she requested that he change. He began giving her practical gifts: a microwave oven, glass pans, and an air conditioner. Valerie began to "feel like furniture." These gifts differed from the jewelry and perfume she used to get as gifts. Valerie concludes that Vincent changed his gifts because she was a mother. Verbally, in a joking manner, Valerie communicated to Vincent her displeasure with these practical gifts. She asked him to return to his old romantic ways. Vincent dismissed Valerie's analysis that he was treating her like a mother after the birth of their child. He said that he was just trying to make her life easier. However, he did change his behavior.

Valerie was accepting of Vincent's gifts as long as he was in the romantic love paradigm. Once he switched into the economic exchange paradigm (e.g., giving practical gifts) she asked him to adjust his behavior. It seems that women in mixed pairs can only accept their spouse's behavior when it is the husband who is in the romantic love paradigm. Couples clash or adjust when the men are in the economic exchange paradigm and the women want romantic love.

Matched Pairs

Matching couples come in two varieties: (1) those who both function under the economic exchange model and (2) those who both function under the romantic love model. These couples are not trying to change one another, although, they may have passed through a period of adjustment. They do not experience conflicts either about gifts or manifested in gifts. They agree on the gifting rules. Table 5-3 presents the symbolic gifting metaphors for matched pairs.

Economic Exchange Paradigm Profiles

Jointly following the rules of the economic exchange paradigm are three couples: Rhonda and Roger, Ellen and Edward, and Amy and Adam. As in the case of Betty and Barry, the economic exchange paradigm has lead to self-gifting. Rhonda purchases her gifts from Roger with Roger's permission. Ellen and Edward have decided to allocate funds previously used for gifts for their child. They have reduced their giving and tend to buy whatever they need/want for themselves rather than wait for it to arrive as a gift. Adam and Amy have also changed their gifting due to financial constraints. Amy feels guilty about spending money while Adam experiences the fleeting joys and burdens that are associated with gifting. The profile for each couple will be described and analyzed.

Table 5-3
Gifting Metaphors of Matched Pairs

Respondent Name	Gifting Metaphor
Economic Exchange Paradigm	
Rhonda	Self gifter in the name of others
Roger	Family gifting financial officer
Ellen	Gifting resource re-allocator
Edward	Difficult gift recipient via circumvention
Amy	The guilty shopper
Adam	Feels fleeting joys and burdens
Romantic Love Paradigm	
Louise	Familial love paradigm
Lloyd	Familial love paradigm
Mary	Unusual gift presentation recipient
Max	Unusual gift presentation giver

Rhonda and Roger

When Roger and Rhonda began their relationship Roger was following the rules of the romantic love model while Rhonda was adhering to the rules of the economic exchange model. Roger became the gifting financial officer while Rhonda became a self-gifter on behalf of Roger. This occurred after a pivotal event in which Rhonda exchanged a gift. Roger is unhappy with the lack of romance in their gifts. Rhonda is happy that her gifts are just what she wants.

This profile is not surprising in light of the gender differences in attitudes towards money. Women enjoy shopping while men like to maintain control of the money (Prince 1991). Rhonda and Roger described the incident which was pivotal to their gifting pattern. Roger, acting in the romantic love paradigm, carefully selected a bracelet for Rhonda. Unsure of his ability to select a jewelry gift for his new wife, he asked his sister for help. He and his sister shopped together for the gift. Rhonda did not like the bracelet Roger and his sister selected and requested that the bracelet be exchanged. Roger was hurt and confused. He thought his sister had good taste. Rhonda exchanged the bracelet for one she loves and wears everyday. Wearing it during the interview she labelled it as a gift from Roger. However, Roger is unaware of which item acts as the replacement for the bracelet he purchased.

Roger learned from this experience that he is unable to predict Rhonda's "unique taste." Rhonda and Roger have an "arrangement" which helps them avoid the pain and trouble of purchasing and exchanging gifts. Before any specified gift occasion they discuss how much money Rhonda should spend on her gift from Roger. This is a playful negotiation in which Rhonda begins high and Roger begins low. They bargain until the amount is set. Rhonda then shops for and purchases her gifts from her husband. She is aware of the difference between products that she buys for herself and those that are gifts from her husband. In contrast, Roger is unaware of what Rhonda buys that are labelled as gifts from him.

Roger is the "family financial officer." The family financial officer is the family member who is responsible for "family finances from the point of view of both decision-making and execution" (Ferber and Lee 1974 p 44). In particular, Roger determines how much money will be spent and how much will be saved. He expresses his partiality to saving while he perceives his wife as partial to spending. He feels that he must hold on tightly to the purse strings:

When we first got married I was very, very strict in holding onto the purse strings. I wanted to save. . . . Since we were able to buy the house I loosened up. Between that and just not wanting to be nagged. I've just been worn down. So I say, "okay, do whatever you want to do, and don't come to me years from now if we're in trouble financially, just do what you want to do."

Roger was stricter in his investment policy until they purchased their house. Now he allows his wife to make more purchases.

Rhonda tries to get Roger's input into gifts that she buys for him. His is often unable or unwilling to participate in these gifting decisions. As a result, holidays have come and gone in which he did not receive a gift. He does not feel bad about this. Content, he has all the things he wants:

Sometimes we'll . . . acknowledge that we have to get (me a gift) and then we'll forget. . . . Especially her not buying me things. She'll like, say to me, "Roger, we didn't get you a Hanukkah gift. Let's get you a Hanukkah gift." And I'll put it off. So, I basically feel like I have everything I need. . . . There is nothing that I'm really dying for. And I'm very, very happy with what I have and with small things. . . . I have everything. I'm very happy just watching my television. There aren't that many things that I want. The last ten years I've most of the time been able to get them.

Notice that Roger is able to get for himself whatever he wants. He does not rely on a gift for his desires.

As Roger's interview continued he began to feel sad about their gifting arrangement. He realized how unromantic it is. He noted the lack of surprise and the focus on the gift object. He wished that he had the ability to determine Rhonda's unique tastes. Ironically, Roger seems to know some of Rhonda's unique tastes. He knows that she likes parties. He knows her friends and the restaurants she likes

to patronize. This information allowed him to plan a surprise birthday party for Rhonda. This surprise and thus more romantic gift was very successful. It is sad that Roger does not allow himself to know that he can learn his wife's preferences.

Amy and Adam and Ellen and Edward

Amy and Adam and Ellen and Edward follow the economic exchange paradigm. Both couples discuss financial resource allocation. In both families funds allocated for gifts between husbands and wives have been reduced. These funds are now earmarked to be used for their children or for their houses.

Adam is the family financial officer. Amy explains that Adam "gives . . . the money and permission" to make purchases. She feels guilty when spending money. Her feelings of guilt and anxiety while shopping alter her shopping experience. She feels compelled to buy her husband token gifts whenever she shops for herself (which is rare). As a result of their concern about money, the couple has started talking about gifts before they are purchased. Amy shows pictures in a catalog of the gold earrings that she would like to receive as a birthday gift. They are emphasizing the object and not the person.

Ellen and Edward share the responsibilities for their finances. Ellen explains how they have re-allocated funds from gifts to each other to anything for their child or

their house. What complicates their giving to each other is Edward's economic exchange paradigm logic: gift objects should be things one needs; what is needed is purchased for oneself; therefore, it is difficult to buy gifts for Edward. Edward circumvents the gifting process by buying for himself. This is not unusual. Whereas men tend to feel that they can buy for themselves whatever they want, women tend to wait to receive their desired objects as gifts.

Ellen describes buying gifts for Edward that she knew, while she was shopping, that he would later return to the store. She purchased these items just so he would have some gift to open on his birthday. She also has asked to exchange gifts of jewelry when she felt that her husband had spent too much money. In particular, Edward gave her an extravagant pair of earrings that she referred to as "Academy Award" earrings. She felt that the Academy Awards were the only place she could wear these earrings. Since she was not going to this affair she did not want to own these earrings. When she returned the earrings she was given store credit. This credit has been held for almost two years. Now she thinks that she will buy a Christmas gift for her mother with the store credit. The gift was not sacred so it can easily be transformed back into money which can be used to purchase something for another recipient.

The three couples who share the economic exchange paradigm feel differently about their pattern of gifting.

Rhonda remarks:

I'm very happy with this arrangement. It works for me. It works very well for us.

Rhonda's husband Roger is saddened by their lack of romantic gifts. He wishes he never traded in his romantic love paradigm for her economic exchange model. Adam is burdened by the cost of gifts and his wife feels guilty about spending. They may have started out in the romantic love paradigm but both switched to the economic exchange paradigm when money got tight. They both have negative affects about the lost joys of gift giving. Although Edward is a difficult gift recipient, Ellen and Edward both have positive feelings about their choice to allocate funds to their child and house and away from gifts between husband and wife. They are content in their economic exchange paradigm.

Romantic Love Paradigm Profiles

Two couples can be described as following the rules of the romantic love paradigm: Louise and Lloyd and Mary and Max. Both of these couples had their children later in life (35 and 41 and 40 and 43 respectively). They may have gone through various incarnations of mixing and matching before they arrived at this stage in their life.

Louise and Lloyd

Louise and Lloyd discuss how their gifting paradigm has changed over time. They were once in a romantic love model in which Louise was given gifts of diamonds and flowers. Now they experience a familial love. The gifts of diamonds in the romantic love model were meant to singularize the recipient. Gifts in the familial love model are meant to singularize the family. For example, Louise was given a mountain bike from her husband as a birthday gift. At the same time Lloyd also bought their son a trainer which fits on the back of Lloyd's bike. The stated purpose for this gift was so that the family could ride together. Spending time as a family is emphasized. Louise explains their change to a familial love paradigm:

I think it's just more family oriented now rather than personal. It's more things we can do together to have a nice family and enjoy each other.

This couple's synchronized gifting paradigm flowed from one love paradigm to another. Lloyd describes a family that likes to do things together and takes joy in each other's accomplishments. As a gift for Father's Day, Louise taught their son to read. The surprise of their son reading was presented as a gift. One can just picture this idyllic family scene in which mother and son lovingly surprise Dad with the child's reading ability. Mom and Dad both take pleasure in their son's accomplishments in this truly loving

family.

Mary and Max

Mary and Max are both in the romantic love paradigm. They place great emphasis on the surprise rule of gifting. Mary has "special feelings for . . . how (the gifts) were presented" rather than for the gift itself. Her husband, Max, explains the emphasis on surprise in their gifting:

Normally, it's a surprise; she has no idea what I'm looking for and she has no idea what she's getting. We have special things that we do. I hide (the gifts) . . . on Christmas Eve. . . . She has no idea. She knows she's getting something just because we've been doing it for so long but she has no idea what, how many, what it pertains to, how big or anything at all.

Max relates the various places that he has hidden gifts:

In the Christmas tree, in the refrigerator, in (our) child's room, under (our) child's pillow, in the cupboards, just about any place you can think of where she has to kind of work for the gift.

When he buys her gifts he wants "a complete element of surprise." Both Mary and Max are following the rules of the romantic love paradigm.

The Child-Like Gifting Metaphors

Respondents use metaphors to discuss their gifting behavior. These metaphors offer insights into cultural views of gifting between husbands and wives. Three child

centered metaphors will be discussed: (1) joy, (2) helplessness, and (3) game playing. What is salient to these respondents is the child's perspective which guides their behavior. This child's perspective can be seen as a positive (e.g., a child's joy) or as a negative (e.g., childish or foolish). Table 5-4 presents respondents with the child-like gifting metaphors.

Joy

Adam, Vincent, and Dean discuss their joy in giving gifts to their wives. Adam's joy is fleeting because he also has adult burdens. Vincent and Dean discuss the joy they see in their wives faces when they give gifts. The facial expression that they crave is similar to a child's face. Jill and Jack also experience a child's joy in their gift giving actions. Each of these respondents will be profiled in terms of this metaphor.

Adam's Joy

Adam's joy in gift giving is tempered by the burdens he feels. Adam likens the joy of Christmas to the feelings he had as a child. He wants to preserve that feeling for his child:

Well, your holiday from school, school plays, school kind of winded down early and you had the week or two off from grammar school and of course in college you have six weeks off or something like that. And even that's festive. . . . You're going to see cousins and you're going to travel and you're going to eat things

Table 5-4
 Child-Like Gifting Metaphors and
 Tradition Gifting Metaphors

Respondent Name	Gifting Metaphor
Child-Like	
Adam	Feels child-like joys and adulthood burdens
Vincent	For the face
Dean	For the face
Jill	We're still kids
Jack	We're still kids
Georgia	Cutting school
Sam	It's a child's game
Wanda	It's a baseball game
William	It's a baseball game
Tradition	
Terry	Traditionalist
Todd	Traditionalist

that you don't normally eat and obviously the gifts. So it was always very consuming. It was great. I have no negative experiences about Christmas (as a child). Now I think, oh God, it's another burden. I have to go to a party, I have to work tomorrow and we have a party tonight. A tree trimming party on a Wednesday night. I have to go home, shower and shave, get dressed up, go out and be at work at seven o'clock in the morning. It's \$1,500 or \$2,000 on Christmas gifts. The tree is \$80 and we have to get lights this year. . . . The wreath is \$40. Again, I don't want to seem like I'm dwelling on the money. . . . Except when it comes to my son - now that I have a son it's for him. I would never let him know that it's a psychologically a little bit of a burden on me. The joy of it is fleeting. At times you feel it and at times it's a hassle.

He wants to have the joyous feelings about Christmas that he had as a child. However, he is unable to fully feel joy (a child's feeling) because he is burdened with an adult's responsibilities.

Vincent's and Dean's Joy

Vincent and Dean are motivated to give gifts to their wives by the joyousness they induce on their wives' faces. This face can be likened to the face of a new born baby. Eyes that are considered large or wide are a defining feature of a baby's face. Vincent explains his motivation for giving gifts:

There is one thing I want to put across, I do enjoy giving her gifts. I like to see her face after receiving something. That's what I enjoy. . . . I do it for this face, for this expression, because I thoroughly enjoy the big smile and the eyes wide open.

In addition, Dean discusses his motivation for giving gifts to his wife. He sees her as "a big kid at heart." He

knows this because "her face lights up and she's surprised." His gift giving is motivated by creating a surprise so that her face will "light up." He likens a lit up face to the heart of a child. His aim is to produce this child-like face.

Vincent's and Dean's gift giving may be an attempt to bring out the child in their wives. They may do this because they find their wives more attractive this way. Research evidence suggests that women who have neonate features are considered more attractive (Cunningham 1986). They may be attempting to dominate their wives. Research evidence suggests that the baby face in an adult is interpreted as an indication of submissiveness (Keating, Mazur, Segall 1977).

Jill's and Jack's Joy

One respondent suggested that children experience excitement in ripping open gift packages. When adults experience this excitement they are likened to children. It is said that they experience a pure child's joy. Jill describes Jack's excitement:

He's like the biggest kid on Christmas. He's excited about everything. . . . He's one of these people that if I let him, he would rip everything open first and then he would go back and look at everything. It's more like the excitement of what he's getting.

Jill and Jack give each other gifts that are more

appropriate for children than for adults. They do this in order to experience a child's joy. Jill discusses these gifts:

He knows my favorite cereal is Lucky Charms. One morning for Christmas I got a case of Lucky Charms cereal. . . . We took the baby to Sesame Place about three weeks ago. That's the little nurse he bought me, Prairie Dawn. . . . I went out for Valentine's Day and I bought him at the jewelry store, like when we were kids, the I.D. bracelet by Spiedel I.D. and put his name on it and put "love, Jill" on the back. . . . We are still really kids when it comes to buying presents. . . . He stops at this place in St. Louis for me and brings me home these Red Hots (candy).

Jill and Jack consider their gifting to be child-like in a positive way. They are experiencing the excitement and joy as if they were children.

Helplessness

Children can feel helpless in an adult's world. They can take action to gain power. One respondent suggested that children "have power over you" when they misbehave (e.g., throwing a temper tantrum in a retail store). Georgia had a gift experience in which she felt like a helpless child who gained power. She describes a gift of concert tickets from her husband:

We were invited to a black tie wedding . . . which neither one of us wanted to go to. It's a side of the family that Gary doesn't particularly like being with. It was not black tie optional. It was black tie. . . . Neither one of us had what to wear. I can't

afford to give a gift. I can't afford to go buy a dress. And we really just didn't want to go. Conveniently he bought the tickets for the same night as the wedding.

Gary's mother was angry that they decided not to go to the wedding and to go to a concert instead. Georgia explains her mother-in-law's reaction:

I told her that we weren't going to the wedding. And my mother-in-law started screaming at me, "I can't believe you. You're so wrong. Why aren't you going to this wedding? I can't believe how selfish you are to buy the tickets for that day." I am an adult. . . . I said to her, "We're adults and whatever we do, we do."

Georgia further explains how she felt about this episode:

It kind of made going to the concert even better. . . . It was like we were getting away with something. . . . The only thing I can compare it to is like cutting school and going somewhere. Not only are you getting away with not being in school you're getting to do something else that's fun. You know, that's how I felt.

Georgia insists that she made an adult decision. She uses the metaphor of cutting school to explain her actions. She was taking control of a situation in which she previously had no control. However, she still felt like a child that was misbehaving. This gift from her husband helped her to attain more power in the relationship with her mother-in-law in which she tends to feel like a helpless child.

Game Playing

A child's game is used as a metaphor to describe the process of gift giving. Furthermore, games are used as metaphors for describing the success or failure of gifts between husbands and wives. Sam, Wanda, and William use a game playing metaphors.

Sam's Game

Sam uses a child's game as a metaphor for how he discovers his wife's gift preferences:

Well for instance, she'll say something to a friend and if I don't know what to get her, I'll call up one of her friends. It's a kid's game, she'll tell Debbie and Debbie will tell me, or whatever. So it's easy that way.

As was suggested earlier, Sam holds a negative view of gift giving. This child's game metaphor is another indication of his distaste for the process. He seems to think that he can never win at this game. The implication of a child's game is that the activity is foolish or childish.

Wanda's and William's Game

Wanda and William use baseball metaphors to describe their success and failure with gifts. Wanda explains how she knows which gifts will be successful:

Well he's a big sports freak so anything with Rangers or related to that, I know it's going to be a hit.

William describes a successful Valentine's Day gift:

Like last Valentine's Day, she woke up and I had the whole house decorated with red streamers and hearts and flowers and balloons, everything you could possibly want, candy, a little teddy bear and she loved it. Boom. I hit one over the fence.

Wanda and William both use the same language to convey the success and failure of gifts. They are expressing success and failure as if it were a baseball game in which the giver is successful when the appropriate gift is purchased. It may be that this is a cultural phenomenon. In other cultures it may be the recipient, the couple, or the retailer who is successful when an appropriate gift is received.

The Gift Tradition Metaphor

One couple, Terry and Todd, both place a great importance on gifting traditions. Table 5-4 presents the respondents with gift tradition metaphors. These gift traditions are religious, cultural, and personal. Terry explains that traditions increase the value of a gift:

I am heavily vested in traditional, traditions and traditional things, keepsakes and that kind of stuff. So, I like to be able to say, when somebody admires the ring (a gift), I like to be able to tell the story of how it came to be and where it comes from. I think it makes it very special and significant.

Terry and Todd have been married for almost twenty

years. Terry is Jewish and Todd is Christian. This couple chooses to celebrate Jewish and Christian holidays. Terry describes her feelings about their tradition of celebrating the holidays of both religions:

My husband and I are an inter-faith marriage and as a result of that we have a long tradition of twenty years now of celebrating holidays that reflect both our backgrounds. His is Christian. Mine is Jewish. We celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas. . . . Hanukkah from a religious point of view. Our child is being raised Jewish. Christmas from a purely traditional point of view. Christmas is a very, very big holiday in his family. But again, more from a traditional, gift giving, sharing, festivity, food, so on and so forth situation, rather than the religious aspect of it.

Terry distinguishes between different types of tradition. There is a cultural tradition. This cultural tradition is what guides her gift giving for Christmas. There is also religious tradition. This is what guides her celebration of Hanukkah. Furthermore, there is a personal tradition. Cultural and religious traditions are shared with a community or society. Personal traditions are shared within a family. Terry explains some of their private gift traditions:

Todd and I have been married for twenty years. From the first that we were married we tried to establish a tradition that at least once a year I get a very significant piece of jewelry. So, as a result of that, I've been married a long time, I've gotten a lot, a lot of jewelry over the years. . . . Its mandatory, not by my standards, by my

husband's, that it always has to include a diamond of some kind. So. Bracelets, rings, necklaces, a lot of earrings, because earrings are something that you tend to have more of. . . . Actually, it started out, really the tradition was I was really getting it more for Hanukkah-Christmas, like a piece a year. And then it's actually become more frequent. I've gotten a piece for Mother's Day.

Terry and Todd have a tradition that Todd gives Terry diamond jewelry as gifts. This is a private tradition that they have established with each other and it continues to evolve over time. As can be seen from this excerpt, the tradition of jewelry has changed from giving just for Hanukkah-Christmas to also giving on Mother's Day.

This couple also has personal traditions that they celebrate with other members of their family. For example, they have established gift traditions with their niece. Terry explains these gift traditions:

I started a tradition, birthday and Christmas, of buying a fifty dollar savings bond. So it's twenty-five dollars cost. . . . Another tradition that I started when my niece was born. This is something that was done in my family for me and my sister and when we were born. When my niece was born I started a strand of cultured pearls. I got her three or four pearls. Each birthday and each Christmas I was adding a couple of pearls.

These traditions of giving savings bonds and creating a pearl necklace bit by bit are private traditions. Cultural, religious and private traditions can make gift decision making easier. The personal traditions seem to dictate what

gift objects will be given. Knowing that one will be giving pearls, or a saving bond, or jewelry with diamonds each time an occasion arises limits the choices at each occasion. A decision with few choices is easier to make.

Personal traditions can be contrasted with the religious or cultural traditions of Hanukkah and Christmas. For Hanukkah, Terry and Todd celebrate with cultural and religious traditions. They give gifts each of the eight nights of the Hanukkah holiday and say the prayers over the candles. Terry explains why they do this with their child:

But now with the baby I want the tradition. Because we light the candles. . . . I have a tape . . . of the prayers. Because I never went to Hebrew school. I didn't have the formal upbringing so I don't really know the prayers. . . . We've been doing that with (our son) since he's born. I want him to be vested in the tradition. So we do that.

Terry wants her child to grow up with these traditions. The cultural and religious traditions that surround the gift giving rituals dictate how and when and in conjunction with what circumstances the gifts are exchanged. She wants these traditions to be something that she can pass on to her child. Todd sums up the experience of gift giving and the role of tradition:

When you've given them a little something, it's a little something of yourself. That's great. And it gets symbolized by a piece of jewelry or a coat or a CD. Whatever it might be. That's what gift giving is. To me it's a cementing of emotions and the past and the

present and the future; tradition.

Todd views gifting as giving a piece of himself which is symbolized by a gift object. The gift object, people, emotions, past, present and future all get tied together with traditions. That is what gift giving is to Todd.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter discussed consumer gift metaphors from the point of view of what a gift is a metaphor for (e.g., romantic love or economic exchange). Gifting rules in two paradigms were presented and consumers were profiled based on which set of rules they follow. In addition, metaphors that consumers employ in their language to discuss gifting were presented. The analysis of these metaphors included profiles of the consumers who use the metaphors. It is hoped that a greater cultural understanding of gifting was gained from this analysis.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study developed a thick description of husbands and wives as gift givers and recipients after the birth of the first child. Limitations of previous consumer gifting research have been addressed by studying both women and men in naturally occurring marital dyads. It has been suggested that it would be valuable to examine gift givers and recipients in naturally occurring pairs (Manikowske 1993). Previous research concerning gifting between husband and wife gift givers and gift recipients in naturally occurring dyads is limited (Horne 1991; Horne and Winakor 1995; Wolfinbarger 1990). Furthermore, this research examined changes that occur over time in the spousal relationship which can lead to changes in consumer gifting behavior. In particular, the birth of the first child was viewed as a pivotal event in consumer's lives which initiated many of the changes in gifting that occurred. A contribution has been made to understanding consumer gifting affect, attitude, and behavior of husbands and wives in naturally occurring marital dyads.

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study. Qualitative research is best suited to delve into the rich symbolic meanings which are present in consumer

gifting behaviors. Three methods of analysis were employed: (1) analysis of global themes, (2) content analysis, and (3) metaphor analysis. This chapter will summarize the methodology and findings and draw conclusions from the analyses. Connections will be forged between this research and previous consumer behavior, marketing, and family research. In addition, the relevance of this research to marketing scholars and practitioners will be presented.

In terms of organization, first a summary and discussion of the data collection process will be presented. Second, the global themes and content analyses will be summarized and discussed. Third, the metaphor analysis will be summarized and discussed. Fourth, conclusions drawn from the study will be offered. Fifth, limitations of this study will be addressed. Sixth, marketing strategy options will be discussed. Next, suggestions for future research will be presented. Finally, this chapter will be summarized and conclusions will be offered.

Data Collection

A phenomenological method was employed for the data collection. The data collection proceeded in an orderly fashion of prospecting and qualifying, approaching, interviewing, and following-up. This process followed a similar format to previous phenomenological research (e.g. Hirschman 1994; Thompson, Locander, Pollio 1990). The phenomenological interview and research with naturally

occurring dyads can be improved by addressing three points: (1) the question of interviewing couples together or separate, (2) the importance of the environment in which the interview takes place, and (3) aspects of follow-up. These points will be discussed below.

Together or Separate

Previous phenomenological consumer research tends to focus on the individual to the exclusion of the group (e.g. Hirschman 1994; Thompson, Locander, Pollio 1990). Thus, previous research has tended to employ individual interviews. Family literature is divided on whether couples should be interviewed together or separate (Hertz 1995). Revealing one's own perspective which may differ from one's spouse's may be hindered when a spouse is present (Hertz 1995; LaRossa, Bennett, and Gelles 1981; Rubin 1976). In addition, some respondents keep secrets from their spouses. When couples are interviewed together these secrets will not be revealed. When interviewing members of the dyad separately it is important to let respondents know that their secrets will remain confidential. This promise relaxes respondents so that they can be forthright and open.

Joint interviews are advantageous in that spouses can clarify issues and prompt recall (Allan 1980). During the data collection process a spouse can be called into the room for a portion of an interview for this purpose. Allowing this enables the researcher to gain the benefit of private

individual interviews as well as joint interviews.

Environment

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents; two interviews were conducted in the researchers home; two interviews were conducted in the researchers office; two were conducted in the respondents place of business (a restaurant and a doctor's office); one was conducted in a diner. The longest interviews (two and a half hours) were conducted in the researchers home. The advantage of conducting an interview in the researchers home or office is that the researcher has better control over the environment. Distractions can be reduced by turning off the telephone, eliminating the presence of others (e.g. spouse, child, babysitter), and not allowing for outside interference (e.g. radio, television).

There are some advantages to conducting the interview in the home of the respondent. The respondents home can be a cue to recall. Respondents tend to look around them during the interview and are reminded of gifts they gave or received from their spouse. Furthermore, respondents liked to show the researcher these gift items. However, one disadvantage of this process is that some gift items are not fully described because respondents point to them. The researcher needs to be vigilant to get a description on audiotape or to bring a camera to the interview.

Interviews conducted in restaurants can be particularly

disappointing. Interruptions (e.g. waitresses and noise from other patrons) distract the researcher and respondent. Furthermore, respondents to feel less comfortable discussing private matters in public places. Still further, restaurant noises add difficulty to the transcribing process.

Follow-Up

As suggested, each respondent was sent a copy of their transcript and asked to return it to the researcher with comments (Moustakas 1994). Although additional comments are valuable to the research there is also a disadvantage of soliciting these comments when studying couples. This disadvantage lies in the promise that secrets will not be revealed to a spouse. The researcher tried as best as she could to maintain this promise by sending each individual's transcript in a separate envelope. However, it was brought to the attention of the researcher that some spouses read each other's transcripts without permission. The researcher met one respondent at a party of a mutual friend one year after the interview. The wife told the researcher that she had read her husband's transcript which he had placed in his desk drawer. Her husband did not know that she read the transcript. She wanted to clarify some issues that her husband had discussed in his interview. It became apparent that in mailing the interviews to respondent's homes may have created a situation in which spouses can read each other's interviews without permission. By relinquishing

control of the transcript the researcher is left open to this possibility and the promise of not revealing secrets cannot be kept. This particular couple is currently in the process of getting a divorce. They did not respect each other's privacy.

The Global Themes and Content Analyses

Two methods were used to develop global themes. First, global themes were originated from an exhaustive literature review process. It was expected that instances of these themes or patterns of experience would be found in the interview text. Five global themes were developed *a priori* with this process: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) stress and coping, (4) preference prediction, and (5) gender. In Chapter 4, instances of the themes were investigated in the interview text. Second, emergent themes and emergent aspects of the *a priori* themes were developed and investigated. Seven global themes, some determined *a priori* and some based on patterns that emerge from the interview text were presented in the analysis of global themes and content analysis: (1) life status change, (2) transition to parenthood, (3) coping and personal resource allocation, (4) coping and gift shopping patterns, (5) preference prediction, (6) gender, and (7) sexuality. Each of these seven global themes will be summarized and discussed below. Furthermore, the way in which they relate to the themes derived from the literature will be presented.

The Life Status Change Theme

The first global theme, life status change, was developed *a priori*. As expected, life status changes herald changes in consumer gifting behavior between husbands and wives. Respondents attributed the transition to parenthood as a primary cause of consumer gifting behavioral changes. In addition, transitions to marriage, homeowner, and career transitions are identified as causes of consumer gifting behavioral changes. Furthermore, as expected, some respondents indicate that these transitions can be stressful. Still further, gifts for rites of passage occasions are more common before the birth of the first child. Surprisingly, these gifts are not necessarily of the form that would enable the recipient to perform a new role. In addition, before the birth of the first child rites of passage gifts tend to be sacred (e.g., engagement rings). This does not seem to be the case for gifts exchanged after the birth of the child.

The Transition to Parenthood Theme

The transition to parenthood theme examined gifting changes that stem from a change in priority from the marital dyad to the family triad. Husbands and wives tend to switch from gift exchanges of mostly interpersonal gifts (e.g., personal adornments) to gift exchanges of intrafamily gifts (e.g., VCR's). However, couples who know each other longer than nine years do not decrease their interpersonal gifts.

Intragroup gifts increase for this group. In addition, emerging from the interview text, it is discovered that parents tend to include their first child in husband-wife gifting activities. The role of the child is as gift intermediary (i.e., taking possession of the gift before the designated gift recipient) and as a gifting ritual intermediary (i.e., performing the gift rituals on behalf of the recipient). These changes in gifting flow from the expected change in priority from the relationship of the marital dyad to the relationship of the family triad. When the couple is together longer before the child arrives some of the focus remains with the dyad and not the triad.

The Coping and Personal Resource Allocation Theme

It was suggested *a priori* in the stress and coping theme that life status transitions can lead to increased levels of daily stress. Furthermore, it was expected that consumers would develop coping strategies to help them solve problems, regulate emotions, and manage stress (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, and DeLongis 1986; Latack 1986; Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Therefore, it is not surprising that consumers report methods for coping with the transition to parenthood. In particular, consumers change their approach to the allocation of personal resources. Two changes in personal resource allocation emerge from the interview text: (1) allocation of personal resources to the child and (2)

allocation of personal resources by amount per occasion and frequency of gifting. Each of these emergent strategies will be discussed below.

Allocation of Personal Resources to the Child

After the birth of the first child personal resources tend to be allocated to the child's gifts and necessities. These personal resources were previously allocated to the couple and their interpersonal gifts. Couples tend to adjust their personal resource allocation as a way of coping with reduced personal resources or because of a change in their priorities.

Gift Amount Per Occasion and Gifting Frequency

Some respondents cope with the transition to parenthood by decreasing, increasing, or stabilizing their interpersonal husband-wife gifting. These coping strategies affect gifting amount per occasion and gifting frequency.

Three strategies for decreasing the total outlay of personal resources for husband-wife interpersonal gifts emerge from the interview text: (1) setting gift spending limits, (2) decreasing the amount of gifts exchanged per occasion, and (3) decreasing the frequency of gifting. Responses to these strategies are varied. Some consumers experience positive affect toward these changes in gifting while others experience negative affect. The positive affect stems from good feelings about taking care of one's

child. Negative affect stems from increased difficulty in gift shopping, feeling foolish for adhering to spending limits when a spouse does not, and feeling that one is less important to the spouse than the child.

For some consumers, gifting amount per occasion and gifting frequency remain constant or increase. Consumers who know each other longer before having a child, or experience success in their work careers are more likely to increase their husband-wife interpersonal gifting. Stability is most associated with Christmas or Hanukkah for consumers who know each other less time before their child is born. One strategy for maintaining gifting frequency that emerges from the interview text is the use of threats (including playful threats) and of unpleasant outcomes when expected gifts do not arrive. This punishing type behavior can teach spouses about expected gifting behavior.

The numbers obtained from the content analysis point to overall gifting increases after the birth of the first child. However, the majority of respondents describe situations in which gifting decreases over time. Recency effects may account for this disparate finding. More gifts may have been reported after the birth of the first child since these occurred more recently. Furthermore, the moderator variable of time together before the child is born seems to influence whether gifting increases, decreases or remains stable.

The Coping and Gift Shopping Patterns Theme

The second set of coping strategies deal with gift shopping patterns after the birth of the first child. The idea that coping strategies would be present in the interview text was developed *a priori*. These particular coping strategies are emergent. They deal with changes in gift shopping patterns and reflect strategies for saving personal resources. Four gift shopping patterns emerge from the interview text: (1) gift shopping partners, (2) timing and time spent, (3) store patronage, and (4) actions associated with price and method of payment. Each of these strategies will be discussed.

Gift Shopping Partners

Gift shopping partners change after the birth of the first child. Before the birth of the first child consumers tend to gift shop alone. After the birth of the first child consumers tend to gift shop with others: child, spouse, or both.

Mothers and fathers tend to include their child in the gift shopping experience. This shopping experience tends to be more stressful and more goal oriented than gift shopping alone. Furthermore, gift surprise is more difficult to maintain when gift shopping for spousal gifts with a child. The child may have difficulty keeping a secret.

Some spouses hire a babysitter and gift shop together

as a couple. Gift shopping as a couple is one strategy employed to increase time spent together. Strategies to maintain gift surprise when gift shopping together include separating in the mall or one spouse leaving a store at the moment of gift purchase.

Some consumers gift shop as a family triad. This gift shopping strategy is one method for reducing the stress associated with gift shopping with a child. Consumers believe that two adults are better able to supervise the child in the store.

Timing and Time Spent

Values are associated with timing (i.e., when a gift is purchased in relation to when it is given) and time spent (i.e., how much time is spent in the store). More thoughtful gifts, a voluntary motive, and a positive attitude toward the recipient are equated with earlier gift purchases and the amount of time spent in a store. Timing and time spent change after the birth of the first child. After the birth of the first child gifts tend to be purchased later and time spent gift shopping tends to be reduced. Some consumers experience negative affect due to the value associated with time. In contrast, some consumers experience neutral or positive affect from these changes. They view these changes as a necessary part of the joy of having a child of their own.

Store Patronage

Changes in store patronage occur after the birth of the first child. Some consumers want to shop more quickly. In order to do so they shop where they perceive they can shop faster. Local stores are evaluated by some consumers as more conducive to quick shopping. In contrast, some consumers change from local shoppers to mall shoppers. These consumers place a higher value on one stop shopping. The retail mall offers a wider selection and thus the ability to purchase many gifts in one shopping trip. Furthermore, consumers who are financially constrained after the birth of the first child tend to switch their store patronage to discounters. They are more concerned with saving money than saving time.

Price and Method of Payment

Changes occur in actions associated with price and method of payment. Consumers who experience financial constraints after the birth of the first child may begin to shop at discount stores, use price as a guideline for purchases, increase time spent bargain hunting and comparison shopping, and decrease their use of fee based in store services (e.g., gift wrapping). In contrast, consumers who are saving time tend to be less concerned about price. Time savers do not bargain hunt and comparison shop. Furthermore, their use of store services may increase. The personal resources of money and time are

perceived as competing. Consumers believe that they both cannot be saved simultaneously. "Money Savers" and "Time Savers" could be considered as two distinct market segments.

Method of payment for gifts also changes after the birth of the first child. Some financially constrained consumers perceive credit card use as a necessary evil. In contrast, other consumers tend to avoid the use of credit cards. Furthermore, after the marriage, the taboo against knowledge of the price of spousal gifts tends to be lifted.

The Preference Prediction Theme

Two aspects of preference prediction were determined *a priori*: (1) accurate preference prediction and (2) deliberate inaccurate preference prediction. One aspect of this theme emerges from the interview text: preference prediction avoidance. Below is a summary and discussion of the preference prediction theme.

Accurate Preference Prediction

It was developed *a priori* that accuracy of preference prediction is enhanced when preferences are stable, valuable feedback is available, and information processing resources are allocated to gift decisions. Furthermore, cultural norms and gender can influence the accuracy of gift preference prediction. As expected, consumer preferences change after the birth of the first child. There is a period of adjustment as husbands and wives learn each

other's new consumer preferences. One way that preferences are learned is through communication about gifts. As expected, some consumers are reluctant to offer negative feedback about gifts. In communicating false positive feedback, spouses are unable to learn their partner's true preferences. In this way, spouses encourage gift buying and feelings are not hurt. In contrast, some consumers are more willing to offer negative feedback after the birth of the first child. This feedback was expected to make it easier to purchase the next gift due to the learning of preferences. Surprisingly, consumers whose spouses begin to offer negative feedback judge their spouses as "pickier" and gift selection becomes more difficult.

After the birth of the first child, information processing resources previously applied to gifting can be usurped by other concerns (e.g., finances). As a result, preference prediction is less accurate and gifting is perceived as less successful.

As expected, gender perceptions influence the prediction of preferences. Men and women perceive women to be better able to predict preferences. Thus, women are perceived as more successful gift givers. This may be due to cultural norms, stereotypes, and gender roles, or to actual differences in biological gender. In addition, culturally construed gender classifications for gifts are used as guidelines for preference prediction. However,

recipients do not always appreciate gifts that are for their gender class when they are not specific to the individual's tastes.

Deliberate Inaccurate Preference Prediction

As expected, deliberate inaccurate preference prediction occurs in gifting between spouses. Instances of deliberate inaccurate preference prediction occur only after the birth of the first child. As expected, imposing an identity on the gift recipient was one motivation for deliberate inaccurate preference prediction. Emergent aspects of this theme are that consumers are also motivated by spite and ritual. Imposed identity and spiteful gifts may be considered an act of aggression. As expected, recipients tend to respond to these gifts with negative affect and hostility.

Preference Prediction Avoidance

Preference prediction avoidance (i.e., when the giver involves the recipient in the gift decision) emerges as one way of coping with an inability to successfully predict a spouse's preferences. Preference prediction avoidance falls on a continuum ranging from the recipient acting as a purchasing agent to the giver acting as a purchasing agent. Falling in the middle of the continuum are gift discussions between the giver and recipient before the gift purchase. The motivation for preference prediction avoidance is to

avoid the risk of failed gifts. This strategy is more likely when failed gifts have previously occurred. Furthermore, risk of wasted time is avoided by not shopping for and returning the failed gift. Still further, financial risk is avoided by not keeping an unused failed gift. In addition, psychological and social risks are avoided when the gift item is sure to match the recipient's preferences. Some consumers find that this gifting method suits them while others are disappointed due to the lack of gift surprise.

The Role of Gender Theme

As expected, gender affects perceptions of (1) appropriate gift products, (2) appropriate timing of gifts, and (3) appropriate direction of gift giving.

Various gift products are examined for their gender appropriateness. As expected, it is more common for personal adornment gifts (e.g., perfume and lingerie) to be given from husbands to wives before and after the birth of the first child. Some changes in gender appropriateness of gifts occurred. Changes occurred in the appropriateness of gender neutral gifts (e.g., technology, household, and experience gifts). Previous research evidence yielded mixed results concerning gender neutral gifts. This study found a change from no gender difference in givers to men as the primary givers of these gifts. It is possible that this change in the gender appropriateness of gifts arises due to

changes in gender roles which accompany the transition to parenthood.

The gender appropriateness of clothing gifts and gifts of greeting cards before and after the birth of the first child was surprising. It was expected that women would be the primary givers of greeting cards. However, it is more common for men to be givers of greeting cards. Furthermore, research evidence suggests that men receive more gifts of clothing than women (Horne and Winakor 1988). Surprisingly, before and after the birth of the first child clothing gifts are received equally by men and women. It is possible that these unexpected results in the gender appropriateness of gifts arise due to gender roles which accompany the transition to parenthood.

No changes occurred in the gender appropriateness of gifts of money or flowers. As expected, American culture dictates that these gifts are given from husbands to wives.

As expected, changes develop in the appropriate timing and direction of gifts. Husbands experience a greater change in gift giving than their wives. In particular, husbands increase gifting on personal days (e.g., Father's Day and Mother's Day). In addition, husbands experience a greater decline than wives in the giving of personal adornments. During the transition to parenthood gift giving from husbands changes more than gift giving from their wives. Husbands may view their wives less as romantic

partners and more as a partner in parenting. Furthermore, as expected, the more common direction of gifting is from husbands to wives. This may be due to male provider roles in which there is a greater expectation for husbands to provide for their wives.

The Sexuality Theme

The sexuality global theme emerges from the interview text. There are three aspects to this global theme: (1) changes in the sexualization of gifts, (2) sexuality and privacy, and (3) comfort and sexuality.

The transition to parenthood literature suggests that changes occur in couples' sexual relationship after the birth of their first child (Belsky 1986). Furthermore, after the birth of the first child, changes develop in attitudes towards one's body weight and sexuality. Some women hold a negative view of their body weight after the birth of the first child. These perceptions can lead to changes in a recipient's response to sexually charged gifts. For example, these gifts tend to be less appreciated after the birth of the first child. However, at some point, sexually charged gifts are newly appreciated. This may be due to positive changes in body weight. Still further, sexually charged gifts are considered private. Couples prefer not to open these gifts in front of family and friends. In addition, sexually charged gifts are contrasted with comfort. For example, women tend to perceive lingerie,

a common sexually charged gift, as uncomfortable and worn for show. In contrast, some consumers try to diminish the sexual nature of these gifts by equating them with comfort.

In summary, seven global themes were summarized and discussed. The discussion focused on the relationship between the *a priori* themes and the themes developed and investigated in the analysis. The next section reviews and discusses the metaphor analysis.

The Metaphor Analysis

Since people think, talk, and express themselves in terms of metaphors, it was expected that a symbolic metaphor would emerge for each respondent. These symbolic metaphors offer insights into the cultural viewpoints of gifting between husbands and wives (Johnson 1987).

Gifting is used as a metaphor for love and communication in the marital relationship. In addition, symbolic metaphors are used to discuss gifting. Previous research has explored metaphors employed by consumers in order to grasp cultural meanings (Thompson, Pollio, Locander 1994). The metaphor analysis employed here is unique in that an interpretation of the central focus of the interview—gifting—in itself is employed by consumers as a metaphor for aspects of the marital relationship (e.g. communication). Both perspectives of metaphor have been employed. Furthermore, this research is original in the analysis of metaphors in naturally occurring dyads (e.g.,

husbands and wives). Previous research has examined consumer metaphors for individual consumers and how these reflect cultural viewpoints (e.g., Thompson, Pollio, Locander 1994). In examining marital dyads, the way in which partners understand or misunderstand each other's world view could be exposed. Still further, the way in which couples interact with their partner's metaphors could be profiled and examined in terms of culture, religion, and society.

Another unique aspect of this research is the identification of metaphor themes. Three metaphor themes serve to classify the symbolic metaphors of the respondents: (1) gifting paradigm, (2) child-like, and (3) gift traditions. Each of the metaphor themes will be summarized and discussed.

The Gifting Paradigm Metaphors

Gifting paradigms operate to guide gifting behavior of husbands and wives. Two gifting paradigms which fall on the extremes of a continuum are presented as relevant to respondents: (1) romantic love and (2) economic exchange. The romantic love model includes expressive, sacred, emotional gifts which singularize the recipient. In this paradigm, gifting is a symbolic method of communication (Belk and Coon 1993; Cheal 1987). In contrast, the economic exchange model includes instrumental, rational, pragmatic gifts which singularize objects (Belk and Coon 1993). In

this model, gifting is an economic exchange in which no symbolic message is intended. A third gifting paradigm, social exchange, identified in previous research (Belk and Coon 1993) is not relevant for the respondents in this study.

In each of the paradigms, consumers develop schemata and scripts which are consistent within the model and contrast with the model at the other extreme. Eight rules or guides to behavior are derived from the literature and the interview text: (1) preference rule, (2) knowledge acquisition rule, (3) surprise rule, (4) calculation rule, (5) fitness rule, (6) participation and reciprocity rule, (7) preparation rule, and (8) acceptance rule. Previous research has examined rules for friendships (Argyle and Henderson 1984) and rules for gift givers (Caplow 1984). This research extends previous research by specifying and examining rules of gifting behavior for gift givers and gift recipients. Thus, a theory of gift receiving can be developed. Furthermore, these rules specify ways for givers and recipients to interact with each other. For example, the knowledge acquisition rule in the romantic love paradigm states that gift givers are expected to unobtrusively learn their spouse's preferences. In contrast, in the economic exchange paradigm, gift givers are expected to inquire directly about the recipient's preferences. Furthermore, in the romantic love paradigm it is more important to surprise

the recipient than it is to give a gift that matches the recipient's stated preferences. In contrast, giving recipients their stated preferences is viewed as more important than surprise in the economic exchange paradigm. Still further, in the romantic love paradigm, all gifts are to be accepted and loved. In the economic exchange paradigm, gifts that do not match recipient's stated preferences can be returned. These contrasts stem from goals of the gifting paradigms: communication of love or economic exchange.

It was discovered that each individual in a marital dyad can hold different (mixed pairs) or the same (matched pairs) paradigms. Mixed pair couples either adjust (i.e., conform to better match their partner), clash (i.e., experience conflict with their partner), or accept their partner (i.e., accepting their partner without changing their own perspective or expecting their spouse to change).

In the adjusting and clashing couples the women are following the rules of and judging their men by the romantic love paradigm. Their husbands start their relationships by following the economic exchange paradigm rules. This behavior is unacceptable to these wives and so they embark on a training program in which they expect their husbands to learn the rules of the romantic love paradigm. Husbands of adjusting couples cooperate with the training program and begin to adjust their perspective and behavior. In the

clashing couples, husbands resist the changes that their wives are trying to impose upon them. This resistance causes conflict in the marriage in the area of gifting. For example, Sam has a "Bah Humbug!" attitude towards gifting. His economic exchange paradigm clashes with his wife's romantic love paradigm. Sam is an economic man whose preference is to give money gifts. His wife interprets this behavior as unloving.

In contrast, for accepting couples, the men are in the romantic love paradigm while the women are in the economic exchange paradigm. The accepting couples are less judgmental of each other's gifting behaviors. The husbands and wives accept each other's behavior even though they behave differently. Acceptance is more common among women whose husbands are following the romantic love paradigm. This seems to be the case regardless of the wife's paradigm. For example, Carol follows the gift giving rules of the economic exchange paradigm. She is a conservative gifter, often giving her husband pragmatic gifts. In contrast, her husband follows the rules of the romantic love paradigm. He believes that gifts communicate love. His following of the romantic love paradigm rules leads him to accept his wife's conservative gifts without complaint. In addition, Carol is accepting of her husband's romantic love paradigm gifting behavior.

There are two types of matched couples: (1) those in

which both individuals function under the economic exchange model and (2) those in which both individuals function under the romantic love model. These couples are not trying to change one another, although, they may have passed through a period of adjustment. Agreeing on the rules, they do not experience conflicts either about gifts or manifested in gifts. For example, Rhonda and Roger both follow the rules of the economic exchange paradigm. Roger is the "family gifting financial officer." He sets the dollar amount for gifts. His wife, Rhonda, is a "self gifter in the name of others." She is told how much to spend and buys herself gifts from her husband. Furthermore, Louise and Lloyd both follow the same paradigm. Although they once embraced the rules of the romantic love paradigm, they now follow a familial love model. Their gifts to each other singularize the family rather than the individual recipient.

After the birth of the first child, husbands and wives followed the rules of either the romantic love, familial love, or economic exchange paradigms. Within the love paradigms, gifting is a metaphor for communicating romantic love or familial love. In the economic exchange paradigm, gifting is a method of economic exchange.

Research evidence suggests that in dating relationships, gift giving evolves from an economic exchange paradigm through a social exchange paradigm and ends with a romantic love paradigm (Belk and Coon 1993). This research

is an extension of Belk and Coon (1993) in that stages in the relationship (i.e., those occurring when dating culminates in marriage and child) were examined. First, gifting rules for givers and recipients in each paradigm were delineated. Second, it was found that the marital dyad passes through a period of paradigm adjustment. However, after the birth of the first child, couples seem to have settled on a particular gifting paradigm (economic exchange or love) to which they adhere in either mixed or matched pairs. Furthermore, it was found that some couples begin their relationship in a romantic love paradigm and after the birth of the first child conclude with a familial love paradigm. This gifting paradigm includes the child in the husband-wife gifting relationship.

The Child-Like and Gift Tradition Metaphors

As expected, respondents use metaphors to discuss their gifting behavior. These metaphors offer insights into cultural views of gifting. Three child centered metaphors were developed: (1) joy, (2) helplessness, and (3) game playing.

The joy of gifting is described as a child's joy. Some consumers experience this joy as well as the burdens associated with gifting. Furthermore, for some consumers, the joyous reaction seen on their wife's faces is a motivating factor for giving gifts. This wide-eyed face is similar to the face of an infant. Givers are attempting to

bring out the child in the recipients.

Children can feel helpless in an adult's world. Some gifting behavior is motivated by an attempt to attain power. For example, Georgia describes gifts from her husband which give her power in the relationship with her mother-in-law, and assist her in feeling less like a helpless child.

Research evidence suggests that a negative view of gifting is a reaction to the commercialization of holidays, retail promotion of gift purchases, and the stress that one feels due to the pressure of buying gifts (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993). Some consumers hold this negative view of gift giving (e.g., Sam) which is brought to light in the metaphor of a child's foolish game. For example, in Sam's negative view of gifting, his method of determining his wife's gift preferences is foolish, like a child's game.

Games are also metaphors which describe the success or failure of gifts (e.g., baseball). A successful gift, when the gift is appreciated by the recipient, is like a home run. The game of baseball is of cultural importance to Americans and thus the language of this game has seeped into the language of gifting. It may be that some consumers think of gifting as a form of competition which can be won when their spouses appreciate their gifts.

The final gifting metaphor elaborated on is that of gifting traditions. Gifting traditions can be religious, cultural, or personal. Cultural and religious traditions

are shared with a community or society. Personal traditions are created and shared by a family. The importance of tradition to some consumers results in additional gifting rules.

The language employed by consumers to discuss their gifting behavior is rich with symbolic meaning. Interpretations included the symbolic meaning of a gift to a spouse and metaphors employed to describe gifting behavior. The metaphors discussed offer insights into how consumers think about their gifting. Furthermore, the use of this method of analysis forces researchers to explore aspects of religion, culture, and society which are brought to light by metaphor analysis.

Conclusions

Although the changes in gifting after the birth of the first child can be organized into global themes and metaphor themes, the direction of the change within the global themes and the particular metaphor adhered to by a consumer seems to vary depending on contextual or situational factors. One situational variable examined was the years a couple spent together before they had their child. Research evidence suggests that family of origin experience is a situational variable which affects the marital relationship after the birth of the first child (e.g., Lane, Wilcoxon, and Cecil 1988). Therefore, the direction of change within the global themes and consumers' adherence to metaphors may be further

determined by examining gifting practices of families of origin. For example, researchers may want to investigate how family of origin experiences lead to a decrease in gifting rather than an increase. Or, researchers may want to explore how family of origin experiences affect which gifting paradigm is followed.

Socialization is an outcome of the gift giving process (Belk 1979). Consumer socialization is the process by which consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes are developed. Consumer socialization, a social learning process, takes place in one's family of origin by one's parents, peers, and the mass media (Moschis and Churchill 1978). However, all consumer socialization is not uniform (Carlson and Grossbart 1988). For example, parents can have different styles of socialization (Carlson and Grossbart 1988) which can lead to different consumer behaviors in their children. These styles of socialization may also lead to the varying gifting behaviors as children grow into adults, marry, and have children of their own.

Consumers recognize that their family of origin experiences impact on their gifting. For example, some consumers note that proficiency in noticing another's preferences, or the importance placed on gifting are part of the socialization process. The following excerpt from the interview text illustrates consumers' belief in gifting socialization:

Interviewer: Does that (buying a gift late) somehow take away from the gift?

Betty: Yes. I think so.

Interviewer: Why?

Betty: I think again because of the way I was brought up. This is important.

Some respondents discuss enacting gifting behaviors in the same manner as their family of origin. Research evidence suggests that adult children tend to imitate holiday gifting celebrations of their parents (Heroux and Church 1992). In contrast, some consumers deliberately avoid behavior they perceive as typical of their parents:

Jill: Last year we did it (celebrated Christmas) here (at my house). We had everybody here Christmas morning so everybody got their gifts Christmas morning; the baby, my husband, me. We did it all together.

Interviewer: When you say "did it," can you describe in detail?

Jill: We come down in the morning. The Christmas tree has already been up for like two weeks. When we come down, it's just like my family (of origin). . . . Everybody has a pile of presents and a stocking with their name on it. I usually put my father-in-law on one couch, (my husband) on one couch, and the baby. . . . We kind of sneak down and put everybody's presents out the night before so when we come down, the whole living room is filled. . . . We usually start taking turns. We each take a turn opening a present out of the stocking. . . . Then when that's done, then we open all the other presents, but one at a time. . . . That's the way we did it when I was child. We always woke up Christmas morning; Santa had been there. Then we always took turns so we could see what everybody got.

As can be seen from this excerpt, some respondents choose to continue to celebrate Christmas in the same manner

as their family of origin. In contrast, some couples question their family of origin's practices and hope to develop their own gifting practices. For example, one respondent's symbolic metaphor was "contra-socialization." Strongly guiding her gifting behavior was the notion that she did not want her marital gifting to be like her parents. She thought it was terrible that her father rarely brought her mother gifts. She wanted gifts to be more forthcoming from her husband. However, in the end, she was often upset with her husband for behaving like her father, not bringing gifts on expected occasions.

Consumers can have similar or dissimilar family of origin experiences. Dissimilar family of origin experiences lead to greater stress in the marriage after the birth of the first child (Lane and Wilcoxon 1989). Some consumers observe that their spouse's family of origin behaves differently than their family of origin. These couples tend to experience more stress and have clashing gifting paradigms. For example, one respondent believes that his family of origin and his wife's family of origin are similar with respect to socioeconomic status but behaved differently in terms of allocation of funds. This husband's parents had an orientation toward the future. His parents spent less money on gifts so that money could be saved for "our future, and college, and doing the right thing down the road." In contrast, his wife's parents had an orientation toward the

present. His wife, as a child, received more gifts because "that's where they placed more emphasis."

Research evidence suggests that children learn gift giving behavior from their parents (Heroux and Church 1992). Knowledge that family of origin experience impacts on current gifting behavior influences consumers' child rearing behavior. Consumers may be particularly attentive to the way in which they teach their children about gifting. Respondents discuss teaching their children about the gifting process:

Georgia: (My son) made me something at school (for Mother's Day). So that was sufficient. I'm kind of passing on to (my son) that hand made stuff is special (for gifts).

Terry: We also feel it's important to set the example for the children of them giving and taking (gifts).

Helen: (My husband and I) always get into a long conversation (about Christmas rituals) . . . and about family relationships and how people do Christmas and how we want to do Christmas as (our child) gets older. . . and how will we change the family rituals and why rituals are so important to us. And (my husband) feels like there's no rituals in his family. We are just developing rituals because we are bringing (our child) up, because we have expectations of how families should be.

Children are taught about sex roles, values, materialism, possessions, giving and receiving through the process of gift giving (Belk 1979). Furthermore, research evidence suggests that Halloween trick or treat gift rituals

teach children to be acquisitive, possessive, and gluttonous (Belk 1990). These personality traits can sometimes be considered negative. Consumers aim to avoid developing these personality traits in their children. Therefore, consumers teach their children to give and receive gifts.

The behavior of the family of origin may be the next step in developing theory that can further the understanding of the direction of change within the global themes or the gifting metaphors adhered to by consumers.

Limitations

This study is limited by the sample in four ways: (1) size, (2) sampling method, (3) non participants, and (4) design. First, although the case cluster method yielded 935 data points, it was derived from a small sample of thirty respondents. Furthermore, the sample size is reduced when a respondent does not mention a gift category or holiday. Second, every effort was made to find respondents who differed from each other demographically (e.g., economically, residence, education). However, the respondents were part of a convenience sample. Two respondents were born and raised outside of the United States. At the time of the interviews all of the respondents lived in the Northeast United States. This geographic proximity might have an influence on culturally bound gifting behavior. A difference in consumer gifting behavior might exist between Western and Non Western

cultures. Third, there was no indication that the couples who chose not to participate were similar to those who did participate. The non participants may have been different in terms of their attitude, affect and behavior in relation to gifting. Last, by design, respondents were married with one child. Research evidence suggests that couples with children differ from childless couples in the degree and not the direction of change in the marital relationship over time. Furthermore, changes in the relationship are accelerated and accentuated in couples with children (Belsky and Pensky 1988). However, it is possible that some changes in gifting occur due to the passage of time and not the introduction of the child into the family. It might have been difficult for the respondents and in turn the researcher to tease out these differences.

These restrictions of the sample may limit the generalizability of the results. In particular, these limitations will have a stronger impact on the numerical analysis. However, the numerical analysis was provided as an additional illustration for the global themes. It is not offered as their sole support. As a secondary illustration, the numerical analysis serves to bolster the qualitative findings.

This research used a phenomenological interview style. This style has the advantage of being able to learn from respondents the salient aspects of their gifting affect,

attitude, and behavior. However, a limitation of this method is that respondents may fail to mention an item during an interview. It remains unclear why some gift items, holidays, or events may not be mentioned. It may be because these items, holidays, or events are unimportant to the respondent or it may be that the respondent forgot to mention them during the interview. Furthermore, some gift item categories may never have been exchanged or the holiday may never be celebrated by these respondents. Still further, it may be because the respondents are choosing to hide something due to embarrassment or social desirability. Non-mentions add an additional limitation to the interpretive and content analyses. Additional research tools may be added to the phenomenological interview in order to solicit responses which may be more inclusive.

Marketing Strategy Suggestions

Marketing practitioners might find this research to be valuable in that marketing strategy can be developed for companies that market products and services involved in gift exchanges. As the respondents in this study indicate, products and services from a large diverse group of industries can be included in gift exchanges.

Retailers might be able to develop marketing strategy based on this research. Consumers discuss a change in store patronage after the birth of the first child. In order to maintain loyal consumers a relationship marketing program

could be developed. This relationship marketing program could offer benefits to retailers and consumers.

The relationship marketing program should be developed with couples before the birth of their first child. In particular, couples who participate in a bridal registry program might be available for a continuing relationship. It was found that store patronage tends to change after the birth of the first child. If a relationship is in place before a child is brought into the family consumers may be less likely to change their patronage after the child is born.

A Christmas gift registry could be included in the relationship marketing program. It has been suggested that a Christmas gift registry, similar to a bridal gift registry, might be valuable to consumers and retailers (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1993). This research found that consumers experience difficulty in predicting their spouses preferences after the birth of the first child. This difficulty leads some consumers to choose a preference prediction avoidance strategy. In particular, consumers who are facing difficulty in choosing gifts that their spouses would appreciate might benefit from gift registries. These gift registries could be consulted for a variety of gifting occasions (e.g., Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day). Consumers could be sent a full catalog and/or a personalized catalog. The personalized catalog could include only

products which spouses have selected in advance to receive as gifts. This could help reduce some of the perceived risks associated with gift shopping. Furthermore, additional products could be featured in the catalog. These products could be sold in conjunction with the products selected for the registry. For example, ties can be added to catalogs for men who have requested shirts in their gift registry. These additional products would help consumers create the necessary gift surprise.

A marketing segmentation strategy could be developed from this research. As suggested above, money and time are two personal resources which are perceived as competing. Some consumers are more price conscious after the birth of the first child. In contrast, some consumers are more time conscious after the birth of the first child. "Money Savers" and "Time Savers" should be approached with a different marketing mix. "Money Saver" consumers are concerned about price and start shopping at discount stores. "Money Saver" members of the relationship program can be offered discounts, value pricing, and rewards (e.g., points for merchandise and services such as gift wrap). This marketing strategy might alleviate consumers' price concerns and keep them as loyal customers. In contrast, "Time Saver" members could be offered opportunities for direct purchases or faster service. A relationship marketing program could thus offer benefits to retailers (e.g., loyal consumers) and

consumers (e.g., rewards for loyalty).

Direct purchases have additional benefits to retailers and consumers. They might alleviate consumers' complaints about gift shopping in a crowded retail environment. Direct mail could remind consumers of their spouses' birthdays and anniversaries, as well as the traditional gift ritual calendar days (e.g., Mother's Day).

Retailers might be able to further alleviate the problem of a crowded retail environment during the Christmas gift shopping season. It is common to increase store hours during this time of year. Furthermore, consumers might be encouraged to join the relationship program by offering an opportunity to shop when the store is less crowded. For example, consumers may be able to make appointments to gift shop during which they are guided to less crowded times. Members of the relationship marketing program could be given special attention and thus have a more pleasant shopping experience. This special attention can include reserved parking, short check out lines, help in the selection of gifts, and child care.

It was found that consumers experience stress when shopping with their child. In addition, shopping with a child creates difficulty in maintaining gift surprise. Child care could alleviate some of the burden consumers experience while shopping with their child, as well as give consumers the opportunity to maintain gift surprise.

Consumers gift shop as a family triad in order to ease the stress of shopping with a child. Retailers who offer child care may further help consumers by allowing them to shop alone and not with their spouses. Shopping alone tends to be the preferred method of shopping before the birth of the child. In creating an environment in which consumers can gift shop alone retailers are reducing consumer stress and increasing opportunities for gift surprise. Furthermore, consumers who have a pleasant shopping experience may stay longer in the stores. This may lead to increased sales.

Some consumers choose anniversary gifts for their spouses based on established categories of materials for gift purchases. For example, part of the motivation for giving a particular anniversary gift was the material (e.g., copper). These materials are often promoted by Hallmark Inc. Similarly, gem stones are often promoted as appropriate for specific birthday gifts while diamonds are promoted as appropriate for engagements. These classifications for gifts are stored in consumers' memory schemas. It was found that consumers search their memory schemas when making gift choices. Industry marketers of any of the materials that fall into these classifications could promote their materials as appropriate gifts. Similarly, marketers could create a scheme that places their material as appropriate for a specific holiday. Industries can promote these associations. Furthermore, a classification

of Christmas gifts could be developed. For example, each Christmas spent as husband and wife could be associated with a specific category of items. This classification scheme might help consumers with their gift choices by suggesting appropriate products. In addition, the classification scheme would promote the materials of a specific industry. For example, anything made of plastic could be attached to the first Christmas as husband and wife while anything made of gold could be connected to the second, and so forth. The industries involved could promote the classification scheme and generate sales of their products. Furthermore, classifications could be developed for many gifting occasions including Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.

A new class of gifts, often referred to as "Mommy gifts" and "Daddy gifts," emphasize the family relationship. These are gifts that are chosen by a spouse to have a child give. Marketers might want to promote specific gifts as appropriate for this class of gifts. These gifts tend to be less expensive or smaller items.

Metaphors are cognitive structures which shape our understanding and influence the nature of meaning (Johnson 1987). The metaphors consumers employ to discuss gifting reveal a great deal about how gifting is thought about. It has been suggested that eliciting metaphors from consumers might improve advertising research and copy (Zaltman and

Coulter 1995). Advertisers might want to use these gifting metaphors in their advertising copy. For example, showing gifting as a way to create a child's joy could encourage consumers to purchase and take joy in the purchase of gifts. Or, connecting the success of gifts to the baseball metaphor could help gain the attention of consumers who might feel particularly understood by the marketer.

It is important for marketers to recognize that for some consumers a gift is a communication of love, whereas for others it is an economic exchange. It might be possible for marketers to segment the market based on these gifting paradigms. A consumer's gifting paradigm leads consumers to approach gifting differently. After further study, marketers might find that consumers in each paradigm can be reached with a different and more effective marketing mix. Marketing strategy for followers of each gifting paradigm could then be developed.

Future Research Suggestions

Each of the themes analyzed in this research are ripe for further study. In this study, gifting between husbands and wives was examined. Future research questions can focus on a broader set of consumer behaviors within some of the themes.

The family life cycle concept captures life style, income, and expenditure pattern differences as a result of changes in family status. Critical transitions have been

identified. Researchers have identified a variety of family life cycle stages. However, some uniformity does exist in these schemes. The stages include: (1) bachelor, (2) newly married, (3) full nest, (4) empty nest, and (5) solitary survivor. Furthermore, nontraditional families also experience transitions (e.g., divorce). Marketers have used this concept to appropriately adjust marketing strategy (Schanniger and Danko 1993). Consumers experiencing these transitions might have different gifting experiences than consumers with one child.

Consumers in the process of completing the transition to parenthood experience stress and develop coping strategies to deal with that stress. Coping strategies include changes in shopping partners, timing and time spent, store patronage, and actions associated with price and method of payment. Future research with respondents in other stages of the family life cycle might examine whether these transitions generate different coping strategies. In addition, researchers may wish to examine coping strategies in other stressful situations (e.g., loss of a job, completion of a doctoral dissertation). Furthermore, it may be fruitful to study life cycle segments which may differ from husbands and wives with one child. For example, empty nest elderly husbands and wives after the birth of their first grandchild, or after retirement, may experience different patterns of gifting change. It remains to be seen

if the coping strategies developed to deal with the stress of the transition to parenthood are universal or unique to gifting after the birth of the first child. Still further, this research can be extended with a longitudinal study. Interviewing the fifteen couples in this study again in five, ten, or fifteen years may bring further insights into the evolving nature of the gifting relationship.

The sexuality global theme emerges from the interview text. Future research can further examine the dualities of privacy and sexuality and comfort and sexuality in a broader range of consumer behaviors.

In terms of the metaphor analysis, future research might try to establish the viability of market segments based on gifting paradigms. Market researchers may want to explore what other consumer behaviors are associated with each gifting paradigm. Market researchers may want to explore how consumers in each gifting paradigm can be reached. Do they watch different television programs? Do they read different newspapers? Are they more or less willing to read direct mail? If so, a different marketing mix can be aimed at each metaphor segment.

Due to their recent transition to parenthood, it is not surprising that husbands and wives in this study tend to attribute changes in gifting to the birth of their first child. As suggested above, it is possible that some changes in gifting may occur due to the passage of time and not the

introduction of a child into the family. It may be fruitful to study married couples who either by choice or for medical reasons do not have children. One research question might be: "What changes, if any, occur in their gifting relationships?"

While this study examined the gifting relationship of husbands and wives in detail, future research may focus on a particular product (e.g., greeting cards) and examine the gifting that takes place between a variety of consumer segments. This research may be useful to a particular industry to fully understand the "giftness" attribute in their product or service. It has been suggested that over time one's relationship to products and their usage changes (Fabricant and Gould 1993). Future research can focus on a product in order to examine the impact of life transitions on the use of that product.

Additional consumer rituals and behaviors might be influenced by life transitions. For example, meal preparation (e.g., Heisley and Levy 1991) grooming (e.g., Rook 1985), consumer fantasy (e.g., Rook 1988), and financial management (e.g., Ferber and Lee 1974; Rosen and Granbois 1983) have been examined. It may be worthwhile to examine changes in these behaviors after the birth of the first child or other life status transitions.

As suggested above, family of origin may play a role in consumer gifting affect, attitude, and behavior as an adult.

Future research could focus on families of origin to gain a greater understanding of its impact on adult consumer affect, attitude, and behavior. As suggested above, future research could examine which family of origin experiences lead to increasing, decreasing, or stabilizing of gifting amount after the birth of the first child. Furthermore, future research could examine family of origin as a variable which may predict choice of gifting metaphor. Still further, the role of family of origin in a wide range of consumer behaviors (e.g., meal preparation, financial management) could be studied.

A phenomenological research method was employed in this study. Respondents were asked a "grand tour" question and secondary questions emerged from the dialog (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). Future research might compare the results of this interview style with other qualitative research. For example, an interview guide might include projective techniques which might elicit topics consumers have been reluctant to discuss. Autodriving is one projective technique in which pictures of the respondents activities and possessions are shown to respondents during the interview in order to create a dialog. At a later date respondents are shown the pictures and elaborate on what is seen. In this way there is an opportunity for the respondent to distance oneself and view the familiar as unfamiliar (Heisley and Levy 1991). Researchers could

photograph respondents' gifts or gifting rituals (e.g., Christmas exchange). Some consumers videotape their own gifting rituals and celebrations. For example, some consumers in this study explain that they videotape Christmas gift rituals in order to create a video memory library for their children. It is becoming increasingly common for families to videotape birthday parties and other celebrations which include gifts. In addition, some consumers have professional videotapes made for their rites of passage celebrations (e.g., wedding, bar/bas mitzvah). These videotapes (professional and amateur) and/or researcher photographs could be used for autodiving and content analysis. In lieu of pictures (still or video), researchers could ask respondents to discuss gifts they have received by showing the researcher the items.

Another research technique which might prove valuable is introspection. Introspection research is defined as "an ongoing process of tracking, experiencing, and reflecting on one's own thoughts, mental images, feelings, sensations, and behaviors" (Gould 1995b p 719). The researcher could be the introspector or could guide respondents in this process. Furthermore, ethnographic studies which employ participant observation might yield substantial results.

Future research could compare the value added by any of these methods. For example, the number of topics covered or the depth of the discussion could be used as a method of

comparison. Just as this study extended previous consumer research, these research questions and methods are a natural extension to this study.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter reviewed the findings of this study. The findings were discussed in terms of the expectations that were generated from previous research. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn. Still further, recommendations were made for marketing practitioners and future research was suggested.

APPENDIX 1:
REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION



265
Baruch College
The City University of New York
17 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10010

Deborah Y. Cohn
Department of Marketing

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of the exchange of gifts within a family. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and I am excited about the possibility of your participation in it.

The research model I am using is a qualitative one through which I am seeking comprehensive depictions or descriptions of your experience. In this way I hope to illuminate or answer my question: "What is the experience of gift giving between spouses over time?"

Throughout your participation as a co-researcher, I hope to understand the essence of gift giving as it reveals itself in your experience. You will be asked to recall specific episodes, situations, or events that you experienced in the exchange of gifts with your spouse. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you: your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places and people connected with your experience.

I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy and effort. If you have any further questions I can be reached at home at 516-732-4824.

Sincerely,

Deborah Y. Cohn, MBA

APPENDIX 2:
RESPONDENT RELEASE FORM



267
Baruch College
The City University of New York
17 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10010

Participant Release Agreement

I agree to participate in a research study of "What is the experience of the exchange of gifts between spouses over the course of time?" I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily. I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a dissertation and any other future publications. I understand that a brief synopsis of each participant, including myself, will be used and will include the following information, first name, marital status, number of children, occupation, age, and any other pertinent information that will help the reader come to know and recall each participant. I grant permission for the above personal information to be used. I agree to meet for an interview of 1 to 2 hours. I also grant permission to tape record the interview.

Research Participant/Date

Primary Researcher/Date

APPENDIX 3:
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Thank you for your participation in the research study of "What is the experience of the exchange of gifts between spouses over the course of time?" I value the unique contribution that you can make to this study. After completing the in-depth interview please answer the following demographic questions.

1. What is your name? (first name only) _____

2. When is your child's birthday? (month/year) _____

3. What is your child's sex? circle one ☐ male ☐ female _____

4. When is your birthday? (month/year) _____

5. When did you get married? (month/year) _____

6. In what year did you first meet your spouse? _____

7. In what year did you first date your spouse? _____

8. What is your highest level of education? _____

9. What is your occupation? _____

10. What is your spouse's occupation? _____

11. What is your sex? circle one ☐ male ☐ female _____

12. What is your ethnic identity? _____

13. What is your family's combined annual income? _____

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX 4
RESPONDENT THANK YOU LETTER



271
Baruch College
The City University of New York
17 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10010

Deborah Y. Cohn
Department of Marketing

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you once again for participating in my research on "What is the experience of gift exchange between spouses over the course of time?" Please find enclosed a copy of the transcript from your interview. If you have any additional comments, feel that an idea needs clarification or that something was missed please contact me at home. As with the interview, all comments will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team.

Sincerely,

Deborah Y. Cohn

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