

Relationship Satisfaction  
Between Elderly Mothers  
and their Adult Children

by

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AND THEIR ADULT CHILDREN

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(ABSTRACT)

The perceived satisfaction derived in the relationship between elderly mothers and their middle-aged children was examined by interviewing both mothers and children. Satisfaction with the relationship was found to be correlated with the following relationship characteristics: (1) degree of sentiment perceived, experienced and expressed toward each other (affection); (2) quality of the face-to-face interactions with one another (association); and (3) each person's view of the level of agreement in values, opinions and attitudes shared with each other (consensus). Mothers and children responded similarly with regard to the dimensions of affection, and consensus in that increased affection and consensus was positively associated with levels of satisfaction experienced in the relationship. Mothers and children also reported that the quality of association was important, although the two groups responded differently to this relationship characteristic. The degree to which children gained satisfaction from the relationship was positively correlated with the perceived quality of the face-to-face interaction, while the quality of these interactions was much less important in the sample of mothers. None of the demographic variables (socioeconomic status, child gender, residential proximity); quality of life variables (vigor, life events, environmental satisfaction); or

marital variables (marital adjustment, marriage length) were found to affect relationship satisfaction between elderly mothers and their children. This research suggests that there is a class of relationship characteristics which includes affection, association and consensus that affects relationship satisfaction. Furthermore this class of characteristics appears to be exclusive and unaffected by specific demographic, quality of life and marital variables.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The study of familial relationships among the elderly is becoming more important as the end of the twentieth century is approached. The steady increase in the proportion of our population who are elderly scarcely needs documentation. The daily newspapers and broadcast media remind us every week that the "baby-boom" generation is rapidly approaching old age. How do those entering late middle-age or early old age relate to parents who share some of the same life tasks? Because of increased longevity, this question will gain in importance and relevance as the twenty-first century is approached.

Social scientists have been investigating the role of interpersonal relationships in the successful aging process for several decades (Arling, 1976; Larson, 1978; Streib & Beck, 1980; Troll, 1971). Compared to other aspects of the aging process, the relationship between elderly mothers and their middle-aged children has been under-represented in the literature. However, in the past few years there has been increased research interest in the nature of this relationship (Hagestad, 1982; Houser & Berkman, 1984; Quinn, 1983; Thompson & Walker, 1982; Walker & Thompson, 1983). Investigations have largely focused on the amount and type of contact and the ebb and flow of aid and support between the generations (Cicirelli, 1981).

The nature of the relationship between the older mother and the middle-aged child needs further study. In addition to the practical and pragmatic features of this relationship, its qualitative nature de-



demands investigation. The quality of the relationship between mother and middle-aged child has most frequently been examined as an aspect of other global dimensions of living (Mancini, 1984; Mitchell & Register, 1984; Ward, Sherman, & LaGory, 1984). Since the relationship between mother and child is enduring, it is worthy of exploration in and of itself.

This study examined relationship satisfaction between mothers and their middle-aged children as reported by both of them. The perception of satisfaction with a relationship depends on interpersonal relationship characteristics as well as demographic variables (Johnson, 1978; Johnson & Bursk, 1977). The interpersonal relationship characteristics chosen for this study include those of an affective nature, those that denote the quality of face-to-face interactions and those that indicate similarity of attitude and values.

The general research questions were:

1. Is satisfaction with the relationship between mother and middle-aged child (relationship satisfaction) affected by the level of affection, quality of association, and degree of consensus?
2. Do associations between relationship satisfaction and interpersonal relationship characteristics change as a function of specified control variables?

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

The model used to explore relationship quality between mothers and their children is displayed in Table 1. The independent variable is termed interpersonal relationship characteristics and is comprised of affection, association and consensus. There are nine control variables which have been organized into three domains: demographic, quality of life, and marital. In general, there are three expectations of the data on how mothers and their children feel about each other. First, the estimate of relationship quality, the dependent variable, should be correlated to affection, association and consensus. Second, other facets of life may partially determine how relationship quality is affected by affection, association and consensus. Third, there may be differences in how mothers and their children view their relationship with one another.

These very general expectations are consistent with the research questions stated in Chapter 1, and the expectations are elaborated in the present chapter. The following review of the literature and accompanying rationale for the study were used to construct the model contained in Table 1. The dependent variable, relationship satisfaction will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the independent and control variables. Throughout the chapter, specific expectations of the data will be explicated.

#### Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is the dependent variable and is defined

Table 1

Independent and Control Variables Influencing Relationship Satisfaction  
Between Mothers and Children

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Interpersonal Relationship Characteristics

Affection  
 Association  
 Consensus

CONTROL VARIABLES

Demographic

Socioeconomic Status  
 Child Gender

Quality of Life

Vigor <sup>a</sup>  
 Life Events

Marital

Marital Adjustment  
 Marriage Length

Residential Proximity      Environmental Satisfaction

Note: All independent variables and all control variables with the exception of CHILD Gender apply to both the mother and child groups

- a Vigor = General health and social participation
- b Environmental Satisfaction = perceived adequacy of income, perceived satisfaction with home and community, perceived stress level

as the degree to which a person experiences enjoyment from the relationship and feels that the relationship meets his/her wants and expectations. For example, in this study, an aged mother who reports high relationship satisfaction is saying that she enjoys interacting with her child, that she desires the relationship the way it is, and that the relationship is what she expects. Since this study also assesses how children feel about their relationship with their mother the same definition applies to them as well.

To date the literature in gerontology that examines relationship satisfaction is rather small. The few studies that have been published seem to point to the merits of such a focus. For example, Johnson and Bursk (1977) have found that mutual trust and respect are more likely to be found among aged mothers and middle-aged children who report high relationship satisfaction. Quinn (1983) reported that elderly mothers and adult children who are satisfied with their relationship are characterized by greater levels of affection. It has also been found that the content and quality of communication influences how satisfied parents and children are with their relationship (Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Houser & Berkman, 1984; Quinn, 1983; Quinn & Hughston, 1979). Finally, the sharing of values seems to positively influence how comfortable the aged and middle-aged feel about their relationship with each other (Johnson & Bursk, 1977).

These few findings seem to indicate not only which specific relationship dimensions are important, but that they can be reflected in an overall feeling that the relationship is pleasing. Further,

these studies indicate that it is possible to measure such dimensions by using research assessment procedures. More will be said later about prediction of relationship satisfaction in the discussion of the independent and control variables.

### Interpersonal Relationship Characteristics

#### Affection

Affection is defined as each person's (mother, son or daughter) view of the degree of sentiment perceived, experienced and expressed toward each other. In the extant literature there appear to be several terms used that are indicative of affection. They are attachment, emotional ties, intimacy and emotional gratification. Of course the term affection is also used. While the following discussion may use terms that vary, all aid in the explication of the construct affection.

Emotional ties between mothers and their children have lifelong effects and are characterized by strong affect (Ainsworth, 1972; Bowen, 1978). The bond between mothers and children persist even in the face of geographic separation, socioeconomic differences and value conflict (Bowlby, 1979; Cicirelli, 1982; Gewirtz, 1972; Kalish & Knudsen, 1976; Troll, 1971; Troll & Smith, 1976).

Intimacy and emotional gratification between mothers and their adult children have been inferred by the frequency of contact or the amount of aid extended to one another (Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982; Lee & Ihinger-Tallman, 1980). Recent exploration of the relationship between aid, contact and intimacy in the mother daughter relationship suggests

that such inferences are not reasonable (Walker & Thompson, 1983). Mutual trust and respect, the two dimensions that are characteristics of voluntary relationships have also been found to enhance affection between generations (Black & Bengtson, 1973). The voluntary nature of the mother adult child relationship is evidenced in the tendency of the older generation to demonstrate stronger emotional ties for their children than the younger generations show for their parents (Black & Bengtson, 1973; Thompson & Walker, 1984). The mother child relationship appears to be voluntary in nature and is based on sentiment rather than obligation (Hagestad, 1982).

In summary, the literature suggests that affection is an important characteristic in the mother child relationship. Because of this importance, affection was chosen as an independent variable in the present study. Drawing on the cited literature, we know that affection between mother and child is enduring and persists in spite of distancing from one's family of origin. It appears to be a separate entity from the giving and receiving of aid and endures in spite of life style differences and physical separation. Consequently, the data from this study were expected to show that the mother's satisfaction with her relationship with her child would increase as her perceptions, experienced feelings and expressions of affection increased. The child's relationship satisfaction with his/her mother was expected to follow the same trend.

#### Association

Association is defined as each person's (mother, son or

daughter) view of the quality of face-to-face interactions with each other. Characteristics most often measured to denote associations between generations involve clarity and quality of communication and type of association as well as expectations and perceptions about these associations (Bengtson & Cutler, 1976; Cicirelli, 1982; Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Houser & Berkman, 1984; Quinn, 1983; Quinn & Hughston, 1979). Other investigations have noted positive, but weak, correlations between frequency of visits and feelings of affection between mothers and their adult children (Adams, 1968; Cicerelli, 1981). On the other hand, Brown (1960) noted that only 17% of the adult children reporting regular visits with their mothers said they had a close relationship with her. Only those mothers that expected to see their children more often than they saw them reported feeling isolated and lonely (Brown, 1960). These later findings lead one to believe that frequency of contact between the generations is relatively unimportant and has little to do with satisfaction derived from the relationship. It has been suggested that the quality of the face-to-face interactions may be relatively unimportant compared to the perceived quality of interactions between the generations (Mitchell & Register, 1984).

In summary, the cited literature suggests that the type and frequency of associations between generations are less important than its perceived quality. The data analysis in the present study was expected to support the argument that the mother's view of the quality of face-to-face interactions with her child would be positively associated with her reported level of satisfaction with the

relationship. The same association was expected between the child's view of the quality of face-to-face interactions with his/her mother and reported satisfaction derived from the relationship.

### Consensus

Consensus is the last of the three interpersonal relationship characteristics being examined in the present study. It is defined as each person's (mother, son or daughter) view of the shared level of agreement in values, opinions and attitudes. This characteristic is important in the mother adult child relationship because the relationship in many ways resembles friendship formation and maintenance. As in friendships, mothers and children are more likely to spend time together and express affection to one another when they share values, attitudes and interests (Hess, 1972; Hess & Waring, 1978a, 1978b). Kreps (1977) noted that without sufficient mutual interest and similar values, there is little to hold intergenerational relationships together. As noted in the discussion of the dependent variable (relationship satisfaction) the sharing of values seems to positively influence how both the mother and her child view the relationship.

Values and attitudes are transmitted through lineage and socialization. Similarities have been found across generations with regard to political party affiliation, belonging to the same religious denomination, occupational attainments, motives regarding achievement and general life orientation (Acock & Bengtson, 1975; Bengtson,



1975; Jennings & Niemi, 1975; Hill, Foote, Aldous, Carlson, & McDonald, 1970).

The existing body of literature has less to say about the way the sharing of attitudes and values affects the quality of the relationship between mother and adult child. Although somewhat more speculative, it seems appropriate to include consensus along with affection and association as an independent variable in exploring relationship satisfaction between elderly parents and adult children. The data from the present study were expected to show that the mother's view of the level of sharing of values, opinions, and attitudes with her child positively affects relationship satisfaction. The same effect was expected to be present on the part of the child with respect to the mother.

#### Control Variables

The control variables included in this study are those believed to have some bearing on correlations between the dependent and independent variables. The nine variables selected have been categorized into three domains: Demographic; Quality of Life; and Marital. The variables included in the Demographic Domain are socioeconomic status, child gender and residential proximity. While residential proximity is not strictly speaking a demographic measure it is being included in this category for the sake of parsimony. The variables included in the Quality of Life Domain include vigor, life change events and environmental satisfaction. The variables included in the Marital Domain include marital adjustment and length of marriage.

## Demographic Variables

### Socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic status has been extensively discussed in the exploration of the elderly mother adult child relationship. Streib (1972) noted that the level of economic resources was one of the four major resources contributing to the strength of older families. Income level has been related to normative family type. Both mothers and adult children are more likely to live in separate households when income is sufficient. As a consequence, fewer demands and expectations are placed by the mother on her adult child, thereby enhancing relationship quality (Seelback, 1978). Partialing out the mother's income adequacy was expected to reduce the correlation between the mother's satisfaction in the parent child relationship and the independent variables. Partialing out the child's income adequacy was expected to affect the correlation between the child's satisfaction in the parent child relationship in the same way.

### Child gender.

The second variable in this domain, child gender, is important because in the literature, the relationship between mother and daughter is described differently than between mother and son. Daughters typically describe their relationship with their mother as between "somewhat" and "considerably" rewarding (Baruch & Barnett, 1983). Daughters also tend to take responsibility for maintaining contact with their mothers (Havighurst, 1973; Shanas, Townsend, Wedderburn, Friis, Milhhoj & Steuhouwer, 1968). Sons have reported that they generally see

their own mothers less often than they see their wife's mother. Competing demands between wife and mother increase when the son becomes a father (Fischer, 1983). Based on these findings, the data analysis in the present study was expected to show an increased correlation between the dependent and independent variables when child gender was held constant in the child group.

#### Residential proximity.

Residential proximity was included as a control variable because there are conflicting findings about its importance in the parent child relationship. Satisfying relationships between the aged and their adult children were found to be independent of geographical proximity (Johnson & Bursk, 1977). However when children who live in residential proximity seldom visit their parents, the quality of the relationship was adversely affected (Adams, 1968; Rosow, 1967). Finally, Walker & Thompson, (1983) found that proximal aid to one's mother is positively linked with intimacy in the relationship. By holding residential proximity constant, a reduced correlation was expected to emerge between relationship satisfaction and the independent variables in both the mother and child groups.

#### Quality of Life Variables

##### Vigor.

Vigor, the first of the quality of life control variables includes the exploration of health status and level of social activity. These variables are being examined as one entity because health directly influences social involvement and participation. Health was found in

Quinn's (1983) recursive path analysis model to be the strongest predictor of adjustment in personal and family life. The better the elderly mother's health, the better the relationship between mother and child (Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Streib, 1971). When relationships were perceived as already strained, the elderly mother's health impairment stressed the relationship even more (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Simos, 1978). Social resources and activity have also been associated with family strength among the aged. Better quality relationships between elderly mothers and their adult children exist when mothers are engaged and busy in various activities. In such circumstances, the mothers are less dependent and demanding of their children thereby enhancing the relationship quality (Adams, 1968; Hess & Waring, 1978b; Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Seelbach, 1978). In holding the mother's vigor constant, the associations between the mother's reported satisfaction of her relationship with her child and the independent variables were expected to decrease. In holding the child's vigor constant, the associations between the child's reported satisfaction of the relationship with the mother and the independent variables were also expected to decrease.

#### Life change events.

Life change events, the second of the quality of life control variables were included because changes in life, both negative and positive, have been associated with increased stress and susceptibility to illness (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). As previously noted, poor health adversely affects the quality of the mother child relationship (Johnson, 1978). By holding the mother's reported stress constant, the

associations between the mother's relationship satisfaction with her child and the independent variables were expected to increase. By holding the child's reported stress constant, the associations between the child's relationship satisfaction with the mother and the independent variables was expected to increase.

#### Environmental satisfaction.

The last of the quality of life variables is environmental satisfaction and is composed of perceptions held about ones living situation. This includes perception of income adequacy, satisfaction with living in home and community, as well as one's perceived stress level. Perceived income adequacy by both elderly mothers and their adult children has been related to the quality of interpersonal relations between them (Johnson & Bursk, 1977). The mother's satisfaction with her living environment also affects the quality of the parent child relationship (Johnson, 1978). Finally, Liberman (1970) noted that women with high stress exposure, but low stress perception, reported a greater richness in recent affective experiences. This perception, in turn, is expected to affect the quality of relationships. By holding the mother's perceptions about these aspects of her life constant, the associations between the mother's relationship satisfaction with her child and the independent variables were expected to decrease. There is the same expectation about the child's perceptions of life circumstances.

#### Marital Variables

Two variables are included in this domain, the first being marital

adjustment and the second being length of marriage. The impact that marital adjustment and length of marriage has on the relationship satisfaction between parent and child has not been documented. These dimensions were included in this study because marriage has been described by couples married 50 years or more as being a positive experience (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978). Positive experience and outlook about one's primary relationship are believed to positively affect other important relationships. This conjecture was used as the basis for the expectation that as these variables were held constant the correlations between the mother's relationship satisfaction with her child and the independent variables would decrease. The same expectations were held about the child's relationship satisfaction with the mother and the independent variables.

#### Intergroup Relationships

The general expectation in the present study that the independent variables would be positively correlated with the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction, was expected in both mother and child groups. The effects of partialing out each control variable were expected to follow the same pattern with regard to the zero order correlations in both groups. The same patterns were expected across the parent and child groups because the majority of the respondents across groups were 40 years of age or older, thereby sharing some of the same life cycle stages (Erikson, 1959).

The magnitude of association between the independent and dependent variables and the effects of partialing out control variables were

expected to differ between groups. As cited in the literature review about affection, there is the tendency for the older generation to show stronger ties for their children than children show for their parents (Black & Bengtson, 1973; Thompson & Walker, 1984). The explained association between relationship satisfaction and the independent variables was expected to differ since needs and life cycle stages across groups were not precisely the same and cohort differences remained (Bengtson & Cutler, 1976).

Since the groups appear to share many similarities, yet are of different generations, it is unclear whether the expectations as predicted would follow the same patterns at the same magnitude across groups. In this sense then, the present study is exploratory. The subsequent analysis of intergroup differences will provide a general basis for future confirmatory research.

#### Summary

The review of the literature is interpreted by the author to indicate that the relationship between mothers and their adult children is important to both mother and child. The way each views the relationship either enhances or erodes the quality of the relationship. Longer life spans make it possible for mother and child to enjoy their relationship into old age, and can be a rich source of enjoyment and pleasure. Characteristics that promise to positively affect relationship quality are the perceived, experienced and expressed affection, the way face-to-face associations are viewed and the perceived level of agreement in attitudes, values and opinions.

Whether the two groups perceive these relationship characteristics in a similar or different manner is unclear. The effect of holding specified control variables constant in the comparisons of relationship satisfaction with the independent variables is also speculative. This study examined relationship satisfaction as a function of the independent variables. It also serves as an initial investigation of group perceptions and effect of the control variables on the bivariate associations.



## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Population and Study Site

The sample for this research was chosen in the Roanoke Valley in Virginia. The sample included Roanoke and the surrounding counties and the towns within these counties. The subject pool was composed of elderly women who had celebrated their fiftieth or greater wedding anniversary. Names of women suitable for the study were taken from published announcements of anniversaries in The Roanoke Times and World News between October, 1982 and January, 1985. Women meeting this criteria were chosen because they were the most likely age group to have middle-aged children. This was important in the study because of the desire to examine the parent child relationship of parents whose children were either in the middle or late life cycle stage.

To suit the purposes of this study each mother was asked to discuss her relationship with her oldest living child. If the respondent refused to select her oldest living child to talk about she was asked to select another child who was 40 years of age or older.

The relationship between the elderly mother and the adult, middle-aged child was the focus for several reasons. First, the differential longevity between elderly men and elderly women increases the potential for mother adult child relationships to become both meaningful and enduring (Cicirelli, 1981). Because mother child relationships are more enduring and prevalent, they can be studied more efficiently than father child relationships. Mothers also appear to be more extensively

involved in intergenerational relations than fathers, as exemplified in the research literature (Adams, 1970; Arling, 1976; Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Houser & Berkman, 1984; Walker & Thompson, 1983).

Finally, the body of literature exploring the nature of the mother child relationship, especially as it pertains to affection has focused on the early life stages (Ainsworth, 1972; Bowlby, 1979; Hartup & Lempers, 1973). In these studies, emphasis was placed on the development of and well-being of the child rather than the mother. Gerontological studies, on the other hand, have been preoccupied with the well-being of the aged parent, and little regard has been given to the nature and quality of the relationship between parent and child in later life (Mitchell & Register, 1984; Mancini, 1984).

### Respondents

There were 112 mothers who met the criteria for inclusion in this survey. Fifteen of these mothers responded that they were too ill to be involved in the study, leaving 97 eligible participants. A total of 75 mothers, representing 77 percent of those eligible were interviewed. A mail questionnaire was sent to each referent child and was returned by 63 (84%) of the 75 asked to participate.

### Description of Elderly Mothers

The mean age of the elderly mothers in this study was 72.8 years (Table 2). The range in age was 65-89. The majority (92.5%) of the mothers interviewed were in the young-old category (65-79), with six participants (7.5%) belonging in the old-old age category.

Table 2

Description of Elderly Mothers

Variable	<u>n</u>	%	Obtained Range	<u>M</u>
<b>Age:</b>				
65-69 yrs.	20	26.67%	65-87 yrs.	72.79
70-74 yrs.	33	44.00%		
75-79 yrs.	16	21.33%		
80-84 yrs.	5	6.67%		
85-89 yrs.	1	1.33%		
<b>Income:</b>				
< \$4000	3	4.00%	\$4000-\$30000+	\$14,147
\$4000-\$5999	3	4.00%		
\$6000-\$7999	9	12.00%		
\$8000-\$9999	11	14.67%		
\$10000-\$14999	26	34.67%		
\$15000-\$19999	11	14.67%		
\$20000-\$29999	8	10.67%		
> \$30000	4	5.33%		
<b>Education:</b>				
< 8 years	21	28.00%	< 8 yrs.- 16+	10.2
8-11 years	29	38.67%		
H.S. Graduate	16	21.33%		
Some College	4	5.33%		
College Grad.	5	6.67%		
Graduate Ed.	0			
<b>Employment:</b>				
Unemployed	72	96.00%		
Part-time	2	2.67%		
Full Time	1	1.33%		
<b>Years in current marriage:</b>				
50-54 yrs.	54	72.00%	50-66 years	52.7
55-59 yrs.	9	12.00%		
60-64 yrs.	11	14.67%		
65-69 yrs.	1	1.33%		
<b>Health:</b>				
Poor	8	10.67%		
Fair	28	37.33%		
Good	33	44.00%		
Excellent	6	8.00%		

Income was based on the household income, rather than on the individuals respondent's income. Over half (64%) of those interviewed reported a household yearly income of \$10,000 or over. The mean income fell in the \$10,000 to \$14,999 range.

At the time of the interview, three respondents (3.7%) were employed, although at age 50, half (50.6%) of these women were employed. The associated prestige with these women, or that of their husband, yielded a mean prestige score of 60.96 (NORC Scale, Reiss, 1961) with an obtained range of scores between 40 and 82. This means that the husbands of most of the women in this elderly sample were craftsmen or laborers. Examples of jobs falling in these categories are mechanics, repairmen, inspectors, bakers, carpenters and shipping and receiving clerks.

Over half of the elderly women in this sample received less than 12 years of formal schooling, while 22 (27%) had 8 or fewer years of education. Only 12 (15%) reported college experience. The mean number of years in school was between 10 and 12 years. Only one elderly mother was a college graduate.

The 75 responding mothers were married and living in their home with their mate. The average number of years married was 52.6 years with a range between 50 and 66 years of marriage to their partner. The average mother in this sample lived 60 miles from the referent child participating in the study.

In general, elderly mothers rated their health as good, with the mean value representing fair to good health. When asked how they were

feeling at the time of the interview, 51 (63%) reported feeling good and only five (6.2%) said they felt poorly. Five (6.2%) respondents reported their health as being poorer than others their age.

#### Description of Children

The mean age of the adult children was 48.1, with an age range between 30 and 64 years. The majority of responding children, 58 (92%) were over the age of 40 years (See Table 3).

There were more than twice as many daughters as sons responding. This resulted in 43 female respondents and 20 male respondents. Of the 18 failing to respond, 14 were sons, yielding a response rate of 91% for the daughters and a corresponding rate of 59% for the sons. This response differential was expected and is in accord with prior data indicating that among kin, female relationships are the most active and enduring (Adams, 1968; Hill, Foot, Aldoul, Carlson & McDonald, 1970) All but four of the respondents were oldest children.

The mean income for the adult children household was between \$20,000 and \$29,999 range. The average child in this study earned approximately twice as much yearly income as the average parent's yearly income. Over half (76%) of the responding adult children reported a yearly household income of over \$20,000.

At the time of the survey, 29 (78%) of the children were employed at least part-time. The corresponding prestige score (NORC Scale, Reiss, 1961) associated with their work, or that of their mate, yielded a mean prestige score of 66.9 with an obtained range between 44 and 82. Over half (57%) the adult children had a prestige score over 70.

Table 3

Description of Adult Children

Variable	<u>n</u>	%	Obtained Range	<u>M</u>
<b>Age:</b>				
30-39 yrs.	5	7.94%	30-64 yrs.	48.1
40-49 yrs.	39	61.90%		
50-59 yrs.	17	26.98%		
60-69 yrs.	2	3.17%		
<b>Income:</b>				
< \$4000	1	1.59%	\$4000-\$30000+	\$23,714
\$4000-\$5999				
\$6000-\$7999				
\$8000-\$9999				
\$10000-\$14999	6	9.52%		
\$15000-\$19999	8	12.70%		
\$20000-\$29999	12	19.05%		
> \$30000	36	57.14%		
<b>Education:</b>				
< 8 years	1	1.72%	< 8 yrs.- 16+	14
8-11 years	2	3.45%		
H.S. Graduate	20	34.48%		
Some College	17	29.31%		
College Grad.	10	17.24%		
Graduate Ed.	8	13.79%		
<b>Employment:</b>				
Unemployed	14	22.22%		
Part-time	9	14.29%		
Full Time	40	63.49%		
<b>Years in current marriage:</b>				
1- 9 yrs.	18	28.57%	1-46 years	19.8
10-19 yrs.	6	9.52%		
20-29 yrs.	25	39.68%		
30 yrs. +	14	22.22%		
<b>Health:</b>				
Poor	2	3.17%		
Fair	9	14.29%		
Good	32	50.79%		
Excellent	20	31.75%		

Examples of jobs in this category include: salesmen and clerical workers.

The adult children were better educated than their parents. Three times as many adult children had experienced at least some college education. Eighteen (28%) were college graduates. Only one adult child reported having 8 or less years of schooling.

Of the children currently married, at the time of the study, the mean number of years with their current spouse was 19.8 years, with an obtained range between 1 and 46 years of marriage.

Adult children rated their current health as good, with the mean value representing good to excellent health. Twenty (31%) rated their health as excellent, and 32 (51%) rated their health as good.

### Design

#### Pretest

Prior to the implementation of this research study, a pre-test sample was selected. The entire face-to-face protocol was administered to a sample of 30 elderly who met regularly at League of Older Americans' functions. The mail survey format was administered to a group of 18 mental health professionals who had living, elderly mothers.

The reactions of all participating in the pre-sample groups were monitored. The readability and understanding, as well as the suitability of response categories were measured by the participant's feedback about items in the questionnaire. The amount of time required to answer the questionnaire in both the face-to-face and mail survey

format was noted. Revisions in wording and format were made in the questionnaire format based on feedback from the pretest sample groups.

### Interview Method

The Total Design Method (TDM) was applied in this survey (Dillman, 1978). The principles were incorporated in contacting the elderly for the face-to-face interview, as well as in the implementation of the mail survey used in the adult children sample. Use of this method resulted in a sample of 75 mothers and a sample of 63 children.

The face-to-face interview was used in the elderly sample for two reasons. Often the elderly have difficulty reading, comprehending and answering questions in a written format. The face-to-face interview reduced the chances of using invalid and unreliable responses in the data. It also provided an opportunity for the interviewer to make an assessment about the ability of the elderly to function independently. Data from elderly who were cognitively impaired or unable to function independently were not included in the study. The items in the face-to-face interview and the mail interview protocols were identical. The formats used in the two protocols were similar and incorporated Dillman's (1978) recommendations. Experienced women were hired to conduct the face-to-face interviews.

### Implementation of Face-to-Face Interviews

An advance letter stating the purpose of the proposed research was mailed to the pool of possible subjects. This letter was printed on Virginia Tech letterhead in order to establish the credibility of the study. Pictures of the interviewers and the project director were



included in this correspondence to help participants identify those involved in the project. Recipients of the letters were alerted to expect a phone call or personal visit from an interviewer requesting an interview. Three call backs were made to each individual in the subject pool in an effort to maximize response rates.

During the interview, an attempt was made to increase response accuracy in two ways. Privacy during the interview was requested so that responses would be minimally influenced by other household residents. Accuracy of responses was also encouraged by the use of cards listing all response categories for each question requiring a comparative response.

At the conclusion of the interview, the address of the referent child was elicited. Each mother interviewed was invited to write a note on the back of the cover letter that was to accompany the written survey format and return envelope to her adult child.

#### Implementation of Mail Survey

One week after the initial mailing of the survey to the adult child (see Appendix B), a postcard follow-up was sent to thank those who had responded and to serve as a reminder to those who had not. A third mailing was sent 2 weeks after the initial mailout. This included a copy of the questionnaire, return envelope and a cover letter emphasizing more strongly than the original coverletter the importance of responding to the survey.

MeasurementRelationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction was defined as multi-dimensional and as providing enjoyment while meeting expectations and desires in the relationship. The degree of satisfaction was based on responses to three global questions asking about the relationship: (1) Overall, is your relationship with (child's name or your mother) what you want? (2) Overall, does your relationship with (child's name or your mother) give you enjoyment? (3) Overall, is your relationship with (child's name or your mother) everything you expect it to be? Response choices to each question included strongly agree (+2), agree (+1), disagree (-1) and strongly disagree (-2). This scale was summed to provide a measure of relationship satisfaction, and had a theoretical range of -6 to +6. The higher the score, the greater the relationship satisfaction. The reliability estimate using Cronbach's alpha was .65. The mean relational satisfaction score among the mothers was 4.08. This indicates that generally speaking, mothers were satisfied with the relationship they had with their referent child. The mean relational satisfaction score among the children was 4.4. Children indicated that they were satisfied with the relationship they had with their mother.

Interpersonal Relationship CharacteristicsAffection.

This variable was defined as positive and negative sentiment, as well as the expression and accompanying feelings of sentiment. Positive sentiment included the construct of understanding, affection,

emotional closeness and the amount of sharing perceived in the relationship. Negative sentiment included the construct of anger, jealousy, guilt and emotional distance. Previously developed scales attempting to measure these constructs of interpersonal relationships were used on younger populations and did not fit the needs of the present study (Berman, 1974; Bowerman & Irish, 1962). This deficiency coupled with what appeared relevant in the measurement of affection led to the development of the affection scale used in this study.

Eight questions were used to measure the positive dimension of affection (see Questions 70, 72, 76, 78, 82, 84, 98 and 100 in Appendix A). A sample item used was: I love (\_\_\_\_). Eight questions were used to measure the negative dimension of affection (see Questions 74, 80, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94 and 98 in Appendix A). A sample item was: I am jealous of (\_\_\_\_). Response choices to each question included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Responses measuring the positive dimensions of affection were rescored so that each strongly agree response was weighted +2; each agree response was weighted +1; each disagree response was weighted -1, and each strongly disagree response was weighted -2. In the response measuring negative dimension, response scores were weighted accordingly: strongly agree -2, agree -1, disagree +1, strongly disagree +2. The weighted responses were summed to provide a measure of affection and had a theoretical range of -32 to +32. The higher the score, the greater the level of affection between parent and child. A

test of reliability of this scale yielded a Chronbach's alpha of .75 for the combined sample group.

#### Association.

This variable was defined as the perceived quality of the face-to-face interactions between elderly mothers and adult children. The characteristics of being relaxed, finding the other interesting to be with and experiencing happiness when together while seeing enough of one another were the constructs desired to measure the positive aspects of face-to-face interactions. Those constructs desired to measure negative aspects of face-to-face interactions included being bored with and trying to avoid being with the other because the other is difficult to be around and because the face-to-face interactions are strained. A search for scales suitable for measuring these concepts was unsuccessful (Mangen & Peterson, 1982; Straus & Brown, 1978). Consequently the author developed the existing scale. The combined parent child sample had a Cronbach alpha of .57.

Four questions were used to measure positive aspects of association (see Questions 102, 110, 126, and 132 in Appendix A). A sample item used was: I find (\_\_\_\_) interesting to be with. Negative experiences involving face-to-face interactions were measured from responses to four questions: 106, 124, 128 and 130 (see Appendix A). A sample item used was: I try to avoid (\_\_\_\_). Response choices to each question included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Responses measuring the positive dimensions of face-to-face interactions were rescored so that each strongly agree response was weighted +2; each agree response was weighted +1; each disagree response was weighted -1; and each strongly disagree response was weighted -2. In the responses measuring negative quality of face-to-face interactions, response scores were weighted accordingly: strongly agree -2, agree -1, disagree +1, strongly disagree +2. The weighted responses were summed to provide a measurement of quality of association. The scale had a theoretical range of -16 to +16. The higher the score, the better the quality of face-to-face association.

#### Consensus.

This variable was defined as each person's view of the level of agreement in values, opinions and attitudes shared with each other. The constructs desired to measure the positive aspects of consensus included respect of opinions in general, respect about the importance of the family, respect for the other's judgment about everyday matters as well as respect for the other's judgment about important decisions. Acceptance of the ways each differs from the other yet each knowing that in some ways their thinking is alike was explained. Awareness that one can depend on advice from the other and is influenced by the other was also examined. The constructs desired to measure the negative aspects of consensus included rejecting what the other considers important in life, rejecting religious and political views, differing on how to raise children and spend money, being critical of the other, and espousing different moral values and maintaining a totally different life style.

Scales attempting to measure the dimension of consensus did not incorporate the constructs just described and believed to be important in the measure of consensus in the population being measured (Mangen & Peterson, 1982; Straus & Brown, 1978; Stryker, 1955). Items in the consensus scale were developed by the author. The reliability coefficient of the scale in the combined parent child sample was .78 (Cronbach's alpha).

Eight questions were used to measure perceived agreement between parent and child (see Questions 134, 136, 140, 142, 152, 156 and 158 in Appendix A). A sample item was: You accept the ways that (\_\_\_\_\_) is different. Negatively phrased questions about degree of consensus were measured from responses to eight questions: 144, 146, 148, 150, 154, 160, 162 and 164 (see Appendix A). A sample item was: I disagree with (\_\_\_\_\_) on what is important in life. Response choices to each question included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Responses measuring the positive indices of consensus were recoded so that each strongly agree response was weighted +2; each agree response was weighted +1; each disagree response was weighted -1; and each strongly disagree response was weighted -2. In the responses measuring disagreement in beliefs, attitudes and values, response scores were weighted accordingly: strongly agree -2, agree -1, disagree +1, strongly disagree +2. The weighted responses were summed to provide a measurement of consensus. The scale had a theoretical range of -32 to +32. Higher scores indicated a greater degree of consensus between parent and child.

## Control Variables

### Demographic variables.

Socioeconomic status was determined in the children's sample by the respondents' current household income, educational level and prestige score associated with employment. Employment at 50 years of age and the corresponding prestige score, as well as current household income and attained educational level was used to compute the socioeconomic status in the elderly mothers' sample. The transformed NORC scale of socioeconomic index for occupations was used to measure socioeconomic status (Reiss, 1961).

The respondents' sex (child gender) was indicated on each mail questionnaire by a coding procedure. Coded numbers beginning with the number 3 indicated female child responses, while coded numbers beginning with the number 4 indicated male child responses.

Residential proximity was defined as the distance the parent and the referent child live from one another. This was measured by the question: "How far away from you does your child or mother live"? The five response categories ranged from less than 20 miles to living more than 250 miles from one another.

### Quality of life variables.

Health constituted one dimension of the independent variable called, "vigor". Health status was defined as the perceived state of health. The global question that formed the basis of statistical analysis of this measurement in both mother and children's samples was:

(1) How do you rate your current health? Response choices included poor, fair, good and excellent.

Two additional questions were used in the sample of mothers to provide a more thorough description of the mothers health status. Response choices to the first question: "How do you feel today?", were poor, fair, good and excellent. Response choices to the second question: "compared to other people your age, how do you rate your health?", were: poorer than others my age, about the same as others my age and better than others my age.

Social participation constituted the second dimension included in the statistical analysis of the variable called "vigor". It constituted the amount of involvement with family, friends, neighbors and organized groups. Assessment was based on the following question (Blieszner, 1982). How many hours a week do you spend doing each of the following: (1) attending church services; (2) doing volunteer work; (3) attending meetings of clubs or organizations; (4) socializing with friends, relatives, neighbors and others? The number of hours the respondent was involved each week in social situations provided the index of sociability. The mean number of hours involving social participation in both the elderly mother and child groups was 7.5 hours each week.

Life cycle events and associated stress reflected those events that occur in life, either on or off schedule, that have stress potential and require readjustment. The Geriatric Scale of Recent Life Events was used to measure this construct (Kijak, Liang & Kahana,



1976). Respondents indicated the occurrence of any of the 41 events listed in the scale that had taken place within the preceding three years by a "yes" response. An example of a scale item is: Death of a friend (see Questions 166-206 in Appendix A). This scale was used for the adult children sample as well as the elderly sample because the events listed as stressors appeared to be age appropriate for both groups.

The Geriatric Scale of Recent Life Events is an adaptation of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). This is a weighted scale that reflects the greater readjustment demand of the individual with a greater mean weight for that event. In establishing scoring scale norms, a sample of 248 elderly people, having a mean age of 70.8 were surveyed. Respondents indicated the percentage of change that specified events would produce in their usual way of living. The stress weights emerging from this revised scale on the elderly population yielded a correlation ranging between .51 to .84 with assigned weights on the original Holmes and Rahe (1967) Scale. A reliability coefficient for the present parent child sample using Cronbach's alpha was .65.

The scale has a theoretical range of 0-2120. The mean score in the mother group was 372.8 with a reported range of 0-923. The mean score in the child group was 360.8 with a reported range of 0-800.

Environmental satisfaction included perception of income adequacy, perceived adequacy of living environment and perceived stress level being experienced. A yes-no response was used as the basis for

analysis to the following questions: "Do you think that your present income is adequate?" All things considered, are you satisfied with the home and community in which you live?" and "Have you been under a lot of stress the last few months?" The three response scores were summed and had a theoretical range of 0-3.

#### Marital variables.

Marital adjustment was defined as the degree of adjustment in the relationship and is based on four constructs: (1) Dyadic Satisfaction, (2) Dyadic Cohesion, (3) Dyadic Consensus, and (4) Affectional Expression (Spanier, 1976). A sample item in the scale is : "How often do you get on each other's nerves?" Responses ranged from all the time to never (see questions 214-245, Appendix A). This scale has a theoretical range of 0-151. Construct validity of .86 was established between this scale and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959). Spanier (1976) reported a coefficient alpha of .96.

In the combined parent child sample in this study, Cronbach's alpha was .98. The reported scores in the mother group was 107-145 with a mean dyadic adjustment score of 118.3. The reported scores in the child group was 58-151 with a mean score of 104.3.

Marriage length was measured by the response to the question: "How many years have you been married to your current spouse?" formed the basis of this control variable (Question 211, Appendix A).

#### Data Analysis

##### Pearson Correlation Analysis

A Pearson Correlation analysis yielded the product-moment correlation between the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction and the independent variables of affection, association and consensus. The mother's reported satisfaction with her relationship with her child was correlated with the affection she experienced in the relationship, her perception of their face-to-face associations and her perception of the degree to which she and her child shared beliefs and attitudes. The same comparisons were made in the child groups. A two-tailed test of significance was used because the direction of the relationship was not determined a priori. The Pearson Correlation procedure as described in Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS, Inc., 1983) was employed.

#### Partial Correlation Analysis

In the partial correlation analysis the mother's SES, vigor, life events, residential proximity, marriage adjustment, marriage length and environmental satisfaction were each held constant and the correlations between her satisfaction with her relationship with her child and the independent variables were examined. The child's socioeconomic status, gender, vigor, life events, residential proximity, marital adjustment, marriage length and environmental satisfaction were held constant and correlations between the child's satisfaction with the relationship with the mother and the independent variables were examined by the partial correlation procedure (SPSS, Inc., 1983). A two-tailed test of significance was used because the direction of the relationship was not determined a priori.

Correlations Between Groups

The elderly mothers' correlations were compared with the adult children's correlations using the Fisher's  $r$  to  $Z$  transformation (Hays, 1973). This procedure normalizes the correlations, allowing for other statistical manipulation. A discussion of the test of the hypothesis that two populations show equal correlation is discussed by Hays (1973, pp 663-664).

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Associations between Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions

##### Affection

There was a significant correlation between relationship satisfaction and affection in the sample of aged mothers ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). The same was true for the child sample ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ). In both samples, greater satisfaction with the parent child relationship was found among those who reported higher affection levels (degree of understanding, sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings of happiness as well as the demonstration of affection). These correlations confirm what had been hypothesized (see Table 4).

##### Association

There was a significant correlation between relationship satisfaction and association among the elderly mothers ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ), and among the adult children ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ). In both samples, greater satisfaction with the parent child relationship was found among those who perceived face-to-face interactions as being relaxed and interesting. Those reporting satisfying relationships also reported that they experienced happiness when together and were able to spend enough time with one another. These correlations confirm what was expected of the data (see Table 4).

##### Consensus

There was a significant correlation between relationship satisfaction and consensus in the sample of aged mothers ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ) and

Table 4

Product-moment Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations of Dependent, Independent and Control Variables

VARIABLE:	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11	X12	Mean	Stand. Dev.
Relationship Satisfaction	X1													
Affection:														
Association:														
Consensus:														
Socioeconomic Status:														
Child Gender:														
Vigor:														
Life Events:														
Environmental Satisfaction:														
Marital Adjustment:														
Length of Marriage:														
Residential Proximity:														
Mean:	4.40	14.54	19.57	13.58	63.43	---	10.57	360.84	1.87	104.26	19.81	2.14		
Standard Deviation:	1.78	7.58	7.16	8.07	20.39	---	6.42	202.91	.63	38.85	12.74	1.41		

Note: Computations based on samples of 75 female parents and 63 adult children.  
 Data for the female parents are in the upper right portion of the matrix.  
 Data for the adult children are in the lower left portion of the matrix.

in the child sample ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ). Greater satisfaction with the parent child relationship was found among those mothers and children with a high level of agreement in values, opinions and attitudes (the degree of respect for each other's opinions and judgments about everyday matters as well as important decisions). These correlations confirm what was expected of the data (see Table 4).

#### Partial Correlations with Controls Held Constant

A comparison between relationship satisfaction and the independent interpersonal relationship measures (affection, association, consensus) was made while controlling for selected control variables. The specific variables held constant in these separate comparisons were: socioeconomic status, child gender, residential proximity, vigor, life events, environmental satisfaction, marital adjustment and marriage length. As previously indicated these controls were organized into demographic, quality of life and marital categories.

#### Affection

##### Mothers.

Controlling for the effects of demographic, quality of life and marital variables (see Table 1, page 4), the correlations between relationship satisfaction and affection among the group of mothers ranged from .37 to .39 (see Table 5). The lower coefficients emerged when the length of the mother's marriage, and residential proximity between mother and the child was controlled. The higher correlations emerged when vigor and marital adjustment were held constant.

Table 5

Partial Correlation between Affection  
and Relationship Satisfaction:  
Control Variables held Constant

Variables	Elder Mother			Adult Child		
	r	df	Sig.	r	df	Sig.
SES	.38	71	.001	.56	58	.001
Child Gender <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	.58	58	.001
Proximity	.37	71	.001	.59	58	.001
Vigor	.39	71	.001	.58	58	.001
Life Change Events	.38	71	.001	.58	58	.001
Environment Satisfaction	.38	71	.001	.58	58	.001
Marital Adjustment	.39	71	.001	.58	58	.001
Length of Marriage	.37	71	.001	.59	58	.001

a: No r for parent



However, these correlations are not different from the bivariate association of .37 and indicates that the interface between relationship satisfaction and affection is not influenced by any of the demographic, quality of life, and marital variables. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and affection would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, residential proximity, environment satisfaction and the marital variables constant for the group of mothers was not confirmed. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and affection would increase when holding life change events constant were not confirmed. These findings were unexpected.

#### Children.

In holding the same classes of variables constant (see Table 1, page 5), the correlations between the group of children ranged from .56 to .59 (see Table 5). The lowest coefficient emerged with socioeconomic status held constant, while the higher correlations emerged when length of marriage and residential proximity between child and mother were controlled. These correlations are not greatly different from the bivariate association of .58 and indicates that the interface between relationship satisfaction and affection in the child sample is not influenced by any of the demographic, quality of life and marital variables. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and affection would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, residential proximity, environment satisfaction and marital control variables constant for the group of

children was not confirmed. Expectations that child gender and life change events would increase the association between relationship satisfaction and affection were not confirmed. These findings were not expected.

### Association

#### Mothers.

Controlling for the effects of demographic, quality of life and marital variables (see Table 1), the correlation between relationship satisfaction and association among the group of mothers ranged from .31 to .36 (see Table 6). The weakest relationships emerged when vigor was held constant and the strongest relationship occurred when environmental satisfaction and life change events were controlled (Table 6). These correlations are not different from the bivariate association of .31, and this indicates that the connection between relationship satisfaction and association is not influenced by any of the demographic, quality of life, and marital variables. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and association would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, residential proximity, environment satisfaction and the marital control variables constant for the groups of mothers was not confirmed. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and association would increase when holding life change events constant was not confirmed. These findings were unexpected.

#### Children.

In holding the same classes of control variables constant, there

Table 6

Partial Correlation between Association  
and Relationship Satisfaction:  
Control Variables held Constant

Variables	Elder Mother			Adult Child		
	r	df	Sig.	r	df	Sig.
SES	.33	71	.002	.62	58	.001
Child Gender <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	.61	58	.001
Proximity	.33	71	.002	.61	58	.001
Vigor	.31	71	.004	.62	58	.001
Life Change Events	.36	71	.001	.62	58	.001
Environment Satisfaction	.36	71	.001	.63	58	.001
Marital Adjustment	.30	71	.001	.61	57	.001
Length of Marriage	.33	71	.002	.63	58	.001

a: No r for parent

was a small range of variation between relationship satisfaction and the child's reported quality of association ( $r = .61, p < .001$  to  $r = .63, p < .001$ ). The weakest relationships emerged when marital adjustment, residential proximity of child and mother, and child gender were controlled. The strongest relationships emerged when the child's length of marriage and environment satisfaction were controlled (Table 6). These correlations are not greatly different from the bivariate association of .61 and this indicates that the interface between relationship satisfaction and association is not influenced by any of the demographic, quality of life and marital variables. Expectations that the associations between relationship satisfaction and affection would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, residential proximity, environment satisfaction and the marital variables constant for the children were not confirmed. Expectations that the correlations between relationship satisfaction and association would increase when controlling child gender and life change events were not confirmed. These findings were not expected.

### Consensus

#### Mothers.

The same comparisons were made between relationship satisfaction and the mother's reported consensus with her child by holding demographic, quality of life and marital variables constant. These partial correlations ranged from .32,  $p < .01$  to .38,  $p < .001$ . The weakest relationship occurred when marital adjustment was controlled. The strongest relationship emerged when the parent's vigor was

Table 7

Partial Correlation between Consensus  
and Relationship Satisfaction:  
Control Variables held Constant

Variable	Elder Mother			Adult Child		
	r	df	Sig.	r	df	Sig.
SES	.33	71	.002	.58	58	.001
Child Gender <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	.61	58	.001
Proximity	.34	71	.002	.59	58	.001
Vigor	.38	71	.001	.59	58	.001
Life Change Events	.37	71	.001	.59	58	.001
Environment Satisfaction	.35	71	.001	.59	58	.001
Marital Adjustment	.32	71	.003	.60	58	.001
Length of Marriage	.33	71	.002	.60	58	.001

a: No r for parent

controlled (see Table 7). These correlations are not different from the bivariate association of .34; this suggests the fact that relationship satisfaction and consensus are unaffected by any of the demographic, quality of life and marital variables. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and consensus would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, proximity, environment satisfaction and the marital variables constant were not confirmed. The expectation that the correlation between relationship satisfaction and consensus would increase when controlling life change events was not confirmed. These findings were unexpected.

#### Children.

The same comparisons between relationship satisfaction and consensus were made by holding the demographic, quality of life and marital variables constant in the group of children. The partial correlations ranged from .58,  $p < .001$  to .61,  $p < .001$  with socioeconomic status showing the least effect and gender of the child having the greatest effect (see Table 7). These correlations are not much different from the bivariate association of .59 and indicates the interface between relationship satisfaction and consensus is not influenced by any of the demographic, quality of life and marital variables. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and consensus would decrease when holding socioeconomic status, vigor, proximity, environment satisfaction, and the marital variables were not confirmed. Expectations that the association between relationship satisfaction and consensus would increase when

holding child gender and life change events constant were not confirmed. These findings were unexpected.

#### Comparisons Between Groups

The Fisher's Z score analysis of correlations indicated one instance where the mother and child groups differed (see Table 8). Since a standard score of 1.96 or higher is required to reject the null hypothesis, only the correlations involving associations are significantly different. In this case the correlation between association and degree of relationship satisfaction is markedly stronger among the children. This finding disconfirms the assumption that the two groups responded the same with regard to association and its bearing on relationship satisfaction. This finding was unexpected.

While at first glance it would appear that the other correlations are different, the analysis showed this not to be the case. This confirms the assumption that mothers and children responded the same with regard to affection and consensus and its bearing on relationship satisfaction. These findings were expected.

#### Summary

The assumption that relationship satisfaction is affected by perceived and expressed affection, quality of association and level of agreement in values, opinions, and attitudes was confirmed in this study. This assumption was expected and held in both the mother and child groups.

The expectations that the demographic, quality of life and marital variables would affect the associations between relationship

Table 8

Comparisons of Correlations between Relationship Satisfaction and Affection, Association and Consensus for Elderly Mothers and their Children

Variable	Mother			Child			Z1-Z2	sigma (Z1-Z2)	z
	r	Z	$\bar{n}$	r	Z	$\bar{n}$			
Affection	.37	.39	75	.58	.67	61	.28	.176	1.587
Association	.31	.32	75	.61	.71	63	.39	.175	2.231*
Consensus	.34	.35	75	.59	.68	63	.32	.175	1.831

\* p < .05

Note: Fisher's Z transformation and a z test were used to test whether the correlations were from the same population



satisfaction and the independent variables (affection, association, consensus) were not confirmed. These findings held in both the mother and child groups and were not expected.

Comparison of the two groups by use of the Fisher's Z was expected to show no differences between the groups with regard to the correlations between relationship satisfaction and affection, association and consensus. The groups were found to differ only when comparing perceived quality of association with relationship satisfaction. The finding that the correlation between relationship satisfaction and association differed in the mother and child groups was unexpected. The lack of differences in the two groups when comparing associations between relationship satisfaction and affection and relationship satisfaction and consensus were expected. These findings partially support the assumption that mothers and children responded the same with regard to the relationship variables affecting relationship satisfaction.

## Chapter 5

### Summary and Discussion

#### The General Research Question

This study was concerned with elderly mothers and their adult children, and was developed out of an interest in knowing how a general feeling of satisfaction with the relationship specifically corresponds to affection, association and consensus. Since the literature has shown that social psychological variables and their correlations are sometimes exogenously related, a second part of this inquiry was to examine aspects of these relationships in a much larger context. The model presented in Chapter 2 (see Table 1) indicates the breadth of this context.

Is satisfaction related to affection, association, and consensus? Emphatically yes, in both the mother and child samples. Are these relationships moderated by the demographic, quality of life, and marital variables? Clearly no, neither in the mother nor in the child samples. The findings relevant to the first question are consistent with the extant literature in gerontology, while those pertinent to the second question are not.

One implication of these findings is that relationship satisfaction and the variables that affect the quality of the relationship are so important that they are largely unaffected by demographic, quality of life and marital variables. The research outcome indicates that affection, association, and consensus between mother and child are important characteristics that contribute

to satisfaction in the relationship. In a practical sense however, questions remain. Does it really matter whether older mothers experience and express affection for their children? Is it important that elderly mothers associate with their children and does it really make any difference if the agreement between mothers and children are similar? Further, do any of these things matter from the child's standpoint?

Both mothers and children reported that indeed these relationship characteristics (affection, association, and consensus) are important and do affect the amount of satisfaction experienced in the relationship. For example, when mothers and children reported high levels of affection for one another they were more likely to be open with one another. The strength of their affection permitted the acknowledgment and expression of negatives as well as positives. Being annoyed by the other, or dislike of the other's behavior did not appear to place the relationship at risk. At the same time both mothers and children accentuated the positive aspects of their relationship. Conversely, they minimized the negative aspects when they viewed their relationship as affectionate.

The real meaning behind the quality of face-to-face interactions lies in the perception of those involved in the relationship. Those mothers and children who found their associations to be interesting and relaxing were less likely to avoid being together than those who found these associations to be difficult, strained or boring. Mothers and children who described their associations as happy also felt that they

interacted with each other sufficiently. All of these perceptions, when taken in total are descriptive of the quality attributed to the face-to-face interactions. Clearly, a positive perception of face-to-face interactions is germane to satisfaction experienced in the relationship between mother and middle-aged child.

The salient aspects of consensus between mother and child involved their agreement of values, opinions and shared attitudes. Those mothers and children who respected, trusted and accepted the values and opinions of the other also were most likely to share attitudes about political and religious matters as well as views about specific aspects of personal and family life. Those mothers and children who respected each other's opinions about important things in life tended to also depend on the other for advice. They believed that their opinions about things in general influenced the other while at the same time trusting the other's judgment about important decisions in life. They accepted the ways they differed from one another and it did not matter a great deal if they agreed on how to raise children or the way money was to be spent. In summary, those parents and children who shared a greater number of values, opinions and attitudes found it easier to accept the ways in which they differed from one another. Perceived similarities outweighed differences among those who reported high levels of relationship satisfaction.

#### The Role of Control Variables

Socioeconomic status, life events, marital adjustment and vigor do significantly correlate with one or the other of the independent

variables. Relationship satisfaction is not significantly correlated with any of the control variables. Even those correlations involving the independent and control variables are of insufficient magnitude to alter the bivariate relationship. These data do not support the notion that the controls intervene, depress or inflate the association between relationship satisfaction and affection, association and consensus.

#### Similarities and Differences in Groups

There were many similarities between the mother and child groups. Both the mothers and children reported good health status and reported similar levels of social involvement. Most of the children, like their mothers, were married and living with their mates. Even though more children worked than their mothers did during their productive working years, the prestige score associated with their work did not appreciably differ. Life cycle tasks shared by a portion of the two groups included retirement, adult children leaving home and the assumption of the grandparent role. These demographic similarities in addition to the fact that the children were themselves experiencing middle-age and approaching old age may explain why the two groups responded similarly to the survey questions.

The assumption that older mothers and their children would respond in the same way to the relationship variables (affection, association and consensus) as well as to the dependent variable (relationship satisfaction) was generally true. At first glance, the variation in magnitude of correlations between the dependent and independent variables between the mother and child groups suggested differences

between the groups. Comparisons of the bivariate correlations between the mothers and the children using Fisher's Z transformation indicated, with one exception, that the groups did not differ. The Fisher's Z transformation normalizes Pearson correlations and allows one to treat them as ordinary scores when using parametric statistical techniques. In the child sample, relationship satisfaction increased when the perceived quality of face-to-face interactions was high. In the mother group the perception of face-to-face interactions and its effect on relationship satisfaction seemed less important. Given the selective nature of the samples, one would not have expected the two groups to differ on this relationship factor nor in the direction they differed. Parents have been attributed with strong ties with their children and they have often reported that they have desired more contact with them (Streib, 1965). Parents have been found to also overestimate the degree of closeness, understanding, and communication when compared to their children's responses (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971).

An explanation of the differing responses between the mothers and children may be found in the homogeneity of the mother group. The research model used in the study selected mothers who had lived with their mates for 50 or more years. By virtue of the investment these women had in their marital relationship, it is possible that their relationship with their spouse was more important to them than was their relationship with their children. This interpretation does not deny the previous research findings; it does however, lead to speculation about a hierarchy of relationships in which the

relationship with a long time spouse is the most powerful. This speculation is in step with the thinking and findings that partners in long standing marriages demonstrate an investment and obligation toward their partners that supersedes concerns with their children (Hess & Waring, 1978b; Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978).

Another explanation of the differing response of parents and children may be found in the child's need to experience positive contact with the parent. Children in the sample clearly indicated that satisfaction with the relationship increased with perceived quality of contact. This does not necessarily contradict earlier findings that adult children do not enjoy being with their parents (Simos, 1973). Rather, it establishes evidence that when the child finds interactions with parents pleasurable, the relationship is greatly enhanced. Children, unlike parents, need to experience quality in face-to-face contacts in order to judge the quality of their relationship with their parent as satisfying.

#### The Extant Literature

The present study contributes to the gerontological literature by verifying the fact that relationship satisfaction between elderly mothers and adult children is a worthy domain of study. Prior research has examined relationship satisfaction, but most often in terms of its contribution to overall life satisfaction or adjustment in old age (Beckman, 1981; Conner, Powers & Bultena, 1978; Quinn, 1983). It has also been studied in terms of helping behaviors between the generations (Cicirelli, 1981; 1983; Thompson & Walker, 1984; Walker & Thompson,

1983). This study speaks directly to the relevance of interpersonal relationship characteristics and the way these variables enhance relationship satisfaction in the mother child relationship in later life.

As a result of the current investigation, one can say with more certainty that the strength of the affectional bond between parent and child persists into the later developmental life stages. These findings lend credence to Bowlby's (1979) postulation that the bond between mother and child continues into adult life and affects behaviors in countless ways. This study also confirms Quinn's (1983) finding that affection between elderly mothers and their adult children positively influences the quality of their relationship.

Present findings add substance to the existing body of literature that acknowledges the importance of association between elderly mothers and their children (Edwards & Klemmack, 1973; Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Quinn, 1983; Quinn & Hughston, 1979). The major contribution of the present study rests in the emphasis on perceived quality of face-to-face interactions without preoccupation about type and frequency of interactions. Regardless of what actually takes place, the perception of what takes place when mother and child are together appears to be a salient variable. This finding affirms Mitchell and Register's (1984) untested assertion that perceived quality of interaction is paramount over the objective qualities of the interaction.

The importance of consensus in relationship satisfaction between mothers and their children is consistent with prior research outcomes



(Bengtson & Cutler, 1976; Hess, 1972). However, as Goode stated (1963) and Hess reiterated (1972) parent child relationships resemble friendships because there is a sharing of mutual interest between them and the relationship is voluntary. The present study verifies that the more similar the values, opinions and attitudes the better the relationship satisfaction. This sharing of attitudes is not limited to similarities about religious and political affiliation and shared attitudes about raising children and spending money but extends to more basic and stylistic approaches to life in general. For example those mothers and children who respected the other's opinions about things considered to be important in life, and those who accepted the ways that they differed from one another, reported increased satisfaction in their relationship.

In a general way, the findings of this study confirm earlier research that emotional ties between mothers and their children have lifelong effects and are characterized by strong affect (Ainsworth, 1972; Bowen, 1978; Bowlby, 1979; Cicirelli, 1982). The study also confirms the postulation of Mitchell and Register (1984) that the perceived quality of face-to-face contact has a direct bearing on the level of satisfaction derived from the relationship. Finally, as noted in prior research (Hess, 1972; Hess & Waring, 1978a, 1978b) mothers and children reported greater relationship satisfaction when they shared values, opinions and attitudes.

A close look at variables thought to be related to the correlations between relationship satisfaction and the dependent

variables of affection, association, and consensus did not confirm earlier research findings (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Johnson, 1978; Johnson & Bursk, 1977; Seelbach, 1978; Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978). This study, unlike that of Johnson (1978), did not confirm that finances affect the quality of the relationship. There was no support for the results suggested in earlier research that sons differed from daughters with regard to relationship satisfaction (Fischer, 1983). Contrary to the findings of Baruch & Barnett (1983) and Johnson & Bursk (1977) the parent's health status and social involvement had no effect on the relationships. Residential proximity, previously indicated as important by Johnson & Bursk (1977), appeared to be independent of relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was unaffected by any of the demographic, quality of life or marital control variables. This research provides some verification that all three independent variables are primary to relationship satisfaction and appear to be independent of other characteristics of adulthood.

#### Theoretical and Research Contribution

Scales used to measure the variables of interest in earlier research did not satisfy the demands of this study. The previously developed scales did not appear valid for measuring the selected dimensions in older and middle-aged people. The goal was to organize items that would tap the variables of affection, association and consensus. This was accomplished in a way that would allow precise measurement of what transpires between mothers and their children during the late life cycle stage. In order to accomplish this, the

concepts had to be appropriately defined. The definitions of affect, association and consensus as used by Bengtson and Cutler (1978) were expanded in order to get closer to a theoretical understanding of what goes on in relationships involving elderly mothers and their children. The definition of affection was expanded to include the degree of sentiment perceived, experienced and expressed toward each other rather than a global measurement of degree of sentiment between members. Association was not simply viewed as objective interaction or activities shared but was defined as each person's view of the quality of their face-to-face interactions. Consensus was defined as each person's view of the level of agreement in values, opinions and shared attitudes rather than simply agreement in values and opinions.

Individual items were developed to help clarify the meaning of each of the defined concepts. Consideration was given to the fact that it is difficult to measure relationship variables of a social psychological nature because of the emotionality attached to these variables. Emotional feelings about relationships and the corresponding constructs are often independent of life circumstances, situations and issues. The reality and the perceived reality of the quality of one's relationship with one's mother or one's child may be totally independent. These considerations were taken into account in the development of the scales used to measure the constructs of affection, association and consensus. The measurement of affection, association and consensus depended on items inquiring about specific behaviors as well as questions about feeling states. In the affection

scale, for example, items questioned about the behavior of talking to the other about personal problems and the showing of affection. Questions in the same scale asked about feelings of emotional closeness toward the other as well as feelings of love. The interplay between feelings and actions was incorporated into the scales measuring the constructs of face-to-face associations and consensus as well as in the scale measuring the construct of affection.

The development of these scales contributes to the body of research exploring social psychological relationship factors between mothers and their children. While further refinement of these scales is warranted, this work represents a major step toward more inclusive and relevant assessment of relationship qualities.

#### Future Research Directions

The most obvious and straight-forward research suggested by the present study is the refinement of the research instruments. The scales derived to measure the independent variables need further reliability studies using larger groups. A factorial analysis of these three scales to verify validation of the constructs discussed is a logical next step in the refinement of the instruments.

This study suggests that the parent child relationship at the distal end of the life cycle is unique. Parents and children tend to respond similarly to one another, with the exception that children need to experience quality face-to-face interactions in order to perceive satisfaction in the relationship. Is this a phenomena that normally occurs in late middle-age or is it a human attribute that decreases

with age? These questions are worthy of attention.

There are other relationship dimensions that no doubt would help us in understanding specific aspects of intergenerational relationships. For example, is the perceived content of contacts other than face-to-face interactions important in relationship quality? Such contact might include letters, telephonic communication and information transmitted by siblings and other important people. Identifying the behaviors that tend to be associated with pleasant and unpleasant interactions would allow us to predict relationship satisfaction more accurately. Finally, a dyadic case-by-case examination would provide further information about individual differences and similarities in intergenerational relationships.

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**APPENDIX A**

OLDER PARENTS  
AND  
ADULT CHILDREN

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Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_

OLDER PARENTS AND ADULT CHILDREN  
Dissertation Project  
Joyce C. Simon, M.A.

Hello:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I called you last  
(day) \_\_\_\_\_ and set this time to talk to you about your  
adult children.

AFTER COMFORTABLE:

Thank you for agreeing to talk to me about your children. We  
know that as children grow older and leave home, things change. To  
some parents, their children stay the most important thing to them;  
to other parents, children are not so important. I want to find out  
about your relationship with your oldest living child.

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

## I. BACKGROUND

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First, I'd like to ask you some background questions.

---

1. How old are you today?  
\_\_\_\_\_ years old.
2. Sex of respondent (filled in by interviewer).
  - 1 FEMALE
  - 2 MALE
3. Race of respondent (filled in by interviewer).
  - 1 WHITE
  - 2 BLACK
  - 3 OTHER
4. How far did you go in school?
  - 1 LESS THAN 8 GRADES
  - 2 8 - 11 GRADES
  - 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
  - 4 SOME COLLEGE
  - 5 COLLEGE GRADUATE
  - 6 POST GRADUATE
5. In general, how do you rate your current health?
  - 1 POOR
  - 2 FAIR
  - 3 GOOD
  - 4 EXCELLENT
6. How do you feel today?
  - 1 POOR
  - 2 FAIR
  - 3 GOOD
  - 4 EXCELLENT
7. Compared to other people your age, how do you rate your health?
  - 1 POORER THAN OTHERS MY AGE
  - 2 ABOUT THE SAME AS OTHERS MY AGE
  - 3 BETTER THAN OTHERS MY AGE

8. Are you employed at the present time?

- 1 NO
- 2 YES, PART-TIME
- 3 YES, FULL-TIME

---

Ask question 9 and 10 if respondent has a job. If not, go to question 11.

---

9. What is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Describe what you do on your job. \_\_\_\_\_

---

11. What is the annual income in your household? Consider all sources of income like retirement pensions, social security, and other forms of assistance, as well as earned income.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 LESS THAN \$4,000 | 5 \$10,000 - \$14,999 |
| 2 \$4,000 - \$5,999 | 6 \$15,000 - \$19,999 |
| 3 \$6,000 - \$7,999 | 7 \$20,000 - \$29,999 |
| 4 \$8,000 - \$9,999 | 8 MORE THAN \$30,000  |

12. Do you think that your present income is adequate?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

13. All things considered, are you satisfied with the home and community in which you live?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

14. Were you employed when you were 50 years old?

- 1 NO
- 2 YES, PART-TIME
- 3 YES, FULL-TIME

---

Ask question 15 and 16 if respondent was employed at age 50. If not, go to question 17.

---

15. What was your job title? \_\_\_\_\_.

16. Describe what you did on your job. \_\_\_\_\_

## II. SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

We are interested in how often you get together in a social way. Please tell me how much time you spend in each of the following activities.

NONE	1-2 HRS WEEK	3-5 HRS WEEK	6-8 HRS WEEK	9-10 HRS WEEK	10 OR MORE/WK			
1	2	3	4	5	6			
17. Attend church services.			1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Do volunteer work.			1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Attend meetings of clubs or organizations.			1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Socialize with friends, relatives, neighbors & others.			1	2	3	4	5	6

## III. NAMING OF ADULT CHILD

21. How many living children do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_ CHILDREN.

22. What is (are) the first name(s) of your child (children)?

a. _____	g. _____
b. _____	h. _____
c. _____	i. _____
d. _____	j. _____
e. _____	k. _____
f. _____	l. _____

23. How old is (interviewer, please name each child)?

a. _____	g. _____
b. _____	h. _____
c. _____	i. _____
d. _____	j. _____
e. _____	k. _____
f. _____	l. _____



Now I would like to ask you a number of questions that deal with the relationship an older parent has with an adult child who is approaching old age or is middle-aged. To suit the purposes of this study, could we discuss the relationship you have with "\_\_\_\_\_", your oldest living child?

NOTE: If respondent refuses to select his oldest living child to talk about, ask the following:

Please choose the child you prefer to talk about who is 40 years of age or older.

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Age of selected child (filled in by interviewer).

\_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD.

Let's talk about your relationship with "\_\_\_\_\_" for awhile.

25. Where does "\_\_\_\_\_" live?

\_\_\_\_\_ (City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State)

- 1 LESS THAN 20 MILES
- 2 20-49 MILES
- 3 50-149 MILES
- 4 150-250 MILES
- 5 MORE THAN 250 MILES

Overall, how strongly do you agree with the following statements about your relationship and face-to-face visits with "\_\_\_\_\_"?

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u> 1	<u>AGREE</u> 2	<u>DISAGREE</u> 3	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u> 4
26. It is what you want.	1	2	3	4
27. It gives you enjoyment.	1	2	3	4
28. It is what you expect.	1	2	3	4
29. You liked your last visit.	1	2	3	4
30. You look forward to your next visit.	1	2	3	4

## IV. PARENT-CHILD CONTACT

Next, we would like to know about your contact with "\_\_\_\_\_".  
Please answer every question.

ONCE A YEAR OR <u>LESS</u> 1	SEVERAL TIMES A <u>YEAR</u> 2	1 - 2 TIMES A <u>MONTH</u> 3	1 - 2 TIMES A <u>WEEK</u> 4	SEVERAL TIMES A <u>WEEK</u> 5	<u>DAILY</u> 6
31.	How often do you usually see _____?				
32.	How often do you call _____?				
33.	How often does _____ call you?				
34.	How often do you write to _____?				
35.	How often does _____ write to you?				
36.	When did you last have a face-to-face visit with _____?				
	(MONTH)	(DAY)	(YEAR)		
37.	How much time did you spend with _____ on your last face-to-face visit?				
1	30 - 50 minutes				
2	1 - 4 hours				
3	5 - 24 hours				
4	2 - 6 days				
5	1 - 2 weeks				
6	More than 2 weeks				
38.	During your last face-to-face visit, what did you do? _____				
39.	What did you talk about the most on your last face-to-face visit? _____				

## V. LAST VISIT

---

To help us get a picture of what your last face-to-face visit with " \_\_\_\_\_ " was like, please answer all of the following questions in a way that best describes your visit.

---

	YES	NO
40. Were you polite to ( _____ )?	1	2
41. Did you pay attention to ( _____ )?	1	2
42. Did you show affection to ( _____ )?	1	2
43. Were you helpful to ( _____ )?	1	2
44. Were you open with ( _____ )?	1	2
45. Were you friendly with ( _____ )?	1	2
46. Did you feel joy in seeing ( _____ )?	1	2
47. Were you relaxed with ( _____ )?	1	2
48. Were you honest with ( _____ )?	1	2
49. Did you show interest in ( _____ )?	1	2
50. Were you respectful to ( _____ )?	1	2
51. Were you straightforward with ( _____ )?	1	2
52. Were you understanding with ( _____ )?	1	2
53. Did you feel close to ( _____ )?	1	2
54. Were you able to put up with ( _____ )'s behavior?	1	2
55. Were you on pins and needles with ( _____ )?	1	2
56. Did you talk down to ( _____ )?	1	2
57. Were you cool to ( _____ )?	1	2
58. Were you critical of ( _____ )?	1	2
59. Were you on guard with ( _____ )?	1	2

	YES	NO
60. Did you disapprove of (_____)?	1	2
61. Were you stubborn with (_____)?	1	2
62. Were you indifferent to (_____)?	1	2
63. Were you stand-offish with (_____)?	1	2
64. Did you get your way with (_____)?	1	2
65. Did you act proud with (_____)?	1	2
66. Did you fail to take (_____) seriously?	1	2
67. Did you get annoyed with (_____)?	1	2
68. Were you judgmental with (_____)?	1	2
69. Did you get angry with (_____)?	1	2

#### VI. AFFECTION

---

We would like to take a close look at the affection you and \_\_\_\_\_ have for one another. Choose the answer that you think best describes the degree of affection between the two of you. Answer the questions as honestly as you can; there are no right and wrong answers.

---

	<u>STRONGLY</u> <u>AGREE</u> 1	<u>AGREE</u> 2	<u>DISAGREE</u> 3	<u>STRONGLY</u> <u>DISAGREE</u> 4
70. You understand (_____).			1	2 3 4
71. (_____) understands you.			1	2 3 4
72. You tell your intimate thoughts (_____).			1	2 3 4
73. (_____) tells his/her intimate thoughts to you.			1	2 3 4
74. You show your negative feelings to (_____).			1	2 3 4
75. (_____) shows his/her negative feelings to you.			1	2 3 4
76. You show affection to (_____).			1	2 3 4

77. ( ) shows affection to you. 1 2 3 4
78. You can depend on encouragement and support from ( ). 1 2 3 4
79. ( ) can depend on you for encouragement and support. 1 2 3 4
80. There are times that you like ( ) less than you normally do. 1 2 3 4
81. There are times that ( ) likes you less than he/she normally does. 1 2 3 4
82. You are emotionally close to ( ). 1 2 3 4
83. ( ) is emotionally close to you. 1 2 3 4
84. You talk about personal problems with ( ). 1 2 3 4
85. ( ) talks about personal problems with you. 1 2 3 4
86. You dislike ( )'s behavior. 1 2 3 4
87. ( ) dislikes your behavior. 1 2 3 4
88. You try to avoid ( ) when you feel bad. 1 2 3 4
89. ( ) tries to avoid you when he/she feels bad. 1 2 3 4
90. You get annoyed with ( ). 1 2 3 4
91. ( ) gets annoyed with you. 1 2 3 4
92. You hide your disappointments from ( ). 1 2 3 4
93. ( ) hides his/her disappointments from you. 1 2 3 4
94. You feel guilty about things you should have done for ( ). 1 2 3 4

95. ( ) feels guilty about things he/she should have done for you. 1 2 3 4
96. You are jealous of ( ). 1 2 3 4
97. ( ) is jealous of you. 1 2 3 4
98. You love ( ). 1 2 3 4
99. ( ) loves you. 1 2 3 4
100. You tell your happy feelings to ( ). 1 2 3 4
101. ( ) tells his/her happy feelings to you. 1 2 3 4

## VII. ASSOCIATION

---

We would like to take a close look at the conditions under which you and \_\_\_\_\_ visit with each other. We know that relationships have their ups and downs. Please choose the answer after each question that you think best describes the time you usually spend together.

---

- | <u>STRONGLY</u><br><u>AGREE</u>                           | <u>AGREE</u> | <u>DISAGREE</u> | <u>STRONGLY</u><br><u>DISAGREE</u> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1   | 2            | 3               | 4                                  |
| 102. You find ( ) interesting to be with.                 |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 103. ( ) finds you interesting.                           |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 104. You like doing things with ( ).                      |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 105. ( ) likes doing things.                              |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 106. You feel bored with ( ).                             |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 107. ( ) feels bored with me.                             |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 108. You only spend time with ( ) because you should.     |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |
| 109. ( ) only spends time with you because he/she should. |              | 1 2 3 4         |                                    |

110. Being with (\_\_\_\_\_) ( makes you happy. 1 2 3 4
111. Being with you seems to make (\_\_\_\_\_) happy. 1 2 3 4
112. You try to find things you like doing with (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
113. (\_\_\_\_\_) tries to find things he/she likes to do with me. 1 2 3 4
114. You like talking to (\_\_\_\_\_) about your special interests and activities. 1 2 3 4
115. (\_\_\_\_\_) likes talking to you about his/her special interests and activities. 1 2 3 4
116. You do things with (\_\_\_\_\_) for fun. 1 2 3 4
117. (\_\_\_\_\_) does things with you for fun. 1 2 3 4
118. You spend time with (\_\_\_\_\_) only when a special task has to be done. 1 2 3 4
119. (\_\_\_\_\_) spends time with you only when a special task has to be done. 1 2 3 4
120. You spend time with (\_\_\_\_\_) because of family obligations. 1 2 3 4
121. (\_\_\_\_\_) spends time with you because of family obligations. 1 2 3 4
122. You spend time with (\_\_\_\_\_) when there is nothing better to do. 1 2 3 4
123. (\_\_\_\_\_) spends time with you when there is nothing better to do. 1 2 3 4
124. Being with (\_\_\_\_\_) is a source of strain to you. 1 2 3 4

125. Being with you is a source of strain to (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
126. You see enough of (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
127. (\_\_\_\_\_) sees enough of you. 1 2 3 4
128. You find it difficult to be around (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
129. (\_\_\_\_\_) seems to find it difficult to be around you. 1 2 3 4
130. You try to avoid (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
131. (\_\_\_\_\_) tries to avoid you. 1 2 3 4
132. You are relaxed around (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
133. (\_\_\_\_\_) seems relaxed around you. 1 2 3 4

## VIII. VALUES

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Another important part of this study is to find out how much you have in common with \_\_\_\_\_. Choose the answer after each question that you think best describes how much you and \_\_\_\_\_ usually agree on things. Answer all the questions as honestly as you can.

---

- |   | <u>STRONGLY</u><br><u>AGREE</u> |  | <u>AGREE</u> |  | <u>DISAGREE</u> |   | <u>STRONGLY</u><br><u>DISAGREE</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------|--|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
|   | 1                               |  | 2            |  | 3               |   | 4                                  |
| 134. You respect (_____)’s opinions about important things in life. |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |
| 135. (_____) respects your opinions about important things in life. |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |
| 136. You depend on (_____) for advice.                              |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |
| 137. (_____) depends on you for advice.                             |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |
| 138. You respect (_____)’s judgment about normal everyday matters.  |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |
| 139. (_____) respects your judgment about normal everyday matters.  |                                 |  |              |  | 1               | 2 | 3 4                                |



140. Your opinions influence (\_\_\_\_). 1 2 3 4
141. (\_\_\_\_)'s opinions influence you. 1 2 3 4
142. You trust (\_\_\_\_)'s judgment about important decisions. 1 2 3 4
143. (\_\_\_\_) trusts your judgment about important decisions. 1 2 3 4
144. You reject what (\_\_\_\_) considers important in life. 1 2 3 4
145. (\_\_\_\_) rejects what you consider important in life. 1 2 3 4
146. You reject (\_\_\_\_)'s religious views. 1 2 3 4
147. (\_\_\_\_) rejects your religious views. 1 2 3 4
148. You reject (\_\_\_\_)'s political views. 1 2 3 4
149. (\_\_\_\_) rejects your political views. 1 2 3 4
150. You differ with (\_\_\_\_) on how to raise children. 1 2 3 4
151. (\_\_\_\_) differs with you on how to raise children. 1 2 3 4
152. You respect (\_\_\_\_)'s beliefs about the importance of the family. 1 2 3 4
153. (\_\_\_\_) respects your beliefs about the importance of the family. 1 2 3 4
154. You differ with (\_\_\_\_) on the way money should be spent. 1 2 3 4
155. (\_\_\_\_) differs with you on the way money should be spent. 1 2 3 4
156. Your mind works like (\_\_\_\_)'s 1 2 3 4

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 157. ( ) thinks like you.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 158. You accept the ways that<br>( ) is different.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 159. ( ) accepts the ways that<br>you are different.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 160. You are critical of ( ).                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 161. ( ) is critical of you.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 162. You have many different moral<br>values than ( ).    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 163. ( ) has many different moral<br>values than you.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 164. You have a totally different life<br>style than ( ). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 165. ( ) has a different life<br>style than you do.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

#### IX. LIFE EVENTS

---

Sometimes events in our life place stress on our relationship with our children. Your answer to each of the following will help me understand the pressures and strains you live with. Please tell me which of the following events have occurred to you in the last three years.

---

- |                             | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| 166. Minor illness          | 1   | 2  |
| 167. Loss of hearing/vision | 1   | 2  |
| 168. Difficulty walking     | 1   | 2  |
| 169. Sexual difficulty      | 1   | 2  |
| 170. Divorce                | 1   | 2  |
| 171. Separation             | 1   | 2  |
| 172. Family member ill      | 1   | 2  |

173.	Gain new family member	1	2
174.	Death of a close friend	1	2
175.	Change number of family get-togethers	1	2
176.	Personal achievement of family member	1	2
177.	Given up financial responsibility	1	2
178.	Financial difficulty	1	2
179.	Change work hours/conditions	1	2
180.	Change residence	1	2
181.	Sell major possessions	1	2
182.	Personal achievement	1	2
183.	Reduce recreation	1	2
184.	Spouse unfaithful	1	2
185.	Fired from job	1	2
186.	Loss of valuable object	1	2
187.	Child married	1	2
188.	Taking large loan	1	2
189.	Minor legal violation	1	2
190.	Trouble with neighbors	1	2
191.	Trouble with social security	1	2
192.	Age discrimination	1	2
193.	Major illness	1	2
194.	Change in sleep habits	1	2
195.	Change in eating habits	1	2
196.	Menopause	1	2
197.	Death of spouse	1	2

198. Marriage	1	2
199. Marital reconciliation	1	2
200. More arguments with spouse	1	2
201. Fewer arguments with spouse	1	2
202. Death of family member	1	2
203. Improvement in family member's health	1	2
204. Trouble with children	1	2
205. Victim of crime	1	2
206. Improvement in financial state	1	2
207. A change in alcohol consumption	1	2
208. You have been under a lot of stress the last few months.	1	2

#### X. MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

---

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about yourself to interpret the results of this survey.

---

209. How many times have you been married:

- 1 NEVER
- 2 ONCE
- 3 TWICE
- 4 THREE OR MORE TIMES

210. What is your current marital status?

- 1 NEVER MARRIED
- 2 MARRIED
- 3 WIDOWED
- 4 DIVORCED OR SEPARATED

---

If married, ask question 211 and go to 214. If widowed, ask question 212 and go to the last page of this appendix. If divorced, answer question 213 and go to last page of this appendix.

---

211. How many years have you been married to your current spouse?

\_\_\_\_\_ YEARS

212. How many years have you been widowed?

\_\_\_\_\_ YEARS

213. How many years have you been divorced or separated?

\_\_\_\_\_ YEARS

214. The dots on the card (Hand Card 9) line show how happy you are in your marriage. The middle point, "HAPPY" represents the degree of happiness in most relationships. Tell me the dot that best describes the degree of happiness in your relationship.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
·	·	·	·	·	·	·

EXTREMELY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	A LITTLE UNHAPPY	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	EXTREMELY HAPPY	PERFECT HAPPY
----------------------	-------------------	---------------------	-------	---------------	--------------------	------------------

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with your spouse in the following areas. (HAND CARD 10)

ALWAYS <u>AGREE</u> 1	ALMOST ALWAYS <u>AGREE</u> 2	OCCA- SIONALLY <u>DISAGREE</u> 3	FRE- QUENTLY <u>DISAGREE</u> 4	ALMOST ALWAYS <u>DISAGREE</u> 5	ALWAYS <u>DISAGREE</u> 6
-----------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	---	--	--------------------------------

215. Handling finances	1	2	3	4	5	6
216. Matters or recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6
217. Religious matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
218. Showing affection	1	2	3	4	5	6
219. Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
220. Sex relations	1	2	3	4	5	6
221. Proper behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
222. Philosophy of life	1	2	3	4	5	6

223.	Ways of dealing with parents or inlaws	1	2	3	4	5	6
224.	Important goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
225.	Time spent together	1	2	3	4	5	6
226.	Major decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
227.	Household tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
228.	Leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
229.	Career decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6

---

To help you answer the next group of questions about your relationship with your spouse, look at this card and tell me which answer is most correct. (HAND CARD 11)

---

<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>MOST OF THE TIME</u>	<u>MORE OFTEN THAN NOT</u>	<u>OCCA-sionally</u>	<u>RARELY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>		
1	2	3	4	5	6		
230.	How often do you talk of ending your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
231.	How often do you leave the house after a fight?	1	2	3	4	5	6
232.	How often do things go well?	1	2	3	4	5	6
233.	Do you confide in your mate?	1	2	3	4	5	6
234.	Do you regret that you are married?	1	2	3	4	5	6
235.	How often do you and your mate quarrel?	1	2	3	4	5	6

236. How often do you get on each other's nerves?      1      2      3      4      5      6

237. Do you kiss your mate? (HAND CARD 12)

- 1 EVERY DAY
- 2 ALMOST EVERY DAY
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 RARELY
- 5 NEVER

238. How many outside interests do you and your mate engage in together? (HAND CARD 13)

- 1 ALL OF THEM
- 2 MOST OF THEM
- 3 SOME OF THEM
- 4 VERY FEW OF THEM
- 5 NONE OF THEM

Tell me how often the following events occur between you and your mate. (HAND CARD 14)

	<u>LESS THAN</u> <u>ONCE A</u> <u>MONTH</u>	<u>ONCE OR</u> <u>TWICE A</u> <u>MONTH</u>	<u>ONCE OR</u> <u>TWICE A</u> <u>WEEK</u>	<u>ONCE A</u> <u>DAY</u>	<u>MORE</u> <u>OFTEN</u>	
<u>NEVER</u>	2	3	4	5	6	
1						
239. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
240. Laugh together	1	2	3	4	5	6
241. Calmly discuss something	1	2	3	4	5	6
242. Work together on a project	1	2	3	4	5	6

Couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Have you had differences of opinion or problems during the past few weeks about the following? (HAND CARD 8)

	YES	NO
243. Being too tired for sex	1	2
244. Not showing love	1	2

245. Select one of the following statements which best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship with your mate.  
(HAND CARD 15)

- 1 I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- 2 I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do all I can to see that it does.
- 3 I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- 4 It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- 5 It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- 6 My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.



Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for talking with me. It has been a pleasant experience for me and I think what you have said will help us understand how parents view their relationship with an adult middle-aged child. Do you know of anyone your age who has an adult child that might like to help us by answering the same questions you have answered?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

We are also interested in an adult child's views of the parent-child relationship. Do you think \_\_\_\_\_ would participate in a survey like this? May I have his/her name, address and phone number? (I ANSWER IS NO, ASK IF ANOTHER CHILD WOULD PARTICIPATE)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to write a note to \_\_\_\_\_ to be included in the questionnaire I will send to him/her?

**APPENDIX B**

Thank you for agreeing to answer the questions in this booklet. We will ask a number of questions about your relationship with your mother. There are no right or wrong answers. We ask only that you answer every question as honestly as possible because the way you see your relationship with your mother is important in this study.

Q1 Overall, how strongly do you agree with the following statements about your relationship and face-to-face visits with your mother?

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. It is what I want.	1	2	3	4
2. It gives me enjoyment.	1	2	3	4
3. It is what I expect.	1	2	3	4
4. I liked my last visit.	1	2	3	4
5. I look forward to my next visit.	1	2	3	4

Next, we would like to know about your contact with your mother. Please answer every question.

	(Circle Number)					
	ONCE A YEAR OR <u>LESS</u>	SEVERAL TIMES A <u>YEAR</u>	1 - 2 TIMES A <u>MONTH</u>	1 - 2 TIMES A <u>WEEK</u>	SEVERAL TIMES A <u>WEEK</u>	<u>DAILY</u>
Q2 How often do you usually see your mother?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q3 How often do you call your mother?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q4 How often does your mother call you?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q5 How often do you write your mother?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q6 How often does your mother write to you?	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Circle Number)

LESS					MORE
THAN	20-49	50-149	150-250	THAN	
20 MI	MILES	MILES	MILES	250 MI	

Q7 How far away does your mother live from you?      1            2            3            4            5

Q8 When did you last have a face-to-face visit with your mother?  
\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
(MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR)

30-60    1-4    5-24    2-6    1-2    more than  
minutes hours hours days weeks 2 weeks

Q9 How much time did you spend with your mother on your last face-to-face visit?      1            2            3            4            5            6

Q10 During your last face-to-face visit, what did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q11 What did you talk about the most on your last face-to-face visit?

---

Q12 To help us get a picture of what your last face-to-face visit with your mother was like, please answer all of the following questions in a way that best describes your visit. (Circle answer.)

START HERE:

- |                              |        |                                |        |
|------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| 1 I was polite               | YES NO | 7 I was friendly               | YES NO |
| 2 I paid attention to mother | YES NO | 8 I felt joy in seeing mother  | YES NO |
| 3 I showed affection         | YES NO | 9 I was relaxed                | YES NO |
| 4 I was helpful              | YES NO | 10 I was honest                | YES NO |
| 5 I was open                 | YES NO | 11 I showed interest in mother | YES NO |
| 6 I felt close to her        | YES NO | 12 I showed respect to mother  | YES NO |

13 I was straightforward with mother	YES	NO	23 I was indifferent toward mother	YES	NO
14 I was understanding	YES	NO	24 I was standoffish	YES	NO
15 I was able to put up with mother's behavior	YES	NO	25 I got my way with her	YES	NO
16 I was on pins and needles	YES	NO	26 I acted uppity	YES	NO
17 I was cool toward her	YES	NO	27 I failed to take her seriously	YES	NO
18 I was critical of her	YES	NO	28 I got annoyed	YES	NO
19 I was on guard with her	YES	NO	29 I judged my mother	YES	NO
20 I talked down to her	YES	NO	30 I got angry with her	YES	NO
21 I disapproved of her	YES	NO			
22 I was stubborn with mother	YES	NO			

Q13 We would like to take a close look at the affection you and your mother have for one another. Circle the number after each question that you think best describes the degree of affection between the two of you. Answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no right and wrong answers.

	(Circle number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1 I understand my mother	1	2	3	4
2 Mother understands me	1	2	3	4
3 I tell my intimate thoughts to mother.	1	2	3	4
4 Mother tells her intimate thoughts to me	1	2	3	4
5 I show negative feelings to mother	1	2	3	4
6 Mother shows negative feelings to me	1	2	3	4

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
7 I show affection to mother	1	2	3	4
8 Mother shows affection to me	1	2	3	4
9 I can depend on encouragement and support from mother	1	2	3	4
10 Mother can depend on me for support and encouragement	1	2	3	4
11 There are times that I like mother less than I normally do	1	2	3	4
12 There are times that mother likes me less than she normally does	1	2	3	4
13 I am emotionally close to mother	1	2	3	4
14 Mother is emotionally close to me	1	2	3	4
15 I talk about personal problems with mother	1	2	3	4
16 Mother talks about personal problems with me	1	2	3	4
17 I dislike mother's behavior	1	2	3	4
18 Mother dislikes my behavior	1	2	3	4
19 I try to avoid mother when I feel bad	1	2	3	4
20 Mother tries to avoid me when she feels bad	1	2	3	4
21 I get annoyed with mother	1	2	3	4
22 Mother gets annoyed with me	1	2	3	4

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
23 I hide my disappointments from mother	1	2	3	4
24 Mother hides her disappointments from me	1	2	3	4
25 I feel guilty about things I should have done for mother	1	2	3	4
26 Mother feels guilty about things she should have done for me	1	2	3	4
27 I am jealous of mother	1	2	3	4
28 Mother is jealous of me	1	2	3	4
29 I love mother	1	2	3	4
30 Mother loves me	1	2	3	4
31 I tell my happy feelings to mother	1	2	3	4
32 Mother tells me her happy feelings	1	2	3	4

Q14 We would like to take a close look at the conditions under which you and your mother visit with each other. We know that relationships have their ups and downs. Circle the number after each question that you think best describes the time you usually spend together.

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1 I find mother interesting to be with	1	2	3	4
2 Mother finds me interesting to be with	1	2	3	4
3 I like doing things with mother	1	2	3	4

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
4 Mother likes doing things with me	1	2	3	4
5 I am bored with mother	1	2	3	4
6 Mother acts bored with me	1	2	3	4
7 I only spend time with mother because it is the thing to do	1	2	3	4
8 Mother only spends time with me because it is the thing to do	1	2	3	4
9 Being with mother makes me happy	1	2	3	4
10 Being with me makes mother happy	1	2	3	4
11 I try to find things I like to do with mother	1	2	3	4
12 Mother tries to find things she likes to do with me	1	2	3	4
13 I like to talk to mother about my special interests and activities	1	2	3	4
14 Mother likes to talk to me about her special interests and activities	1	2	3	4
15 I do things with mother for fun	1	2	3	4
16 Mother does things with me for fun	1	2	3	4
17 I spend time with mother only when a special task has to be done	1	2	3	4



	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
18 Mother spends time with me only when a special task has to be done	1	2	3	4
19 I spend time with mother because of family obligations	1	2	3	4
20 Mother spends time with me because of family obligations	1	2	3	4
21 I spend time with mother when there is nothing better to do	1	2	3	4
22 Mother spends time with me when there is nothing better to do	1	2	3	4
23 Being with mother is a source of strain to me	1	2	3	4
24 Being with me is a source of strain to mother	1	2	3	4
25 I see enough of mother	1	2	3	4
26 Mother sees enough of me	1	2	3	4
27 I find it difficult to be around mother	1	2	3	4
28 Mother finds it difficult to be around me	1	2	3	4
29 I try to avoid mother	1	2	3	4
30 Mother tries to avoid me	1	2	3	4
31 I am relaxed around mother	1	2	3	4
32 Mother is relaxed around me	1	2	3	4

Q15 Another important part of this study is to find out how much you have in common with your mother. Circle the number after each question that you think best describes how much you and your mother usually agree on things. Answer all the questions as honestly as you can.

	(Circle Number)			
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1 I respect mother's opinions about important things in life	1	2	3	4
2 Mother respects my opinions about important things in life	1	2	3	4
3 I depend on mother for advice	1	2	3	4
4 Mother depends on me for advice	1	2	3	4
5 I respect mother's judgment about normal everyday matters	1	2	3	4
6 Mother respects my judgment about normal everyday matters	1	2	3	4
7 My opinions influence mother	1	2	3	4
8 Mother's opinions influence me	1	2	3	4
9 I trust mother's judgment about important decisions	1	2	3	4
10 Mother trusts my judgment about important decisions	1	2	3	4
11 I reject what mother considers important in life	1	2	3	4
12 Mother rejects what I consider important in life	1	2	3	4
13 I reject mother's religious views	1	2	3	4
14 Mother rejects my religious views	1	2	3	4
15 I reject mother's political views	1	2	3	4
16 Mother rejects my political views	1	2	3	4

(Circle Number)

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
17 I differ with mother on how to raise children	1	2	3	4
18 Mother differs with me on how to raise children	1	2	3	4
19 I respect mother's beliefs about the importance of the family	1	2	3	4
20 Mother respects my beliefs about the importance of the family	1	2	3	4
21 I differ with mother about the way money should be spent	1	2	3	4
22 Mother differs with me about the way money should be spent	1	2	3	4
23 My mind works like mother's mind	1	2	3	4
24 Mother thinks like me	1	2	3	4
25 I accept the ways that mother is different	1	2	3	4
26 Mother accepts the ways that I am different	1	2	3	4
27 I am critical of mother	1	2	3	4
28 Mother is critical of me	1	2	3	4
29 I have many different moral values than mother	1	2	3	4
30 Mother has many different moral values than I have	1	2	3	4
31 I have a totally different lifestyle than mother	1	2	3	4
32 Mother has a different lifestyle than I do	1	2	3	4

Q16 Changes in life make it necessary to make adjustments that affect our relationship with others. Please show which of the following events have occurred to you in the last three years. Please answer every question. (Circle answer.)

## START HERE:

1 Minor illness	YES	NO	20 Fired from job	YES	NO
2 Loss of hearing or vision	YES	NO	21 Loss of a valuable	YES	NO
3 Difficulty walking	YES	NO	22 Child married	YES	NO
4 Sexual difficulty	YES	NO	23 Taking large loan	YES	NO
5 Divorce	YES	NO	24 Minor legal violations	YES	NO
6 Separation	YES	NO	25 Trouble with neighbors	YES	NO
7 Family member ill	YES	NO	26 Trouble with social security	YES	NO
8 Gain family member	YES	NO	27 Age discrimination	YES	NO
9 Death of close friend	YES	NO	28 Major illness	YES	NO
10 Change number of family get togethers	YES	NO	29 Change in sleeping habits	YES	NO
11 Personal achievement of family member	YES	NO	30 Change in eating habits	YES	NO
12 Given up financial responsibility	YES	NO	31 Menopause	YES	NO
13 Financial problems	YES	NO	32 Death of spouse	YES	NO
14 Personal achievement	YES	NO	33 Marriage	YES	NO
15 Change work hours or conditions	YES	NO	34 Marital Reconciliation	YES	NO
16 Change residence	YES	NO	35 More arguments with spouse	YES	NO
17 Sell major possessions	YES	NO	36 Fewer argument with spouse	YES	NO
18 Reduce recreation	YES	NO	37 Death of family member	YES	NO
19 Spouse unfaithful	YES	NO			

- 38 Improvements in family members health      YES   NO
- 39 Trouble with children      YES   NO
- 40 Improvement in financial state      YES   NO
- 41 Change in alcohol consumption      YES   NO
- 42 I have been under a lot of stress lately      YES   NO

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about yourself to interpret the results of this survey.

Q17 How old are you today? \_\_\_\_\_

Q18 How far did you go in school? (Circle number.)

- 1 LESS THAN 8 GRADES
- 2 8 - 11 GRADES
- 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
- 4 SOME COLLEGE
- 5 COLLEGE GRADUATE
- 6 POST GRADUATE

Q19 In general, how do you rate your current health? (Circle number.)

- 1 POOR
- 2 FAIR
- 3 GOOD
- 4 EXCELLENT

Q20 Are you employed at the present time? (Circle number.)

- 1 NO
- 2 YES, PART TIME
- 3 YES, FULL TIME

If no, skip to Q30

Q21 If yes, what is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_

Q22 Describe what you do on your job. \_\_\_\_\_

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Q23 What is the annual income in your household? (Circle number.)

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 LESS THAN \$4,000 | 5 \$10,000 - \$14,999 |
| 2 \$4,000 - \$5,999 | 6 \$15,000 - \$19,999 |
| 3 \$6,000 - \$7,999 | 7 \$20,000 - \$29,999 |
| 4 \$8,000 - \$9,999 | 8 MORE THAN \$30,000  |

Q24 Do you think that your present income is adequate? (Circle number.)

- 1 YES  
2 NO

Q25 All things considered, are you satisfied with the home and community in which you live? (Circle number.)

- 1 YES  
2 NO

Q26 How often do you get together with other people in a social way? Circle the number that tells how many hours each week you spend in the following activities.

	(Circle number)					
	NONE	1-2 HRS	3-5 HRS	6-8 HRS	9-10 HRS	10 OR
		WEEK	WEEK	WEEK	WEEK	MORE/WK
1 Attend church services	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 Do volunteer work	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 Attend meetings of clubs or organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 Socialize with friends, relatives, neighbors & others	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q27 How many times have you been married? (Circle number.)

- 1 NEVER  
2 ONCE  
3 TWICE  
4 THREE OR MORE TIMES

Q28 What is your current marital status? After answering, please follow the arrow next to your answer to the next statement. (Circle number.)

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 NEVER MARRIED         | If never married,     |
| 2 MARRIED               | close the booklet and |
| 3 WIDOWED               | read the LAST page.   |
| 4 DIVORCED OR SEPARATED |                       |

(If married)

(If widowed)

(If divorced or separated)

Q29 How many years have you been married to your spouse?

Q30 How many years have you been widowed?

Q31 How many years have you been divorced or separated?

GO TO Q32

CLOSE BOOKLET  
AND READ THE  
LAST PAGE

CLOSE BOOKLET  
AND READ THE  
LAST PAGE

Q32 The dots on the following line show how happy you are in your marriage. The middle point "HAPPY" represents the degree of happiness in most relationships. Circle the dot that best describes the degree of happiness in your relationship.

0            1            2            3            4            5            6  
 .            .            .            .            .            .            .

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EXTREMELY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	A LITTLE UNHAPPY	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	EXTREMELY HAPPY	PERFECT
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Q33 Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the amount of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse in each item on the following list.

(Circle number)

	ALWAYS AGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE	OCCA- SIONALLY DISAGREE	FRE- QUENTLY DISAGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE	ALWAYS DISAGREE
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Handling finances	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 Matters of Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 Religious matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 Showing Affection	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 Sex relations	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Proper behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 Philosophy of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 Ways of dealing with parents or inlaws	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 Important goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 Time spent together	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 Major decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
13 Household tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
14 Leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
15 Career decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6



(Circle Number)

	ALWAYS	MOST OF THE TIME	MORE OFTEN THAN NOT	OCCA- SIONALLY	RARELY	NEVER
16 How often do you talk of ending your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
17 How often do you leave the house after a fight?	1	2	3	4	5	6
18 How often do things go well?	1	2	3	4	5	6
19 Do you confide in your mate?	1	2	3	4	5	6
20 Do you regret that you are married?	1	2	3	4	5	6
21 How often do you and your mate quarrel?	1	2	3	4	5	6
22 How often do you get on each other's nerves?	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Circle Number)

	EVERY DAY	ALMOST EVERY DAY	OCCA- SIONALLY	RARELY	NEVER
23 Do you kiss your mate?	1	2	3	4	5

(Circle Number)

	ALL OF THEM	MOST OF THEM	SOME OF THEM	VERY FEW OF THEM	NONE OF THEM
24 How many outside interests do you and your mate engage in together?	1	2	3	4	5

Q34 How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

(Circle number)

	LESS THAN <u>NEVER</u>	ONCE OR <u>ONCE A MONTH</u>	ONCE OR <u>TWICE A MONTH</u>	ONCE OR <u>TWICE A WEEK</u>	ONCE OR <u>ONCE A DAY</u>	MORE <u>OFTEN</u>
--	---------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------

1 Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 Laugh together	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 Calmly discuss something	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 Work together on a project	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q35 These are some of the things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Show if either item below caused differences of opinion or were problems during the past few weeks.

(Circle number)

- |                           |     |    |
|---------------------------|-----|----|
| 1 Being too tired for sex | YES | NO |
| 2 Not showing love        | YES | NO |

Q36 Select one of the following statements which best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship with your mate.  
(Circle only one number)

- 1 I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- 2 I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do all I can to see that it does.
- 3 I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
4. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- 5 It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- 6 My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

CLOSE THE BOOK AND READ THE  
LAST PAGE)

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your relationship with your mother? Any comments about what you think makes your relationship the way it is will be appreciated.

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Your contribution to this effort is very greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of the results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (not on this questionnaire). We will see that you get it.

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