

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF ELDERLY  
PARENTS WITH THEIR ADULT CHILDREN

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Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of interaction of middle-aged adult children and their elderly parents. The volunteer sample was composed of 25 parents, over 65 years of age, from eight programs for senior citizens in Stillwater, Enid, Oklahoma City, Cushing and Yale, Oklahoma. Also included in the sample were 25 designated children, ages 40-65. The questionnaires elicited responses from both the parent and child on the parents' health, housing, transportation, income and communication. An assessment was made of the closeness of relationship of the parent and child. Included on the questionnaire was a life satisfaction scale (LSIZ) which was used to assess personal morale. The chi-square test was used to identify parent-child pairs responding alike.

Findings and Conclusions: The majority of parents and children rated the health of the parents compared to their peers as satisfactory. The chi-square tests resulted in a significant association of paired responses ( $<.05$ ) on the parents' health status. The majority were satisfied with the parents' housing and transportation. There was a significant association ( $<.0001$ ) in the dyad responses on the parents' current means of transportation. Twenty-four pairs of parents and their own children agreed in their responses. The majority of parents were comfortable financially but had some concern about fixed incomes and inflation. There was a significant association in the dyad responses on five items relating to communication. Alike responses were made by parent/child pairs on number of organizations to which parent belonged ( $<.05$ ); frequency of visits by parent to designated child's home ( $<.001$ ); interest of adult child in parents' past ( $<.01$ ); relationship of elderly parent to child's spouse ( $<.05$ ); and closeness of relationship of parent with child ( $<.01$ ). Seventeen pairs rated the relationship as very close. Both groups scored high on the LSIZ indicating a good adjustment to life. Paired responses on three items on the LSIZ resulted in significant associations. Independent responses by parent-child pairs suggested an autonomy in the family. There were expressions of appreciation for meaningful communication and familial bonds were affirmed.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution in the United States produced a change in American families. The extended family concept began to change due to families moving to areas of concentrated employment. The economy during the early 1900's prompted the development of old-age pensions in a number of states and a recognition of the responsibility of the community for its elderly citizens.

In 1935 Federal matching funds provided additional assistance in the form of the Social Security Act. This assistance aided families who were having difficulty providing for their elderly parents. Additional recognition of the needs of the elderly came about in 1965 in the form of financial assistance for health care, the Medicare program.

The Older Americans Act, enacted in July 1965, established the Administration on Aging. This Act provided a focal point within the Executive Branch of our government in the form of an agency whose major concern was the well-being of our elderly. The Fiscal 1978 Labor-HEW Appropriations Act (H.R. 7555) earmarked over \$800 million for programs for older Americans.

Although the nation sought to provide assistance in the form of programs of economic aid, health care, nutrition, employment, and social action, Montgomery (1978) felt that Americans were faced with

the demands of coping adequately with the increased longevity of aging persons. According to the U. S. Bureau of Census (1979) in 1977 the life expectancy was 73.2 years of age. In 1900 only four percent of the population were over 65 years of age, whereas in 1978 the 65 and over group represented 11 percent of the population. In line with these figures, the Administration on Aging of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1978) predicted that older Americans will make up well over 12 percent of the population by the year 2000 if birth rates continued to drop and the younger population continued to decrease.

Butler (1978) indicated that increased life span is very important to all persons but a greater concern is the quality of the added years. He continued by writing that

. . . the poverty, dependency, low social status and age prejudice that victimize and afflict many elderly today indicate what life would be like if more and more people lived longer and society did not make the necessary adjustments (p. 8).

Montgomery (1978) stated that the phenomenon of increased longevity surprised the nation and individuals. He placed particular emphasis on the problems of equitable distribution of economic resources, lack of adequate programs of health care, social services, and housing. Montgomery then suggested that aging individuals and their families need to have adequate guidelines or strategies for coping with the increased years. It is his belief that family specialists can help alleviate some problems created in relationships between family members of different age groups by helping to dispel the myths and stereotypes about aging. Comfort (1977) believed that modern science and medicine were dealing with the physical aging of persons but the "sociogenic aging" required simply a change in attitudes.

He explained this type of aging as

. . . the role which our folklore, prejudices, and misconceptions about age impose on 'the old'. It requires no scientific discoveries to abolish this aspect of aging; simply a change of attitude, and that, in a society in love with the technological fix, is harder to obtain (p. 10).

Montgomery (1978) felt that families needed to see the importance of intergenerational relationships but also the importance of maintaining their own privacy and independence. He felt that it was necessary for families to learn more about the aging process and its accompanying consequence on all members of the family in order to provide quality interrelationships.

Researchers are now giving attention to the relationship of two particular age groups facing such a need. These two groups are elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children. Johnson and Bursk (1977) studied the relationship of 54 parent-child pairs and indicated that when family ties existing between elderly parents and their adult children are observed, they must be viewed in the context of the total pattern of aging. Alam (1978) noted that these family ties were being brought to public awareness and suggested that the study of the relationship between the generations of elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children was eminent for research.

#### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effects of health, housing, transportation, income and communication on the elderly parent as perceived by a sample of elderly parents to see if their adult children perceived them in the same way. The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To identify similarities concerning the perception of problems related to health, housing, transportation, income, and communication as perceived by the elderly parent and the middle-aged adult child;
2. To determine the closeness of relationship between the elderly parent and the middle-aged adult child;
3. To compare the responses of the elderly parents and their middle-aged children regarding life satisfaction as identified on the Life Satisfaction Index Z; and
4. To make recommendations for further research in the area of generational relationships of elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children.

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated for this study:

- H<sub>1</sub>. There will be no significant association in the perception of elderly parents' problems pertaining to health, housing, transportation, and income as perceived by the elderly parent and their specified adult child;
- H<sub>2</sub>. There will be no significant association between elderly parents and their specified adult children in their perceptions of interaction and closeness of relationship to one another;
- H<sub>3</sub>. There will be no significant association between the elderly parent group and the adult child group in their assessment of their own life satisfaction.

### Limitations

The following limitations are a premise of this study:

1. Participation was limited to elderly parents who were 65 years of age and older and their designated middle-aged adult children who were from 40 to 65 years of age;
2. Participation was limited to one parent and one child per family;
3. The sample was of a volunteer nature and volunteers were recruited from a relatively small geographic area.

### Definitions

The following definitions were utilized in this study:

Adult child or middle-aged child: For this study the adult child is defined as a person between the ages of 40 and 65. These persons are also referred to as the "designated adult child" or the "specified adult child."

Congregate meal program: A program set up under Title IV of the Older Americans Act. The Title IV projects are required to provide meals in a congregate setting for groups of elderly people to foster social interaction and facilitate the delivery of supportive services and meet emotional needs (Administration on Aging, USDHEW, 1973).

Continuing education centers: The Institute of Lifetime Learning is a non-profit, non-political program which offers continuing education adapted to the needs and interests of the mature person (NRTA, 1971).

Elderly parent: For this study the elderly parent is defined as a person who is over 65 years of age.

Family: "two or more persons related by marriage, blood, birth, or adoption" (Duvall, 1971, p. 551).

Family life cycle: "sequence of characteristic stages beginning with family formation and continuing through the life of the family to its dissolution" (Duvall, 1971, p. 551).

Generation: "development within the individual life span, from one stage (or generation) to the next" (Troll, 1975, p. 13).

Problems: "differences in values, attitudes and behavior" (Alam, 1978, p. 26).

Senior Citizens Center: Credited with beginning in 1959. In 1965 the Older Americans Act called for expansion of these "centers to provide recreational activities as well as information, counseling and referrals on health and welfare problems" (NRTA, 1971, p. 65).

Retired Service Volunteer Program (RSVP): One of the linkage organizations under the Older Americans Volunteer Programs established in 1971 under the authority of the Older Americans Act. This organization interfaces between individuals desiring work activities and organizations needing their services. This particular program is designed to reach the non-traditional volunteer, that is, one who would not ordinarily participate in volunteer programs. This program takes the activity to the volunteer such as providing activity for nursing home residents (Bowles, 1977).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The inclusion of a number of studies in this chapter was based on their theoretical support of changes that happen to families as they progress through life's stages and their relevance to this particular study. Particular attention was focused on identifying the stages of life and corresponding developmental tasks accompanying these stages. More detailed attention was given to the last two identifiable stages, middle-age and elderly. The inter-relationship of these two generations has been studied with regard to recent research in this area. Sampling and instrumentation of various research projects have been studied and implications drawn for better methodology in intergenerational research.

#### Life Stages and Developmental Tasks

Within the framework of human development, the identification of specific stages in the development of personality was postulated by both Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson according to Duvall (1971). Freud identified early stages through adolescence; but, it was Erikson who referred to eight ages in the life cycle of man. These stages as delineated by Erikson (1963) were:



Basic trust vs. basic mistrust - infancy  
 Autonomy vs. shame and doubt - early childhood  
 Initiative vs. guilt - play age  
 Industry vs. inferiority - school age  
 Identity vs. role confusion - youth  
 Intimacy vs. isolation - young adult  
 Generativity vs. stagnation - middle adulthood  
 Integrity vs. despair - later adulthood (p. 109).

Progression from one stage to the next challenged family theorists to consider specific changes in human growth and development. Duvall (1971) noted that,

. . . enough is known about families in general to forecast what to expect through the family life cycle. The stages of the family life cycle differ in length, in activity, in intensity of family interaction, and in relative difficulty of their family development tasks (p. 486).

The concept of developmental tasks had its beginnings in Freudian psychology, according to Rowe (1966); but, the first person to formulate developmental tasks for the individual for each stage of the life cycle was Robert J. Havighurst. Havighurst (1972) defined a developmental task as:

. . . a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks (p. 2).

Havighurst continued by stating that the developmental tasks originated from inner sources such as physical maturation, from outer pressures such as those of society and "from the desires, aspirations, and values of the emerging personality" (p. 2). Havighurst believed that these factors are often combined to form the developmental task.

Developmental tasks for the family emerged from the work of one of the subgroups at the first interdisciplinary workshop on marriage and family research at the University of Chicago during the summer of

1950 according to Duvall (1971). This group defined family developmental tasks as:

. . . those which must be accomplished by a family in a way that will satisfy (a) biological requirements, (b) cultural imperatives, and (c) personal aspirations and values, if the family is to continue to grow as a unit (Hill, 1951, p. 21-22).

Rowe (1966) emphasized that the family successively changes from formation to dissolution just as individuals move from conception to senescence. Rowe (1966) continued by stating that:

Family development is inherently bound up in the satisfaction of the needs and desires of its members to make it possible for them to grow to maturity. To progress as a unit the family develops to the extent that reciprocal interaction patterns emerge to fulfill the individual's continuously changing needs and desires (p. 203).

Duvall (1971) listed 10 categories of behavior of an individual from birth to death that assist in the cataloging of the more common developmental tasks. These are:

1. Achieving an appropriate dependence-independence pattern
2. Achieving an appropriate giving-receiving pattern of affection
3. Relating to changing social groups
4. Developing a conscience
5. Learning one's psycho-socio-biological sex role
6. Accepting and adjusting to a changing body
7. Managing a changing body and learning new motor patterns
8. Learning to understand and control the physical world
9. Developing an appropriate symbol system and conceptual abilities
10. Relating oneself to the cosmos (p. 146).

According to Duvall, the individual who successfully completed the tasks began as a helpless, dependent infant and passed through various stages of independence and emerged as a mature adult, interdependent with society.

With regard to the family Duvall stated that family developmental tasks parallel individual tasks. She listed these tasks for the family:

1. Physical maintenance - providing shelter, food, clothing, health care, etc.
2. Allocation of resources - meeting family needs and costs
3. Division of labor - deciding who does what, assigning responsibility
4. Socialization of family members
5. Reproduction, recruitment and release of family members
6. Maintenance of order - providing means of communication
7. Placement of members in the larger society
8. Maintenance of motivation and morale - rewarding members for achievements (p. 149).

Duvall continued by stating that "The modern family assumes as one of its primary functions that of promoting the continuing development of each of its members throughout the entire life cycle" (p. 149). Rowe (1964) supported this when he said, "The better equipped a family is for each of its members to meet his developmental tasks and the more closely the family accomplishes its group tasks, the more successful is the development of the family" (p. 199).

Troll (1975) believed that development was a multi-dimensional process of developing (1) from one life stage or generation to the next, (2) from child to parent to grandparent within the family line, and (3) as age cohorts within larger groups such as from youth to established members of society. Troll noted that while this development was occurring, society as a whole was changing. Such change contributed to a complexity in the interaction of generations. Two such generations affected by the complexity of development and change were the stages of middle age adulthood and the age beyond retirement.

#### Middle Age

Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) stated that "there is more agreement on the circumstances that surround these years than on the actual range itself (p. 266). In making this observation, however, they noted that

middle age is generally thought to be the period between that time when child rearing and becoming established as providers has been completed to that point of full retirement. It may be a period of more personal freedom, less economic stress, greater availability of leisure time, and fewer demands for material growth. Havighurst's developmental tasks for this stage recognized particular responsibilities.

1. Assist teen-age children to become responsible and happy adults.
2. Achieve adult social and civic responsibility.
3. Reach and maintain satisfactory performance in one's occupational career.
4. Develop adult leisure-time activities.
5. Relate oneself to one's spouse as a person.
6. Accept and adjust to the physiological changes of middle age.
7. Adjust to aging parents (Havighurst, 1972, p. 96).

Duvall (1971) noted that the study of middle age is new for this century due to medical advances. More adults live out their life span in good health than did generations before. Duvall referred to this age as "the generation between," while Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) referred to it as "the group who create and manage society for the rest of the population" (p. 266). They continued by noting that developmental changes are slow during this extended life span period.

The human body is still functioning at almost peak efficiency at the beginning of this phase of life; but, as persons progress through this stage, physical changes become apparent, stated Kaluger and Kaluger (1974). Such readily discernible changes as graying hair, facial wrinkles, drying skin with loss of elasticity, and the redistribution of fat tissue regardless of diet or exercise occur gradually. Longer periods are needed for rest after extended periods of activity and strenuous exercise. Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) also noted that the sense organs of middle-aged persons change at an amazing rate of

uniformity. This will often affect persons psychologically as well as physically. They noted that one of the most noticeable sensory changes occurs with eyes. Many middle-aged persons are required to wear reading glasses or bifocals. Loss of hearing, although not extreme at this age, may bring a need for emotional adaptation on the part of the middle-aged adult with regard to interpersonal relations. Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) noted however, that "the adult at this age can be more mentally alert, physically sound, and emotionally stable than at any other age" (p. 271).

Troll (1975) believed that the primary physiological event of these middle years is the menopause or climacterium and she emphasized that empirical data support the fact that this event does not have impact on psychological development. She also noted that psychological development during this age is not closely related to chronological age but rather to social events such as seeing the youngest child leave home.

According to Cavan (1969) the middle-aged man is more likely to be concerned with his vocational status. If the middle-aged man is vocationally satisfied, he may choose to retire early or he may relax knowing that he has fulfilled his social responsibilities. However, Cavan noted, if the middle-aged man has not found success, the pressures may increase during middle age to cause him to expend more time and energy toward that goal. Cavan indicated that some men may turn to extramarital sexual affairs in order to prove their agility at this age. She also projected that the impact of the post-parental period for the middle-aged wife is often softened by engaging in full-time employment.

Duvall (1971) thought that persons who were happy in middle age were those who were successful in their developmental tasks and in the process of growing older. She outlined these tasks for families in the middle-aged years:

1. Maintaining a pleasant and comfortable home
2. Assuring security for the later years
3. Carrying household responsibilities
4. Drawing closer together as a couple
5. Maintaining contact with grown children's families
6. Keeping in touch with brothers' and sisters' families and aging parents
7. Participating in community life beyond the family
8. Reaffirming the values of life that have real meaning (p. 428).

Duvall continued by stating that couples express their value systems as they seek to accomplish these developmental tasks. She noted that "even in the reaffirmation of life's values, a couple can still make progress toward developing unity and integrity in the leisure of their middle years" (p. 428). Cavan (1969) summed up the period of middle age when she regarded it as a "time" of reappraisal and redirection for husband and wife" (p. 496).

#### Age 65 and Beyond

The retirement years or the final stage of the family life cycle has as its goal successful aging through continued activity and comfortable disengagement according to Duvall (1971). Havighurst (1972) indicated that there may be limitations for persons in this stage of life, physically, mentally, and economically, but socially the contacts may be narrowed or they may be extended. Havighurst further noted that spiritual boundaries may be broadened at this stage of life.

Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) noted that physical changes in later adulthood are in the direction of deterioration but are no greater or

more drastic than at other age levels. Individuals age at different rates and parts of the body age more quickly than others. There is, however, a high correlation within a family in the rate of aging. According to Kaluger and Kaluger physical conditions of aging persons depend on their psychological temperament, manner of living, hereditary background and factors in the environment. They also noted that there are other significant influences such as "faulty diet, malnutrition, gluttony, emotional stresses, overwork, passivity, infections, drug or alcohol intoxications, traumas, and endocrine disorders" (p. 296).

It was observed by Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) that the very obvious signs of age change such as limited agility, decreased strength and physical deterioration may be accepted or rejected by the individual. This acceptance or rejection related directly to the rate of psychological aging. Sensory functions deteriorated first the authors stated. Vision, hearing, sense of smell and taste, and speech recede during this stage of aging. The heart and blood vessels show the most detrimental change the authors continued to note. The digestive system alters with age and the respiratory and nervous system are structurally affected by the increased years.

The National Council on Aging, Incorporated [NCOA] (1978) reported that in most cases of chronic ailments in old people, the ailments were not totally limiting to those individuals. The NCOA stated that:

Only ten percent of people over 65 are confined in any serious way. An even smaller proportion requires unusual attention. Only one over-65 person in 25 lives in an institution . . . . of the many myths about old age, the image of all older people as sick, fragile, disabled and sexless is the most inaccurate of stereotypes (p. 9).

Developmental tasks for the individual in the later years were listed by Havighurst (1972) as:

1. Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
2. Adjusting to retirement and reduced income
3. Adjusting to death of spouse
4. Establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group
5. Adopting and adapting social roles in a flexible way
6. Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements (p. 108).

Duvall (1971) added to these tasks the following developmental tasks for aging families:

1. Finding a satisfying home for the later years
2. Adjusting to retirement income
3. Establishing comfortable household routines
4. Nurturing each other as husband and wife
5. Facing bereavement and widowhood
6. Caring for elderly relatives
7. Maintaining contact with children and grandchildren
8. Keeping an interest in people outside the family
9. Finding meanings in life (p. 453).

Havighurst (1972) noted that these tasks differ from the tasks for other stages in life in that there is an element of self-protection or "holding-on to life" rather than an attempt to gain more from life.

Kaluger and Kaluger (1974) postulated that older persons lose their sense of identity as physical, mental and social stresses abound.

Society provides little support for these persons because it does not understand the behavior of older persons or how to assist them.

Furthermore, Rowe (1978) noted that in this age of increased technology and limitless learning, little is known about the causes of aging.

Rowe portrayed the older person of today as one who was living in private housing as opposed to being institutionalized, was in command of his or her own life, had better health than previous generations and was enjoying the later years.

The person of 65 today lived during the depression years so has a strong work ethic and if male may feel a need to justify leisure time activities. The male questions forced retirement because he still



feels productive at 65. Retirement income is a reduced income for many of these persons, but they are not below the poverty level. The older person of today is willing to change and makes more major adjustments during this age than any other period of life. Rowe (1978) noted that the open attitude toward discussing death has enabled the senior citizen to face the inevitable. Rowe concluded her remarks by stating that "Aging can indeed become a real jewel in the mosaic of life - a time when one has the money, the health, and the time to accomplish all the things there was never time to do during the working years" (p. 486).

### Intergenerational Relationships

In the decade of 1960 to 1970, much of the research that was done on the family of later life was summarized by Troll (1970). Areas of interest that were measured were housing and residential proximity, frequency and type of interaction, economic support, and familial bonds. Troll noted in her remarks that about three percent of those over 65 who were in institutions, and three percent of the non-institutionalized had no kin. Since 1970, further investigation and research were completed in these areas and the following remarks included those suggested by Troll as well as more recent findings.

#### Housing and Residential Proximity

Troll (1970) found that the majority of older persons prefer living in their own homes and not with their children. She noted that nuclear family units tend to live near each other and have frequent contacts with each other. The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1979) reported that 83 percent of older men and 58 percent

of older women lived in family settings, about one-third lived alone or with non-relatives and the proportion living in family settings decreased rapidly with advancing age. However, according to the United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Census (1979) only six percent of the older population were shown to be institutionalized in 1977. The Bureau of Census reported that 62 percent of the older population live in the Nation's metropolitan areas.

Troll (1970) found that one-third of all people over 65 who have living children were living with them. Most of these households, however, were two generation rather than three. Troll noted that "only eight percent of American families are true three-generation households" (p. 190). She continued by saying that as the parents grow older they tend to move closer to their children or near one child in particular.

Johnson and Bursk (1977) in their study of 54 elderly people in the Boston area, found to their surprise that the majority of elderly parents were satisfied with their living environment. Montgomery (1978) reported that housing affects the quality of lives for the elderly, particularly those who are frail and for those where their entire physical world is their dwelling.

#### Frequency and Type of Interaction

Other findings by Troll (1970) suggested that mutual help was not related to distance or frequency of visits between the older generations. Johnson and Bursk (1977) supported Troll when they noted that satisfying relationships were not dependent on geographical proximity but were related to communication between parents and children. Troll further noted that a widow with one son could not expect the frequency

of contacts that she might have if there were more children. However, she noted that if the widow received monthly visits, that might be more frequent than several children would provide. It was also noted that the middle-aged child would more likely visit frequently with their own children than with their parents.

Arling (1976) in his study of the elderly widow, her family, neighbors and friends reported that "the availability and frequency of contact with children and other relatives is not significantly related to daily activity" (p. 763). He continued by noting that research studies verified a high degree of contact between older people and their adult children; but, this did not contribute to high morale or more personal satisfaction. There may be frequent visits, letters and phone calls; but, for each generation there was a difference in perspective and their approaches to life situations were based on their respective stages in the life cycle.

#### Economic Support

Troll (1970) suggested that the findings showed support to be very often two-directional, that is, children to parents and parents to children, as long as both are able. However, it was noted that the middle class experienced this two-directional flow whereas the blue collar worker gave more aid to their elderly parents than received aid. Farber (1964) believed that some parents grant only partial independence to their children by giving them financial assistance in exchange for companionship.

Peterson (1978) noted that respondents in his study of elderly Mormons were worried about inflation and their stationery incomes but

felt nothing could be done about it. However, Johnson and Bursk (1977) found that older families were more concerned with financial security that had been established rather than level of income. Troll (1970) concluded by noting that most parents continued to give to their children as long as they were able to do so.

### Familial Bonds

Thompson and Streib (1961) reported that relationships with kin whether satisfying or not were more important to the older person and constituted the most significant of all relationships. There was increased awareness on the part of the elderly of the possibilities of bad health or of death. These factors had great influence, particularly the health factor, in accepting dependency on children. Thompson and Streib continued by saying that this was particularly difficult because much emphasis had been placed on independence and its importance in earlier years, but that was jeopardized by health in particular.

Thompson and Streib (1961) assessed that relationships of aging parents and their adult children often become closer as the adult children mature and their children leave home. However, for some, the demands of an older person who has become egocentric may foster great conflict, particularly if housed in the home of their children. Albrecht (1954) in her study of intergeneration parent patterns felt "that opportunities for youth to have interaction with their grandparents was good, and they needed to be taught the facts about aging in order to be more supportive in their interaction with older persons" (p. 32).

Troll (1970) stated that "the obligatory motive in interaction between aged parents and adult children is commonly assumed" (p. 192). She also noted that most studies indicated that there was a bias toward female kinship relations in that females expressed more affection. She stated also that more older men than women lived with families. Troll believed that the adult child whether male or female will have difficulty expressing a mature outlook toward elderly parents if those parents are not models of mature acceptance of their situations. Arling (1976) believed that two necessary factors in relationships for these two groups were the continued independence of the parent and the respect of the child for the parent as an independent individual.

#### Sampling and Instrumentation

In the review of the literature particular emphasis was given to the importance of securing more information regarding the relation of the middle-aged children and their adult parents. Johnson and Bursk (1977) in their study of these relationships found "a significant association between a positive elderly parent-adult child relationship and health and attitude toward aging factors associated with the elderly parent" (p. 95). They suggested that replications of their study from a larger sample of paired data would help to generalize their findings. They interviewed a non-probability sample, in separate interviews of 54 parent-child pairs in the Boston area, using a structured interview schedule with both closed and open-ended questions. Interviews were limited to an hour and a half with each of the elderly parents. A second instrument was developed based on the pretested parent questionnaire and was used in interviewing the adult child.

Data were collected regarding general background, family relationships, health, living environment, finances, and attitudes toward aging. These authors suggested in conclusion to their findings that interviewing both the elderly parent and the adult child could be the first step in contributing to their thinking about their own relationship with each other.

Abdel-Ghany (1977) in attempting to distinguish factors involved in quality of life, gathered data by using the "Social indicators for the Aged Survey conducted by the Governor's Council on Aging, North Carolina Department of Human Resources." Using stratified random sampling, 961 adults aged 65 or older, were interviewed in their homes in the 13 geographic areas of North Carolina. Using a "likert-type" scale Abdel-Ghany assessed their housing, health, social relations and activities, life satisfaction, independence, and economic condition. Using factor analysis the author noted that perception of satisfaction of quality of life varied in residents of the different geographic areas.

Peterson in a paper presented at the Adult Education Conference, U. S. A. held in Portland, Oregon, October 1978, stated that more information can be obtained regarding expressed and unexpressed needs by the use of semi-structured interviews than by highly structured surveys. Alam (1978) noted that middle-aged persons were expressing their needs regarding relationships with their parents as shown by his experience in asking female homemakers from small towns and rural communities in middle America to list on cards the problems, benefits, and rewards of intergenerational relationships. Alam completed a content analysis of the cards to determine the dynamics of the relationships. He noted

that comments were as positive as they were negative.

Arling (1976) surveyed 409 non-institutionalized elderly widows in the Piedmont region of South Carolina. Using a questionnaire that was developed by the Piedmont Life Enrichment for the Aged Project, social service needs of the elderly widow were assessed as well as social involvement, daily activities and morale. Arling noted several limitations in the research design. He suggested that most of the widows in the study were poor so they maintained a certain amount of dependency on their children, and the research design failed to incorporate an exchange of aid between parent and children. Therefore, it was difficult to measure dependency of the widow accurately.

Simos (1973) in her study on adult children and their aging parents, selected 50 individuals from the clientele of a Jewish family agency on the West Coast. Data were obtained from personal interviews using a semi-structured schedule. The parents in the study ranged in age from 60 to 94 but were not interviewed. Of the 50 adult children interviewed, 36 were females and 14 were males and ranged in age from 30 to 68 years of age. The author noted that although the data related to a specific ethnic group the enormity of the problems can be generalized to all families.

### Conclusion

The review of the literature revealed the need for more extensive research into the relationship between middle-aged children and their elderly parents. In conclusion, the researcher noted Alam's suggestion (1978) of three topics that dominate the rewards of satisfactory intergenerational relationships. They are:

1. the value of older persons' experience, wisdom and practical knowledge,
2. the help generations can offer each other in different areas,
3. and the contribution to family continuity through intergenerational relationships (p. 27).



## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The research design for this study was based on the specified objectives. These included (1) identifying similarities concerning the perception of problems related to health, housing, transportation, income, and communication as perceived by the elderly parent and the middle-aged adult child, (2) determining the closeness of relationship between the elderly parent and the middle-aged child; and (3) identifying similarities in the responses of the elderly parents and their middle-aged children regarding life satisfaction. Kerlinger (1973) stated that "the main criterion or desideratum of a research design can be expressed in a question: 'Does the design answer the research question?'" (p. 322). The information presented in this research was collected with the specific aim of answering the research questions which are stated in the above objectives.

#### Type of Research

The type of research implemented in this study was descriptive. Best (1977) stated that

Descriptive research describes what is. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of conditions that now exist. It involves some type of comparison or contrast and may attempt to discover relationships that exist between existing nonmanipulated variables (p. 15).

One technique of descriptive research suggested was survey research.

Compton and Hall (1972) described survey research as "that which explains a problem and analyzes it" (p. 140). For this research the data collection instruments were questionnaires which included both closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were included to allow the respondents more freedom in their replies.

### Instrument Development

Several instruments were used as a basis for the development of the questionnaires used in this study. The first instrument was a modified interview schedule, originally developed by Johnson and Bursk (1977) to assess the affective quality of 'good' family relationships, and later modified by Johnson (1978) for use with older mothers and their daughters. A second instrument, titled "Your Activities and Attitudes" prepared by Burgess, Cavan, and Havighurst in 1948 and reprinted in a later study by these authors (1949) for the purpose of assessing personal adjustment of older people, provided a further basis for instrument development. From the instruments described above the researcher selected questions which were applicable to the objectives postulated for this study.

One questionnaire was developed for elderly parents with specific questions in the areas of health, housing, transportation, income, communication and closeness of relationship with designated adult child. The second questionnaire was adapted from the first. It contained the same questions as the first instrument but allowed the adult children to answer from their perspective of their parents' health, housing, transportation, income, communication and closeness of relationship (Appendix A).

Included as a final part of each of the questionnaires was a life satisfaction scale which was intended to ascertain individual responses to life satisfaction. The scale used (Appendix A) was the Life Satisfaction Index Z (LSIZ) adapted by Wood, Wylie, and Sheafor (1969) from the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA) by Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin (1961). The LSIA was a result of the seeking of investigators to develop a measure independent of level of activity or social participation but reflective of the complete use of the individual's own viewpoint.

The LSIA attempted to rate life satisfaction in the following areas: zest versus apathy, resolution and fortitude, congruence between desired and achieved goals, positive self-concept and mood tone. Neugarten et al. (1961) felt that an individual was more satisfied with life when

. . . he takes pleasure from the round of activities that constitutes his everyday life; regards his life as meaningful and accepts resolutely that which life has been; feel he has succeeded in achieving his major goals; holds a positive image of self, and maintains happy and optimistic attitudes and moods (p. 137).

The Life Satisfaction Index Z, a scale of 13 items, is a reduced form of the Life Satisfaction Index A, a scale of 20 items. The LSIZ was chosen for this study because it was a shorter form than the LSIA and according to Dobson, Powers, Keith and Gowdy (1979) the LSIZ "seemed to be a potentially useful multidimensional measure of life satisfaction among older persons" (p. 57).

In order to establish validity and reliability of the questionnaires to be used in the research, they were presented to a panel of experts which included the researcher's thesis committee and a

statistician who was consulted to establish a statistical analysis plan. Copies of the instruments are included in Appendix A.

### Population and Sampling Plan

In order to collect information for this study, the researcher visited the directors of the following programs organized for the elderly:

1. Congregate meal programs in Cushing, Enid and Stillwater, Oklahoma;
2. Senior Citizens' Centers in Enid and Yale, Oklahoma;
3. Continuing Education Program at the St. Luke's Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and
4. the RSVP program in Enid, Oklahoma.

The directors were asked for permission for the researcher to visit the programs and solicit volunteer participation in the study. The requirements for participation in the study included the willingness on the part of the volunteer elderly parents, aged 65 and above, to complete a questionnaire and designate one of their adult children between the ages of 40 to 65 as a possible participant. The designated adult children were then mailed questionnaires which were similar in nature to the questionnaires given to the parents. In the selection of participants the researcher sought the participation of males as well as female parents and male as well as female adult children.

This purposive, non-probability sampling included 25 parent-adult child pairs. The parents were over 65 years of age and their children were between the ages of 41 and 56 years of age.

### Data Collection

Visits were made to seven care programs for the elderly. The first visit was made to the Continuing Education program in Oklahoma

City in early May, 1980. Volunteers were requested to respond to the questionnaires that day or return them by mail. Seven elderly parents volunteered and returned their questionnaires by mail. Each had designated an adult child to receive a mailed questionnaire. Six of the seven children responded. A follow-up questionnaire was mailed in August, 1980 but a response was not received from the seventh child.

Visits were made the last of May to Enid, Oklahoma to the Senior Center and the Congregate Meal Program. With the assistance of the Director of the Senior Center program an additional visit was arranged with the Director of the RSVP program in Enid. At the request of the Director of the Senior Center and the RSVP program approximately 50 elderly parent questionnaires were left for them to distribute to selected persons whom they felt would be able to respond. Eight questionnaires were distributed to volunteers at the Enid Congregate Meal program.

A total of eleven usable parent questionnaires were returned by mail from Enid. Seven of the designated children responded to their questionnaires. Second mailings were sent in August for more responses and one more adult child responded bringing the total to eight. However, one adult child was 26 years of age. This eliminated the use of her questionnaire for the study.

In June, the Congregate Meal program in Cushing and the Senior Center in Yale were visited. Nine parents from the two groups responded by mailing in questionnaires. Eight of their designated children responded.

The Stillwater Congregate Meal program was visited in July and

five elderly parents completed questionnaires but only two gave addresses for themselves and their adult children. The total usable responses from elderly parents in the Stillwater program and their designated adult children were two pairs. Two adult children from Stillwater, whose parents were in other cities, volunteered to complete a questionnaire and mail the questionnaires to their parents. These two pairs completed the volunteer sampling.

Of the 40 elderly parent questionnaires returned, only 30 were usable. Of these 30 elderly parents 25 of their designated adult children responded to their questionnaires. This brought the total participation to 25 elderly parents and their 25 adult children.

#### Analysis of Data

Percentages and frequencies of responses of both parent and child groups were given for each of the items on the questionnaires. These were examined to determine similarities in each group's perception of problems that the elderly parents have in the areas of health, housing, transportation, income and communication. Closeness of relationship of parents and their children was examined using percentages and frequencies of responses of the two groups to particular items on the questionnaires pertaining to closeness.

The chi-square statistical technique was used to measure the paired responses of the elderly parents and their own designated adult children. These dyad responses were investigated on 29 of the items in each of the instruments as well as the 13 items on the LSIZ. Due to the very limited sampling and low cell counts the chi-square results were viewed with discretion as to their reliability. Mean scores were

determined for the elderly parent group and the adult child group on the life satisfaction scale. (See Appendix C for scoring procedures on the LSIZ).

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

This study was concerned with the perception of closeness of relationship of elderly parents and their designated adult children. Problems of the elderly parents in the areas of health, housing, transportation and income were investigated to determine how they were perceived by both the adult children and their elderly parents. Communication patterns were examined in order to establish the perception of the degree of closeness the elderly parents and their adult children had with each other. Both groups, the elderly parents and the adult children, were asked to respond to the Life Satisfaction Index Z (LSIZ) in order to ascertain individual psychological well-being.

In this chapter a description of the participants will be presented as well as an analysis of the data in accordance with the hypotheses of the study. The responses to open-ended questions have been included in Appendix B. For the purpose of providing more data analysis, some comments have been included in this chapter.

#### Description of Sample

The population consisted of 25 elderly parents and 25 designated adult children. A detailed description of characteristics of the



parents is presented in Table I. Table II gives a detailed description of the designated adult children who participated. The elderly parents were volunteers from two senior citizen's centers, three congregate meal programs, one continuing education program and one Retired Service Volunteer Program. The adult children participants were those children designated by the elderly parent to receive a questionnaire which was designed to assess their perceptions of their parent's current health, income, housing, transportation, as well as their communication patterns.

#### Sex and Age of Respondents

Of the 25 responding parents, 19 (76%) were female and 6 (24%) were male. The specified adult children participants were 92 percent (24) female and eight percent (2) male. There was an even distribution in the ages of the parents. Six (24%) were between the ages of 65 to 70; seven (28%) were between 71 and 75; six (24%) were between 76 and 80; and, six (24%) were between 81 and 85.

The adult children who participated were between 41 and 56 years of age. Seven (28%) were between the ages of 41-45; seven (28%) were between 56 and 60. The two male designated adult children who responded were each 55 years of age.

#### Marital Status

The parent group had 16 (64%) who were widowed and the adult children had 2 (8%) widowed. Two (8%) of the adult children had never married, but 13 (52%) had been married once and remained in that relationship. There was no response to this question by one elderly parent

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELDERLY PARENTS  
(N=25)

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	6	24
	Female	19	76
Age	65-70	6	24
	71-75	7	28
	76-80	6	24
	81-85	6	24
Marital Status	Living with first spouse	3	12
	Married more than once	4	16
	Divorced	1	4
	Widowed	16	64
	No response	1	4
Length of Marriage	6-25 years	2	8
	26-50 years	3	12
	51-65+ years	3	12
	Not applicable	6	24
	No response	11	44
Widowed	Less than one year	2	8
	1-10 years	9	36
	11-20 years	3	12
	21-30 years	2	8
	No response	9	36
Employed	Yes	1	4
	No	24	96
Male Children	None	14	56
	One	6	24
	Two	3	12
	Three	2	8
Female Children	None	1	4
	One	12	48
	Two	10	40
	Three	2	8

TABLE II  
 CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIGNATED ADULT CHILDREN  
 (N=25)

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	2	8
	Female	23	92
Age	40-45	7	28
	46-50	7	28
	51-55	9	36
	56-60	2	8
Marital Status	Never married	2	8
	Living with first spouse	13	52
	Married more than once	3	12
	Divorced	4	16
	Widowed	2	8
	No response	1	4
Length of Marriage	16-25 years	7	28
	26-35 years	7	28
	More than 35 years	2	8
	Not applicable	6	24
	No response	3	12
Widowed	1-10 years	1	4
	More than 20 years	1	4
	No response	23	92
Employed	Yes	21	84
	No	3	12
	No response	1	4
Male Children	None	6	24
	One	7	28
	Two	8	32
	Three	2	8
	Five	1	4
	No response	1	4
Female Children	None	4	16
	One	8	32
	Two	6	24
	Three	4	16
	Four	1	4
	Five	1	4
	No response	1	4

and one adult child. Four (16%) of the adult children were divorced while one (4%) of the parents was divorced.

The question regarding length of marriage seemed to be confusing to some of the respondents. Eleven of the parents and three of the children made no response to the question. However, six (24%) of the parents and six (24%) of the adult children marked the question as not applicable to their situation. Three (12%) of the parents had been married 51 to 65 years.

The length of widowhood for nine parent respondents was less than one year. Two had been widowed between 21 and 30 years and nine made no response to the question. One adult child had been widowed more than 20 years. The majority (92%) of the adult children in the sample were not widowed.

### Employment

Only one parent respondent was employed and was working as a real estate broker. Twenty-one (84%) of the adult children were employed, three were unemployed, and one failed to answer. In the adult children's responses regarding kinds of employment, two were college teachers, four were secretaries, one was a public school consultant for speech correction, one a contract specialist (buyer). There was a computer data operator/census enumerator, a district agent for an insurance company, an administrative assistant in the personnel area of public school administration and a drug department salesperson. One adult child was self-employed in a uniform and maternity shop while another was a guidance secretary in the public schools. One adult child directed an elderly nutrition program, another was a payroll

clerk, one was an energy consultant, one a bookkeeper, and one was in transportation.

#### Number of Children

The parent group had a total of 18 male children and 38 female children. Fourteen (56%) had no sons while one (4%) had no daughters. The adult children had a total of 75 children of their own. Six (24%) had no sons and 4 (16%) had no daughters. One of the adult children had five sons and another had five daughters. One adult child neglected to answer the question.

#### Discussion of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There will be no significant association in the perceptions of elderly parents' problems pertaining to health, housing, transportation, and income as perceived by the elderly parent and their designated adult child.
2. There will be no significant association between elderly parents and their designated adult children in their perceptions of interaction and closeness of relationship to one another.
3. There will be no significant association between the elderly parent group and the adult child group in their assessment of their own life satisfaction.

The following paragraphs will present information related to the hypotheses stated above. A compilation of frequencies and percentages of group responses given for the items on the questionnaires are included in the text. The chi-square test was utilized to measure paired responses made by the parent and his or her adult child. The results of the chi-square tests are included in one section of the text.

Inquiries were made regarding five areas of the parent's life.

These areas were health, housing, transportation, income and social communication. A final inquiry was made using the LSIZ (Life Satisfaction Inventory Z) to determine life satisfaction of each parent and each adult child.

### Health

Items 9 through 14 of the survey (Table III) were related to inquiries regarding the health of the parent both from the parent's point of view and from the adult child's viewpoint. In item 9, when asked to rate the parents' health compared to the parents' peers, 72 percent (18) of the adult children rated their parents' health as excellent or very good and seven (28%) gave a good or fair rating. Thirteen (52%) of the parents rated their own health as excellent or very good while 12 (48%) chose the good or fair rating.

Item 10 was a question regarding whether or not the parent had been hospitalized during the past year. Eight parents responded affirmatively but 17 indicated they had not been hospitalized. Four of the adult children indicated their parent had been hospitalized and 21 gave a no response.

In response to the question raised in item 11 regarding the health of the parent's spouse, seven parents and eight children responded that the parent's spouse was in good, very good, or excellent health. This means that the majority of elderly parents either did not have a spouse or had a spouse who was in poor health.

Sixteen of the parents and 15 adult children reported in item 12 that the designated adult child would provide assistance most of the time to the parent if parent's health should fail. One child responded

that such assistance would be for "a short time."

TABLE III  
RESPONSES OF ELDERLY PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT  
CHILDREN ON PARENT'S HEALTH

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent N=25		Adult Child N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
9. Rating of Health Compared to Others the Same Age				
Excellent, very good	13	52.00	18	72.00
Good, fair	12	48.00	7	28.00
12. Need of Adult Child's Aid if Parent's Health Should Fail				
Most of the time	16	64.00	15	60.00
Some of the time, seldom never, uncertain	9	36.00	10	40.00
13. Frequency of Use of Outside Help by Parent				
Occasionally, seldom	11	45.83	13	52.00
Never, not applicable	13	54.17	12	48.00
14. Preference for Assistance by Specified Adult Child				
Most of the time, some of the time	15	68.18	17	68.00
Seldom, never, not applicable	7	31.82	8	32.00

Regarding the parent's need for outside help due to physical problems (item 13) both parents (45.83%) and adult children (52%) suggested that such help was seldom or occasionally needed. Neither group indicated outside help was used regularly.

Item 14 on the inventory was a question regarding the use of the designated adult child's assistance when outside help was needed. Ten of the parents and 13 of the adult children responded that the designated adult child would be asked to assist some of the time. Five parents and four children indicated that the adult child would be called to assist most of the time.

### Housing

The respondents were invited to respond to item 15 of the questionnaires by indicating the type of housing in which the parents lived. Twenty-three of the 25 parents lived in their own homes. Of the two who lived in rented homes, one lived in a trailer and the other lived in a home rented from one of their children. One parent owned a mobile home.

Twenty parents and 20 children indicated in item 16 that the parent had lived in his/her current location more than 10 years. The responses to item 17 revealed that 16 parents indicated that they lived alone. Seventeen of the adult children said their parents lived alone.

The parent group responses on item 18 revealed that eight of the parents had persons living with them who were their relatives. Six of the adult children made the same response as the eight parents.

Twenty-three parents and 25 children stated in item 19 that the parent had adequate privacy most of the time. All parents and children agreed that the parents felt safe in their homes (item 20).

Fifteen parents checked the response, most of the time, on item 21 regarding the security they felt in being alone at night in their neighborhoods. Two parents indicated they never felt secure in such a



circumstance. Nineteen of the children thought their parents felt secure most of the time, but two responded that their parents were never free from fear when circumstances caused them to be outside after dark.

In response to item 22 (Table IV), both parents and children were in agreement on satisfaction with surroundings. Fourteen in each group responded that they were very satisfied with the parent's surroundings.

TABLE IV  
RESPONSES OF ELDERLY PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT  
CHILDREN ON PARENT'S HOUSING

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
22. Attitude to Parent's Surroundings				
Very satisfied	14	56.00	14	56.00
Satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied	11	44.00	11	44.00
23. Persons Who Give Assistance with Minor House Repairs				
Spouse, own children	11	45.83	13	52.00
Neighbors, contracted help, specified others	13	54.17	12	48.00

Eleven of the parents responding to item 23 said they would call on their spouse or their own children for minor house repairs. Thirteen would call on neighbors, contracted help or specified others such as grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers or sons-in-law. Three

children noted that their parents did all of the minor repairs themselves. Additional comments about the parents' housing are included in Appendix B.

Although there were concerns expressed about the housing of the elderly parents, the data would seem to support the Johnson and Bursk study (1977) that the majority of elderly parents were satisfied with their living environment. The data would also support the theory of Havighurst's developmental task (1972) that for aging families finding a satisfying home for the later years is an important part of self-protection or "holding-on to life."

#### Transportation

According to parent group responses on item 25 (Table V), 18 (72%) of the parents drove their own cars, three rode with spouse or family, three rode with friends, and one used taxi service. Nineteen (76%) of the adult child group reported that the parents drove their own cars.

On item 26, 14 (58.33%) of the elderly parents indicated they would call on others most of the time if transportation were needed. Eighteen (72%) of the children felt their parents would call on others for transportation most of the time. Five of the parents and three children said the parents would seldom call on others for transportation.

Fewer (40%) parents than children (56%) responded on item 27 that transportation was offered by others most of the time. However, the majority of the parents (24) and the children (24) responding to item 28 said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the current means of transportation available to their parents. One parent

indicated dissatisfaction and one child responded with some dissatisfaction to the transportation question.

TABLE V  
RESPONSES OF ELDERLY PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT CHILDREN ON PARENT'S TRANSPORTATION

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent N=25		Adult Child N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
25. Means of Transportation Used Most Often				
Drive own car	18	72.00	19	76.00
Ride with spouse, or family, with friends, use other means	7	28.00	6	24.00
26. Freedom Expressed in Asking for Transportation with Others				
Most of the time	14	58.33	18	72.00
Some of the time, seldom, never	10	41.67	7	28.00
27. Frequency of Offers of Transportation by Others				
Most of the time	8	40.00	14	56.00
Some of the time, seldom, never	12	60.00	11	44.00
28. Satisfaction with Parent's Current Means of Transportation				
Very satisfied	16	64.00	13	52.00
Satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, dissatisfied	9	36.00	12	48.00

Additional comments from the respondents on transportation concerns are included in Appendix B. The data would seem to support the findings by Troll (1970) and Arling (1976) that continued independence of the parent and the respect for this independence by the child is a necessary factor in the relationship of the two groups.

### Income

Items 30-37 on the inventory related to the financial condition of the parent. On item 30 the respondents were asked to describe the parent's current financial condition compared to other persons the same age. Twenty-two of the parents and 24 children stated their parent's financial condition was either very comfortable or comfortable (Table VI). Three parents and one child said the condition was somewhat uncomfortable and one parent noted being somewhat uncomfortable due to being on a fixed income.

When asked on item 31 to rate the future financial condition of the elderly parent based on their current situation, responses were the same. Four parents and four children noted that the condition would be somewhat uncomfortable.

Two questions were asked regarding financial assistance given to parent by their designated adult child or other children. Twenty parents and 20 children responded on item 32 that financial assistance was never given to the parent by the adult child. On item 33 18 parents and 20 children said the parent never received assistance from other children. Three parents and two children made no response to this question.

Item 34 (Table VI) on the inventory was a question which asked

whether or not the adult child received financial assistance from the parent. Two children and three parents indicated that regular assistance was given. One parent noted that such assistance was in the form of rent for living quarters.

TABLE VI  
RESPONSES OF ELDERLY PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT  
CHILDREN ON PARENT'S INCOME

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
30. Assessment of Parent's Current Financial Condition Compared with Others the Same Age				
Very comfortable	10	40.00	9	37.50
Comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable	15	60.00	15	62.50
31. Assessment of Parent's Future Financial Condition Based on Current Situation				
Very comfortable	9	36.00	9	36.00
Comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable	16	64.00	16	64.00
34. Financial Assistance Given to Specified Adult Child by Parent				
Regularly, occasionally, seldom	8	32.00	9	36.00
Never	17	68.00	16	64.00
35. Financial Assistance Given to Parent's Other Adult Children by Parent				
Regularly, occasionally, seldom	8	34.78	10	45.45
Never	15	65.22	12	54.55

When asked if other children received financial assistance (item 35), two parents indicated regular assistance was given and three gave occasional assistance. Five of the adult children noted that assistance was given to other children occasionally and one stated "particularly if an emergency arises." One parent noted that financial assistance was not needed by the children and another parent indicated that an inheritance from the parent's father, the children's grandfather, had been distributed equally and the children should not be in need.

Item 36 was an open-ended question regarding the parent's reasons for working if employed. Both parents and adult children responded that employment helped to keep the parent active and mentally alert, it gave the parent something to do, it supplemented the income, and it provided an opportunity for the parent to be with other people and feel needed. It was noted from the questionnaires that only one parent was employed but it was assumed that the responses given referred to volunteer work performed by the parent. Item 37 referred to further concerns the parent or child might have in regard to income that had not been noted in previous questions. These responses are detailed in Appendix B.

Havighurst (1972) stated that one of the developmental tasks for the individual in the later years is "adjusting to retirement and reduced income" (p. 108). The data would seem to support the Peterson study (1978) which states that elderly persons do worry about inflation and their stationery incomes. The data also support the findings of Johnson and Bursk (1977) who noted that older persons were more concerned with financial security than level of income.

### Communication and Closeness of Relationship

Nineteen items in the instrument were concerned with patterns of communication of the elderly parent with the specified adult child and with "responsible others" as designated in the study of Kulys and Tobin (1980). Item 38 (Table VII) referred to the number of organizations to which the parent belonged. Of the responding parents 58.33% and 56% of the adult children were in agreement on the number of organizations in which membership was maintained by parent. Of the 14 parents, six belonged to two clubs or organizations and five belonged to three such groups.

Item 39 was in reference to the number of club meetings attended by the parent. Over 68 percent of the children and 54 percent of the parents agreed that the parents attended one or more meetings per week.

Items 40, 41 and 42 were included in the inventory to find out more about the parent's friends. When asked on item 40 "How many friends do you have?", 23 parents and 21 children were in agreement that the parent had ten or more friends. When questioned about the parent's closest friend (item 41), 17 (68%) of the parents said either their spouse or their designated adult child was their closest friend (Table VII). However, 13 (56.52%) of the children felt that the closest friend of their parent was one of the relatives (a sister) or a friend outside the family. Nine children chose the latter response. Kulys and Tobin (1980) stated the following:

The individual selected is usually determined by the nature of the kin relationship: spouses are selected before children, children before siblings, and siblings before other extended-family members (p. 142).

The data would seem to support these findings assuming that the parent's

TABLE VII  
 RESPONSES OF ELDERLY PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT  
 CHILDREN ON COMMUNICATION AND CLOSENESS  
 OF RELATIONSHIP

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
38. Number of Organizations (clubs, lodges, church groups) to which the Parent Belongs				
None, one, two, three	14	58.33	14	56.00
Four or more	10	41.67	11	44.00
39. Number of Club Meetings Attended by Parent Each Month				
None, less than one, one or two	11	45.83	7	31.82
One a week, two or more a week	13	54.17	15	68.18
41. Identification of Closest Friend of Elderly Parent				
Spouse, specified adult child	17	68.00	10	43.48
One of parent's other children, one of the relatives, a friend outside the family	8	32.00	13	56.52
42. Amount of Time Given to Open and Frank Discussion of Problems by Elderly Parent with Closest Friend				
Most of the time	14	58.33	13	52.00
Some of the time, seldom, never, uncertain	10	41.67	12	48.00
43. Rating of Happiness of Parent's Last Marriage				
Very happy, happy	14	66.67	13	54.17
Average, unhappy	7	33.33	11	45.83
44. Frequency of Visits by Elderly Parent to Home of Specified Adult Child				
Daily, weekly, monthly	13	54.17	10	41.67
Yearly, none	11	45.83	14	58.33



TABLE VII (Continued)

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
45. Frequency of Telephone Contacts Parents Have with their Specified Adult Children				
Daily, weekly	18	72.00	17	70.83
Monthly, yearly	7	28.00	7	29.17
46. Frequency of Telephone Contacts Elderly Parents Have with Other Family				
Daily, weekly	15	62.50	13	65.00
Monthly, yearly	9	37.50	7	35.00
49. Degree of Satisfaction Noted by Elderly Parent Regarding Amount of Time Specified Adult Child Spends with Parent				
Very satisfied	17	68.00	8	32.00
Somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, dissatisfied	8	32.00	17	68.00
50. Is Specified Adult Child's Assistance Sought by Parent in Planning for Parent's Future?				
Yes	10	40.00	10	40.00
Somewhat, no, uncertain	15	60.00	15	60.00
51. Is Specified Adult Child Interested in Elderly Parent's Childhood or Past?				
Yes	14	58.33	21	84.00
Somewhat, no, uncertain	10	41.67	4	16.00
53. How Does the Elderly Parent Relate to Spouse of Specified Adult Child?				
Very well	10	47.62	12	50.00
Fairly well, not well, uncertain, not applicable	11	52.38	12	50.00

TABLE VII (Continued)

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
54. Rating of Closeness of Relationship of Elderly Parent with Specified Adult Child				
Very close	22	88.00	17	68.00
Somewhat close, not close	3	12.00	8	32.00
55. Is there a Feeling that Something is Missing in the Relationship of the Elderly Parent with their Adult Child?				
Yes	2	8.33	5	20.00
No, uncertain	22	91.67	20	80.00
56. Is Additional Information Given Related to Closeness of the Relationship?				
Yes	4	16.00	17	68.00
No	21	84.00	8	32.00

closest friend would also be the one the parent would call upon in times of need. When questioned on item 42 about frank discussion of problems with their closest friend, the majority of the parents (58.33%) indicated they could discuss their problems in such a manner most of the time.

Fourteen (66.67%) of the parents and 13 (54.17%) of the children on item 43 rated their parent's last marriage as very happy or happy. Four of the children and only one parent noted that the parent's marriage was unhappy.

Items 44, 45, and 46 referred to personal visits made by the

parent to the home of the designated adult child, telephone contacts made with the child and telephone contacts with other members of the family. On item 44 the parents (54.17%) indicated more regular visits than did the children (41.67%). Three of the children noted that their parents made no visits to their homes while only one parent checked this response.

Regarding telephone contacts which elderly parents have with their designated adult children (item 45), regular contacts were made either daily or weekly. Contacts by telephone with other family members (item 46) were very frequent according to both parents and children. Particular recognition was given to regular contacts with grandchildren on one of the parent's responses. Daily and weekly contacts were made according to 72 percent of the parents and 71 percent of the children responding.

This data on communication support research by Troll (1970) and by Arling (1976) regarding frequency of contacts elderly parents have with their children and other relatives. They do make note that this does not necessarily contribute to high morale or personal satisfaction.

Items 47 and 48 in the questionnaire discussed the parent's freedom to talk with their designated adult child about their problems without reservation and the kind of feelings such discussion generated between them. Nineteen of the parents and 20 of the children indicated on item 47 that the parent could discuss their problems without reservation most of the time. Four children felt such open discussion occurred only some of the time and two of the parents responded they could seldom have such a discussion. Twenty-two of the parents and 23

children (item 48) indicated that the freedom to discuss their problems without reservation made them feel good. Three parents responded that it made them feel fair and one child noted that it gave her a fair feeling. One child checked that she felt bad about the discussion which occurred between parent and child.

Item 49 referred to the satisfaction felt by both parent and child regarding the amount of time the adult child spent with the parent. Seventeen (68%) of the parents felt very satisfied while only eight (32%) of the children expressed such satisfaction. Ten of the children indicated they were somewhat satisfied, four said they were somewhat dissatisfied and three felt very dissatisfied. None of the parents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time the adult child spent with them.

In item 50, the question was to ascertain whether or not the elderly parent had sought assistance from the designated adult child in planning for the parent's future. The majority of the parents (60%) and children (60%) responded with somewhat, no or uncertain to the question. Nine of the parents and eight of the children responded with a no to the question.

Regarding the interest of the designated adult child in the parent's childhood or past (item 51), 84 percent of the children and 58.33 percent of the parents indicated the adult child was interested. Eight of the children and two of the parents responded with a no to the question.

When questioned about the enjoyment felt by the parent when visiting in the home of their designated adult children (item 52), 23 of the parents indicated they enjoyed the visits most of the time.

Twenty-two of the children responded that they enjoyed having the parent visit most of the time. Two parents and three children checked that such visits were enjoyed some of the time.

In reference to a question about the relationship of the parent with the designated adult child's spouse (item 53), ten of the parents (48%) and 12 of the children (50%) felt the parent and adult child's spouse related very well to each other. Three parents and four children felt that parent and spouse related fairly well.

When asked on item 54 to rate the closeness of their relationship as very close, somewhat close, or not close, 88 percent (22) of the parents and 68 percent (17) of the children felt the relationship to be very close. Two parents and seven children indicated the relationship was somewhat close and one parent and one child felt the relationship was not close.

When questioned on item 55 as to whether or not there was something missing in the relationship of the elderly parent and their designated adult child, over 91 percent of the parents and 80 percent of the children stated there was nothing missing in the relationship. Both groups were invited to respond with additional information related to the closeness of their relationship. Only four (16%) of the parents responded with additional information, but 68 percent (17) of the children made a response. These responses are included in Appendix B.

The analyses of the data on communication readily support the findings in the review of literature. Alam (1978) found in his study with middle-aged persons and their relationship with their parents that most of the comments were positive rather than negative when viewing the problems that exist between the two generations.

### Chi-Square Results for Hypotheses One and Two

In order to investigate and measure paired responses of each parent and their own adult child the chi-square test was utilized. The variables of health, housing, transportation, income, communication and closeness of relationship were investigated and responses were tabulated. The results of the chi-square tests showed that over five percent of the cells had expected counts of less than five. There was a notation that due to small sampling there should be a reservation regarding the results of the tests. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the results of those items which showed a significant association in the responses of pairs of parents and children are included in the text.

On Health, item 9, regarding the parents' health compared to their peers (Table VIII), there was a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) in responses made by parent and child. Eighteen pairs of parents and children responded alike in their answers. Twelve pairs notably responded with excellent or very good on parents' health.

Concerning item 25, under Transportation, each parent and child was invited to respond regarding kind of transportation used by the parent. There was a significant association ( $p < .0001$ ) in the responses of the dyads (Table IX). Twenty-four of the 25 pairs responded alike.

Five items under the category of Communication and Closeness of Relationship were shown to have responses that were significant. Item 38 referred to the number of organizations or groups to which the parent belonged. Seventeen pairs of parents and their adult children were in agreement on their responses. The chi-square test revealed a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) of paired answers (Table X).

TABLE VIII

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON PARENT'S HEALTH COMPARED TO  
OTHERS THE SAME AGE

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Excellent, very good	Good, Fair			
Excellent, very good	12	1	13		
Good, fair	6	6	12		
Total	18	7	25	5.540	.05

df = 1

TABLE IX

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON MOST USED MEANS OF  
TRANSPORTATION

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Drives own car	Rides with spouse or family, rides with others			
Drives own car	18	0	18		
Rides with spouse or family, rides with others	1	6	7		
Total	19	6	25	20.301	.0001

df = 1

TABLE X  
CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS TO  
WHICH PARENT BELONGS

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	None, one two, three	Four or more			
None, one, two, three	10	4	14		
Four or more	3	7	10		
Total	13	11	24	4.033	.05

df = 1

The frequency of visits by the elderly parent to the home of the designated adult child was discussed in item 44. The results of the chi-square test (Table XI) revealed a significant association in the responses of parents and children ( $p < .001$ ). Nineteen pairs responded alike to the question. Ten pairs agreed that the visits were either on a yearly basis or not at all. Nine pairs agreed the visits were more regular.

There was a significant association ( $p < .01$ ) of responses of parents and their children on item 51 (Table XII). Eighteen pairs of family dyads responded similarly regarding whether or not the designated adult child was interested in the elderly parent's childhood or past. Fourteen pairs responded affirmatively to being interested while four pairs were more guarded (or negative) in their responses.



TABLE XI

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON FREQUENCY OF ELDERLY PARENT'S  
VISITS TO SPECIFIED ADULT CHILD'S HOME

Parent	Adult Child		Total	X <sup>2</sup>	Level of Significance
	Daily, weekly, monthly	Yearly, none			
Daily, weekly, monthly	9	4	13		
Yearly, none	0	10	10		
Total	9	14	23	11.374	.001

df = 1

TABLE XII

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON WHETHER OR NOT ADULT CHILD IS  
INTERESTED IN PARENT'S CHILDHOOD OR PAST

Parent	Adult Child		Total	X <sup>2</sup>	Level of Significance
	Yes	Somewhat, No Uncertain			
Yes	14	0	14		
Somewhat, no, uncertain	6	4	10		
Total	20	4	24	6.720	.01

df = 1

Item 53 concerned the relationship of the elderly parent with the spouse of the designated adult child. There was a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) in the responses of parent-child pairs. Fifteen pairs responded similarly to the question. Eight pairs felt the relationship was not very good whereas seven pairs considered the relationship to be very positive.

TABLE XIII

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON RELATIONSHIP OF ELDERLY  
PARENT WITH SPOUSE OF ADULT CHILD

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$X^2$	Level of Significance
	Very well	Fairly well, not well, uncertain			
Very well	7	2	9		
Fairly well, not well, uncertain	3	8	11		
Total	10	10	20	5.051	.05

df = 1

There was a significant association ( $p < .01$ ) in paired responses on item 54. Parents and children were asked to rate the closeness of their relationship. Twenty pairs were in agreement on their ratings of closeness (Table XIV). Seventeen of the total 25 pairs felt their

relationship to be very close. Only three pairs responded that the relationship was somewhat close or not close.

TABLE XIV

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Very close	Somewhat close, not close			
Very close	17	5	22		
Somewhat close, not close	0	3	3		
Total	17	8	25	7.244	.01

df = 1

A notation should be made regarding item 55 which related to the question of whether or not something was missing in the relationship of the elderly parent and their designated adult child. Although the chi-square tests revealed no significant association in the responses of pairs to this question, there is a definite pattern in the paired responses of no and uncertain. This would seem to indicate that the parents and children were attuned to each other.

The chi-square tests were utilized for other items on the questionnaires, but the results indicated that there were no significant associations in paired responses on those items. However, there were

some items wherein the distribution would suggest a high degree of rapport between the generational dyads.

#### Life Satisfaction Index Z

The Life Satisfaction Index Z (Wood, Wylie and Sheafor, 1969), a derivative of the Life Satisfaction Index A (Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin, 1961) was used to ascertain the individual's satisfaction with personal life. Frequencies of responses and percentages were reported for the parent and the adult child groups on each of the 13 items (Table XV).

For purposes of analyzing the data the responses were grouped into two categories. The agree response was the first category. Included in the second category were the disagree and the uncertain responses. According to the scoring method suggested for the LSIZ (Appendix C), a higher life satisfaction or measure of successful aging is reflected when participants respond as follows to the items:

- |             |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Agree    | 6. Disagree  | 11. Disagree |
| 2. Agree    | 7. Agree     | 12. Agree    |
| 3. Disagree | 8. Agree     | 13. Disagree |
| 4. Agree    | 9. Agree     |              |
| 5. Agree    | 10. Disagree |              |

On items 1 and 2 regarding current outlook on life, 15 children and 21 parents agreed that as they grow older, things seemed better than they thought they would be, and 16 of the children and 18 parents agreed they had gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people they knew. Twenty parents and 17 children disagreed with the idea on item 3 that this is the dreariest time of their lives. Seventeen parents and 20 children responded on item 4 that they were as happy as when they were younger. To the question regarding whether or not these were

TABLE XV  
 RESPONSES OF PARENTS AND THEIR ADULT CHILDREN  
 ON LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent		Adult Child	
	N=25		N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be				
Agree	21	84.00	15	60.00
Disagree, uncertain	4	16.00	10	40.00
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know				
Agree	18	75.00	16	64.00
Disagree, uncertain	6	25.00	9	36.00
3. This is the dreariest time of my life				
Agree	2	8.70	5	20.00
Disagree, uncertain	21	91.30	20	80.00
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger				
Agree	17	70.83	20	80.00
Disagree, uncertain	7	29.17	5	20.00
5. These are the best years of my life				
Agree	11	55.00	16	64.00
Disagree, uncertain	9	45.00	9	36.00
6. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous				
Agree	2	8.33	1	4.00
Disagree, uncertain	22	91.67	24	96.00
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were				
Agree	22	91.67	22	88.00
Disagree, uncertain	2	8.33	3	12.00
8. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied				
Agree	24	96.00	23	92.00
Disagree, uncertain	1	4.00	2	8.00

TABLE XV (Continued)

Item and Response Choice	Elderly Parent N=25		Adult Child N=25	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
9. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now				
Agree	16	66.67	20	80.00
Disagree, uncertain	8	33.33	5	20.00
10. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted				
Agree	8	32.00	5	20.00
Disagree, uncertain	17	68.00	20	80.00
11. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often				
Agree	2	8.33	3	12.00
Disagree, uncertain	22	91.67	22	88.00
12. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life				
Agree	21	87.50	17	68.00
Disagree, uncertain	3	12.50	8	32.00
13. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better				
Agree	5	21.74	4	16.00
Disagree, uncertain	18	78.26	21	84.00

the best years of their lives (item 5), 16 children and 11 parents agreed that they were the best years. Five parents and three children disagreed with this statement.

Twenty-four children and 22 parents on item 6 felt that most of the things they do were not monotonous or boring. Twenty-two respondents in each group agreed on item 7 that the things they do are as

interesting to them as they ever were. On item 8 regarding the feeling of satisfaction as they look back on their lives, 24 parents and 23 children agreed with their expression of satisfaction. When asked to respond on item 9 regarding making plans for things they will be doing a month or a year from now, 16 parents and 20 children agreed that they had made such plans.

On item 10, 12 parents disagreed and five were uncertain about the statement, "When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted." Twenty children disagreed with the statement. In response to item 11, "Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often," 20 children and 20 parents disagreed with the statement but two of each group were uncertain in their responses.

Twenty-one parents and 17 children agreed on item 12 that they had gotten "pretty much" what they expected out of life. Six children disagreed and two were uncertain. Two parents disagreed with the statement and one was uncertain. On item 13, "in spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better," 14 parents disagreed and four were uncertain. Eighteen children disagreed and three were uncertain.

In order to ascertain a global view of the life satisfaction of the two groups, mean scores were figured on the LSIZ for each group. The parent group had a mean score of 21.08 out of a possible score of 26. The mean score for the adult child group was 22.92. (See Appendix C for scoring procedures.)

A comparison was made with the mean scores of the two groups in this study and the mean scores of two groups of people who were retired and remained in retirement and those who were reemployed. The study of

639 individuals in 1974 (Chatfield, 1977) revealed a mean score of 18.27 for those persons who had been retired for one year or more and 19.08 for those not retired. Chatfield's study revealed a higher score on life satisfaction (21.36) for those persons not retired whose income exceeded \$15,000.00. The highest mean score registered by Chatfield's study (1977) was for 53 persons whose income exceeded \$15,000 and who had no health problem. Their mean score was 22.18.

Since the LSIZ index asks the respondent to evaluate life satisfaction in general, the scores of the parent group and the adult child group are very close in comparison to those in the Chatfield study who had high levels of life satisfaction. Chatfield felt that income and economic security as well as good health were important parts of successful aging.

#### Chi-Square Results for Hypothesis Three

The chi-square tests were utilized on all thirteen items of the LSIZ Scale. However, only three items were shown to have results that indicated a significant association in the responses of family dyads.

Item 5 asked for a response of agree, disagree or uncertain that "these are the best years of my life." There was a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) in the responses of parents and their own children on this item. Fifteen pairs responded alike (Table XVI). Ten pairs agreed with the statement.

Item 9 regarding persons making plans for things they will be doing a month or a year from now showed a paired response that was significant ( $p < .01$ ). Nineteen pairs responded alike to the question (Table XVII). Fifteen pairs agreed with the statement.



TABLE XVI

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON LSIZ ITEM 5

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Agree	Disagree, uncertain			
Agree	10	1	11		
Disagree uncertain	4	5	9		
Total	14	6	20	5.089	.05

df = 1

TABLE XVII

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON LSIZ ITEM 9

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Agree	Disagree, uncertain			
Agree	15	1	16		
Disagree, uncertain	4	4	8		
Total	19	5	24	6.189	.01

df = 1

Item 13 regarding the statement that "the lot of the average man is getting worse not better," nineteen pairs made the same response to the statement. Of those nineteen pairs, 17 pairs checked the disagree or uncertain response. The chi-square tests revealed a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) on this item (Table XVIII).

TABLE XVIII

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PARENT RESPONSES VERSUS  
ADULT CHILD RESPONSES ON LSIZ ITEM THIRTEEN

Parent	Adult Child		Total	$\chi^2$	Level of Significance
	Agree	Disagree, uncertain			
Agree	2	3	5		
Disagree, uncertain	1	17	18		
Total	3	20	23	4.093	.05

df = 1

Although only three of the thirteen items on the LSIZ Scale resulted in a significant association of paired responses, several others were notable. The paired responses on these items reflected patterns of affinity between the parent/child pairs.

#### Summary

A summary of the data collected has been presented in this chapter

as well as a description of the sample and a discussion of the hypotheses. Descriptive tables were included to show frequencies and percentages of responses on the inventory items. The chi-square analyses were included for the purpose of determining similarities in dyad responses. Chapter V will present the conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of health, housing, transportation, income and communication on elderly parents as perceived by the elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children. The objectives of the study were:

1. to identify similarities concerning the perception of problems related to health, housing, transportation, income and communication as perceived by the elderly parent and the middle-aged adult child;
2. to determine the closeness of relationship between the elderly parent and the middle-aged adult child;
3. to compare the responses of the elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children regarding life satisfaction as identified on the Life Satisfaction Index Z; and
4. to make recommendations for further research in the area of generational relationships of elderly parents and their middle-aged adult children.

Fifty participants, composed of 25 parents, aged 65 and above, and 25 of their adult children, ages 40 to 65, were included in the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires developed

by the researcher. The elderly parent group and the adult child group were invited to respond to the same questions. The groups were asked to present their own viewpoint regarding the questions.

The instruments elicited information regarding the parents' health, housing, transportation, income and communication with family, particularly the designated adult child. The closeness of relationship between parents and their adult children was assessed. Both groups were asked to respond to the Life Satisfaction Index Z for the purpose of assessing personal morale or satisfaction with life. The chi-square test was the statistical procedure used to measure paired responses of parents and their own adult children.

There was a significant association in the responses of the parent and adult child dyads regarding the rating of the parent's health compared to others the same age. Twelve pairs rated their parents' health as excellent or very good. Of the total sample of 25 adult children, 72 percent rated their parent's health as excellent or very good. This was a higher percent than the parent group rating. Independent responses were made by parent/child pairs to the other questions regarding the parents' health. The majority of the respondents felt that the adult child would be willing to assist their parent if the parent's health should fail.

There were no significant associations in the responses on the parents' housing. All but two of the respondents indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the parents' surroundings. There were divided opinions on the choice of persons who would give assistance with minor house repairs. More parents than children indicated they would seek help from various sources other than family.

There was a significant association in the responses of the dyads on the means of transportation used most often by the parent. All but one pair of parents and their children responded alike to the inquiry. The majority of parents drove their own cars but indicated they would call on others if they needed transportation. Both groups were satisfied with the current means of transportation available.

There were no close associations in dyad responses to the parents' current financial condition. The majority of parents and children agreed that the parents' financial situation was either very comfortable or comfortable. Both groups evidenced some reservation about the future condition of the parent based on their current situation. A majority of each group indicated the future would be comfortable or somewhat uncomfortable depending on the future economy. Particular concerns were raised regarding escalating costs in light of fixed incomes.

With the exception of eight pairs of parents and their adult children, the paired respondents agreed on the number of organizations to which the parent belonged. All but one parent belonged to several organizations and attended meetings regularly. Ten of the parents said their designated child was their closest friend. The closest friend to seven other parents was the spouse. Over half of the adult children felt the parent's closest friend was someone other than the spouse or designated adult child.

There was a significant association in the responses of 19 pairs of parents and children regarding frequency of visits by the parent to the home of the designated adult child. Ten pairs of parents and their children noted that such visits were made either yearly or not at all. The responses made by the parent group and the adult child group

resulted in more parents indicating more frequent visits than did the adult children. Infrequent visits in many cases were due to distances involved. In one case the location produced a difficult health factor for the parent thereby causing the parent not to visit.

The parents indicated they were very satisfied with the amount of time designated adult children spent with them. However, the adult children were less satisfied with the time they had available to spend with their parents. This may have produced a sense of guilt in some of the children as evidenced by their comments.

The majority of both groups indicated the parent had not actively sought the designated child's assistance in planning the parent's future. However, there was definite involvement in future planning as reflected by 40 percent of both groups.

There was a significant association in the dyad responses of the parents and the adult children regarding the designated adult child's interest in the parent's childhood or past. Eighteen pairs of parents and children were in agreement on their responses to the question. Fourteen of these made an affirmative response. However, of the group responses, more children than parents made an affirmative response to the question of interest in the parent's past.

Fifteen pairs of parents and children responded similarly regarding the relationship of the elderly parent to the designated adult child's spouse. Almost half of the parent group and half of the adult child group felt that the spouse and elderly parent related very well to each other.

There was a significant association in the responses of the two groups in rating their closeness of relationship. Twenty pairs

responded alike. Seventeen pairs responded that the relationship was very close. Both parents and children expressed appreciation for meaningful communication over the years. There were complimentary patterns of interaction which recognized and honored individuality and independence of both parents and children. Comments were made by parents and children that reaffirmed the importance of familial bonds. The fact that participants responded independently of their dyad partner on most of the questions would seem to suggest the autonomy of each individual respondent.

The Life Satisfaction Index Z was used to determine the degree of satisfaction with life. The high scoring of responses on the LSIZ indicated successful life adjustment for both participating groups. The mean scores for both groups were high on the LSIZ. However, the adult child group had a mean score of 1.84 points higher than did the parent group.

Three items on the life satisfaction scale were significant. When asked to respond whether they agreed or disagreed that these were the best years of their lives, fifteen pairs responded alike. However, in the group responses more children agreed with the statement than did their parents. Fifteen pairs of parents and children responded alike in an affirmative response to the statement, "I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now." In the group responses, the majority of the parents and children agreed with the statement. In response to the statement, "In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better," there were 17 pairs who disagreed or were uncertain in their response. More children agreed with the statement than did parents in the group responses.

The parents sampled in this study were in good health. There was



satisfaction with their housing and transportation. Their financial situation seemed to be satisfactory for their current needs. Even though separated by great distances in some cases, the majority of the parents and children evidenced active communication with each other. There was a very satisfying relationship between parent and child as evidenced by their comments and ratings on closeness of relationship. The findings in this study would seem to indicate that the kin network system between parents and their children was supportive as well as effective.

#### Recommendations for Further Research and Action

In conclusion, efforts should be made to find ways to assist adult children and their parents to discuss and plan for the parents' future needs without feeling the inhibitions of impending loss. Communities need to provide better marketing of care and assistance programs for the elderly. In many cases greater availability of such programs for the elderly as assistance with financial planning, with minor housing repairs, and with maintenance of the home would help them maintain their independence.

Family life specialists should assist families in role adjustment or role adaptation necessitated by changing circumstances in the family. Special assistance should be given to persons in their later years in order to help them assess their own attitudes toward aging. The introduction of coping skills by family life specialists would help persons deal with changes which result from aging.

Continued research should consider ways of finding help for older persons that would enable them to retain their feelings of self-worth

in the society in which they live. The maintenance of their dignity and autonomy would be an essential part of such a study.

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made which suggest further research and action. In the area of inter-generational relationships of elderly parents and their adult children, research should be broadened to include:

- (a) a larger sampling of parents and children;
- (b) a sampling of parents who live in retirement villages or congregate care facilities;
- (c) a sampling of parents and their retired adult children both of whom are above 65 years of age;
- (d) an investigation of various socio-economic levels of parents and their adult children; and
- (e) an investigation of never married, middle-aged adult children and the relationship which they maintain with their parents.

In order to secure more complete data, it is recommended that an interview process be used, particularly with the elderly parents. Time should be allowed in such interviewing for the elderly to express themselves completely.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRES



# Oklahoma State University

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS  
AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074  
241 HOME ECONOMICS WEST  
(405) 624-5057

Dear Friend:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University. I am pursuing a master's degree with special interest in generational relationships of the elderly with their middle-aged adult children. I am particularly interested in finding out about the closeness of relationship between these two generations.

In order to complete this research, I have developed two questionnaires. One is to be completed by an elderly parent and one by his/her adult child. The questionnaires are similar but are worded so that they are to be answered from the viewpoint of the parent or the child.

Your name has been given as the adult child to respond to a questionnaire about your relationship with your parent. I would appreciate your willingness to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to me in the envelope provided. Complete privacy will be maintained on responses. If you have questions please feel free to write or call me collect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Ann Seamans".

Jo Ann Seamans  
2001 Admiral Rd.  
Stillwater, OK 74074  
(405) 372-6951

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Althea Wright".

Althea Wright, Assistant Professor  
and Major Advisor  
Department of Family Relations and Child Development  
Oklahoma State University



ELDERLY PARENT  
\_\_\_\_\_

## GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Please complete the following questions with a check (✓) or short answer.

1. What is your sex?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. male
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. female
2. What is your age?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. 65 - 70
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. 71 - 75
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. 76 - 80
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. 81 - 85
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. 86 +
3. What is your current marital status?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. living with first and only spouse.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. married for second time (3rd, 4th, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. divorced
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. widowed
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. separated
4. How long have you been married to your present spouse?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. less than 5 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. 6 to 25 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. 26 to 50 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. 51 to 65 years or more
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. not applicable
5. If widowed, how many years since the death of your spouse?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. less than one year
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. 1 to 10 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. 11 to 20 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. 21 to 30 years
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. more than 30 years
6. Are you currently employed either full or part time?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. yes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. no

7. If employed, what is your occupation?

8. Please give name, full mailing address, age and sex of your children.

Name	Address	Age	Sex
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please indicate with an (X) in front of the name, one of your children who might be willing to fill out a questionnaire similar to this questionnaire. This designated child will be referred to in the questionnaire as your "specified adult child."

HEALTH

9. How would you rate your own health compared with others your own age?

- a. excellent  
 b. very good  
 c. good  
 d. fair  
 e. poor

10. Have you been hospitalized during the past year?

- a. yes  
 b. no

11. How would you rate the health of your spouse compared to others his/her own age?

- a. excellent  
 b. very good  
 c. good  
 d. fair  
 e. poor  
 f. not applicable

12. If your health should fail would you expect your specified adult child to come to your aid as soon as possible?

- a. most of the time  
 b. some of the time  
 c. seldom  
 d. never  
 e. uncertain

13. Do you have physical problems that make it necessary for you to have outside help?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
  - e. not applicable
14. When outside help is needed do you like for your specified adult child to assist you?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
  - e. not applicable

#### HOUSING

15. In what type of housing do you live?
- a. own home
  - b. rented home
  - c. apartment in house, building or elderly housing complex
  - d. with family in their home
  - e. nursing home
  - f. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
16. How long have you lived in this location?
- a. less than one year
  - b. 1 - 5 years
  - c. 6 - 10 years
  - d. more than 10 years
17. How many people live with you (in your home, apartment, room in nursing home, family home, etc.)?
- a. none
  - b. 1 - 2
  - c. 3 - 6
  - d. more than 6
18. Are they related to you?
- a. yes
  - b. no
  - c. mixed
  - d. not applicable
19. Do you feel that you have adequate privacy?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never

20. Do you feel safe in your home?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
21. Do you feel secure enough in your neighborhood to go out alone at night?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
22. How would you describe your general attitude to your immediate surroundings?
- a. very satisfied
  - b. satisfied
  - c. somewhat dissatisfied
  - d. dissatisfied
23. From which of the following do you seek the most help for house repairs, lawn mowing, or assistance with minor repairs?
- a. spouse
  - b. own children
  - c. neighbors
  - d. contracted help
  - e. others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
24. Do you have housing problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions.

TRANSPORTATION

25. What means of transportation do you use most often?
- a. drive own car
  - b. ride with spouse or family
  - c. ride with friends
  - d. public transportation
  - e. walk
  - f. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

26. If transportation is needed (other than your own car), do you feel free to call on others?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
27. Do others offer you transportation?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
28. What is your attitude about your current means of transportation?
- a. very satisfied
  - b. satisfied
  - c. somewhat dissatisfied
  - d. dissatisfied
29. Do you have transportation problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions.

INCOME

30. How would you describe your current financial condition compared with others your own age?
- a. very comfortable
  - b. comfortable
  - c. somewhat uncomfortable
  - d. uncomfortable
31. How would you rate your future financial condition based on your current situation?
- a. very comfortable
  - b. comfortable
  - c. somewhat uncomfortable
  - d. uncomfortable

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EP \_\_\_\_\_

32. Do you receive financial assistance (money) from your specified adult child?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
33. Do you receive financial assistance from your other children?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
34. Does your specified adult child receive financial assistance from you?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
35. Do your other children receive financial assistance from you?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
36. If currently employed, what are your reasons for working?
37. Do you have concerns about money which are not mentioned above?

COMMUNICATION

38. To how many organizations such as clubs, lodges, church groups, and the like do you belong?
- a. none
  - b. one
  - c. two
  - d. three
  - e. four or more

39. How many club meetings do you usually attend each month?
- a. none
  - b. less than one a month
  - c. one or two a month
  - d. one a week
  - e. two or more a week
40. How many friends do you have?
- a. none
  - b. one to four
  - c. five to nine
  - d. ten or more
41. Who is your closest friend?
- a. my spouse
  - b. my specified adult child
  - c. one of my other children
  - d. one of my relatives
  - e. a friend outside the family
42. Can you discuss your problems openly and frankly with your friend?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
43. How do you rate the happiness of your (last) marriage?
- a. very happy
  - b. happy
  - c. average
  - d. unhappy
  - e. very unhappy
44. How often do you visit in the home of your specified adult child?
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none
45. How often do you have telephone contact with your specified adult child?
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none
46. How often do you have telephone contact with other family.
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none

47. Can you discuss your problems openly and frankly with your specified adult child?
- a. most of the time  
 b. some of the time  
 c. seldom  
 d. never
48. How does this make you feel?
- a. good  
 b. fair  
 c. bad  
 d. uncertain
49. How do you feel about the amount of time your specified adult child spends with you?
- a. very satisfied  
 b. somewhat satisfied  
 c. somewhat dissatisfied  
 d. very dissatisfied
50. Have you sought assistance from your specified adult child in planning for your future?
- a. yes  
 b. somewhat  
 c. no  
 d. uncertain
51. Is your specified adult child interested in your childhood or your past?
- a. yes  
 b. somewhat  
 c. no  
 d. uncertain
52. Do you enjoy visiting your specified adult child in his/her home?
- a. most of the time  
 b. some of the time  
 c. seldom  
 d. never
53. How do you relate to the spouse of your specified adult child?
- a. very well  
 b. fairly well  
 c. not well  
 d. uncertain  
 e. not applicable
54. On a scale of 1 to 3, would you please rate the closeness of your relationship with your specified adult child. (Circle the appropriate number.)
- |            |                |           |
|------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1          | 2              | 3         |
| _____      | _____          | _____     |
| very close | somewhat close | not close |



55. Do you feel there is something missing in this relationship

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. yes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. no  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. uncertain

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

56. Please give any other information related to the closeness of relationship of you and your specified adult child that you feel would be helpful to this study.

#### LIFE SATISFACTION INDEX

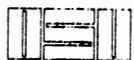
Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a check mark in the space under "AGREE." If you do not agree with a statement, put a check mark in the space under "DISAGREE." If you are not sure one way or the other put a check mark in the space under "?". PLEASE BE SURE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ON THE LIST. Respond according to your feelings about your own life.

- |   | AGREE | DISAGREE | ?     |
|---|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.        | _____ | _____    | _____ |
| 2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know. | _____ | _____    | _____ |

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EP \_\_\_\_\_

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	_____	_____	_____
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	_____	_____	_____
5. These are the best years of my life.	_____	_____	_____
6. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	_____	_____	_____
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	_____	_____	_____
8. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	_____	_____	_____
9. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.	_____	_____	_____
10. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	_____	_____	_____
11. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	_____	_____	_____
12. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.	_____	_____	_____
13. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better.	_____	_____	_____



# Oklahoma State University

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS  
AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074  
241 HOME ECONOMICS WEST  
(405) 624-5057

May 9, 1980

Dear Friend:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University. I am pursuing a master's degree with special interest in generational relationships of the elderly with their middle-aged adult children. I am particularly interested in finding out about the closeness of relationship between these two generations.

In order to complete this research, I have developed two questionnaires. One is to be completed by an elderly parent and one by his/her adult child. The questionnaires are similar but are worded so that they are to be answered from the viewpoint of the parent or the child.

I would appreciate your willingness to complete the attached questionnaire and to designate one of your adult children, between the ages of 45 and 65, who could be contacted to respond to a similar questionnaire.

Please return your completed questionnaire to me in the envelope provided. Complete privacy will be maintained on responses. Your participation in this study is appreciated. If you have questions please feel free to write or call me collect.

Sincerely,

*Jo Ann Seamans*

Jo Ann Seamans  
2001 Admiral Rd.  
Stillwater, OK 74074  
(405) 372-6951

*Althea Wright*

Althea Wright, Assistant Professor  
and Major Advisor  
Department of Family Relations and Child Development  
Oklahoma State University

## GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ADULT CHILD  
CODE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Please complete the following questions with a check (✓) or short answer.

1. What is your sex?
  - a. male
  - b. female
2. What is your age?
  - a. 40-45
  - b. 46-50
  - c. 51-55
  - d. 56-65
3. What is your current marital status?
  - a. never married
  - b. living with first and only spouse
  - c. married for second time (3rd, 4th, etc.)
  - d. divorced
  - e. widowed
  - f. separated
4. How long have you been married to your present spouse?
  - a. less than 5 years
  - b. 6 to 15 years
  - c. 16 to 25 years
  - d. 26 to 35 years
  - e. more than 35 years
  - f. not applicable
5. If widowed, how many years since the death of your spouse?
  - a. less than one year
  - b. 1 to 10 years
  - c. 11 to 20 years
  - d. more than 20 years
6. Are you currently employed either full or part-time?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
7. If employed, what is your occupation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How many children do you have?
  - a. boys    Ages: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. girls    Ages: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. none

Please respond to these questions on the basis of your relationship with your parent.

HEALTH

9. How would you rate your parent's health compared with others the same age?
- a. excellent
  - b. very good
  - c. good
  - d. fair
  - e. poor
10. Has your parent been hospitalized during the past year?
- a. yes
  - b. no
11. How would you rate the health of your parent's spouse compared to others the same age?
- a. excellent
  - b. very good
  - c. good
  - d. fair
  - e. poor
  - f. not applicable
12. If your parent's health should fail would you be expected to come to your parent's aid as soon as possible?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
  - e. uncertain
13. Does your parent have physical problems that make it necessary for him/her to have outside help?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
  - e. not applicable
14. When outside help is needed does your parent like for you to assist him/her?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
  - e. not applicable

HOUSING

15. In what type of housing does your parent live?
- a. own home
  - b. rented home
  - c. apartment in house, building or elderly housing complex
  - d. with family in their home
  - e. nursing home
  - f. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
16. How long has your parent lived in this location?
- a. less than one year
  - b. 1 - 5 years
  - c. 6 - 10 years
  - d. more than 10 years
17. How many people live with your parent (in his/her home, apartment, room in nursing home, family home, etc.)?
- a. none
  - b. 1 - 2
  - c. 3 - 6
  - d. more than 6
18. Are they related to your parent?
- a. yes
  - b. no
  - c. mixed
  - d. not applicable
19. Does your parent have adequate privacy?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
20. Does your parent feel safe in his/her home?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
21. Does your parent feel secure enough in his/her neighborhood to go out alone at night?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
22. How would you describe your parent's general attitude to his/her immediate surroundings?
- a. very satisfied
  - b. satisfied
  - c. somewhat dissatisfied
  - d. dissatisfied

23. From which of the following does your parent seek the most help for house repairs, lawn mowing, or assistance with minor repairs?
- a. spouse
  - b. own children
  - c. neighbors
  - d. contracted help
  - e. others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
24. Does your parent have housing problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions.

#### TRANSPORTATION

25. What means of transportation does your parent use most often?
- a. drives own car
  - b. rides with spouse or family
  - c. rides with friends
  - d. public transportation
  - e. walks
  - f. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
26. If transportation is needed (other than own car), does your parent feel free to call on others?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
27. Do others offer transportation to your parent?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
28. What is your attitude about your parent's current means of transportation?
- a. very satisfied
  - b. satisfied
  - c. somewhat dissatisfied
  - d. dissatisfied
29. Does your parent have transportation problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions?

INCOME

30. How would you describe your parent's current financial condition compared with others' the same age?
- a. very comfortable
  - b. comfortable
  - c. somewhat uncomfortable
  - d. uncomfortable
31. How would you rate your parent's future financial condition based on his/her current situation?
- a. very comfortable
  - b. comfortable
  - c. somewhat uncomfortable
  - d. uncomfortable
32. Does your parent receive financial assistance (money) from you?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
33. Does your parent receive financial assistance from his/her other children?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
34. Do you receive financial assistance from your parent?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
35. Does your parent give financial assistance to his/her other children?
- a. regularly
  - b. occasionally
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
36. If your parent is currently employed, what do you feel are the reasons he/she works?
37. Do you have concerns regarding your parent's financial situation that are not mentioned above?



COMMUNICATION

38. To how many organizations such as clubs, lodges, church groups, and the like does your parent belong?
- a. none
  - b. one
  - c. two
  - d. three
  - e. four or more
39. How many club meetings does your parent attend each month?
- a. none
  - b. less than one a month
  - c. one or two a month
  - d. one a week
  - e. two or more a week
40. How many friends does your parent have?
- a. none
  - b. one to four
  - c. five to nine
  - d. ten or more
41. Who is your parent's closest friend?
- a. his/her spouse
  - b. you
  - c. one of the other children
  - d. one of the relatives
  - e. a friend outside the family
42. Can your parent discuss his/her problems openly and frankly with the friend?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
43. How do you rate the happiness of your parent's (last) marriage?
- a. very happy
  - b. happy
  - c. average
  - d. unhappy
  - e. very unhappy
44. How often does your parent visit in your home?
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none

45. How often do you and your parent have telephone contact?
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none
46. How often does your parent have telephone contact with other family?
- a. daily
  - b. weekly
  - c. monthly
  - d. yearly
  - e. none
47. Can your parent discuss his/her problems openly and frankly with you?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never
48. How does this make you feel?
- a. good
  - b. fair
  - c. bad
  - d. uncertain
49. How do you feel about the amount of time you spend with your parent?
- a. very satisfied
  - b. somewhat satisfied
  - c. somewhat dissatisfied
  - d. very dissatisfied
50. Has your parent sought assistance from you in planning for his/her future?
- a. yes
  - b. somewhat
  - c. no
  - d. uncertain
51. Are you interested in your parent's childhood or his/her past?
- a. yes
  - b. somewhat
  - c. no
  - d. uncertain
52. Do you enjoy having your parent visit in your home?
- a. most of the time
  - b. some of the time
  - c. seldom
  - d. never

8

AC \_\_\_\_\_

53. How does your parent relate to your spouse?

- a. very well
- b. fairly well
- c. not well
- d. uncertain
- e. not applicable

54. On a scale of 1 to 3, would you please rate the closeness of your relationship with your parent (Circle the appropriate number.)

1	2	3
_____	_____	_____
very close	somewhat close	not close

55. Do you feel there is something missing in your relationship with your parent?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. uncertain

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

56. Please give any other information related to the closeness of relationship of you and your parent that you feel would be helpful to this study.

## LIFE SATISFACTION INDEX

Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a check mark in the space under "AGREE." If you do not agree with a statement, put a check mark in the space under "DISAGREE." If you are not sure one way or the other put a check mark in the space under "?". PLEASE BE SURE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ON THE LIST. Respond according to your feelings about your own life.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	_____	_____	_____
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.	_____	_____	_____
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	_____	_____	_____
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	_____	_____	_____
5. These are the best years of my life.	_____	_____	_____
6. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	_____	_____	_____
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	_____	_____	_____
8. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	_____	_____	_____
9. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.	_____	_____	_____
10. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	_____	_____	_____
11. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	_____	_____	_____
12. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.	_____	_____	_____
13. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better.	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

A VERBATIM RECORD OF RECORDED COMMENTS

ELDERLY PARENTS' RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS  
IN RANDOM ORDER

Item 24. Do you have housing problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions?

I need some work done on my house but the children have their own families to see to first but they will help when they have the time.

Our natural gas meter was surreptiously moved from beside our house to our front yard also the water service line from the water main under the street to our water meter freezes in severe cold weather and this leaves us for 2 or 3 days without running hydrant water. The city has refused to lower the service line so it won't freeze in cold weather.

Item 29. Do you have transportation problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions?

Drive own car when it runs.

Item 37. Do you have concerns about money which are not mentioned above?

Income is very comfortable except for taxes and inflation, oil, gross tax, income tax, windfall profit tax - robbery.

I wish \_\_\_\_\_ would save more of her money and ask me for less.

Item 44. How often do you visit in the home of your specified child?

None, he lives in Laramie, Wyoming at 7,200 ft. alt. and I cannot stay in altitudes higher than 5000 ft.

Item 56. Please give any other information related to the closeness of relationship of you and your designated adult child that you feel would be helpful to this study.

My girls say I was gone from home too much. My girls say I did not inspire confidence in their own ability. I gave them what I would like to have had for myself when I was growing up. My husband was a workaholic. My parents were workaholics. My girls grew up during the depression. I worked to give them two degrees each and I was a good grandmother to their 8 children, 5 of whose father died when the baby was 6 months old. We helped with her children in our home, and also took care of after she inherited for 15 years.

More time of either of us.

I feel my daughters were given too much too soon by grandfather, grandmother, father and mother. They think I should let a trust handle my estate. My lawyer (who was my father's and mother's lawyer and mine since he got out of law school, says I have handled it very well. He is now in his fifties too.

She has her life to live. She has a family so I try not to interfere with her plans. She has a steady job five days a week, a son not married but in his own home, a married daughter and grandchildren so I only call her occasional we visit, personal visit, mostly Sunday afternoons.

(Jane) is a step-daughter as is (Mary). Jane was eleven when we were married Mary was 8 months old. Her father died when she was 4 months old. Ruth is ours. She is 1/4 indigent. As her mother's health worsens she tries harder to be self-supporting. Jane has five grown children and is the bravest woman I ever knew.  
(assumed names used)

DESIGNATED ADULT CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED  
QUESTIONS IN RANDOM ORDER

Item 24. Does your parent have housing problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions?

My mother rents from my sister so there is some conflict between sister and mother.

The home needs major repairs due to construction faults - extensive settling and cracks - a worry. The home and yard work are too much physical work which my mother does herself as my father is crippled and unable to do some of the jobs necessary. She has not been able to find help to meet her satisfaction. She then suffers from arthritis and high blood pressure.

Receives help from great grandchildren. She pays them.

No - except being able to hire competent help for repairs around her home. It's hard for her to find someone to come, then they take a long time to get to her and certainly do not give her a break on the cost.

Item 29. Does your parent have transportation problems that have not been mentioned in the previous questions?

She has had a number of "fender benders" - so many a few years ago that her insurance was canceled. She did take a defensive driving course as a result.

During bad weather she hires a taxi cab to bring her groceries to her.

Item 37. Do you have concerns regarding your parent's financial situation that are not mentioned above?

I feel my parent unfair and selfish with family money.

They worry about not having enough - especially my mother. I think this is due to having been extremely poor while growing up and having lived through the depression.

Future - medical, food, etc., house repairs, social security will not cover the increase in living expenses.

Concerned with the rising cost of living.

Although she gets very little social security, she does have income from 2 apartment rentals, and help her with taxes and insurance. She is totally welcome to live with us at anytime,



and has been encouraged to do so, often. She is very independent and likes to be self reliant. We will assume any and all responsibilities, financial or otherwise when the time comes that she can no longer live by herself.

Item 56. Please give any other information related to the closeness of relationship of you and your parent that you feel would be helpful to this study.

She tell me her problems doesn't listen to mine. This makes me feel angry.

She is judgemental, critical. She is self centered, selfish, demanding. My mother has a dual nature. She means well and tries to be concerned. At the same time she psychologically and financially is destructive. If I want to get along with her it is detrimental to my mental health. I can't cope with her love hate program. I wish she understood me, and would quit hurting me. She needs love and family and so do I.

We have the greatest communication line between us, truthfulness, sincerety and have more love and understanding than most families. Just a note for your study: I am an adopted child.

Lack of time to be together. My work schedule/his activities. Closeness of relationship - very close if you mean love and trust. somewhat close if you mean time/activities together.

Our relationship is good but I'm not always treated as an adult with an acceptance of opinions other than her own. My mother has always been a very strong domineering personality who has a very strong sense of being "good", and a "Christian". She is extremely kind, thoughtful and loving. She gives of herself almost to the extent of denying time for herself and sometimes as a duty not out of pleasure. She tends to be "very hurt" if I or my children do not do what she wants us to do. Her feelings are easily "hurt". She is a perfectionest and an immaculate, compulsive housekeeper and I'm not, which causes me to feel inadequate. When I visit with my family she is "picking up" after us all the time - so that my children do not feel comfortable when they visit in her home; and I'm trying to keep one step ahead of her so there is always tension under the surface.

My greatest concern when it comes to my father is the fact I get so involved, busy, and tired I do not have more time to give. It gives me a great deal of comfort to realize my father has happily remarried and is active and busy with his own affairs. He is not ill, bored, lonely or depressed which definately gives some insight on our responses. We are indeed fortunate.

My mother will be 83 in August. In the last 2-2½ years she has developed hardening of the arteries which has caused abnormal personality traits for her and as a result we are not as close as we were several years ago.

I feel extremely close to both my parents and only wish I didn't live so far away. I do try to get home 2-3 times a year, but wish I could do so more often. I also wish they felt they could travel to see me, but my mother doesn't travel very well and I feel uneasy about my Dad driving very far.

I call her at least once a week and often twice - I live in another city. Those living in same city (family) call daily. I wish we could see each other more often. When I leave her after I've spent a day with her, I am depressed. She's 81 years old and I know she's not going to be here long. I wish I could say I love you - and run back and hug her - but it would all be so sad - and she would know that I'm afraid she won't be here long - so we remain friends - and laugh and enjoy each other's company and I don't say anything sad or mushy or depressing.

My mother has been a help in raising my 6 children. (Their only grand children). Her experience and age, I believe, is a factor in knowing how to handle certain problems that come up with raising a family and I have learned from her and in turn I can pass this on to my children when they start their families. There are other fields my mother is helpful in also. My dad is an active gardner and mechanic. He helps in this area. Both parents are from Pioneer stock, born and raised farmers from which they are retired. I am very proud of my parents.

My living parent is my mother. 76 yrs. old. She is very independent and involved with her own activities (church, lodge, Sr. Citizens Groups, etc.) She lives within her means - social security. My parents allowed me to become independent, making my own decisions from adulthood. They never tried to interfere after marriage and were always welcome guests in our home. When grandchildren came along - they were our responsibility and enjoyed visiting the grandparents on holidays and vacations. Our line of communication has always been open and good. My parents (mother) is someone I could always confide in. She was always at home when I was a child. She always showed interest in whatever I did. They always made me feel "special" and she still does. (I'm the oldest of 4 children). I would say on the whole we have a very good relationship and are close even though we live 400 miles apart. I have never lived closer than 200 miles since my marriage.

My mother turned our relationship around by the time I was 21 years old - she became the child - I was the listening

sympathetic "mother". In the past two years she has taken over the mother role again by helping me to return to college after I was widowed and we all more apt now to share problems.

We are very close but I do not feel that either of us would want to live together. I just hope we never have to face that problem.

We live too far apart. My mother, my sister and I are unusually close. My mother knows she can move in with us any-time. We are moving to Oklahoma to be near her when we retire, December, 1981. I realize that some answers might be different if I had lived near her all these years. In case you wonder why envelope was opened after it was sealed the first time, I decided to clarify some of those checked answers with the added comments. For example, I wanted it known that I see my mother more than once a year.

In recent years has visited none in our home. Used to visit every other year.

Is something missing in relationship? Distance (factor in having close relationship)

My mother has not only been an outstanding mother, she is also a wonderful grandmother. My children love her very much and have learned a great deal from her. They have always, and still do, love to visit in her home and spend time with her. She has taught all of us by example. She has never demanded anything of me. All the love and respect I have for her she has earned by being a loving mother and a very good friend. If my children love me half as much as I love my mother, I will feel very fortunate.

Parent was married at age 65 for a short time. Parent visits in AC home every few months unless she is recuperating - then as long as 3 or 4 mo. per stay.

Something missing relationship - honesty

Other than being very different individuals and both very independent people, there is only one thing I cannot seem to accept. My mother is not open and honest with me about what she needs, wants, or how she feels. She tries to protect me, not be a burden, and somewhat play the martyr (not the complaining kind). She talks and answers around things. I appreciate what she tries to do - but she most of all is not honest with herself and her friends. She sometimes doesn't understand how important truth is and not what the "people will think".

Although I live in Laramie WY (whose altitude is now too high for my father to visit -- since he had a heart attack several

years ago), business trips enable me to stop by Stillwater every month or two, plus my wife and I (and sometimes the children) make 5 or 6 other trips to Oklahoma per year (her folks also live in Okla.) We prefer more trips, and not to stay too long on each trip. As my Dad says about relatives, after a couple of days -- like fish -- they get to stinking.

I've been very helpful to my mother since I was 10 years old especially, as my father left her then with 3 children and her expecting another one. I am always willing to do whatever I can to help her. She feels free to call upon me anytime she feels she needs too. I try to do what I feel will benefit her the most in what advice I give her. Since her illness over a year ago, I feel she needs more help than before the illness and since the death of my step-father about a year ago, also. I think she does very well for a person her age and living where none of her children are near to her, And know that's hard on her too. If some of us lived in Stillwater she would have more help in caring for her and her house, And seeing to her daily needs and etc. I go as often as I can to see her and help take care of her business. Thanks to taking an interest in my mother.

APPENDIX C  
LSIZ SCORING PROCEDURES

## SCORING PROCEDURES - LIFE SATISFACTION Z\*

Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a check mark in the space under "AGREE." If you do not agree with a statement, put a check mark in the space under "DISAGREE." If you are not sure one way or the other, put a check mark in the space under "?." Please be sure to answer every question on the list.

(Key: Score 2 points for each "right" answer - marked with X; 1 point for ? or no response).

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
5. These are the best years of my life.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
6. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
8. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
9. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
10. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
11. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

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\*Vivian Wood, Mary L. Wylie, and Bradford Sheafor, "An Analysis of a Short Self-Report Measure of Life Satisfaction: Correlation with Rater Judgments," Journal of Gerontology, 24 (4) (1969), pp. 467-468.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
12. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
13. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better.	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF ELDERLY PARENTS WITH  
THEIR ADULT CHILDREN

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

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