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ABSTRACT

A study assessed the usability, retest reliability, and construct validity of an instrument measuring young adults': (1) perceived attention from parents; (2) perceived "normalcy" of family interactions; and (3) perceived consistency of family interactions. The retest reliability study yielded no significant differences between 73 respondents (undergraduate students from 6 homogeneous sections of a sophomore-level basic course in oral communication) from 2 separate administrations completed 8 weeks apart. Construct validity was measured by administering the instrument to 2 subsamples of 21 young adults from the same university (i.e., middle children from large families versus only children and/or honor students). Chi-square analyses yielded significantly different scores in the predicted directions. Results of these tests provided evidence of usability, retest reliability, and construct validity thus indicating that researchers may employ the instrument with confidence in future studies. (Contains 22 references, 2 tables of data, and 4 notes; appendixes contain the demographic questionnaire, instructions for subjects, and a statement of agreement to participate.) (Author/RS)

# The Memphis Family Perceptions Instrument: Tests for Validity and Reliability

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Running head: FAMILY PERCEPTIONS INSTRUMENT

# The Memphis Family Perceptions Instrument: Tests for Validity and Reliability


## Abstract

The present study assessed the usability, retest reliability and construct validity of an instrument measuring young adults' (a) perceived attention from parents, (b) perceived "normalcy" of family interactions, and (c) perceived consistency of family interactions. The retest reliability study yielded no significant differences between 73 Rs scores from two separate administrations completed eight weeks apart. Construct validity was measured by administering the instrument to two subsamples of young adults (i.e., middle children from large families versus only children and/or honor students). Chi-square analyses yielded significantly different scores in the predicted directions. The results of these tests provided evidence of usability, retest reliability, and construct validity thus indicating that researchers may employ the instrument with confidence in future studies.


Running head: FAMILY PERCEPTIONS INSTRUMENT

The Memphis Family Perceptions Instrument:

Tests for Validity and Reliability

Chartier and Chartier (1975) were among the first in the field of communication to publish an exploratory study examining the relationship between parental communication and self-esteem. The authors employed Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory (CSE) (Coopersmith, 1967) to measure respondents' self-esteem, and the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (RI) to examine perceived parental communication (Barrett-Lennard, 1962). Chartier and Chartier's results indicated that "the degree to which a young adult perceives his parents' communication as constructive is significantly related to his level of self esteem (p. 27)."

Several studies have examined the broader spectrum of parental behavior and self-esteem in young adults, documenting the influence of such variables as support, control, autonomy, induction, and companionship (Barber, Chadwick, & Oerter, 1992) as well as perceptions of verbal abuse, type of primary caretaker, and gender (Blake & Slate, 1993). Further, Barber et al. (1992) found a positive relationship between the quality of parent-adolescent relationships and self-esteem in a cross-cultural analysis of two groups of respondents from the United States and Germany. Similarly, Buri, Richtsmeier, and Komar (1992) studied the effects of parental nurturance as a predictor of self-esteem throughout the adolescent and young adult years; they concluded that parental nurturance is a very strong predictor of adolescent self-esteem in the junior high school years and remains a predictor of self-esteem throughout the subsequent high-school years. If parents are perceived as having high levels of positive verbal interactions they tend to have adolescents who like themselves and are confident. On the other hand, parents who are perceived as having low levels of positive communication tend to have adolescents with problems in self-esteem.

## Communicative Normalcy and Self-Esteem

Families enact communication in several different ways (Pill, 1990). One method used in family communication is the "reframing" of ideas about family life in order to adapt and avoid

problems associated with strict or "outmoded" perceptions. Pill found that reframing could open the lines of communication between family members. Effective parent-child communication enables families to grow and learn together; conversely, problems may arise when the family members have limited knowledge of communication and/or limited communication skills. Such families may look outside their own household to society to find a model of "normal" family communication.

## Perceived Favoritism and Self-Esteem

Research examining parent-child communication has explored both the parent and adolescent perception of family interactions. Lanza-Kaduce and Webb (1992) posited that "perceived parental communication patterns hold the potential to be important determinants in the social outcomes (such as the development of self-esteem) of the parent-adolescent relationship" (p.2). It can be reasoned that if the child has a positive perception of parents' communication, then the likelihood of a positive relationship and healthy self-image is greater. Perceptions of the family's communication may influence the self-esteem of both the adolescent and their parents (Demo, et al., 1987). Reuter and Webb (1992) found that perceptions of the mother's self-disclosure and the father's level of regard correlated with young adults' self-esteem.

Given these research findings, we believe the study of family communication, especially as it relates to self-esteem, could be advanced by more closely examining the influence of family perceptions, especially these three variables (i.e., perceived parental attention, perceived "normalcy" of family interactions, and perceived interactional consistency). Further, we believe that it is appropriate to study perceptions of these phenomena versus actual behavior(s) which influence perceptions for two reasons: (a) Negotiated meaning in communicative interactions is created through the various interpretations of the individuals involved. Therefore, perceptions of communicative phenomena have a greater impact on the individual than do the actual observable behaviors. (b) Adolescents may perceive parents' communicative behaviors differently than the

parents and/or an objective observer. When adopting the view that the receiver's perception is the communicated message, assessing perception becomes paramount.

## Purpose and Research Questions

The present study is part of a larger replication and extension of Chartier and Chartier's (1975) original study. The replication and extension study examined the influence of perceived parental communication upon the self-esteem of young adults. This replication and extension study employed previously published and tested instruments to assess its variables[1] in all cases except the following three: the perceived parental attention, perceived normalcy of family interactions, and perceived interactional consistency.

A through review of research in family studies as well as communication studies yielded no extant instruments to measure these variables. Therefore, the authors created an eight-item questionnaire to assess these perceptions, the "Memphis Family Perceptions Instrument," hereafter referred to simply as "the instrument" (see Appendix A). We consider the instrument's testing and development an important scholarly enterprise because "measurement is vital to the development of communication theory as it provides a way to classify and define objects under study" (Arnold, 1989, p.117). Table 1 contains theoretical and operational definitions of these variables.

The purpose of the present study was to conduct the pilot reliability and validity testing on the instrument so that researchers may employ it with confidence in future studies. The specific research questions were as follows:

RQ1: Does the instrument demonstrate adequate clarity of meaning, variability, task difficulty, "flow", and timing?

RQ2: Does the instrument have retest reliability? Specifically, do Rs report approximately the same perceptions at two test times eight weeks apart?

RQ3: Does the instrument have construct validity? That is, does it measure what it purports to measure? Specifically, does the instrument measure high scores for a sample expected to score

high in perceived amount of parental attention, normalcy, and consistency (i.e., in the upper quartile of responses)? Conversely, does the instrument measure low scores for a sample expected to score low on perceived amount of parental attention, normalcy, and consistency (i.e., in the lower quartile of responses)?

We believed that thorough testing of the instrument was vital because, as Emmert noted, "the weakest link in the empirical research is often that of the measurement techniques. ...[Measurement] is a critical aspect of any empirical study that cannot be over emphasized" (1989, p.87). "Since it is critical that the instrument(s) used in a study be reliable, valid, and useful" (Clark, 1991, p. 81), we conducted three distinct tests of the instrument: a pilot test, a retest reliability study, and a test for construct validity.

"A good survey ... has a pilot study ... to identify problems before they become costly (or even fatal) ones" (Bowers & Courtright, 1984, p.71-72). Our pilot study assessed score variation, meaning, and task difficulty of individual items as well as the "flow" and timing of the instrument as a whole. Emmert (1989) identified four types of reliability; three of the four were not assessed in the present study. Parallel-test reliability could not be tested because no previously published instrument assessed the variables of interest. Both split-half reliability (i.e., Chronbach's Alpha) and internal consistency tests were not appropriate in the present case due to the limited number of items employed to assess each variable. However, a retest reliability study was conducted to assess whether "the results obtained ... [from the instrument] are consistent from one administration to the next" (Emmert, 1989, p.101) - that is, to ascertain if the instrument produces "stable and reliable scores" (Clark, 1991, p.81).

Given that "survey research is generally weak on validity and strong on reliability" (Babbie, 1986, p.233), construct validity is "essential in the initial stages of measurement development" (Rubin & Graham, 1994, p.28). Therefore, a construct validity test was conducted to assess whether the instrument "actually measures what it is supposed to [measure]" (McCrosky & Richmond, 1989, p.154). While some scholars argue that "it is never actually

possible to `prove absolutely' the validity of any measurement procedure that is intended to `measure' a hypothetical construct" (Emmert, 1989, p.107), many scholars provide suggested procedures for assessing validity (Bowers & Courtright, 1984; Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Clark, 1991).

Carmines and Zeller (1979) together with Clark (1991) identify five types of validity; four of the five were not assessed in the present study. Convergent validity could not be tested because no previously published instrument assessed the variables of interest. Content validity was not appropriate as the instrument was not assessing a knowledge base. Similarly, criterion validity was not appropriate because the instrument measures extant perceptions rather than attempting to assess or predict actual behavior.[2] Finally, face validity was not measured directly as the authors designed the instrument to have face validity, no deception was involved in the testing, and the pilot study involved appropriate lay-experts to establish face validity. Therefore, the authors tested the instrument's construct validity, the type of validity described as "central to the measurement of abstract theoretical concepts" (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p.23), the "most theoretically based" (Emmert, 1989, p.114), and "the most important and certainly the most difficult type of validity to establish" (Bowers & Courtright, 1984, p.120).

## Instruments

The authors employed two questionnaires in this study: a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) as well as the instrument under study. The questionnaires were counterbalanced to avoid order effects. Half of the Rs received packets containing demographic questionnaire first followed by the instrument; the other half of the packets were in reverse order.

The demographic questionnaire was administered for reporting purposes as well as to determine if Rs were members of the populations under study. The questionnaire assessed Rs' year and status in school as well as age, gender, ethnicity and citizenship. Additionally, the demographic questionnaire contained seven questions about household type, siblings, and perceptions of parental favoritism.

The instrument is an eight-item questionnaire (see Table 1). The first two questions assess perceived parental attention by asking Rs to circle the percentage of free-time each parent spent with the Rs while the Rs were growing up. Options range from 0 to 100% in 10% increments. The latter six questions employ Thurstone-type scales ranging from 1 to 11 to assess perceptions of family "normalcy" and perceptions of consistency in family interactions.

Note that the instrument was designed to avoid two of the measurement problems most often associated with personal relationship research methodology (Baxter, 1988).[3] Further, following the advice of Bowers and Courtright, conceptually related items were grouped together "to minimize mental strain for a reader" (1984, p.66). Given that "research has demonstrated that one item [assessment] is very unreliable" (Arnold, 1989, p.131), the instrument included two to four items to assess each variable; in each case, distinct questions addressed perceptions of mother and father. Finally, the instrument was designed to meet the three assumptions of Likert scales.[4]

Three distinct studies examined the adequacy of this instrument: a pilot test, a retest reliability study, and a construct validity test. In each case, the authors obtained approval from appropriate committees on the use of human subjects prior to data collection. All data were collected from students attending the same large, urban state university located in the southeastern United States. For each statistical analysis, the authors failed to reject the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05.

## Pilot Test

### Methods

#### Respondents

Respondents (Rs) were 24 undergraduate students enrolled in a senior-level course in interpersonal communication at the university described above. Rs were 15 female and 9 male students who received a small amount of extra-credit for participation in this study. The sample contained 14 (58.33%) communication majors, 7 (29.17%) individual study majors, as well as

one of each of the following majors: psychology, theatre, and undecided. Most of the students (20 of 24) were seniors; however, the sample also contained one junior and three sophomores. The researchers selected a sample of advanced students of interpersonal communication for their heightened sensitivity to interpersonal and relational issues as well as the impact of technical and relational terms. These Rs were drawn from the same university-wide student population as the sample for the retest reliability study as well as the construct validity test. Further, this sample approximately met Converse and Presser's (1986) suggested size requirements for pilot studies (i.e., 25-75 Rs).

Procedures

Three graduate students in communication, including the first author, administered the questionnaires at the end of a regular class meeting. Rs were asked to complete the questionnaire with a critical eye, noting any problems or difficulties in reading, understanding, or interpreting the questionnaire. Rs were asked to raise their hand to report any difficulties; test administrators recorded the questions. No time limits were imposed; all Rs completed the questionnaire within 15 minutes.

## Results

The pilot test provided an indication of the amount of time necessary for Rs to complete the questionnaire (i.e., 15 minutes) as well as the instrument's clarity of meaning. One R's question related to the demographic questionnaire; to address the concern, the researchers added "none" as an option to question 5. Two questions related to the instrument: one was the direct result of not reading a question accurately; a simple rereading of the question clarified the matter. The other question related to the meaning of the phrase "while you were growing up." After thoughtful consideration, the authors declined to rewrite the phrase as we believed more specific phrasing (i.e., "from your earliest memory until you moved away from home") would be awkward and provide no additional semantic clarity.

As per Converse and Presser's (1986) suggestion, the researchers hand-tallied the Rs responses. Virtually every possible response to each question was selected at least once; therefore, the instrument was deemed to provide the opportunity for sufficient variation in response. As no R asked a question or provided a response that indicated a lack of procedural understanding, the "flow" of the questionnaire and naturalness of the sections were deemed adequate. In sum, the pilot test provided evidence of the instrument's adequacy on issues of clarity of meaning, variation, task difficulty, "flow", and timing.

## Test-Retest Reliability Study

### Methods

#### Respondents

Rs consisted of 73 undergraduate students from six homogenous sections of a sophomore-level basic course in oral communication. This course is a graduation requirement for each student at the same university. The sample contained 32 males (43.84%) and 41 females (56.16%). While the majority of the sample were Caucasian (80.82%), other ethnic backgrounds were represented: 15.06% African-American, 1.36% Asian-American, 1.36% Hispanic and 1 (1.36%) other. Students from each class rank participated in the study; 5.48% freshman, 60.27% sophomores, 26.02% juniors, and 8.21% seniors. While six (8.21%) were only children, the majority of Rs ($N = 67$, 91.78%) reported having siblings. The age range of the respondents was 19 - 36, with a mean age of 21.

#### Procedures

The instrument and the demographic questionnaire were administered to 85 Rs at Test Time 1. However, only 73 of these Rs completed the questionnaire again during Test Time 2, resulting in 73 usable questionnaire sets. Given that memory may influence results when two administrations are two to four weeks apart (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 40), Test Time 2 occurred exactly eight weeks after the Test Time 1 administration. A coding process that guaranteed anonymity was used to pair the results of Test Time 1 with Test Time 2.

Data were collected on two successive days in six individual sections of the course. The first author gained permission from the course director as well as each section instructor and administered the questionnaire to each section at the beginning of the class. The author also provided Rs with oral instructions for completion and coding of the questionnaires. (See Appendix B). Participation was voluntary; Rs who completed the questionnaire signed an agreement to participate form (Appendix C) and received a small amount of extra-credit in the class. Students who elected not to participate in the study were given a copy of the Chartier and Chartier (1975) article to read as an alternative extra-credit activity. Although no time restrictions were given, all Rs completed the questionnaire within fifteen minutes.

## Results

The first author paired each R's questionnaires from Test Time 1 and Test Time 2 using a pre-assigned code. Responses to each of the eight questions on the instrument were recorded for both test times, resulting in 16 data points for each of the 73 Rs. The authors computed a Wilcoxin matched-pairs signed-ranks test (Siegel, 1956, pp. 75-83) for each individual question by subtracting each R's Test-Time-1-score from his/her Test-Time-2-score. The analyses failed to yield significant differences. The two-tailed alphas are reported in Table 1.

A Wilcoxin test was calculated , rather than the usual Pearson product-moment-correlation coefficient (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p.37) for two reasons: (a) The Wilcoxin test assesses both the direction and magnitude of the differences between the matched scores thus providing a highly sensitive test for changes. Indeed, "it gives much more weight to a pair [of scores] which shows a large difference between the two conditions than to a pair which shows a small difference" (Siegel, 1956, p.75). Thus, the Wilcoxin test allowed a direct assessment of the extent to which scores changed on retest rather than whether they were merely correlated with earlier scores. (B) Given that these questions were newly developed, we had no data to indicate that the assumptions of a parametric statistical test such as a correlation (e.g., normal

distribution, homoscedasticity) could be met. Therefore, the authors elected the more conservative path of employing nonparametric analyses.

## Construct Validity Test

### Methods

#### Respondents

Rs were 21 students from the same university. The sample contained Rs who reported membership in one of two subpopulations that logically would appear to represent extreme scores on these variables: a) honor students and/or only children (N=11) or b) middle children from a family of five or more children (N=10). These diverse subpopulations were sampled in an attempt to identify young adults who were likely to have had a large amount of parental attention while they were growing up (i.e., honor students and only children) as well as young adults who were likely to have had very little parental attention while they were growing up (i.e., middle children from large families).

The subpopulation of honor students and/or only children contained 5 males (45%) and 6 females (55%). The majority of Rs were Caucasian (91%), with 1 African-American R (9%). Students from several class ranks participated in the study: 5 first-year students, 1 sophomore, 3 seniors, and 1 graduate student. While 7 Rs (63.64%) were only children, 4 of the honors students reported having siblings (36.36%). Of the Rs, 4 were both honor students and only children (36.36%), 4 were honor students but not only children (36.36%), and 3 were only children but not honor students (27.27%).

The subpopulation of middle children from families of five or more children contained 3 males (30%) and 7 females (70%). The Rs represented three ethnicities: 5 Caucasian (50%), 4 African-American (40%), and 1 Asian-American (10%). Three class ranks were represented: 6 sophomores, 1 junior, and 3 graduate students. In this subpopulation, the Rs reported a number of siblings ranging from 4 to 11, with a mean of 6.10.

#### Procedures

Rs completed the instrument and a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire contained an additional three questions to assess if Rs were in a target population. The first question read: "My status as a [university name] student is (circle one) a) honor student, b) non-honor student, or c) none of the above." The second question read: "How many siblings did you have? (please write in the number) _____." Question three asked: "What number child were you in the family (i.e., first-born, second-born, third, etc.)? (please write in the number) _____."

The first author placed an advertisement in the campus newspaper to recruit volunteers from the subgroups. The advertisement asked students to call a telephone number to volunteer if they fit into any of the three listed categories (i.e., an only child, an honor student, and/or from a family of five or more children). When potential Rs called, they were mailed a packet containing an agreement to participate form and brief instructions (contained in Appendix B), a demographic questionnaire, the instrument, and a postage-paid envelope addressed to the first author for returning the questionnaires. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires, each R was mailed two dollars in payment for participation.

## Results

Statistical analyses were conducted to ascertain if the responses from the subsamples were extreme (high or low) scores. For purposes of the analyses, extreme scores were defined operationally as the upper and lower quartile ranges calculated from an administration of the instrument during the previous semester to 319 Rs enrolled in an oral communication course that served as a graduation requirement. An average score was operationally defined as any score that fell in either of the middle two quartiles.

Data from the special subsamples were organized into a frequency table based on whether the score was in the upper, the middle two, or the lower quartiles, thus creating a 2X3 contingency table for each of the eight questions. A chi square and C contingency coefficient were computed for each of the eight contingency tables.

Chi-square analyses were appropriate as such analyses assess whether "two groups differ with respect to some characteristic and therefore with respect to the relative frequency with which some group members fall in several categories" (Siegel, 1956, p.104). The significant results are displayed in Table 2. An examination of the cell frequencies indicated that the differences were generally in the predicted direction.

## General Discussion

This study conducted three distinct tests to assess the usability, reliability, and validity of the Memphis Family Perceptions Instrument. The pilot test provided the opportunity for "field observation of the questionnaire in action" (Converse & Presser, 1986, p.71) as well as preliminary evidence of the instrument's adequacy on issues of clarity of meaning, variation, task difficulty, "flow", and timing.

Eight Wilcoxin matched-pairs signed-ranks tests assessed the retest reliability of the questions. Each test revealed no significant differences between the Rs' Test-Time-1 versus Test-Time-2 scores. Clark noted that an instrument "is reliable and valid to the extent that it produces the same scores with multiple administrations" (1991, p.81). Thus, the present study provides evidence of the instrument's retest reliability across an eight-week period.

Chi square tests assessed the construct validity of the instrument. The significant results indicated that these two subsamples differed with respect to their classifications. For Questions 1, 2, 3, and 5 the cluster patterns displayed on Table 2 are clearly in the expected array. For example, the honor students/only children tended to report that their parents spent much of their free time with the Rs and thus their scores cluster in the upper and middle quartiles. In contrast, the middle children from large families tended to report that their parents spent little of their free time with the Rs and thus their scores clustered in the lower and middle quadrants.

However, questions 4, 6, 7, and 8 follow a slightly different pattern. The honor students/only children display the array described above but the scores of middle children tended to cluster in the middle quadrants with only a slight tendency toward the low scores (i.e., in the

predicted direction). Thus, the data to support the validity claim about the instrument's ability to assess low score is not as strong as the authors had hoped. Nonetheless, the significant chi-square scores indicate a significant difference in the patterns of the scores between the two subsamples. Further, the C scores indicated that the association between the subpopulations and the type of score (high, average, or low) is quite high.

Thus, overall, these data clearly support a claim of external validity for the questionnaire. Honor students and only children were significantly more likely than middle children from large families to obtain high scores on the questions. In contrast, middle children from large families were significantly more likely than only children and honor students to obtain middle and low scores.

Limitations of this study include the relatively small sample size for the construct validity test (N=21). Additionally, the retest reliability assessment included only one retest administration. Further, all Rs were from the same university, thus largely representing one region of the country and/or one urban area. Nonetheless, the results of these tests provide evidence of the usability, reliability and validity, which indicate that the instrument may be employed with some confidence in future studies.

It is important to view the present study as a critical first step in establishing the reliability and validity of the instrument. As Carmine and Zeller said:

> Construct validity is not established by confirming a single prediction on different occasions or confirming many predictions in a single study. Instead, construct validation ideally requires a pattern of consistent findings involving different researchers using different theoretical structures across a number of different studies (1979, p.24)

Given the results of this preliminary study, researchers are comfortable recommending the use of this instrument in multiple studies with varying theoretical orientations.

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## Endnotes

[1] The instruments were the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967), the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962), the Revised Family Communication Patterns Instrument (Ritchie and Fitzpatrick, 1990) and a standard demographics questionnaire.

[2] The instrument did not employ relational labels such as "close friends" or "romantic partner" which carry ambiguous meanings. Further, Rs' responses assessed their own perceptions rather than a dyadic measure of the relationship

[3] "All items are relevant to the cognitive construct of interest. ... Each item is equally representative of the cognitive construct being measured. ... The cognitive construct being investigated justifies the use of a number of summed scales" (Bowers & Courtright, 1984, p. 97).

[4] "Both criterion validity and content validity have limited usefulness for assessing the validity of empirical measures of theoretical concepts employed in the social sciences. It is partly for this reason that primary attention has been focused on construct validity" (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p.22).

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Code: _____

In what YEAR were you born? _____

Gender: (Please check one) _____ Female _____ Male

Ethnic Background: (Please check all that apply)

_____ American Indian _____ Asian
_____ African-American _____ Caucasian
_____ Hispanic _____ Other - please specify: _____

Class: _____
Teacher's name: _____
Title of class: _____
Class meeting time: _____
Year in school:

_____ freshman _____ sophomore
_____ junior _____ senior
_____ MA student _____ PhD student

1. Household type:

I was raised in a home that I would characterize PRIMARILY as:

_____ single mother household
_____ single father household
_____ biological, mother & father living together
_____ step-father, biological mother
_____ step-mother, biological father
_____ step-mother alone
_____ step-father alone
_____ other (please specify): _____

Appendix A (cont'd.)

2. Living arrangements:

What are your present living arrangements?

_____ live with one or more parents
_____ college dorm
_____ apartment/house
_____ other (please specify): _____

Siblings:

3. How large was your family while you were growing up?

_____ I had brothers and/or sisters
_____ I was an only child
(If you were an only child, you may skip the next four questions.)

4. How many siblings lived in your household while you were growing up? (please place a number beside each option)

_____ brother(s)
_____ sister(s)
_____ half-brother(s)
_____ half-sister(s)
_____ step-brother(s)
_____ step-sister(s)
_____ adoptive brother(s)
_____ adoptive sister(s)

5. While you were growing up, did you have any siblings that did NOT live in your household?

_____ brother(s)
_____ sister(s)
_____ half-sister(s)
_____ step-brother(s)
_____ step-sister(s)
_____ adoptive brother(s)
_____ adoptive sister(s)
_____ none

Appendix A (cont'd.)

6. When I was growing up, my father (or primary male caregiver) had a favorite among his children.

_____ yes _____ no _____ no male caregiver

If yes, his favorite child was:

_____ me
_____ a sibling older than me
_____ a sibling younger than me

7. When I was growing up, my mother (or primary female caregiver) had a favorite among her children.

_____ yes _____ no _____ no female caregiver

If yes, her favorite child was:

_____ me
_____ a sibling older than me
_____ a sibling younger than me

Appendix B
Instructions

First, I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. This project will help me in the completion of my Master's Degree in Communication. Also, this study can help researchers better understand the dynamic process of communication in families.

My grade for this project is determined in part by the number of people who participate in this study. You can help me receive a good grade by filling out and returning this questionnaire. I appreciate your participation.

Included in this packet are the questionnaire for you to fill out, and a pre-addressed stamped envelope for returning it in. It should take about 15 minutes for you to complete the questionnaire. After you are finished, simply place the completed questionnaire, this form, and your signed Statement of Agreement to Participate form in the enclosed envelope. Seal it and drop it in the US mail. Please try to return it as soon as possible.

Once I have received your completed questionnaire, I will mail back $2 in payment for your participation in this study. To receive your payment, please include you name and mailing address below.

Thank you again for your time and help.

Name _____
Address _____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix C

Statement of Agreement to Participate

The Theatre and Communication Arts Department at the University of Memphis supports the practice and protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. This study is conducted by Tamara Bollis-Pecci in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Communication. The study is directed by Lynne M. Webb, also of the University of Memphis.

This study is intended to examine attitudes about and perceptions of the family. You are asked to complete the attached survey. It asks you to provide information about yourself and your family. The survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete.

The potential benefits to this survey include increased self-awareness and recalling childhood memories. There appears to be no risk of any type to you if you agree to participate in this study. However, if you recall painful memories and wish to speak to a counselor about these matters, the number of the university counseling service is 678-2068. We suggest you telephone this service for an appointment if you so desire. The counseling is offered free of charge to University students carrying 6 or more hours.

Your responses will be kept confidential. No information which identifies you or any other participant will be provided on subsequent reports of this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any point without penalty.

Please sign and date the following consent form. Please separate this form from your questionnaire and return it with your completed survey. Once again, your responses will be confidential.

I have read and understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in the study and I have received a copy of the description of this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

If you would like to receive a written summary of the results of this study when it is completed, please provide your name and address below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TABLE 1

Results of Retest Reliability Study

| Variable | Z, p[a] |
|---|---|
| 1. **Perceived amount of parental attention** | |
| definition: the extent to which a child perceives his/her parent dedicating free time to him/her | |
| operationalizations: | |
| **Q1a** - "While you were growing up, what percentage of his free time did your father (or primary male caregiver) spend with you?" | Z= -0.8358, p= 0.401 |
| **Q1b** - "your mother?" | Z= 0.241, p= 0.8104 |
| 2. **Perceived normalcy of family interactions** | |
| definition: the extent to which the child perceives his/her family as "normal" when compared to other families | |
| operationalizations: | |
| **Q2** - "Compared to most American families, how "normal" were your family's interactions?" | Z= -0.10, p= 0.9204 |
| **Q3** - "Compared to families you knew, how "normal" were your family's interactions?" | Z= -0.142, p= 0.8886 |
| 3. **Perceived interactional consistency** | |
| definition: the extent to which the child perceives the interactions of the family members as consistent over time | |
| operationalizations: | |
| **Q4** - "While you were growing up, how consistent were your mother's (or primary female caregiver's) interactions with you? (Did she interact with you in the same way from one day to the next?)" | Z= -1.54, p= 0.1236 |
| **Q5** - "While you were growing up, how consistent were your father's (or primary male caregiver's) interactions with you? (Did he interact with you in the same way from one day to the next?)" | Z= -0.799, p= 0.4296 |
| **Q6** - "While you were growing up, how consistent were your mother's interactions with your father (or primary caregiver)? (Did she interact with him in the same way from one day to the next?)" | Z= 0.116, p= 0.9124 |
| **Q7** - "While you were growing up, how consistent were your father's interactions with your mother (or primary caregiver)? (Did he interact with her in the same way from one day to the next?)" | Z= -0.6998, p= 0.4902 |

[a] Statistics are from Wilcoxin matched-pairs signed-ranks tests. All alphas are two-tailed. Sample size was 73.

TABLE 2

Data from Construct Validity Study

| | Only Children/Honor Students | | | | Middle Children from Large Families | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question # | mean | Q1** | Q2-Q3 | Q4 | mean | Q1 | Q2-Q3 | Q4 | $X^2$ | C* |
| 1a. | 61.80 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 35.00 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 69.30 | 0.876 |
| 1b. | 79.09 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 47.7 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 87.73 | 0.902 |
| 2. | 10.50 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 5.80 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 184.39 | 0.947 |
| 3. | 8.90 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 6.60 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 63.26 | 0.866 |
| 4. | 9.45 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 7.10 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 94.80 | 0.905 |
| 5. | 9.90 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6.50 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 86.81 | 0.897 |
| 6. | 9.63 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6.90 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 97.70 | 0.907 |
| 7. | 9.90 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 7.50 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 93.58 | 0.904 |

*All X and C, df=2, all significant at <.001
** Q signifies the range of each quadrant

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