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The mother-child relationship as a predictor of late adolescent functioning

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Case Western Reserve University, 1991
THE MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AS A PREDICTOR OF
LATE ADOLESCENT FUNCTIONING

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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THE MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AS A PREDICTOR OF LATE ADOLESCENT FUNCTIONING

Abstract

by

Pamela Simon Senders

The importance of the early mother-child relationship and the navigation of separation-individuation in toddlerhood has long been recognized. This study explored these relationship issues at the time of the "second individuation." Relationship with mother was examined as a predictor of late adolescent functioning in the areas of ego identity status, depression, and eating disturbances. 183 college students (114 females and 69 males; mean age was 19.14) from two campuses completed a battery of paper and pencil measures regarding past and current factors in their relationship with mother. Two brief measures addressing separation-individuation and the student's perception of mother as a role model were designed for this study. Data was analyzed for four groups (by sex and living situation). Results indicated that greater feelings of individuation correspond with feelings of acceptance by mother during childhood, and less discord in the current mother-child relationship. Multiple regression
analyses revealed that relationship with mother was a good predictor of depression in three of four groups; women living with their parents were the exception. Relationship with mother was a significant predictor of ego identity status only for men living away from home. Relationship with mother proved to be a predictor of drive for thinness and body dissatisfaction only for women living away from home. Findings are discussed in terms of different separation-individuation issues for males and females, continuity of the relationship with mother over time, and the relation between living situation and relationship with mother. Areas for further research are discussed.
Dedication

To Eric...with love and appreciation for his continued support and patience, and for his good humor while scoring tests at midnight; and, to Ariella...whose silly grins, sloppy kisses, and sleepy hugs have added a new dimension of love to my life.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents Josef and Pepi Simon for supporting my educational goals. Heartfelt thanks go to my mother for giving her loving care and attention to Ariella while I wrote this dissertation.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my siblings, their spouses, my in-laws, and my friends during the lengthy process of graduate school. Each in his or her own way has encouraged me (using a variety of methods including coaxing, cajoling, threats, and even attempted bribery) to attain the goals I set for myself and "just get it done already!" Thank you for your loyalty.

Thanks go to my nephew and niece, Paul and Carly Wieder, for volunteering some of their vacation time to help score measures.

I would like to thank Donna Zloba, Chris Schatschneider, Judy and Jerry Turner, for their technical expertise and assistance in completing this project.
Special thanks go to Dr. Jane Kessler for taking an interest in my graduate school career, guiding me through the dissertation maze, and being a role model I would be proud to emulate.
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THE MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AS A PREDICTOR OF LATE ADOLESCENT FUNCTIONING

Introduction

There has been longstanding interest in the mother-child relationship and its impact on development. Recently psychologists have intensified their interest in this relationship under the rubric of object relations theory. Cashdan (1988), a proponent of object relations therapy has stated, "The major paradox of early childhood is that autonomous growth occurs in the context of a highly dependent relationship" (p.64). Many elements have spurred this renewed interest in the mother-child dyad, including the early debates between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, the rise of ego and self psychology, debates between Kernberg and Kohut, the nature of the idealizing transference, the role of aggression in early development, and so on.

The Early Mother-Child Relationship

The attachment between mother and child is reported to have lifelong implications for personality development, the establishment of self-esteem, and the stability of interpersonal relationships. Freud (1905/1962) stated, "A child's affection for his parents...points the way to his choice of
an object" (p.94), and he wrote that children grow to feel for others who meet their needs "...a love which is on the model of and a continuation of their relation as sucklings to their nursing mother" (p.88). Mahler, Bergmann, and Pine (1975) called this relationship the "primal soil from which all subsequent human relationships form." Treatment of patients with personality disorders has prompted interest in early object relationships, as well. For example, Kernberg (1980) found many parallels to the developmental phases of children in his work with borderline patients. The two lines of investigation exemplified by the work of Mahler and Kernberg have converged to form modern object relations theory (Hamilton, 1988). Of course, other object-relations, genetic predispositions, and environmental factors play a role in development, but time and again the mother-child relationship has been implicated as a critical element in how a child's personality unfolds.

The seminal work of Mahler et al. (1975) described the events necessary for a child to negotiate a path from the absolute dependency of "normal autism", to the lack of differentiation in "symbiosis", to the early strivings for separation and individuation in toddlerhood. The child disengages from the mother, establishes appropriate boundaries, and gains in intrapsychic autonomy in the first three years of life, ultimately achieving object constancy. As the child "hatches" from the mother's protective
(sometimes engulfing) embrace, he or she hopefully is ready to embark on a voyage of world exploration outside the sphere of that earliest attachment, equipped with the confidence and security he or she attained therein.

**The Second Individuation**

In time the voyage of exploration through the relatively calm waters of latency comes to an end, and the process of separation is undertaken once again. With the arrival of pubertal changes in adolescence, the separation-individuation process must be repeated, but in a modified form. This time the adolescent struggles to separate from the parents and their expectations, in order to embark on a voyage of self-discovery and identity development. To this end, Anna Freud (1958) claimed that it was normal for an adolescent "to behave for a considerable length of time in an inconsistent and unpredictable manner" including "to love his parents and to hate them; to revolt against them and to be dependent on them; to be deeply ashamed to acknowledge his mother before others and unexpectedly to desire heart to heart talks with her..." (p. 275). Blos (1962, 1967, 1979) discussed adolescence from the perspective of psychoanalytic recapitulation theory, and he has termed this period the "second individuation," a time of psychic restructuring which entails regression in the service of normal
development. He views adolescence as a series of phases, from latency through late adolescence, the outcome of which is the attainment of a "personal and autonomous lifestyle." Some hallmarks of adolescence are the shedding of family dependency, the loosening of infantile object ties, finding new sexual objects outside the family, and accepting responsibility for oneself. Adolescence provides a second chance to come to terms with overwhelming dangers which have survived infancy and latency. According to Blos, the adolescent often deals with these through "action language or body language," including somatization, and anorexia nervosa or psychogenic obesity, in extreme cases. Adolescents are often moody which may represent both their joy upon independence from the internal objects and the depressed affect in the face of this loss. During the final phase, late adolescence, a consolidation of ego takes place; the adolescent arrives at some settlement of "my way of life" and a sense that "this is me."

Remnants of earlier unresolved conflicts can be carried through each phase contributing to the attitudes, "pet peeves," feelings and prejudices which are part of the final character formation. The period of adolescence, however, is a time of heightened vulnerability. Difficulties may result in deviant development, developmental impasses, or failure to individuate. Blos refers to these adaptations as prolonged, miscarried or incomplete adolescence.
Identity Development in Adolescence

In Erikson’s (1963) eight-stage theory of development, he delegates the tasks of adolescence to the fifth stage, which he calls Identity vs. Role Confusion. From his psychosocial perspective Erikson has written extensively about the "identity crisis," a necessary turning point in adolescence during which commitments are made to ideology and occupation. In pursuit of an identity the adolescent becomes preoccupied with how he or she seems to others and how that compares with his or her self-perception. Erikson considered adolescence as a time for searching, experimentation, and introspection which then serves to crystallize some earlier developmental components while also setting a course for decisions in later life. In addressing the vicissitudes of adolescent development, Erikson (1956, 1968) discussed outcomes along a continuum between achieving ego identity or experiencing identity diffusion. The concepts of identity crisis and development along a continuum have been great contributions to the study of adolescence.

Subsequent work has specified other possible outcomes along the continuum from identity achievement to diffusion. Marcia (1966) developed an interview format and an Ego Identity Incomplete Sentences Blank with which to categorize adolescents based on Erikson’s ideas. Four ego identity status groups were named as ways of coping with the
adolescent identity crisis. Identity Achievement is the status in which the adolescent has both experienced a crisis and made a commitment. In the status of Foreclosure the adolescent had made commitments, generally based on parental values, and he or she has not experienced a crisis. The adolescent in Moratorium has not made commitments yet because he or she is in the throes of the identity crisis. Moratorium today seems to be socially sanctioned, embodied, and perhaps prolonged, in the college experience (Steinberg, 1989). Finally, the youth who experiences Identity Diffusion is not performing the maturational tasks of identity development. He or she is in a state of confusion and lacking in commitments, though he or she may or may not have experienced a decision-making period.

Variants of Marcia’s methodology have been used in many studies, establishing identity as a useful and reliable construct in the study of adolescent personality development (Marcia, 1980). With varying degrees of success other researchers have operationalized Erikson’s ideas and Marcia’s framework in forced-choice, Q-sort, and questionnaire formats which are easier to administer and to score.

**Gender Differences in Adolescent Development**

When discussing adolescent development two related issues also must be considered. The first issue centers on the differences between
male and female development in adolescence. Freud proposed a theory of
differential development for male and female children based on the
resolution of the Oedipal conflict (1931/1961, 1933/1964). He believed
that for females, castration anxiety began the Oedipal phase, that its
resolution was incomplete, and consequently the female superego was less
well developed than the male's. He also felt that females developed
hostility toward the mother for "castrating" her, making it impossible to
maintain the primary attachment. Generally, Freud (1933/1964) felt that
development from girl to woman was more difficult and complicated than
the comparable process for males. Continuing in the psychoanalytic vein,
but addressing adolescence, Blos (1962) believed that the female's
adolescent struggle was more intense, because it included a "prolonged and
painful" separation from mother. Erikson (1968) wrote primarily about
male development and addressed womanhood as a side issue. He
suggested that because a female's sense of identity is more relational than
a male's, the female may actually leave some identity issues unresolved
until she forms a relationship with someone (e.g., a prospective spouse)
whose sense of identity will help to establish her own. Newman and
Newman (1988) also described "less of a sequenced path" from identity to
intimacy for women. They reported that although men would not commit
to marriage until after making occupational and gender identity
commitments, some females would marry before these other commitments were firmly established.

Much of the early identity status research was conducted with male subjects. When females are studied, however, different criteria are sometimes used and results often differ from those studies conducted with men (Marcia, 1980). Feminist writers have begun to address these purported differences in development. In a study of 48 female college seniors, Josselson (1973) found that unlike Erikson's expectations, few women were deeply concerned with ideology or political values. For these women nurturance and interpersonal relations were primary concerns. Josselson concluded that for women the stages of identity and intimacy are merged. For the women studied, what some might otherwise call vague commitments to the goals of career and family, Josselson interpreted as commitments to the fundamentals with flexibility available for filling-in details later (e.g., how to balance a career with motherhood). Josselson (1987) also developed the principle of anchoring which is critical for female development. Women identify themselves in relation to some "anchor" - their primary family, a spouse and/or children, a career, or friends - which satisfies the need for communion following the separation-individuation process of late adolescence.
Although some feminists balk at Freud's conclusions about females, others have made an effort to work within his Oedipal schema, while greatly expanding the attention given to the female's way of meeting developmental challenges. While Freud emphasized the importance of the male's separation from mother in order to establish gender identity, Chodorow (1978) focused on the female's bias for empathy and her wish to combine a sense of attachment and identity. She wrote of the "mutual engagement" between mother and daughter which makes separation arduous for both members of the dyad and fraught with ambivalence. The mother wants to steer the daughter toward adulthood, yet keep her close. The daughter's feelings of continuity in the relationship conflict with her wish to individuate. In some cases the daughter may act as a mother substitute for her mother, thereby developing an insufficiently individuated self.

Some writers emphasize the differences in adolescent tasks. A male's sense of self is established by forming boundaries; he must turn away from the mother, his primary attachment, in order to establish a male identity. For females, the attachment to mother may be continued; within this relationship, the female is still able to establish her feminine sense of self (Apter, 1990). Apter claims that mothers and daughters fight more, but with the goal of preserving their closeness, not separating. While
studying Kohlberg's model of moral development, which was patterned on men's lives, Gilligan (1982) realized that the model did not fit very well for women. She came to oppose the classic arguments which paint the female as inferior or failing to develop because her identity is defined through attachment rather than separation. Since adolescence is a crucial time for separation, she suggested that female development was most divergent and problematic during this period. Gilligan found that the different moral conceptions of women were grounded in the context of relationships. Women judged by standards of responsibility and caring, unlike the formal abstractions men relied upon.

Stern (1990), in keeping with the feminist works cited above, pointed out the paradox inherent in any discussion of female adolescence: Adolescence is traditionally viewed as a time of separation, "a second individuation," yet for women, the self is best defined through relationships with others. How then does the female traverse the already challenging terrain of adolescence if she is being pulled in two directions?

Views on Adolescent Turmoil

In addition to the issue of gender differences in adolescence a second issue must be addressed regarding the problematic nature of the adolescent period itself. Is it inherently a normative or a disturbed period
of development? The theories of development reviewed above represent the classical interpretations which portray adolescence as a period of "normative disturbance" including regression, crisis, rebellion, confusion, and so on. One may also consider some contemporary views which hold adolescence as a normal phase which sometimes entails some disturbing or disruptive episodes. Several studies (see Apter, 1990, for a brief review) have found that the supposed "turmoil" or "trauma" does not exist for many normal adolescents. Instead, many teenagers pass through these years in a relatively calm manner with minimal rebellion and still manage to achieve the adolescent tasks of social, emotional and vocational growth. Weiner (1970) cites considerable data suggesting that "the modal teenager is a reasonably well adjusted individual whose daily functioning is minimally marred by psychological incapacity" (p.48). He suggests that when a turbulent adolescence occurs it is generally reflective of deviant adjustment and is not normative. Weiner reviews numerous studies, the results of which suggest that psychological disturbances in adolescents warrant the same concerns and attention as they do in adults. Haley (1980) called late adolescence the "age of leaving home," a particularly vulnerable period during which the adolescent may exhibit "mad or eccentric" characteristics. It is widely known that the latter part of adolescence is
often the time of a first psychotic break, or other symptomatic manifestation.

**Parent-Child Relations and Adolescent Maladjustment**

When pathological functioning becomes apparent in adolescence the cause or multiple causes may be difficult to trace. Studies have shown that the parent-child relationship is an important factor which affects the child's personality functioning, role choices and identity, both as a child and as an adult. Dickstein and Posner (1978) found that self-esteem in latency-age children is positively related to closeness in the parent-child relationship. Graybill (1978) reported that children and young adolescents who viewed their mother's means of discipline as psychological pressure had low self-esteem. A study by Sholomskas and Axelrod (1986) reported that women's primary role decisions were related to their mothers' messages to them, and their self-esteem was greater when the mother-daughter relationship was loving. Josselson's (1987) book on women's identity development also emphasized the importance of attachment to women's sense of identity.

Sometimes dysfunctional parent-child relationships have been identified as contributing to the development of adolescent disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and depression, with varying degrees of emphasis on the role of the mother. Research with the families of eating
disordered patients has suggested that certain familial patterns contribute to a daughter's manifestation of eating symptomatology (Bruch, 1985; Johnson & Connors, 1974; Minuchin, 1974). Mishne (1986) reports that adolescent girls may attempt to control their fears of separation, dependency, and burgeoning sexual interests by way of controlling their bodies, thus slowing or putting off the changes of puberty. Bruch (1973) focused primarily on the interactions between the mother and child, seeking understanding in the dynamics of the past relationship. The systems theorists focus on the current interactions between the family members and the anorectic patient, often finding enmeshment, overprotectiveness, rigidity, and lack of conflict resolution within the "anorectic family" and its subsystems (Minuchin, Rosman, & Baker, 1978). Other findings suggest that the families of bulimic-anorexics are less involved and supportive, more isolated, conflictual and detached than were families of nonproblem controls (Humphrey, 1986). In similar work, Humphrey (1988) reported that bulimic and bulimic-anorexic women experienced greater neglect, rejection and blame in their families, while anorexics denied such problems, but did report greater marital distress in their families.

Depression in adolescence arises for many reasons. It may be of a reactive nature, or it may take on the proportions of a clinical depression.
For some, relinquishing previous childhood gratifications may give way to depressive feelings (Weiner, 1970). Some adolescents are overwhelmed with a sense of failure if they feel they have not attained a sense of competent autonomy, a successful separation-individuation (Mishne, 1986). Moving away from the early object ties may arouse feelings of sadness and loneliness, even though the separation is sought after. Early object experiences play a role in how the separation is negotiated. For example, it was found that maternal rejection in childhood was more closely associated with clinical depression in female patients than in male patients (Crook, Raskin, & Eliot, 1981). Similarly, paternal variables were found to be related to daughter's personality variables and depression (Brook, Whiteman, Brook & Gordon, 1988).

**College Students and Identity Consolidation**

Like theorists before them, Newman and Newman (1979) consider late adolescence a time of consolidation resulting in a relatively constant personal image. They outline five goals which are accomplished during this period: (a) stabilization of individual ego functions; (b) allowing new people and experiences to gain importance; (c) formation of sexual identity; (d) balancing thoughts of self and others; and (e) separation of public and private self. For many youths today, these goals are
accomplished while they attend college. College students represent a cross-
section of late adolescents who are readily accessible to psychological 
research. Many studies of identity development are carried out using 
subjects from college populations (Marcia, 1980). Depending on the values 
of the student and the college culture, the student's identity status, and the 
contact between students and faculty, college students may or may not be 
open to new views during the college experience (Newman & Newman, 
1979). Aside from the normative changes expected during late adolescence, 
this can also be a time of dysfunction or decompensation because of the 
vulnerability of the adolescents when they take leave of their home and 
familiar relationships. According to the DSM-III-R of the American 
Psychiatric Association (1987), the onset of anorexia is most likely to occur 
in early to late adolescence. Reports of prevalence range from 1 in 800 to 
1 in 100 young women between the ages of 12 and 18.

Bemis (1978) reported that anorexia sometimes arises in response to 
a new situation, such as starting college or getting married. Bulimia is 
believed to occur in about 10% of a college population (Schlesier-Stropp, 
1984). Dauber (1984) showed that depression could be increased in 
depressed college women through subliminal psychodynamic activation 
using the phrase "Leaving mom is wrong." This intriguing finding suggests
that at a subconscious level, depression in college women is tied to their separation from mother.

**Hypotheses**

"The actual experience with the object in infancy and early childhood has a profound effect on the outcome of adolescence" (Ritvo, 1972, p.252). Theoretically the earliest object relations set the stage for later functioning based on the quality of attachment, nurturance and support in the mother-child dyad. Numerous studies have stated that those adolescents who report "marked conflict with, or alienation from, their families tend also to demonstrate impaired psychological adjustment" (Weiner, 1970, p. 55). Hence, when there are problems with the early relationship, problems may arise later as well. To compound the relationship factor, it has been suggested that the child's gender also makes a difference in his or her psychological outcome.

Feminist writers have examined the developmental differences between the sexes, with some suggesting that mother-daughter separation is a more difficult process than mother-son separation. While a male relinquishes ties to mother in order to identify with father and establish his own identity, the female child, who is already identified with the same sex
parent, must forge her own identity in the context of the already extant identification. For this reason, the female path is deemed more difficult.

This study was designed with the importance of early relationships, the potential for difficulties to arise during adolescence, and the added difficulties of mother-daughter separation in mind. This study focused on the impact of separation-individuation on the outcome of adolescence, particularly the nature of mother-daughter relationships in late adolescence which entail the paradox of separation and connection which has been described as unique to female development. How does the primary mother-child relationship and the separation process in late adolescence relate to the child's concurrent functioning outside of that relationship? Both college men and women were included in the study and surveyed about their relationships with their mothers so that gender comparisons could be made, and the hypothesized difficulty inherent in the mother-daughter separation could be explored.

More specifically, the quality of the mother-child relationship was explored (both, as it was remembered from childhood and as it was experienced in late adolescence) in relation to the daughter's functioning during the "second individuation" phase and her identity development. Daughters' recollections of mothers' warmth, their current contentment within the mother-daughter relationship, their views of themselves as
separate from mother, and their views of mother as a role model were
used as predictors of the daughter's accomplishment of normal adolescent
tasks (identity development) and of her symptom formation (problematic
eating behaviors and depression) during the time of separation.

It was predicted that the quality of the mother-daughter relationship
would impact upon the daughter's functioning in late adolescence, when
she has left home and entered the college environment. The positive or
negative valence of the relationship was expected to relate to the
daughter's positive or negative adjustment.

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. The daughter's recollections of the early mother-daughter
relationship will correspond to her current relationship with her mother.

2. The daughter's perception of her degree of separation-
individuation will correspond with her assessment of her mother as a role-
model.

3. Women with moderate levels of separation-individuation (not
detached, not enmeshed, but separate while maintaining a positive
connection) will report more positive recollections and will rate their
current relations as more satisfactory.
4. Women with moderate views of their mothers as role models (not idealized, not disparaging) will report more positive recollections and will rate their current relations as more satisfactory.

5. The daughter’s perception of her relationship with mother will correspond to her ego identity status development.

6. The daughter’s reported relationship with mother will correspond to her degree of depression.

7. The daughter’s reported relationship with mother will correspond to the incidence of problematic eating behaviors.
Method

Subjects

Subject Pool. A total of 192 subjects took part in this study. They were recruited from the subject pools of two local universities; one was private, and the other was state-funded. These two populations were chosen to access a broader socioeconomic group, thus enriching the epidemiological information gathered in the study. From the initial group of 192 undergraduates, the data of nine subjects were excluded, leaving a total of 183 subjects for the testing of the hypotheses. Three subjects were excluded because their parents were divorced and they lived with their fathers during adolescence, rendering the continuity of the mother-child relationship difficult to evaluate. The remaining six subjects were excluded because their mothers were deceased before the subject reached the age of 18.

Participants. Participants from the private university were 73 undergraduates (42 females, 31 males), ranging in age from 17 to 21 years, who were enrolled in introductory level Psychology courses. Subjects received 2 credits toward their course's 7-credit requirement for experiment participation by completing the paper and pencil measures described below.
Participants from the state-funded university were 110 undergraduates (72 females, 38 males), ranging in age from 18 to 21 years. These subjects also were compensated with experiment participation credits for completing the experimental test packet.

**Subject Characteristics.** For the total sample of 183 college students the mean age was 19.14 years (sd = .99). There was no significant difference in age between sexes $X^2(4, N = 183) = 6.61$, ns. Students up to age 21 were invited to participate; as a result, all grade levels were represented. For the entire sample, 44.8% were freshmen, 34.9% were sophomores, 14.9% were juniors, and 4.4% were seniors. Two students omitted this question.

A reading screening test was included in the test battery (see Materials section) to determine the subjects' reading comprehension levels. The cutoff-score was 12 points; scores below the cutoff indicated a reading level below sixth grade. The mean Vocabulary Locator score for the entire sample was 19.01 (sd = 1.16, N = 183). No student scored below 14, therefore, no students were excluded for insufficient reading level.

Marital status for all the subjects was homogeneous: 97.8% of the students were single and 1.1% were married. One student was cohabiting, one was divorced, and one did not respond.
Release of Information. Both groups of subjects signed releases acknowledging their informed consent to participate in the project, in accordance with APA and university guidelines for research with human subjects.

Materials

Materials consisted of a battery of self-report, paper and pencil measures which address aspects of the mother-child relationship, aspects of the subject’s current personality functioning, and a range of demographic information. A sample of each scale and its instructions can be found in the Appendix.

Screening. Subjects were screened for reading comprehension level with a brief measure (the Vocabulary Locator section of the Tests of Adult Basic Education) included in the experimental packet. A minimum of sixth grade reading level was required to complete the experimental questionnaires. All participants who wished to participate were included.

Independent Variables. Sex was used as a grouping variable since the hypotheses addressed a gender related difference in separation and adjustment during late adolescence.

The quality of the mother-child relationship was explored in relation to the subject’s emotional adjustment and identity status while at college.
The mother-child relationship was assessed with four scales which address different aspects of the relationship.

**Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ).** Perceived level of rejection in the relationship, that is, "the warmth dimension" of parenting, was measured by the adult version of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner, 1984). The PARQ is a 60 item questionnaire which measures the adult subject's perception of treatment received from his or her mother during childhood. The instructions direct the respondent to "think about the time when you were about 7 to 12 years old..." and rate statements as True (almost always, sometimes) or Not True (rarely, almost never) about one's mother. The PARQ consists of a total scale score which denotes degree of rejection experienced (as perceived by the respondent) and four subscales which represent acceptance and three types of rejection, according to PAR theory (Warmth/Affection, Aggression/Hostility, Neglect/Indifference, and Rejection-Undifferentiated). Parental Acceptance and Rejection Theory predicts that rejected children tend to be hostile, to be dependent or defensively independent, to have impaired self-esteem, to be emotionally unstable, and to have a negative world view. Research to date supports the theory that acceptance and rejection affect the behavioral and personality dispositions of children and adults who recall being rejected as children. Rejection has
been implicated in a variety of disorders including neuroses, conduct problems, psychosomatic reactions, disturbed body image, and so on (Rohner & Nielsen, 1978). A study by Saavedra (1980) found that Puerto Rican adolescent males' self-esteem varied directly with their perceptions of both maternal and paternal warmth.

The PARQ's creators administered the PARQ to 147 university undergraduates, ages 18 to 43 years, yielding reliability and validity data, with no significant age or sex differences. Internal consistency coefficients ranged from .86 to .95 on the four subscales (p < .001). Concurrent, convergent and discriminant validity were also established; a complete discussion is available in Rohner's (1984) Handbook for the study of parental acceptance and rejection.

The Adult PARQ is a single-dimension scale which represents the respondent's recollection of characteristics of his or her childhood relationship with mother. Three additional scales were employed to address the current relationship with mother, during late adolescence.

**Child's Attitude Toward Mother (CAM).** The first of the relationship measures is the Child's Attitude Toward Mother (CAM), one of several clinical measures developed by W.W. Hudson (1982). The CAM was designed to measure the degree, severity or magnitude of a problem a child has with his/her mother. It is a 25-item scale on which the
respondent rates each statement on a frequency scale of 1 (rarely or none of the time) to 5 (most or all of the time). After reverse-scoring nine items, a final score is calculated by summing all scores, then subtracting 25. The final score ranges from 0 to 100 with a clinical cutting score of 30. Scores in the 0 to 30 range denote a "problem level" which is not clinically significant. High scores are always taken to indicate more serious discord than lower scores. Coefficient alpha for the CAM with a subject pool of 1072 was .94 with a standard error of measurement of 4.57.

For the purpose of the proposed study low scores (0-29) will be considered indicative of a positive mother-child relationship, that is, one which has a high degree of contentment and little hostility. Scores of 30 and above indicated a negative mother-child relationship, suggesting greater discord, lack of contentment, and higher levels of hostility.

The second and third scales to address the subject's current relationship with his or her mother were designed specifically for this study, to address issues germane to the transition of late adolescence.

**Separation-Individuation Scale (SIS).** The Separation-Individuation Scale (SIS) represents the degree to which the subject sees himself or herself as functioning independently from the mother. For college students there is almost always some degree of dependence on the parents, which may include financial support, living at home while commuting to school,
and so on. The scale includes items regarding the degree of contact with the parent, intrusiveness, support, and dependence in the relationship. This scale was patterned on the CAM, consisting of 25 items which are rated on a frequency scale of 1 (never) to 5 (most of the time). After nine negatively-phrased items are reverse scored, all items are summed, and 25 is subtracted from the total, yielding a score in the range of 0 to 100. For this scale, the higher scores indicate a more positive relationship, with good boundaries, mutual respect and some supportive behaviors. In designing the SIS the extreme scores were both envisioned as indicators of maladjustment, either overdependence/enmeshment (highest scores) or extreme independence/detachment (lowest scores). Those scoring in the middle range will represent some flexibility in the mother-child relationship, suggesting independent behaviors, continued contact, and some reliance, which is seen as a positive late-adolescent adjustment. A moderate score represents the subject’s ability to function separately, yet to interact with and relate to his or her mother in a comfortable and useful way. For the 183 subjects who were included in the study the alpha for the SIS was .82. A separate group of 43 subjects completed the SIS twice, one week apart, yielding a test-retest reliability of .76 (p < .001).

**Perception Of Parent (POP).** The last of the "relationship scales" measures the subject’s perceptions of his or her mother as an individual
and a role model. This is the Perception of Parents Scale (POP) which taps the subject's level of admiration for and confidence in his or her mother as a separate person. It also addresses concerns about the mother's individual functioning. This scale asks the respondent, who is generally self-absorbed during adolescence, to take a different perspective and to reflect on how his or her mother may be reacting to the changes in her life while her child is separating from her. Once again, this is a 25 item scale scored from 1 (Never) to 5 (Most of the time). For scoring, 11 items are reverse scored, all scores are summed, then 25 is subtracted from the total, yielding a range of scores from 0 to 100. Low scores represent a negative perception of the parent, while higher scores suggest admiration and positive feelings about mother as an individual. Once again, in designing the POP those with scores in the middle ranges were expected to be better adjusted, since they neither idealize mother, nor are they negativistic about mother as a model or overly concerned about her individual functioning.

In this study, for the 183 subjects completing the POP, the alpha coefficient was .90. Test-retest reliability was computed on a separate group of 43 subjects completing the POP twice, one week apart, yielding ($r = .60$, $p < .001$).

**Outcome Measures.** Three measures were chosen to assess how the subject is currently functioning as a late adolescent, while attending college,
and theoretically completing the tasks of individuation and identity consolidation. Two measures address the occurrence of problematic functioning by assessing emotional adjustment (Eating Disorders and Depression), while the third assesses the individual's progress toward completing the adolescent task of identity development.

**Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI).** The Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI) is a 64-item self-report measure designed to assess a number of psychological and behavioral traits common in anorexia nervosa and bulimia (Garner & Olmsted, 1984). Subjects answer the 64 items on a 6-point scale ranging from Always to Never, yielding scores for the following eight subscales: Drive for Thinness, Bulimia, Body Dissatisfaction, Ineffectiveness, Perfectionism, Interpersonal Distrust, Interoceptive Awareness, Maturity Fears. For the purpose of this study the EDI and its subscales will be used as a gross indicator of adjustment in late-adolescent, college students. The EDI is normed for both anorexia nervosa patients and a comparison group of female college students. The scale was rigorously constructed, with reliability coefficients for the subscales ranging from .89 to .93 for the anorexic group and .72 to .92 for the female college group. Several studies of criterion, convergent, and discriminant validity were completed, yielding acceptable coefficients. In fact, all expected correlations were obtained, in addition to many other significant
correlations, which might be artifacts of the large samples used. The EDI is a well-developed measure which readily lends itself to the comparison of normals to a clinical population on a variety of dimensions. Numerous studies have employed the EDI to study outcome of hospital treatment for anorexics (Bourke, Taylor & Crisp, 1985; Toner, Garfinkel, & Garner, cited in Garner and Olmsted, 1986) and bulimics (Conners, Johnson & Stuckey, 1984). Swift, Kalin, Wambolt & Ritholtz (1985) found that six of the eight subscales on the EDI correlated with depression in a follow-up study of bulimics. Using the EDI for a cluster analysis, Olmsted and Garner (1984) examined 35 college women who engaged in self-induced vomiting. They found that the majority of women who had vomited to control weight at some time were as well adjusted as women who had never vomited, suggesting that this symptom is of limited value in inferring psychopathology.

**Multiscore Depression Inventory (MDI).** Berndt's Multiscore Depression Inventory (1986) is a 118-item self report questionnaire measuring the severity of depression and depressive features. This measure is designed to assess mood, as a trait-like phenomenon, in a normal population. All items are answered true or false. In addition to a total score for overall depression, the MDI also has reliable scores for 10 relevant subscales: Low Energy Level, Cognitive Difficulty, Guilt, Low Self
Esteem, Social Introversion, Pessimism, Irritability, Sad Mood, Instrumental Helplessness, Learned Helplessness. Coefficient alpha for the full scale was stable at .96 or .97 across several samples. The subscale reliabilities are generally in the .80's, with the exception of the Guilt subscale (consistently .70's) and the Low Energy subscale (consistently .90's). Test-retest reliability after a three week interval was .82. Concurrent validity was of the appropriate magnitude, ranging from .69 (with the Beck Depression Inventory) to .77 (with the Depression Adjective Checklist). The items are face valid, and convergent and discriminant validities were established in the initial process of selecting scale items. The MDI is a relatively new instrument which is currently being used in a variety of research settings, including medical and eating disordered patients (Connors, Johnson, & Stuckey, 1984), gifted adolescents (Berndt & Zinn, 1984), and cross cultural groups.

Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2 (EOMEIS-2). Finally, the second Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2; Adams, Bennion, and Huh, 1987) will be used as an indicator of identity development status, based on Erikson's (1963) theory of adolescent identity formation. The terms Identity Achievement, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Identity Diffusion, are used as indicators of the adolescent's crisis and commitment (Marcia, 1966). This
self-report format was developed in an effort to expand on Marcia’s operationalization of Erikson’s theory in the interview format and translate it into a similarly useful measure which is more convenient to administer, score, and utilize with a larger number of research participants. The EOMEIS-2 consists of 64-items which the respondent rates from A (strongly agree) to F (strongly disagree). Lettered ratings are then translated into numbers and summed for each status (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Diffusion), compared to cutoff scores for each category according to established rules, and then an Identity Status can be assigned for each subject on the whole, and for two subdimensions, Ideology Identity (occupational, religious, political, philosophical) and Interpersonal Identity (friendship, dating, sex roles, recreational choice). One drawback of the EOMEIS-2 is that it does not differentiate well between the categories of Moratorium and Identity Diffusion. The authors suggest that this is probably due to the fact that few Pure Diffusion types are observed among healthy, adolescent populations. Internal consistency coefficients across 13 studies ranged from .30 to .89, with a median of .66. Overall estimates of test-retest reliability have a median correlation of .76. A wide variety of studies have established predictive validity coefficients for the OMEIS. Montemayor, Brown and Adams (1985) found that adolescent perceptions of the family environment were predictive of identity
development, with high cohesion, low conflict, high control settings related to a regression in development. Similarly, enmeshed families are seen to encourage foreclosure. Adams (1985; Adams & Jones, 1983) found that diffused and foreclosed adolescents perceived greater parental rejection and control than achieved or moratorium teens. A complete listing of studies establishing predictive, concurrent and construct validity is available in the OMEIS Reference Manual (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1987).

Procedure

Each subject was assigned an arbitrary code number in order to maintain anonymity and allow the subject to respond honestly without concern for social desirability. Subjects completed the battery of scales in groups of 15 to 25, with the examiner remaining present to provide clarification of instructions and to answer any questions. Sessions were approximately 90 minutes long, providing ample time for the completion of the test packet. At the end of the session, subjects were informed of the purpose of the study, and any questions which arose were answered.
Results

The results will be presented in three sections in order to follow the analysis process. Preliminary findings are provided to give the reader a global understanding of the sample and basic theoretical questions. The data initially were analyzed with multivariate analyses of variance to explore group differences by sex and to explore differences between the two school samples. Subsequent analyses of variance and correlational analyses were undertaken to test the hypotheses and to attend to differences in mother-child relationships in different contexts.

Normative Sample

Overall, the group scores for this college sample were well within the normal ranges of the measures used. A composite of 8 studies on the Adult PARQ (adults reflecting on their childhood experiences with mother), yielded a mean score of 102 (Rohner, 1988); the current sample had mean PARQ scores of 99 for women and 92 for men. The CAM has a clinical cutoff score of 30; the means for this study were 24 for women and 17 for men. The MDI has a mean T-score of 50; this group had mean MDI scores of 50 for women and 51 for men. Mean scores for the three EDI subscales used herein (Drive for Thinness, Bulimia, and Body

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Dissatisfaction) were comparable to the mean scores for the female college sample used to norm the EDI. Norms for the SIS and the POP are not yet established, but the students tended to score in the directions of feeling individuated from their mothers and viewing her as a positive role model.

**School, Sex, and Living Situation**

Comparisons were made between the two schools which indicated no significant differences for the following variables: Age, \( t(181) = -1.01, \) ns; Sex, \( X^2(1, N = 183) = .86, \) ns; Marital Status, \( X^2(3, N = 182) = 1.41, \) ns; having Divorced Parents, \( X^2(1, N = 182) = 2.80, \) ns; and, having a Deceased Parent, \( X^2(2, N = 181) = 1.97, \) ns.

A significant difference between schools was found for race, \( X^2(1, N = 181) = 7.27, p < .01. \) In the total sample, 81.4% were Caucasian, 5.5% were African American, 4.4% were Asian, and .5% were Native American. Of the remaining students, 7.1% identified their race as "other," and 1.1% declined to answer this question. Because of small group sizes for the minority race categories, race was collapsed into two groups, Caucasian and Non-Caucasian. The distribution of the numbers in the respective cells was not proportional; the significant difference for race between schools was due to the inclusion of 20 minority students in the smaller sample from the private university (5 African American, 7 Asian and 8 "other") while there
were only 12 minority students in the larger, public university sample (5 African American, 1 Asian, and 6 "other").

MANOVAs for the dependent variables (SIS, POP, CAM, PARQ) by the two groups for race, $F(4,174) = 1.35$, and for the outcome variables (MDI, EDI) by race, $F(4,168) = .52$, were not significant. Thus the two groups were combined for further analyses.

A 2 (sex) by 2 (school) MANOVA showed that for the relationship measures (SIS, POP, PARQ, CAM) there was a significant School by Sex interaction, $F(4,174) = 2.80, p < .05$ (Figure 1). Univariate tests indicated that of the four relationship measures the SIS score was the significant contributor to the interaction, $F(1,177) = 4.31, p < .05$; women at the private university felt a greater degree of individuation and separation from their mothers, while men at the two universities did not differ.
Figure 1. School by Sex Interaction on SIS
There was a main effect for school on relationship with mother, \( F(1,174) = 2.44, p < .05 \). This main effect showed that students at the public university had more negative relationships with their mothers across the four relationship scales than those students at the private university.

There was no significant main effect for sex on the relationship measures; on the whole it appears that the sexes do not differ in their relationships with mother in late adolescence, as measured by these four scales. However, under the closer scrutiny of a univariate F-test, there was a significant difference between the sexes for the Child's Attitude toward Mother, \( F(1,177) = 3.97, p < .05 \), with women exhibiting greater discord in their relationships with mother. Because this study was primarily an effort to explore the nature of the mother child relationship in late adolescence and gender differences therein, and because a sex difference was found for one of the established measures, the separation of sex groups was maintained for subsequent analyses.

There was also a significant difference between schools in the numbers of students living at home with their parents and those who lived away from home, \( X^2(1) = 80.01, p < .0001 \). Of the students at the state-funded university, 75% were commuters who lived at home with their parents, while 93% of students at the private university were living in dorms or off-campus housing, but not with their parents.
A 2 (sex) by 2 (away groups) MANOVA for relationship with mother (SIS, POP, PARQ, CAM) revealed no significant interactions or main effects. A 2 (sex) by 2 (at-home groups) MANOVA for relationship with mother revealed no significant interactions or main effects. Because the away groups at the two schools did not differ, they were combined for subsequent analyses. This procedure was followed for the at-home groups, as well, but must be viewed cautiously due to a small number of subjects who were living at home while attending the private university. It was believed that the school differences mentioned earlier (e.g., greater discord between public university students and their mothers) could be attributed to the differences in living situation between the public, "commuting" school and the private, "dorming" school. Thus, subsequent analyses compared the Living Away from Home group to the Living with Parents group, rather than dividing subjects by their schools.

The MANOVA for the relationship variables (SIS, POP, PARQ, CAM) by living situation was significant, $F(4,176) = 3.43$, $p < .01$, suggesting that the relationship with mother varies based on where the student lives. For the subsequent univariate tests, a Bonferroni adjustment to $p < .0125$ was made in order to control for Type I error. The POP score differed significantly based on living situation, $F(1,177) = 11.82$, $p < .001$, students living away from home gave their mothers higher ratings as role models.
A 2 (sex) by 2 (living situation) MANOVA for depression had no significant interaction or main effects. A 2 (sex) by 2 (living situation) MANOVA for eating/body disturbances (EDIDT, EDIB, EDIBD) had an interaction which approached significance, F(3,176) = 2.15, p < .10. The main effect for living situation was not significant; however, there was a significant main effect for sex, F(3,176) = 9.60, p < .0001. Women had a greater drive for thinness, more bulimic concerns or behaviors, and more dissatisfaction with their bodies than the men.
Hypotheses

The main analyses were addressed by separating the complete sample into four groups by sex and living situation: Females Living Away from Home, Females Living with Parents, Males Living Away from Home, and Males Living with Parents. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables by these four groups are presented in Table 1.

Intercorrelations for the main variables were computed to determine their degree of independence. Correlation matrices for the main variables by sex and by living situation are presented in Tables 2 and 3.
Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations by Sex and Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AWAY w/PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>AWAY w/PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>19.95 (22.57)</td>
<td>27.54 (22.38)</td>
<td>14.32 (10.51)</td>
<td>20.00 (15.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>94.09 (30.83)</td>
<td>103.73 (34.85)</td>
<td>89.30 (20.05)</td>
<td>94.19 (25.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>69.59 (15.79)</td>
<td>61.41 (14.96)</td>
<td>71.14 (12.20)</td>
<td>64.56 (16.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>63.36 (14.59)</td>
<td>57.61 (12.95)</td>
<td>63.22 (7.31)</td>
<td>63.09 (11.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIDT</td>
<td>4.54 (6.65)</td>
<td>6.11 (6.09)</td>
<td>2.95 (3.96)</td>
<td>1.09 (2.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIB</td>
<td>1.74 (3.60)</td>
<td>2.02 (3.37)</td>
<td>1.00 (1.86)</td>
<td>.84 (1.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIBD</td>
<td>9.65 (7.60)</td>
<td>11.36 (7.75)</td>
<td>6.30 (6.30)</td>
<td>3.41 (4.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDI</td>
<td>50.38 (11.68)</td>
<td>50.55 (10.08)</td>
<td>52.12 (9.62)</td>
<td>48.80 (11.49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAM = Child's Attitude Toward Mother
PARQ = Parental-Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire
POP = Perception of Parent Scale
SIS = Separation Individuation Scale
EDIDT = Eating Disorders Inventory, Drive for Thinness
EDIB = Eating Disorders Inventory, Bulimia
EDIBD = Eating Disorders Inventory, Body Dissatisfaction
MDI = Multiscore Depression Inventory
Table 2
**Correlation Matrix: Females**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAM</th>
<th>PARQ</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>SIS</th>
<th>EDI- DT</th>
<th>EDIB</th>
<th>EDI-BD</th>
<th>MDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.80**</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
<td>-.80**</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td>.46**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
<td>-.74**</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.69**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>-.76**</td>
<td>-.68**</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>-.85**</td>
<td>-.65**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI- DT</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIB</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-BD</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDI</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-Tailed significance: *p < .01   **p < .001

Top half of matrix: Females-Living Away from Home (n=55).
Bottom half of matrix: Females Living with Parents (n=56).
Table 3
Correlation Matrix: Males

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAM</th>
<th>PARQ</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>SIS</th>
<th>EDI-DT</th>
<th>EDIB</th>
<th>EDI-BD</th>
<th>MDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.47*</td>
<td>.73**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>-.84**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.47*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>-.79**</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>.82**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-DT</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIB</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-BD</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDI</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-.48*</td>
<td>-.50*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-Tailed significance: *p<.01   **p<.001

Top half of matrix: Males-Living Away from Home (n=34).
Bottom half of matrix: Males-Living with Parents (n=30).
Hypothesis (1). Recollections of the early mother-child relationship correlated with the subject's current perception of that relationship, as predicted (see Tables 2 and 3). The degree of rejection indicated by the PARQ score was significantly correlated with the degree of discord reflected in the subject's current attitude toward mother (CAM). That is, the more rejected the subject reportedly felt in his or her youth, the greater discord he or she was experiencing in late adolescence. This finding held true for all four groups ($p < .001$): Females-away, ($r = .80$); Females-at home, ($r = .75$); Males-away, ($r = .55$); and Males-at home, ($r = .85$).

Hypothesis (2). The subject's perception of his or her separation-individuation from mother correlated with the subject's perception of the mother as a role model. That is, the more the subject saw himself or herself as a separate individual, the more the subject perceived the mother as a positive role-model. Again these were significant correlations for all four groups: Females-living away, ($r = .76, p < .001$); Female-living with parents, ($r = .69, p < .001$); Males-living away, ($r = .47, p < .01$); and Males-living with parents, ($r = .82, p < .001$).

Hypothesis (3). The third hypothesis predicted that subjects in the group with a moderate score on separation-individuation (SIS) would have the most satisfactory mother-child relationships, while the extreme groups would report greater discord in their relationships with mother. It was
anticipated that the lowest scoring group would be overly involved with their mother or somewhat enmeshed, setting the stage for greater discord. Conversely, it was expected that the highest scorers would be so independent that they might be detached from or indifferent about their mothers, or defensively independent (Rohner, 1988), perhaps in an attempt to compensate for resentment and hurt feelings about their past treatment by mother. These assumptions only partially were supported by the data; the relationship between feeling individuated and having a positive relationship with mother was a linear one, rather than curvilinear.

An inverse relationship was found between the level of the SIS-score (divided into terciles for low, medium and high groups) and the degree of rejection recalled from childhood (PARQ). Those individuals who felt least separate also recalled feeling the most rejected in childhood. Those in the middle group felt a moderate degree of rejection, and those who reported the greatest degrees of individuation recalled the least amount of rejection from their earlier years.

The same pattern was found in comparing the SIS-groups for their current attitude toward their mothers (CAM). Those with the least degree of separation felt the most discord in their current relationships, and vice versa. For this analysis it is interesting to note that the individuals who felt the least separate had a mean CAM score which was above the clinical
cutoff of 30 (M = 41.636, sd = 22.374) while the moderate and high
groups had mean scores below the clinical cutoff.

Table 4 presents means and standard deviations on the PARQ and
Table 5 presents means and standard deviations on the CAM for each of
the four subject groups, divided into three levels of scoring on the SIS and
on the POP. Means, standard deviations, and F values by sex and by living
situation for the PARQ are presented in tables 6 and 7, respectively.
Tables 8 and 9 provide similar information regarding the CAM.

**Hypothesis (4).** With similar logic, the fourth hypothesis predicted
that subjects who gave their mothers moderate ratings as role models
would have more satisfactory relationships with their mothers. It was
anticipated that subjects who gave their mothers poor ratings or were
somewhat disparaging would also be experiencing some conflict. Similarly
it was expected that subjects who gave their mothers very high ratings were
being unrealistic in their idealizations. Since part of the adolescent process
is coming to view one's parents realistically and recognizing their flaws, it
was predicted that the highest-scoring group might also be harboring some
unrecognized ill-feelings toward mother.

While it was anticipated that the middle group (i.e., the group with
moderate ratings of their mothers as role models) would have the most
satisfactory mother-child relationships, this was only partially supported by
the data. Again, there was an inverse relationship between the level of the POP-score (low, medium and high) and the degree of rejection recalled from childhood (PARQ). Those individuals who gave their mothers the poorest ratings as role models also recalled the most rejection in childhood. Those in the middle group reported a moderate degree of rejection, and those who gave their mothers high ratings as role models recalled the least amount of rejection. The ANOVAs indicated a significant main effect for POP-group on childhood recollection of rejection (PARQ). (Refer to Tables 4 through 9).

The same pattern was found in comparing the POP-groups for their current attitude toward their mothers (CAM). Those with the least regard for their mothers as role-models felt the most discord in their current relationships, and so on. The ANOVA indicated a significant main effect on attitude toward mother by POP-group. Again it is interesting to note that the individuals who gave their mothers the lowest ratings as role models had a mean CAM score which was above the clinical cutoff of 30 ($M = 39.271, sd = 22.519$), while the moderate and high groups had mean scores below the clinical cutoff.
Table 4  
Means and Standard Deviations on the Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire for Subject Groups divided by SIS and POP levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE AWAY w/PARENTS</th>
<th>MALE AWAY w/PARENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>121.3 (36.5)</td>
<td>109.9 (21.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>123.8 (38.5)</td>
<td>124.9 (30.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>102.8 (26.8)</td>
<td>89.1 (15.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.4 (23.8)</td>
<td>87.1 (9.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>75.2 (10.7)</td>
<td>71.4 (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.7 (17.7)</td>
<td>81.2 (9.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>126.9 (41.8)</td>
<td>102.3 (23.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121.1 (35.5)</td>
<td>119.6 (30.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>98.1 (24.6)</td>
<td>92.6 (21.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.2 (27.8)</td>
<td>89.7 (13.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>75.3 (10.1)</td>
<td>78.0 (8.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.1 (8.5)</td>
<td>76.8 (7.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n (Females-Living Away from Home) = 58
n (Females-Living with Parents) = 56
n (Males-Living Away from Home) = 37
n (Males-Living with Parents) = 32

SIS = Separation Individuation Scale
PARQ = Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
POP = Perception of Parent
Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations on the Child’s Attitude toward Mother for Subject Groups divided by SIS and POP levels

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<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AWAY w/ PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>AWAY w/ PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27.7)</td>
<td>(20.6)</td>
<td>(12.7)</td>
<td>(18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(10.6)</td>
<td>(7.7)</td>
<td>(10.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.2)</td>
<td>(6.5)</td>
<td>(5.6)</td>
<td>(8.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32.0)</td>
<td>(21.2)</td>
<td>(11.2)</td>
<td>(17.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
<td>(14.9)</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
<td>(8.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.0)</td>
<td>(7.7)</td>
<td>(5.6)</td>
<td>(7.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n (Females-Living Away from Home) = 58
n (Females-Living with Parents) = 56
n (Males-Living Away from Home) = 37
n (Males-Living with Parents) = 32

SIS = Separation Individuation Scale
POP = Perception of Parent
CAM = Child’s Attitude toward Mother
Table 6  
Means, Standard Deviations, and F values for PARQ by SIS-group, POP-group, and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>F(group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>122.82 (37.28)</td>
<td>117.38 (26.77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>97.14 (25.09)</td>
<td>88.48 (14.19)</td>
<td>50.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>76.46 (12.96)</td>
<td>77.39 (9.32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>122.73 (36.87)</td>
<td>110.47 (27.64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>95.73 (25.73)</td>
<td>91.13 (17.28)</td>
<td>45.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>75.58 (9.48)</td>
<td>77.52 (7.91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .001

PARQ = Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire  
SIS = Separation Individuation Scale  
POP = Perception of Parent
Table 7
Means, Standard Deviations, and F values for PARQ by SIS-group, POP-group and Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LIVING AWAY</th>
<th>LIVING W/ PARENTS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>F(group)</td>
<td>F(L.S.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>117.30 (31.95)</td>
<td>124.06 (36.29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>94.74 (21.82)</td>
<td>91.50 (20.63)</td>
<td>49.27**</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>74.27 (9.76)</td>
<td>80.56 (13.37)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>115.19 (35.67)</td>
<td>120.76 (34.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>96.18 (23.27)</td>
<td>91.07 (22.15)</td>
<td>43.39**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>76.36 (9.56)</td>
<td>76.41 (7.65)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .001

L.S. = Living Situation
PARQ = Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
SIS = Separation Individuation Scale
POP = Perception of Parent
Table 8  
Means, Standard Deviations, and F values for CAM  
by SIS-group, POP-group and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th></th>
<th>( F(\text{group}) )</th>
<th></th>
<th>( F(\text{sex}) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M ( (sd) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>M ( (sd) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>46.03 ( (23.22) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.94 ( (16.24) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>17.83 ( (10.03) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.38 ( (8.78) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>89.53**</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>6.67 ( (6.90) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.35 ( (8.04) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>43.10 ( (24.52) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.21 ( (15.16) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>18.46 ( (13.60) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.92 ( (6.83) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>68.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>7.56 ( (7.78) )</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.92 ( (6.31) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)
** \( p < .001 \)

\( \text{CAM} \) = Child's Attitude Toward Mother  
\( \text{SIS} \) = Separation Individuation Scale  
\( \text{POP} \) = Perception of Parent
Table 9
Means, Standard Deviations, and F values for CAM by SIS-group, POP-group and Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LIVING AWAY</th>
<th>LIVING W/PARENTS</th>
<th>F(group)</th>
<th>F(L.S.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(sd)</td>
<td>(sd)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>38.96</td>
<td>43.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25.37)</td>
<td>(20.15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>15.18</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>81.87*</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.66)</td>
<td>(10.52)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.75)</td>
<td>(8.34)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>38.48</td>
<td>39.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26.63)</td>
<td>(20.27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>16.47</td>
<td>16.93</td>
<td>62.04**</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11.11)</td>
<td>(12.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.08)</td>
<td>(7.49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .001

CAM = Child’s Attitude Toward Mother  
SIS = Separation Individuation Scale  
POP = Perception of Parent
Hypothesis (5). It was predicted that subjects in the four different categories of identity status development would also have different relationships with their mothers. It was assumed that a more positive relationship with mother would foster the development of a stable identity status. A 2 (sex) by 2 (living situation) by 4 (ideological identity status) MANOVA showed no significant interactions for relationship measures (SIS, POP, PARQ, CAM). There was a significant main effect for ideological identity status on relationship with mother, $F(12,421) = 2.02$, $p < .05$. Those in the ideology achieved status had better relationships than those in the diffusion category; those in the foreclosed and moratorium groups had intermediate scores. There was a significant main effect for living situation, $F(4,159) = 2.69$, $p < .05$. Those individuals living away from home reported more positive relationships than those who were living at home. There was no main effect for sex.

A 2 (sex) by 2 (living situation) by 4 (interpersonal identity status) MANOVA yielded only one significant result regarding the relationship with mother domain. There was a main effect for living situation, $F(4,160) = 2.82$, $p < .05$, with those who live away from home reporting more positive relationships than those who live with their parents.

Hypothesis (6). When it comes to symptom formation in late adolescence, one area in which the mother-child relationship has been
implicated is the occurrence of depression. Since adolescence is considered a time of disengagement from internal objects, the subject might be experiencing a sense of loss which sensitizes him or her to feelings of sadness and depression. It was predicted this adolescent propensity toward sadness coupled with difficulty in the relationship with mother could heighten the adolescent’s vulnerability to depression. Since this was a sample of normal college students, there was not much manifestation of depression. In reviewing the subsequent analyses one ought to keep in mind that the sample variability was primarily within the normal range.

The issue of parental relationship and depression was addressed with a hierarchical multiple regression analysis for each of the four subject groups. On the first level of the hierarchy the previously established relationship measures (PARQ and CAM) were entered to address both the past and current relationship with mother. On the second level, the measures which were designed for this study (SIS and POP) to tap specific elements of the late adolescent mother-child relationship were entered, to see whether these measures could account for any additional variance in the occurrence of depression. It was discovered that the PARQ and the CAM accounted for a significant amount of variance in depression for three of the four subject groups. The newly created SIS and POP, which
correlated with the established measures, did not add to the variance accounted for beyond the contributions of the PARQ and CAM. It appears that the relationship with mother as assessed by acceptance-rejection in childhood and current degree of discord can account for a substantial portion of the late-adolescent’s experience of depression. However, for women who are living at home with their parents while they attend college this was not the case. Details of the multiple regression analyses can be found in Table 10. Because several multiple regression analyses were computed, a Bonferroni adjustment to $p < .0125$ was made in order to correct for Type I error.
Table 10
Hierarchical Regression of Subject’s Relationship with Mother, Depression, and Eating Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Female Away M (sd)</th>
<th>Female w/Parents M (sd)</th>
<th>Male Away M (sd)</th>
<th>Male w/Parents M (sd)</th>
<th>R² changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDI (CAM &amp; PARQ)</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(POP &amp; SIS)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-DT (CAM &amp; PARQ)</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(POP &amp; SIS)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-B (CAM &amp; PARQ)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(POP &amp; SIS)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI-BD (CAM &amp; PARQ)</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(POP &amp; SIS)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.0125
**p<.0001

n (Females-Living Away) = 58
n (Females-Living w/Parents) = 56
n (Males -Living Away) = 37
n (Males -Living w/Parents) = 32
Hypothesis (7). A second area of symptom formation in which the mother-child relationship has been implicated is the manifestation of problematic eating behaviors and eating disorders, which often first appear in adolescence. A hierarchical regression analysis was undertaken to explore to what degree the mother child-relationship might account for the variance in problematic eating behaviors in college-age adolescents. Three subscales of the EDI were chosen to assess eating-related problems: Drive for Thinness, Bulimia, and Body Dissatisfaction. Once again, the well-established relationship measures were entered first in the hierarchy (PARQ and CAM), and the measures designed for this study (SIS and POP) were entered on the second level. For this analysis, the only group which appeared to be affected by the relationship with mother was the Female-Living Away from Home group; all other analyses were non-significant (see Table 10). For these young women the relationship with mother, as portrayed on the PARQ and CAM, accounted for a significant portion of the variance in Drive for Thinness, \( R^2 (2,54) = .15, p < .0125 \), as well as a significant portion of the variance in Body Dissatisfaction, \( R^2 (2,54) = .17, p < .01 \). The relationship with mother did not predict the occurrence of bulimia in any of the groups. Once again, the new measures, SIS and POP, did not account for any additional variance in the eating behaviors analyses.
Discussion

Normative Sample

The results of this study provide some interesting information about a normative sample of college students undergoing the developmental changes of late adolescence. The pattern of normative scoring suggests that this college population was average in many ways and generally was not experiencing clinical difficulties which could be measured by these scales. It is encouraging to find that the students on these two campuses generally recall feeling accepted by their mothers as children, that they currently experience some reasonable amount of discord in the relationship with mother, that they are not depressed, nor are they plagued by eating disturbances.

As a post-hoc analysis, a subgroup of seven "clinical" subjects was identified by selecting some conservative criteria. These were individuals who scored above the clinical cutoff on at least three scales: (a) a score of 30 or more on the Child's Attitude toward Mother (CAM); (b) a score above 70 on the Multiscore Depression Inventory (MDI); and, (c) a score on one of the EDI subscales used in this study (Drive for Thinness, Bulimia, Body Dissatisfaction) that was above the mean score for the EDI's anorexia nervosa group. Six of these seven individuals also fell in the category of Identity Diffusion on the Extended Objective Measure of Ego
Identity Status (EOMEIS-2). It was not surprising to note that all seven individuals who met these criteria were female, since one of the criteria related to eating disordered behavior and according to DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1987) 95% of those who suffer from eating disorders are women. Also, in this study there was a significant difference between the sexes for drive for thinness and body dissatisfaction. A cursory examination of their demographic data yielded no other similarities among these women: they ranged in age from 18 to 21; some lived with their parents and others lived away from home; they came from intact and divorced families, and families with one deceased parent. Thus, about 7% of the women in this sample showed some signs of clinical distress, but no demographic clues suggested a common origin for these difficulties.

Intercorrelations

Two measures were designed specifically for this study and were intended to explore discrete aspects of the mother-child relationship. These were the Separation-Individuation Scale (SIS) and the Perception of Parent Scale (POP). Although these measures had face validity, and adequate test-retest reliability over a one week period, they were not normed on any sample other than participants in this study which certainly
limits their utility and generalizability at this time. In fact, these two measures proved to be highly correlated with one another, across sexes and living situations. It is also noteworthy that these measures were highly correlated with previously developed and normed scales which ostensibly are intended to measure different facets of the mother-child relationship. It appears that "relationship with mother" is a firm concept which may draw on a specific set of information and feelings regardless of how the questions are phrased. This global "relationship with mother" concept warrants further study.

A second finding, the positive correlation between one's recollection of acceptance-rejection in the past relationship with mother (PARQ) and the child's current attitude toward mother (CAM), suggests that there is continuity in the valence of the relationship over time. Surely there is waxing and waning of feelings in the context of the relationship due to life events and developmental changes, but the data suggest that the overall charge remains the same. This lends some support to the psychodynamic school's interest in past events and relationships as exerting influence over current functioning. It is possible that it is the current relationship which colors the subject's interpretation of past events; those with current discord in their relationships may be influenced to recall their past experiences in a more negative light. It is important to note here that there were few
extreme responses in this sample; most students recalled relatively accepting maternal behaviors during childhood and reported low to moderate levels of discord in their current relationships with mother.

Although this study was intended to look at normal, developmental issues, some questions were of a clinical nature. The curvilinear relationship between separation-individuation and the relationship with mother which was proposed above did not hold true in this sample. Being that this was a non-random sample which scored in the normal range on some clinical scales, there may have been a restriction of range which altered the outcome of the hypotheses. For example, there were no students who scored at the possible extremes of the Low and High groups on the SIS and the POP; given the restricted range, the hypotheses were only partially supported. Perhaps with a larger or more heterogeneous group of subjects there would have been a different outcome.

There has been much previous research with college students which has explored relationships between late adolescents and their parents. Hoffman (1984) examined psychological separation. He reported that individuals with ongoing conflictual feelings toward their parents might have difficulties with intimate relationships. Others (Lapsley, Rice & FitzGerald, 1990; Quintana & Lapsley, 1987) working within a framework of "lifespan continuity of adaptation" have explored adolescents attachment
to their parents. Using a path analysis, Quintana and Lapsley (1987) did not support a causal relation between attachment to parents and identity status. They recommended exploring attachment to mother and to father separately. In subsequent work using different measures, Lapsley et al. (1990) found attachment to parents to be a significant predictor of identity status. This study, albeit using measures different from Quintana and Lapsley's, pursued the connection between the mother-child relationship and identity status. A difference in relationship with mother was found for the ideological identity status groups. Those in the Achieved status had scores on the relationship measures which indicated more positive interactions than those in the Diffusion group. The foreclosure and moratorium groups were more difficult to interpret. No relationship differences were evident in the interpersonal identity status groups. Probably these inconsistent outcomes across studies are due in part to the different methodologies used. The salient point is that for some aspects of identity development there may indeed be a relation between parent-child factors and identity status, but this may not be so for all identity tasks. Discovering which parent-child relationship factors contribute to the development of a more stable identity status could have some clinical applications, e.g., some early problems might be better addressed through
parent guidance or conjoint sessions, or late-adolescent difficulties could be addressed by pinpointing early relationship issues.

**Living Situation**

The division of the sample into four subject groups based on sex and living situation followed from the preliminary analyses. Some differences between the two school samples were related to where the students lived; however, there might be additional explanations for these differences. For example, socioeconomic differences between the two schools might affect where the student chooses to live. Socioeconomic hardships which might induce a student to live at home could also add stress to the parent-child relationship, explaining, in part, the greater discord found for students living at home. An attempt was made to explore socioeconomic issues in this study, however, incomplete data precluded these analyses. It is recommended that further research in this area address socioeconomic issues in a more systematic fashion, particularly since socioeconomic differences in the occurrence of some clinical syndromes (e.g., eating disorders) previously have been reported in the literature.

The results of the study indicate that the student’s relationship with mother varies with his or her place of residence. It appears that the old adage "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" takes effect. Students who
lived away from home gave their mothers a significantly higher rating as a role model than those students living at home. Students who were living at home with their parents reported more discord in the relationship with mother than those who were living away from home. It follows logically that the more contact one has with the parent, the more opportunity there is for conflict to arise. One area which warrants further study, however, is how the decision of where to live during college is made. It is likely that financial considerations play a major role in determining living situation. However, perhaps the relationship issues are influential as well. For example, do students who have a positive relationship prior to college choose to remain at home with their parents, or are these the ones who feel confident and secure enough to move away? Or is it those who experience higher discord prior to college who then choose to move away, thereby relieving some of the tension they had previously experienced? It might be interesting to study high school seniors, their relationships with their parents, and their subsequent decisions to live at home or away from home after graduation.

**Sex differences**

One of the primary goals of this study was to explore the theoretical difficulties inherent in mother-daughter separation which was proposed by
Freud, Blos, Gilligan and others. At first glance the males and females fared similarly; both groups scored in the average range on the test measures included in the experimental packet. There were no significant differences between the sexes for their relationships with mother, depression, or identity status. Sex differences on subscales of the Eating Disorder Inventory were already enumerated. Upon closer scrutiny, once the sexes were divided into groups by living situation, some within-sex differences appeared.

Several studies have reported that depression proneness relates to child-rearing practices, including rejection, inconsistency of expressed affection, strict control, and so on (Burbach & Borduin, 1986; Gotlib, Mount, Cordy & Whiffen, 1988; McCranie & Bass, 1984; Scalf-McIver & Thompson, 1989). The mother-child relationship was a good predictor of depression in this college student sample. Few of the participants were depressed to a concerning degree, nonetheless, the relationship with mother explained a substantial portion of the variance in the depression scores for three of the four subject groups. For one group, however, the relationship with mother was a woefully poor predictor. Despite predictions based on the theoretical difficulties in the overall mother-daughter relationship, these factors proved to be poor predictors of depression in the group of females still living with their parents.
Emotional separation from mother through normal developmental changes and, for some subjects, heightened by a change in proximity to mother, may have resulted in feelings of guilt, sadness, and loneliness, which contributed to the feelings of depression in the other three groups. Perhaps for the males living with their parents, the connection between relationship with mother and depression indicates that the young man is having some difficulty with separation which is supposedly an easier male task. The females at home, however, may not be experiencing the added stress which the feminists propose because they are maintaining the close tie to mother while individuating. Although there may be stress in the relationship, which is evident in their comparatively elevated Children's Attitude toward Mother (CAM) scores, it is occurring in the context of an ongoing relationship which makes it less threatening, and perhaps neutralizes the mother's effect on the daughter's depression. If the daughter is experiencing some depression, there could be some better predictor of it. A post-hoc analysis revealed that for the women living at home it was their relationship with father (as indicated by their score on the Children's Attitude toward Father scale, which was part of the battery but not included in the main analyses) which was a significant predictor of depression ($R^2$ change = .24, $p<.001$). This difference which holds for women (and men) who live at home, warrants further exploration since it
suggests that the influence of mothers and fathers may differ depending where the late adolescent is living.

Literature from different areas of study have linked family measures with the occurrence of eating disturbances. A recent study by Scalf-McIver and Thompson (1989) found that family variables related to bulimic symptoms in college women. Specifically, inconsistency of mother's expressed affection toward daughter was correlated with both bulimic and depressive symptoms. In this sample, other aspects of the relationship with mother were examined, as well as where the daughter lived. Despite a positive rating for the mother-daughter relationship in the group of women living away from home, the relationship factor was a significant predictor of difficulties with drive for thinness and body dissatisfaction in this group. This was not the case for women still living with their mothers. In this case, the feminist ideas appear to be on target in that the added stress of change in proximity to mother may make the daughter more vulnerable to symptom formation. Only eating issues and depression were explored here; this connection may apply in other areas as well. One might speculate that the disruption of a positive, satisfactory mother-daughter relationship results in a decrease in the daughter's felt nurturance and support and is reflected in a focus on eating and body issues. Perhaps a mechanism such as this one is operating when the notorious "freshman ten (pounds)" are
gained during the first year in college. It was not surprising that females differed from males here; it was not expected that the relationship factors would predict eating disturbances for the males, since eating symptomatology is relatively rare among male college students. The fact that the two female groups differed from one another, however, supports the notion that separating from the mother may be more difficult for women, and may result is some adjustment difficulties when the subject leaves home.

**Implications for Further Research**

There are some drawbacks to the data used in this study. All the information herein was derived from survey data and reflects each student’s subjective interpretations. The sample used was a self-selected group of college students enrolled in psychology courses. Although there was a good cross-section of students from different grade levels and different majors, this was not a random sample. Some of the measures included were newly devised and were not normed; rather, they were used in an exploratory fashion, in comparison with established research and clinical measures. Also, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) was dependent on the subject’s memory which could be distorted over time or affected by the wish to respond in a socially desirable manner.
Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the data must be viewed cautiously, and with an eye to raising questions for further research.

One basic issue in question here is how one can explore, or whether one should explore, clinical issues with a normal sample. Testing hypotheses on college freshmen is done all the time, but are these results generalizable or clinically useful? On the one hand, one wonders whether relationships between variables exist to some degree in a normal population, while these same relationships are exaggerated and/or distorted in a clinical population. On the other hand, perhaps there is a dichotomy in operation; for the normal group such relationships do not exist, while for the clinical group they do exist. This becomes particularly important in an instance where one is studying normal developmental changes which may have clinical implications, such as in this study. Perhaps a two-pronged research approach is in order. First, explore the issues in a group of normals, then replicate with a clinical group in which such issues might be magnified.

The issue of generalizability must be considered when using a college sample. These students are a select few of the general population who have the opportunity for a societally sanctioned period of psychological moratorium. They are a privileged group who have help available from dormitory counselors, vocational counselors, peers, professors, workshops, and counseling centers. Can data derived from this
population provide reliable information about the general population? It seems important to seek normal controls from settings other than college classes, such as working young adults, those in the military, the unemployed, and so on.

Another implication of this study is the need to piece together a puzzle of predictors which could account for even more variance in the issues under scrutiny. Females and males may in fact differ in some of their needs when it comes to separating from home. Exploring the relationship with mother provides some interesting information, but certainly mothers are not responsible for everything, despite the mother-blaming which has come in and out of vogue in recent years. One might take a closer look at the similarities and differences in the late adolescent's relationship with his or her father, and the interaction of the parent's gender with the child's gender. Although past literature and research supports the uniqueness of the mother-child dyad, the role of the father has expanded by late adolescence, and might be as good a predictor of functioning, or a better one in some instances, than relationship with mother. Comparisons of single parent and two parent families might yield interesting results. Exploring the ability of a second parent to temper the effects of the other parent when the relationship with one is problematic would be interesting and clinically relevant. By exploring these and other
environmental factors and personality traits of the child, for example, perhaps a more coherent picture of gender-related needs and developmental changes can be assembled.

Drawing information with clinical relevance to child-rearing would be an important contribution of such research. Studying late adolescents might provide parents and clinicians with new approaches to younger adolescents which could pave the way for an easier separation. It could also help clinicians provide troubled adolescents with alternate ways of coping. Focusing on facets of the early mother-child relationship and factors such as acceptance-rejection, criticism, encouragement, and so on, might reveal which factors set the foundation for a relationship which is stable over time. Determining relationship elements essential to maintaining the positive valence of the relationship across time and developmental changes could ease the minds of many new parents.

The finding that students who felt the least individuated also had scores above the clinical cutoff on the Child's Attitude toward Mother scale really highlights one of the premises of this study. Are the difficulty separating and the discord in the relationship during late adolescence anomalies, or are these subjects experiencing a recapitulation of the first individuation which was also a problematic one? The PARQ provided some information about the mother-child relationship during latency, but it
would be very interesting to find out how these subjects managed during the separation-individuation process as toddlers.

The living situation factor is also an interesting area for further study. Exploring how the decision is made to live at home or in a local dormitory, or to go out of town for college could yield more information regarding the influence of the relationship with parents during the transition from high school to college or to early work experiences. The finding that students, especially the females, who remain living with their parents during college experience greater discord in their relationships with their mothers may warrant some plan for intervention with commuting students to help them cope with strained home relations. Surveying students who live at school who then return to the home (for prolonged vacations, or after graduation) might reveal interesting information regarding the stability of these findings. Will students who return home revert to previous patterns? Would they report greater discord for the times they are living at home?

Yet another area for research would be a longitudinal study designed to look at the developmental phenomena of separation and individuation at points of transition later in life. For example, how does the relationship with one’s parents relate to functioning at the time of marriage, parenthood, career achievements or during losses such as divorce
or widowhood. Shifts in dependency and need for support during times of stress, whether due to celebrations or sad events, might impact upon the mother-child relationship even after both parties are established in their adult roles. Research spanning the generations of late-adolescent, parent and grandparent could expand upon our knowledge of mother-child relationships, and how separation and individuation issues play out when aging grandparents become more dependent on their adult children as is often the case today.
References


Appendix A: Measures
Dear Student:

You are being asked to participate in this research project about students' adjustment to college and separation from home/family for my doctoral dissertation. As part of the undergraduate subject pool you will be able to earn credits for experimental participation by completing several questionnaires which take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions after completing the forms or if you wish to withdraw from the study, you may contact me at the CWRU Department of Psychology, 368-2686.

Pamela S. Senders, M.A.

_____________________________________________________

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a psychology study designed for undergraduate students which addresses the student’s relationship with his or her parents around the age when the student "leaves home" to attend college (commuting students are included).

My participation entails completing a series of paper-and-pencil questionnaires about your family background and relationships, your mood, and your sense of identity. There is little personal risk in completing these measures beyond that of daily living. All my responses will be kept strictly confidential. Responses from all the participants will be combined, so that the results will be based on group data. My individual responses will not be revealed to or discussed with anyone other than the examiner and her assistant.

I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from this study at any time by notifying the examiner at 368-2686 (CWRU, Department of Psychology).

After reading the information outlined herein, I offer my consent to participate in the study titled "Late Adolescent Adjustment as a Function of the Perceived Mother-Child Relationship."

Name (please print) __________________________
Signature __________________________
Date __________________________
Subject Information Form

NAME/CODE NUMBER: ________________ SEX: Male Female

AGE: ________________ DATE OF BIRTH: ________________

RACE: ___ Caucasian MARITAL STATUS: ___ Single
___ African American       ___ Separated
___ Asian American        ___ Divorced
___ Native American       ___ Cohabiting
___ Other                ___ Married

CLASS: ___ Freshman MAJOR (if declared): _________________________
___ Sophomore
___ Other ________________________

LIVING QUARTERS: While attending college, I live...
___ In a dormitory
___ Off campus housing
       ___ Alone
       ___ With others, roommates
       ___ With my spouse or significant other
___ At home, with my parent(s)
___ Other ________________________

CONTACT WITH FAMILY: Choose the appropriate letter.

A = Daily or almost every day
B = Not every day, but at least once a week
C = Not every week, but at least once a month
D = Holidays and/or Family Events
E = Rarely
F = No contact of this type with my family

I currently see/visit my parents ________.
I currently have contact with my parents by phone ________.
I currently have contact with my parents by mail ________.

FAMILY: While I was growing up, my family consisted of...
___ MOTHER
___ FATHER
___ SISTER(S): How many? ________ Ages? ________
___ BROTHER(S): How many? ________ Ages? ________

BIRTH ORDER: In a family of ______ children, I was born ______.
(indicate first, second,...last)
Subject Information Form

MOTHER:
My mother currently is...

___ married to my father
___ living with my father
___ separated from my father
___ divorced and living with...
   ___ alone
   ___ a roommate
   ___ a significant other
   ___ remarried
___ deceased
___ widowed and living with...
   ___ alone
   ___ a roommate
   ___ a significant other
   ___ remarried
___ never was married

She lives...
   ___ nearby
   ___ in another city
   ___ in another state

She is...
   ___ employed full time
      (Job Title ______________)
   ___ employed part time
      (Job Title ______________)
   ___ is currently unemployed
   ___ a housewife

FATHER:
My father currently is...

___ married to my mother
___ living with my mother
___ separated from my mother
___ divorced and living with...
   ___ alone
   ___ a roommate
   ___ a significant other
   ___ remarried
___ deceased
___ widowed and living with...
   ___ alone
   ___ a roommate
   ___ a significant other
   ___ remarried
___ never was married

He lives...
   ___ nearby
   ___ in another city
   ___ in another state

He is...
   ___ employed full time
      (Job Title ______________)
   ___ employed part time
      (Job Title ______________)
   ___ is currently unemployed
   ___ a househusband
Subject Information Form

ADOPTION: Were you adopted? _____Yes _____No
I was adopted at age ________.
I was told of the adoption at age ________.

(If you are adopted, complete these forms regarding your adoptive family.)

DIVORCED or DECEASED PARENT:

If your biological parents are divorced...

a. How old were you at the time of the divorce? _____

b. After the divorce, I lived with...
   _____ Mother
   _____ Father
   _____ Other, please explain

   ______________________________________________________

c. My parent(s) is/are deceased. At the time of my ________'s
death, I was _____ years old.

d. After the divorce/death, the parent I lived with remarried.
   _____ Yes  _____ No.

f. At the time of this remarriage, I was _____ years old.

g. The parent I lived with has remarried more than once.
   _____ Yes  _____ No.

h. The household I grew up in also included
   _____ stepsiblings  _____ foster children  _____ grandparents
   _____ other relatives  _____ pets

INCOME: I estimate that my own income (earned from jobs) is ________ dollars per
year.

   I..... (check all that apply)
   _____ am on a scholarship  _____ work part time
   _____ have student loans  _____ work full time
   _____ am a work-study student
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This questionnaire is about parents and children. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item carefully to reflect your current thoughts and feelings by placing a number in each column, as follows:

1 = Never  
2 = Rarely  
3 = Sometimes  
4 = Often  
5 = Most of the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>father</th>
<th>mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I call my parent on the phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>My parent asks for my opinions and/or advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>When I need advice, I call my parent first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>My parent reads my mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I tell my parent about my college courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>My parent assists me with financial support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I must defend my decisions to my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>My parent gives me emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>My parent respects my knowledge and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I am candid/open with my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>My parent respects my privacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I avoid physical contact with my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>My parent knows my likes and dislikes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>When I talk to my parent, we end up arguing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My parent listens in on my phone calls with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I tell my parent about my friends/dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>My parent keeps personal information from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I go to visit my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>My parent is not sensitive to my feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I discuss sexual concerns with my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>My parent goes through my room or my belongings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I feel OK when I disagree with my parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>My parent treats me like I'm still a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I provide my parent's emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>My parent calls or writes to me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25
P.O.P. SCALE

This questionnaire is designed to measure your perceptions of your parents as individuals. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer as thoughtfully as you can by placing a number beside each item as follows:

1 = Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Sometimes
4 = Often
5 = Most of the time

Father   Mother

1. My parent is irritable.
2. I view my parent as successful in relationships.
3. My parent misses me now that I am attending college.
4. My parent is satisfied with his/her choice of career.
5. I am afraid of becoming just like my parent.
6. My parent seems depressed.
7. My parent keeps the house running smoothly.
8. I worry about my parent.
9. My parent engages in activities outside the family.
10. My parent seems content.
11. I feel sorry for my parent.
12. My parent seems lost when he/she has no one to look after.
13. My parent has friends he/she can count on.
15. My parent enjoys having time to spend alone.
16. My parent is an independent thinker.
17. I want to be like my parent when I am his/her age.
18. My parent neglected the children because of career.
19. My parent is a capable person.
20. I am proud of my parent’s accomplishments.
22. My parent is an anxious person.
23. I think my parent sacrificed a lot for the child(ren).
24. My parent seems to be looking for a fight.
25. My parent sets a good example of how to be a parent.

1,5,6,8,11,12,14,18,21,22,24
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### Appendix B: Intercorrelations Between Relationship and Outcome Measures

Table 11
**Correlation Matrix: Complete Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAM</th>
<th>PARQ</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>SIS</th>
<th>EDIDT</th>
<th>EDIB</th>
<th>EDIBD</th>
<th>MDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.78**</td>
<td>-.74**</td>
<td>-.79**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.69**</td>
<td>-.72**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIDT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDIB</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDIBD</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MDI</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-Tailed significance: *p<.01    **p<.001