

FAMILY RITUALIZATION, FAMILY COHESION AND ADAPTABILITY, AND A  
MEASURE OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY

by

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**BY**

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**of**

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**Ilona Oszadszky**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined the relationships between family rituals, family cohesion and adaptability, and intimacy in university students' interpersonal relationships outside their families. In addition, the relationships between these variables and four demographic variables (age, gender, years of university education completed by subjects, and parents' education) were also investigated. A theoretical model outlining the predicted relationships between these variables was presented.

Subjects included male and female undergraduate students recruited from the introductory psychology subject pool at the University of Manitoba. Family rituals were assessed using the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) and family cohesion and adaptability were assessed using the Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scales (FACES II). Furthermore, the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) was used to assess intimacy in relationships outside the family. The data were analyzed using structural equation modelling procedures to determine the interrelationships between the variables in the model.

As expected, meaningful family rituals positively influenced the degree of intimacy in students' interpersonal relationships outside their families. Consistent with findings of other research, gender also influenced the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. Specifically, female students perceived greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than did male students. Contrary to expectations, family cohesion and adaptability did not affect intimacy in students' interpersonal relationships outside their families. The study also examined the relationship between family rituals and family cohesion and adaptability. Results indicated that meaningful family rituals positively contribute to family

cohesiveness and adaptability as perceived by university students. Conversely, the findings also suggested that rigidly adhering to routines in family rituals may negatively affect students' perceptions of family cohesion and adaptability. Finally, the results of this study indicated that the level of education attained by both students and their parents has a small, yet significant, positive effect on family cohesion and adaptability. These findings have important implications for university counsellors, family therapists, and policy makers and administrators in education.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Review of the Literature.....	3
Family Rituals.....	3
Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	7
Intimacy.....	9
Research Questions.....	11
Theoretical Rationale.....	12
Theoretical Model.....	23
Overview of the Thesis.....	27
2. Methodology.....	29
Subjects.....	29
Measurement of Variables.....	32
Demographic Questionnaire.....	33
Age.....	34
Gender.....	34
Years of University Education Completed.....	36
Parents' Education.....	36

Family Cohesion and Adaptability	
Evaluation Scale (FACES II).....	38
Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	41
Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ).....	46
Meaning.....	48
Routines.....	52
Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS).....	56
Intimacy.....	58
Procedure.....	64
Data Collection.....	64
Data Analysis Methodology.....	65
3. Results.....	68
Correlations.....	68
Multiple Regression Analyses.....	70
Effects of Demographic Variables on Meaning.....	71
Effects of Demographic Variables and Meaning on Routines..	71
Effects of Demographic Variables, Meaning, and Routines on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	76
Effects of Demographic Variables, Meaning, Routines, and Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability on Intimacy.....	83
Summary.....	90
4. Discussion.....	93
Limitations.....	104
Implications.....	106
Directions for Future Research.....	107
Conclusion.....	109

References.....	111
Appendices.....	121
Appendix A.....	121
Appendix B.....	123
Appendix C.....	127
Appendix D.....	129

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure

1. Theoretical Model.....24
2. Direct Effects of Gender, Age, Years of University  
Education, Parents' Education, Meaning, and Routine.....91

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1.	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics.....	31
2.	Frequencies and Percentages for Age.....	35
3.	Descriptive Statistics for Age.....	35
4.	Frequencies and Percentages for Years of University Completed.....	37
5.	Descriptive Statistics for Years of University Completed.....	37
6.	Frequencies and Percentages for Parents' Education.....	39
7.	Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Education.....	39
8.	Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	43
9.	Frequencies and Percentages for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	44
10.	Descriptive Statistics for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	45
11.	Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Family Ritual Meaning....	49
12.	Frequencies and Percentages for Family Ritual Meaning.....	50
13.	Descriptive Statistics for Family Ritual Meaning.....	51
14.	Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Routines.....	53
15.	Frequencies and Percentages for Routine.....	54
16.	Descriptive Statistics for Routine.....	55
17.	Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Intimacy.....	59
18.	Frequencies and Percentages for Intimacy.....	60
19.	Descriptive Statistics for Intimacy.....	62
20.	Correlation Coefficients for the Variables.....	69

21.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and Parents' Education on Meaning.....	72
22.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and Parents' Education on Routine.....	73
23.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, and Meaning on Routine.....	75
24.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and Parents' Education on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	77
25.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, and Meaning on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	79
26.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, Meaning, and Routine on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability.....	81
27.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and Parents' Education on Intimacy.....	84
28.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, and Meaning on Intimacy.....	85
29.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, Meaning, and Routine on Intimacy.....	87
30.	Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, Meaning, Routine, and Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability on Intimacy.....	89

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

The basic tenet common to many theories of development is that early experiences in the family of origin affect children's psychosocial development (Sullivan, 1953; Erikson, 1963; Bowlby, 1977). From experiences within their families, children develop beliefs about themselves and others and learn how to relate interpersonally (Bowlby, 1977; Bretherton, 1985; Galvin & Brommel, 1986). Bowlby (1977) asserts, for instance, that "there is a strong causal relationship between an individual's experiences with his [sic] parents and his [sic] later capacity to make affectional bonds" (p. 206). It follows, therefore, that the dynamics of young people's family of origin is considered to play a significant role in fostering their ability to establish and maintain intimate relationships outside their families (Sullivan, 1953; Erikson, 1963; Bowlby, 1977; Bowen, 1978; Hovestadt, Piercy, Anderson, Cochran, & Fine, 1985).

Although considerable research has focused on the relationship between caregiver-child attachment styles and later interpersonal relationships in adulthood, other aspects of individuals' experiences in the family of origin, in relation to intimacy development, have received less attention. Among these neglected areas are the potential roles played by family rituals and family cohesion and adaptability. These aspects of the family environment have been found to contribute to individual functioning. More specifically, these variables have been found to protect children from developing problems with, for example, alcoholism, drug abuse, self-esteem, identity development, and emotional and behavioral difficulties (see Wolin, Bennett, Noonan, & Teitelbaum, 1980; Bennett, Wolin, & Reiss, 1988; Fiese, 1992; Fiese, 1993; Cooper, Holman, & Braithwaite, 1983; Tolan, 1988; Protinsky & Shilts, 1990). Surprisingly, however,

no research has been done investigating the association between family rituals and intimacy in relationships outside the family and, to my knowledge, only one published study has investigated the relationship between family cohesion and adaptability and intimate relationships beyond the family. Because of the potential impact of these variables on individual psychosocial development, this area certainly warrants in-depth consideration.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study is to examine the relationships between family rituals, family cohesion and adaptability, and intimacy in interpersonal relationships beyond the family. In addition to these family environment variables, this study also examines the relationship between gender and intimacy in relationships outside the family because many researchers suggest that gender differences exist in the experience of intimate relationships (see for example Bakken & Romig, 1992; Sharabany, Gershoni, & Hofman, 1981; Fischer, 1981; Blyth & Foster-Clark, 1987). More specifically, as will be discussed later in Chapter 2, this study goes beyond investigating correlational relationships between the variables, by examining the extent to which the independent variables influence the dependent variables using structural equation modelling procedures. That is, this study examines the extent to which family rituals, family cohesion and adaptability, and gender contribute to the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family.

As discussed previously, the relationship between family environment variables, such as family rituals and family cohesion and adaptability, and intimacy in relationships beyond the family has received very little research

attention. Consequently, this study will contribute to the body of literature investigating factors that contribute to intimacy development.

In this chapter, the main variables of concern to this study are reviewed and, from this, four research questions are derived. The theoretical rationale that guides the study is then discussed in relation to these four questions. Complementing this discussion, a model outlining the proposed linkages between all the variables in the study is presented (Figure 1). Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Family Rituals**

Rappaport (1971) outlined six characteristics that are central to the definition of ritual: 1) repetition; 2) acting (saying, thinking, and doing); 3) special behavior or stylization (using behavior and symbols in an extraordinary way); 4) order (beginning and ending of ritual with capability of spontaneity); 5) evocative presentational style; and 6) collective dimensions (meaning). Many of these characteristics have been incorporated into a definition of ritual formulated by van der Hart (1983). According to van der Hart (1983):

Rituals are prescribed symbolic acts that must be performed in a certain way in a certain order, and may or may not be accompanied by verbal formulas. Besides the formal aspects, an experiential aspect of ritual can be distinguished. The ritual is performed with much involvement. If that is not the case, then we are talking about empty rituals. Certain rituals are repeatedly performed throughout the lives of those concerned; others, on the contrary, are performed only once (but can be performed again by other people). ( p. 5-6)

That rituals are prescribed, repeated, and meaningful, are three aspects of ritual central to van der Hart's definition. Rituals are prescribed in that they must be carried out in a specific way, and repeated, as the behavior is not considered to be a ritual if it is performed on only one occasion (van der Hart, 1983).

Through their repetitive and prescribed nature, family rituals provide a sense of structure, order, predictability, and continuity to family life ( Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Rituals organize family life by providing 'frameworks for expectancy' (Douglas, 1966) and as a result they have the power to link the past, present, and future (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Furthermore, as each family idiosyncratically re-enacts the ritual time and time again in prescribed ways, the "rituals stabilize family life by clarifying expected roles, delineating boundaries within and without the family, and defining rules so that all members know that 'this is the way our family is' " (Wolin et al., 1980, p.201). In this way, family rituals may also contribute to a sense of family identity (Bennett, Wolin, & McAvity, 1988).

The meaning attributed to rituals is also considered an important aspect of family rituals. Rituals that are considered to be meaningless are described by van der Hart as being empty rituals (1983). Van der Hart does not consider empty rituals to be without value, however, as the repetitive nature of rituals will contribute to continuity and under certain circumstances the meaningfulness of the ritual may be reignited (1983).

Based on hundreds of interviews with families, Wolin and Bennett (1984) have specified three types of family rituals, including celebrations, traditions, and patterned family interactions. Celebrations consist of holidays such as Christmas and Easter as well as ceremonious occasions including weddings, baptisms, and funerals. In general, celebrations tend to be quite specific to each culture with

most families carrying out the traditions in a similar manner. Traditions are more specific to each individual family and include such rituals as the annual summer vacation, Sunday dinners, and birthday traditions. Patterned interactions include everyday rituals such as family chores, family meetings, regular dinnertimes, and evening activities. Although they are less organized and planned than celebrations or family traditions, patterned interactions provide structure to everyday life.

In addition to the types of family rituals described by Wolin and Bennett (1984), eight dimensions of family rituals have been identified by Fiese and Kline (1993) based on the empirical research of Wolin & Bennett (1984) and the theoretical work of Imber-Black (1988), Roberts (1988), and Turner (1967). These eight dimensions include: occurrence, roles, flexibility, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, continuation, and deliberateness (Fiese & Kline, 1993; Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, & Schwagler, 1993). Definitions for each of these dimensions are included in Appendix A.

Factor analysis indicated that the eight dimensions of family rituals may be summarized as two main factors: meaning and routine (Fiese, 1992). The meaning factor includes the dimensions of occurrence, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, and deliberateness. The meaning factor appears to describe "the personal meaning ascribed to family rituals, highlighting the symbolic significance and affect associated with family rituals" (Fiese, 1992, p. 157). The routine factor includes the dimensions of roles, flexibility, and continuation. This factor seems "to summarize the manner in which rituals are carried out, highlighting the repetitive routines practiced in family rituals" (Fiese, 1992, p. 157).

The degree to which meaning is associated with family rituals and the level of routine involved in family rituals varies between families. Consequently, a number of family ritual typologies have been described in the literature (Wolin & Bennett, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Imber-Black, 1988; Fiese & Kline, 1993; Hecker & Schindler, 1994). Expanding on the work of Wolin and Bennett (1984), Janine Roberts (1988), for example, identified a family ritual typology to describe differences in family ritualization. According to Roberts (1988), the practice of flexible rituals occurs when families are able to change ritual practices when necessary. In contrast, families that participate in rituals that are rigid and inflexible are identified as rigidly ritualized. Families that do not participate in many rituals are described as under-ritualized and when rituals emphasize the cultural or religious traditions of one side of the family, while ignoring traditional aspects of the other side of the family, skewed ritualization is evident. Finally, hollow rituals are practiced when there appears to be little meaning attached to the rituals.

The possible protective function of family rituals has become of increasing interest among researchers. The disruption of family rituals in the alcoholic family, for example, has been associated with the intergenerational transmission of alcoholism as well as emotional and behavioral problems among offspring of alcoholic parents (Wolin et al., 1980; Bennett, Wolin, & Reiss, 1988). In addition, Fiese (1993) examined the possible role of family rituals in protecting children with alcoholic parents from developing drinking problems and anxiety-related health symptoms, such as headaches, backaches, and stomach aches, and found a negative association between family ritual meaning scores and anxiety-related health symptoms. Furthermore, using cluster analysis Fiese et al. (1993) found that meaningful family rituals protected couples from experiencing marital

dissatisfaction in early parenthood (Fiese et al., 1993). Another study revealed that meaningful family rituals are positively associated with individual identity development (Fiese, 1992). In essence, family rituals have been linked to a number of variables that promote adaptive functioning in individuals.

### Family Cohesion and Adaptability

In an effort to integrate a multitude of concepts, from a variety of social sciences fields, that are related to marital and family interaction, Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell (1979) developed the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems. Their early research revealed two main dimensions of family functioning, family cohesion and family adaptability, which are considered to be the underlying dimensions of the various concepts found in the literature.

Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1983) defined family cohesion as the "emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (p. 70). The constructs used to measure the family cohesion dimension include: emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, and interests and recreation (Olson et al., 1983). Families vary in the degree of cohesiveness experienced. According to Olson et al. (1983), four levels of family cohesion may be identified, ranging from very low to very high. At the very low end of the continuum, families are described as disengaged. Disengaged family members feel a high sense of autonomy with little attachment or connectedness to the family. Conversely, at the very high end of the continuum, family members feel an extreme sense of connectedness, enmeshment, to the family that limits individuation. In between the extreme ends of the continuum, two additional levels of cohesion are identified, ranging from low to moderate (separated) and from moderate to high (connected).

The second main dimension, family adaptability refers to the extent to which the family is able to change in response to situational and/or developmental stress (Olson et al., 1983, p. 70). The concepts that are used to measure family adaptability include: family power, negotiation styles, role relationships, and relationship rules (Olson et al., 1983). As with the cohesion dimension, there are four main levels of adaptability ranging from very low (rigid) to very high (chaotic). Families characterized by low to moderate adaptability are referred to as structured and families with moderate to high adaptability are referred to as flexible.

According to Olson's curvilinear hypothesis, the medium levels of cohesion (separated and connected) and adaptability (structured and flexible) are considered to be most conducive to optimal family functioning and individual development. In contrast, the extreme levels of cohesion (disengagement and enmeshment) and adaptability (rigid and chaotic) are generally seen to be problematic and are hypothesized to hinder effective family functioning and individual development (Olson et al., 1983).

Research investigating the relationship between family cohesion and adaptability and individual functioning has produced inconsistent findings, likely due to differences in methodology between the studies. Although some research supports Olson's curvilinear hypothesis, indicating that medium levels of family cohesion and adaptability promote adaptive individual functioning (e.g., Garbarino, Sebes, & Schellenbach, 1985; Rodick, Henggler, & Hanson, 1986), other research suggests that there is a linear positive relationship between family cohesion and individual functioning (e.g., Bell, Avery, Jenkins, Feld, & Schoenrock, 1985; Kenny, 1990). For example, Bell et al. (1985) found a significant positive relationship between family attachment, bonds with parents

and siblings, and a number of social competency measures, including social self-esteem and degree of satisfaction/ease in same and opposite sex relationships, among a sample of first year university students. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to suggest that intimacy in relationships may be influenced by family cohesion and adaptability.

### Intimacy

Intimacy is seen as a vital aspect of human experience. The importance of intimacy is reflected in major theories of development. Maslow (1954), for example, highlighted the need for affection as a basic need in his hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, psychoanalytical developmental theorists, such as Erikson and Sullivan, argued that intimacy is the key developmental task in late adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1963; Sullivan, 1953). The importance of intimacy was highlighted by Angyal, for example, who stated that establishing and maintaining intimate interpersonal relationships is the "crux of our existence from the cradle to the grave" (1965, p. 19).

Schaefer and Olson (1981) proposed that the most refined definitions view intimacy as a mutual need satisfaction (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970) and closeness to another human being on intellectual, physical, and emotional dimensions (Dahms, 1972). Dahms further characterized intimacy as involving mutual accessibility, naturalness, non-possessiveness and the need to view intimacy as an ongoing process that occurs over time (1972).

Similarly, Paul and White (1990) described intimacy as having cognitive, affective, and behavioral components which apply both to friendships and romantic relationships. The cognitive component of intimacy involves the ability to take the perspective of another person, that is, to see through the eyes of the

other person. The affective component refers to empathic ability or the ability to place oneself emotionally in the other person's shoes. The behavioral component includes being trustworthy, sensitive and responsive to the other person, equitable and mutual, and effectively communicating. In romantic relationships, the behavioral component may also include sexual relations. Paul and White (1990) stressed that these components are characteristics of a mature form of intimacy that is developed gradually.

Erikson defined intimacy as "the capacity to commit oneself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (1963, p.263). Central to Erikson's conceptualization of intimacy is the willingness to make a commitment to another person without fear of losing one's identity. Failure to resolve this task leads to isolation, or an avoidance of intimate closeness with others, for fear of losing oneself.

In his theory of psychosocial development, which is based on clinical observations and experiences, Erikson described eight stages of development that occur throughout the lifecycle (1963). At each stage, individuals face a bipolar conflict. Five conflicts are faced during childhood including: trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt, and industry vs. inferiority. In addition, adolescents face the struggle of identity vs. role confusion, and in young adulthood the conflict between intimacy vs. isolation must be resolved. Moreover, in adulthood and late adulthood the struggles are generativity vs. stagnation and integrity vs. despair, respectively. Erikson proposed that the successful resolution of each of these developmental tasks is dependent on the resolution of prior developmental tasks (1963). For instance,

the ability to establish intimacy is dependent on the successful resolution of the previous developmental tasks of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, and identity.

Sullivan's (1953) theory of interpersonal development posits that there are a number of interpersonal needs that must be resolved at each developmental stage in the lifecycle and, similar to Erikson's theory, the successful resolution of each need provides the basis for the resolution of the interpersonal need at the next developmental stage. In infancy, needs of attention, nurturance, and affection must be met by adult caregivers. During childhood and early adolescence, sharing and closeness with peers become important. In adolescence, the establishment of a special "chumship", or close relationship, with a same-sex peer is a key component in enabling individuals to develop intimate relationships with opposite sex peers. The developmental theories of Erikson and Sullivan are used, in this study, to conceptualize the links between the family environment variables (family rituals and family cohesion and adaptability) and intimacy in relationships outside the family.

### **Research Questions**

On the basis of the previous discussion, the following four questions were derived:

1. Do family rituals positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family?
2. Do family rituals positively influence family cohesion and adaptability?
3. Do family cohesion and adaptability positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family?
4. Does gender affect the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family?

## Theoretical Rationale

In this section, the theoretical rationale linking the variables in the study is presented in relation to the four questions that guide the study. The first question to be addressed is: Do family rituals positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Many researchers have suggested that the family environment is a factor that contributes, at least to some degree, to individual psychosocial development (e.g., Moos & Moos, 1989; Olson et al., 1983; Wrobbel & Plueddemann, 1990). Family ritualization, for instance, is one aspect of the family environment that has been found to contribute to individual development. As previously mentioned, a number of studies have provided evidence indicating that family rituals may, for example, protect children of alcoholics from developing alcoholism, emotional and behavioral problems, and anxiety-related health symptoms (Wolin et al., 1980; Bennett, Wolin, & Reiss, 1988; Fiese, 1993). Specifically, Wolin et al. (1980) found that children of alcoholics are less likely to develop alcoholism if the rituals in their families of origin are not disrupted by parental alcoholism. In a later study, Bennett, Wolin, and Reiss (1988) found that children from families that developed and implemented plans for family rituals functioned better, both behaviorally and emotionally, than children from families that did not plan and execute family rituals. Furthermore, in a relatively recent study, Fiese (1993) reported that adolescents with alcoholic parents who perceived their family rituals as being meaningful, were less likely to develop anxiety-related health symptoms than adolescents with alcoholic parents who perceived their family rituals to be relatively meaningless. Moreover, other studies revealed that meaningful family rituals are associated with marital satisfaction and cohesiveness (Fiese et al., 1993) as well as with individual identity development (Fiese, 1992). It is proposed

in the present study, that rituals, in the family of origin, may also positively influence the level of intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family. As mentioned previously, to date there are no published research studies that have investigated this relationship.

The proposed relationship between family rituals and intimacy in relationships outside the family is based on the assumption that the environment of the family of origin plays an important role in individual development. Many prominent theorists such as Erikson (1963), Bowlby (1973), Sullivan (1953), and Bowen (1978) have stressed the importance of early experiences in the family of origin in the psychosocial development of the individual. More specifically, according to Erikson (1963), healthy intimacy development is dependent on the establishment of a basic sense of trust in infancy. As rituals are repeated in a predictable and consistent manner, a sense of trust and security may be fostered as family members come to expect certain patterns of events and behaviors.

Predictability and consistency in meeting the emotional and physical needs of the child are important in the development of early relationships between the caregiver and the child that, in turn, influence the nature and quality of later relationships (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby's attachment theory, for example, posits that early caregiver-child relationship experiences contribute to the formation of beliefs about whether the self is worthy of attention and care and beliefs about whether others are emotionally available and responsive. These beliefs or "internal working models" are generalized to other relationships throughout the life span (Bowlby, 1973), and, thus, relationships in adulthood often reflect early relationships in the family. Lending support to attachment theory, Lichtenberg (as cited in Hadley, Holloway, & Mallinckrodt, 1993) found that children who were nurtured and cared for were "likely to enjoy human interaction and to find support

from others" whereas children who were neglected did not react as positively to interpersonal relationships (p. 349). Other research studying adults has also supported the belief that early relationships with caregivers function as models for later interpersonal relationships (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Nollen, 1990).

The present study proposes that family ritual experiences may contribute to family cohesiveness, emotional bonding between family members, and that these experiences may promote internal working models characterized by a sense that the self is worthy of care and attention and that others are emotionally responsive and available. It is further proposed that individuals who believe they are worthy of care and affection and that others are emotionally responsive and available will likely have positive attitudes towards interpersonal relationships and, in turn, will want intimate relationships outside the family.

It is important to recognize that numerous researchers and clinicians argue that individuals from families characterized by extreme connectedness (enmeshment) may have difficulties in identity and intimacy development. That is, overidentification with the family may result in limited individual autonomy that can, in turn, affect the ability to establish intimacy in relationships because, according to Erikson (1963), intimacy can be developed only after an individual identity is established.

Although it is proposed that family rituals may create cohesiveness within the family, allowing family members to feel connected to one another, at the same time family rituals may also promote individual identity. For instance, family rituals often involve the theme of identity (Imber-Black, 1988). Family rituals, such as birthdays, bar mitzvahs, and weddings, symbolize identity transitions. Other rituals, such as mother's day, also contribute to an individual's sense of

identity through the celebration of the maternal role. Furthermore, based on clinical observations, in addition to three research projects investigating family rituals, Wolin and Bennett (1984) proposed that family rituals establish and maintain a sense of family identity from which grows a sense of individual identity. In addition, results of a study conducted by Fiese (1992) provided moderate empirical support for the belief that family rituals are associated with individual identity development. More specifically, Fiese (1992) found that scores from several of the family ritual dimensions on the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) positively correlated with adolescent identity development as measured by the identity integration scale from the Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (MSEI). Correlations ranged from .24 to .26 at the .05 significance level.

As the definition of intimacy is the ability to connect to another individual while maintaining a sense of individuality (Erikson, 1963), it stands to reason that the ability to develop intimate relationships outside the family may be influenced by family rituals because they may allow individuals to feel connected to the family while at the same time allowing for individual identity development.

Family rituals may also function as a regulator of the separateness and connectedness of the family. Spending time with family members during family ritual events may create cohesion between family members, allowing individuals to feel connected to one another. As family rituals are time limited events, however, individuals may separate from the family after the event. In this way, family rituals may allow for an "ebb and flow" of separateness and connectedness. If intimacy is defined as being connected to another individual without fear of losing oneself, then such family ritual experiences can contribute to intimacy development.

Earlier, it was proposed that family rituals promote cohesiveness in families. Therefore, the second question that is addressed is: Do family rituals positively influence family cohesion and adaptability? Many researchers studying family rituals have argued that a major function of family rituals is to create family cohesiveness (Turner, 1967; van der Hart, 1983; Fiese et al., 1993). This belief is supported by the popular use of rituals as a therapeutic tool to promote intimacy within families, renew marital relationships, and establish kinship connections (Wolin, Bennett, & Jacobs, 1988; Cheal, 1988; Whiteside, 1989). In further support of the proposed relationship between family rituals and family cohesiveness, Shipman (1982) provided numerous examples of students' personal accounts of family rituals, many of which state how rituals promoted cohesiveness in the family. In commenting on family rituals, one student in the study stated:

Family rituals were many and colorful while I lived at home. Every holiday had its own traditional family activities and patterns. Whenever one of these occasions is in the near future, it seems to have a big impact on the cohesiveness of the family. Everyone in the nuclear family realized the importance of this special event, and this seems to draw everyone together like a magnet. (Shipman, 1982, p. 183).

Another student recalled:

Some of my happiest memories are from our family summer vacations. Every summer for the past thirteen years, the whole family goes on vacation...I really enjoy being with my family. We all come out to know each other better and are drawn closer together. (Shipman, 1982, p. 176)

These statements reflect the important cohesion building function of family rituals. They emphasize how the process of ritual ties family members together

and how a sense of closeness is established. A sense of togetherness may be created as family members spend time together, sharing common experiences and communicating with each other. As previously mentioned, the consistent, predictable, and repetitive nature of family rituals may also serve to promote family cohesion in that the enactment of the rituals time and time again may foster a sense of trust within family members which promotes positive relationships (Erikson, 1963; Bowlby, 1973). Cohesiveness is also created through repeated family rituals as family members gain a collective sense of who they are. That is, family rituals convey a sense of family identity as the uniqueness of each family is represented in their idiosyncratic behaviors (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). For example, in describing a Polish tradition of serving a waferlike cracker at Christmas Eve dinner, one student stated: "The object is for everybody to have a large piece and then give some of his [sic] piece to each member of the family. This is to symbolize unity and friendship among us" (Shipman, 1982, p. 172).

Although many clinicians and researchers have commented on the association between family rituals and family cohesiveness, this relationship has been empirically investigated in only one study conducted by Fiese et al. (1993). The subjects included 115 married couples with infant or preschool children. Family rituals were assessed using the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) and a semi-structured interview developed by Wolin and Bennett (1984). Marital satisfaction and cohesion was assessed using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). The results of the study indicated that family rituals considered to be meaningful were associated with greater marital satisfaction and cohesion. The authors acknowledged that the results of the study should be interpreted with caution as causation cannot be implied because the study is cross-sectional in nature. Thus, it is unclear whether meaningful family rituals result in more

satisfying relationships or whether more satisfying relationships result in more meaningful family rituals.

The previous discussion provides support for the proposal that family rituals may contribute to family cohesiveness. Numerous statements by students commenting on family rituals demonstrated the creation of family cohesiveness through family rituals. Family rituals create cohesion through their symbolic nature, the enactment of the ritualization process, their predictable, consistent, and systematic nature, and through the creation of the family identity. In addition, the use of family rituals by family therapists as a tool to promote cohesion in families lends further credence to the proposed link between family rituals and family cohesion. Finally, Fiese et al. (1993) found that meaningful family rituals are associated with marital satisfaction and cohesion, providing empirical support for the relationship.

The third question to be addressed is: Do family cohesion and adaptability positively influence the level of intimacy perceived in relationships outside the family? In the Circumplex model of marital and family functioning, Olson et al. (1983) postulated that family cohesion (emotional bonding) and adaptability (amount of flexibility with power structures and rules) are significant factors involved in individual development. Furthermore, it has been suggested that cohesion and adaptability within the family may play important roles in enabling individuals to develop intimate relationships with others (Romig & Bakken, 1992).

Cohesiveness in the family of origin, where individuals learn to regulate distance and closeness with others (Galvin & Brommel, 1986), may be very important as relationships within the family of origin serve as prototypes for intimate relationships, perhaps to be developed in the future, outside the family (Bowen, 1978; Bowlby, 1973). Attachment theory may help to explain this

proposed link between early family relationships and later relationships outside of the family. According to this theory, as previously discussed, early family relationships may contribute to beliefs about the self and others (internal working models) that serve to guide future relationships in adulthood (Bowlby, 1973). That is, early relationships in the family of origin are linked to later relationships outside of the family via internal working models. It is proposed that individuals who perceive their families as cohesive likely had positive relationship experiences in their family of origin that promoted adaptive beliefs, internal working models, about the self and others (i.e., that the self is worthy of attention and care and that others are emotionally responsive to their needs). Furthermore, individuals who believe that they are worthy of love and that others are responsive and available to them likely have positive attitudes towards interpersonal relationships and thus are more likely to experience greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than individuals who have negative attitudes towards interpersonal relationships.

The degree of family adaptability may also be an important factor in intimacy development as the family must be able to adapt to the changing needs of a maturing child (Olson et al., 1983). For instance, during adolescence, in preparation for adulthood tasks, it is important for teenagers to separate from the family (Seltzer, 1982). It is during this developmental period that the peer group replaces parents as sources of intimacy (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987). A high degree of family cohesion, which may have been appropriate during childhood, may be considered inappropriate during adolescence and may hinder intimacy development outside the family (Olson et al., 1983).

Even though this relationship is important, to date, only one study has examined family cohesion and adaptability in relation to intimacy development in

middle adolescence. In a correlational study, Romig and Bakken (1992) tested the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between family cohesion and adaptability, as measured by the Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale-III (FACES III), and intimacy in relationships outside the family, as measured by the Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Inventory-Behavior (FIRO-B). Two-hundred and seven male and female high school students, with a mean age of 16.3 years, participated in the study. For the total sample, higher levels of family cohesion correlated with higher levels of companionship and intimacy in relationships. Consequently, the authors concluded that the degree of emotional bonding in families has some influence on intimacy development (Romig & Bakken, 1992). In addition, higher levels of family adaptability correlated with higher levels of control expressed and wanted in relationships. Stepwise multiple regression procedures were also used to determine the variance in intimacy accounted for by family cohesion, adaptability, and gender. The results indicated that family cohesion accounted for 5.3 percent of the variance in intimacy expressed and desired and gender accounted for an additional 14.3 percent of the variance in intimacy. That is, females initiated and wanted more intimate interpersonal relationships than males.

On the basis of these findings, Bakken and Romig (1992) investigated whether or not gender differences in the degree of intimacy expressed and desired existed among a sample of middle adolescents. The study found that females and males significantly differed on both the level of intimacy expressed and the level of intimacy desired. That is, females reported that they initiated and desired more intimate relationships than males. Furthermore, females also reported valuing intimacy to a greater degree than males.

These findings lead to the fourth question of concern in this study: Does gender affect the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Congruent with previous research findings, this study proposes that females are more likely to experience higher levels of intimacy in their relationships than males. The following discussion provides theoretical and empirical support for this hypothesis.

In commenting on gender, James Q. Wilson (1993) argued that there are important social orientation differences between males and females. He suggested that males are disposed towards managing dominance and tend to have a hierarchical orientation towards social organization. In contrast, females are disposed towards sustaining harmonious relationships and, thus, tend to have a non-hierarchical orientation. Drawing upon the work of Deborah Tannen, Wilson suggested that these differences in social orientation are inherent in the language and values of men and women. More specifically, the language of men suggests that independence is of primary importance, whereas the language of women suggests that intimacy in relationships is most important. Similarly, Gilligan (1982) proposed that in young adulthood males are concerned primarily with establishing an independent identity, whereas females are more concerned with developing and maintaining intimate interpersonal relationships. In a similar vein, Miller (1976) stated: "Women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships" ( p. 83).

Based on the work of Gilligan and Miller, theorists at the Stone Centre for Developmental Services and Studies have developed a "self-in-relation" model to describe the development of women (Surrey, 1991). The basic assumption of their model is that for women the self develops in relation to others. They

challenge developmental theories that stress the importance of separateness and autonomy. For example, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development posits that intimacy is only possible after the establishment of identity. Conversely, the self-in-relation model proposes that for women identity develops in relation to others. The essence of the difference between male and female development is captured in the following statement by Gilligan (1982):

While for men, identity precedes intimacy and generativity in the optimal cycle of human separation and attachment, for women these tasks seem instead to be fused. Intimacy goes along with identity, as the female comes to know herself as she is known through her relationships with others. (p. 12)

The observed difference in male and female development may help to explain research findings that suggest gender differences exist in the level of intimacy experienced in relationships. In a study examining the developmental transitions in relationships from high-school to college, for example, Fischer (1981) found that compared to college men, high-school men, and high-school women, college women more frequently described their closest relationships as being high in intimacy and high in friendship. In contrast, high-school men, high-school women, and college men most frequently described their relationships as being uninvolved.

Similarly, Sharabany, Gershoni, and Hofman (1981) found gender differences in the degree of intimacy experienced in opposite and same-sex friendships among a sample of male and female children in grades 5, 7, 9 and 11. Compared to boys, girls reported higher levels of intimacy in their same-sex friendships across all grade levels. Moreover, although both boys and girls in grade 5 reported low levels of intimacy in their opposite-sex friendships, girls in

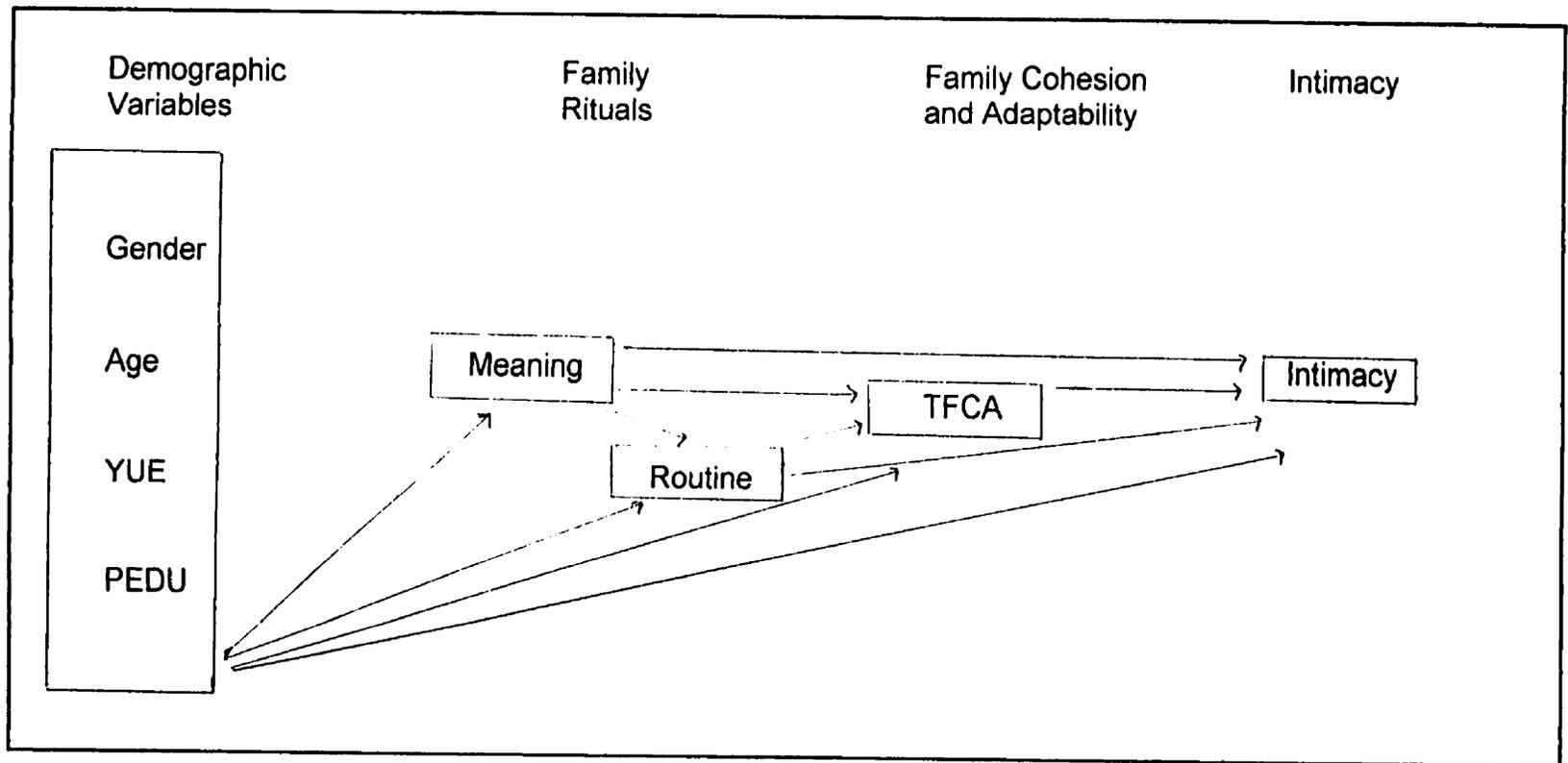
grades 7 to 11 reported much higher levels of intimacy in their opposite-sex friendships than did boys. Consistent with these findings, a more recent study by Blyth and Foster-Clark (1987) also found that girls perceived higher levels of intimacy in their opposite and same-sex relationships than did boys.

While it has been suggested that females are more advanced than males in their capacity to develop intimate relationships with others (Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Fischer, 1981; Bakken & Romig, 1992; Sharabany et al., 1981; Blyth & Foster-Clark, 1987), this issue remains controversial to Paul and White (1990). In their review of the literature regarding gender differences in intimacy development, Paul and White (1990) pointed out that much of the research surrounding this issue has been conducted using dyadic relationships. Consequently, they highlighted the need to be cautious in generalizing the capacity for intimacy based solely on dyadic relationships. There appears to be gender differences in the importance of the peer group and dyadic relationships, with the peer group being a more significant context for the expression of intimacy for males and dyadic relationships being more significant for females (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Although the present study examines the degree of intimacy experienced in dyadic relationships for male and female students, it is acknowledged that, for males, intimacy may be more pronounced in the peer group than in dyadic relationships.

### **Theoretical Model**

The preceding discussion provided a theoretical rationale linking family rituals, family cohesion and adaptability, and the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family. Presented in Figure 1 is a model that depicts how the

Figure 1  
Theoretical Model



24

(YUE=Years of University Education; PEDU=Parents' Education; TFCA=Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability)

variables in the study are related to each other, based on the theoretical rationale previously outlined.

The first group of variables included in the model are four demographic variables including gender, age, years of university education completed (by subjects), and parents' education. These variables have been included as they may potentially affect the other variables in the model. With respect to gender, a considerable amount of research has suggested that gender differences exist in the development of intimacy (e.g., Bakken & Romig, 1992; Sharabany et al., 1981; Blyth & Foster-Clark, 1987). Moreover, gender differences in the practice of family rituals have also been suggested (Fiese et al., 1993; Laird, 1988). Laird (1988), for example, provided anecdotal evidence implying that women are generally the primary carriers of traditions. Age is also included in the model as, according to Erikson, intimacy is believed to be the primary developmental task during adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1963). It is possible that some of the younger students in the sample may not have experienced intimate relationships outside of their families and thus age may be a factor that contributes to the results of the study.

Parents' education is included in the model, as an indicator of socio-economic status (SES), because recent research has indicated that SES is positively correlated with healthy family functioning (see for example: Alnajjar, 1996; Canfield, Hovestadt, & Fenell, 1992).

Meaning and routine are the next two variables in the model. As stated earlier in this chapter, meaning refers to the personal significance of family rituals and routine summarizes the manner in which rituals are carried out, with respect to adherence to roles and flexibility with routines. It is proposed that family rituals, in the family of origin, will positively influence the degree of family cohesion and

adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. As stated previously, it is proposed that family rituals may promote family cohesiveness and adaptability. Togetherness may be established as family members spend time together, sharing common experiences and communicating with each other. Furthermore, family members that feel close to one another may be more likely to respond to each other needs thus increasing the likelihood of parents being flexible with roles and rules (adaptability).

It is further proposed that family rituals will positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. As previously discussed, family rituals may promote family cohesiveness, allowing family members to feel connected to each other, while at the same time promoting individual identity development. As intimacy is defined as the ability to be close to another individual without losing a sense of individuality, family rituals may serve as a prototype for later relationships outside of the family.

Total family cohesion and adaptability follows the family ritual variables in the model. In this study, both family cohesion and family adaptability are combined into a single variable labelled total family cohesion and adaptability on the basis of factor analyses procedures described in Chapter 2. It is proposed that family rituals positively influence total family cohesion and adaptability and, in turn, this variable influences the final variable in the model, intimacy in relationships outside the family. The proposed relationship between total family cohesion and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family is consistent with developmental theories that consider relationships within the family of origin to be models for later relationships (Bowen, 1978; Bowlby, 1973, 1977). It is argued that early relationships within the family of origin contribute to beliefs, about the self and others, that are generalized to later

relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991; Bretherton, 1985). Relationships in adulthood are thus considered to reflect early relationships in the family of origin, at least to some degree.

### **Overview of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. In Chapter 1 the primary objectives of the study, as the reader has already seen, are described and the four questions that guide the study are introduced. In addition, a review of the main variables in the study (family rituals, family cohesion and adaptability, and intimacy) is presented. Following this, the theoretical rationale that links the variables is discussed and a model outlining the proposed relationships between the variables, based on the theory, is presented.

In Chapter 2, the methodology of the study is outlined in three sections. The first section describes the research participants and the second describes the instruments used to measure the eight variables included in the study. Moreover, in this section each of the variables are operationalized and their descriptive statistics are presented. In the third section of this chapter a description of how the data were collected is provided and an explanation of the data analysis procedures that were used is presented.

In Chapter 3, the results of the study are presented. In the first section of the chapter the results of the Pearson Product Moment correlations conducted between all pairs of variables in the study are reported. In the second section, the results of ten multiple regression analyses are presented. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in four sub-sections. In the first sub-section, the effects of the demographic variables on the meaning associated with family rituals are examined, and the second sub-section examines the effects of

the demographic variables and family ritual meaning on the routine aspects of family rituals. The third sub-section investigates the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine on total family cohesion and adaptability. The fourth sub-section presents the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, routine, and total family cohesion and adaptability on the level of intimacy experienced in relationships beyond the family. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary of the direct effects of the variables in the model.

In Chapter 4, the results of the study are summarized and discussed in relation to the four questions that guided the study. As mentioned previously, these questions are: Do family rituals positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Do family rituals positively influence family cohesion and adaptability? Do family cohesion and adaptability positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Does gender affect the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. The answers to these questions are interpreted within the context of the theoretical rationale presented in Chapter 1. Following this, the limitations of the study are acknowledged. Finally, implications of the study, suggestions for future research, and a conclusion are presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Methodology**

In this chapter, the methodology of this study is outlined. In the first section of this chapter, the characteristics of the sample of undergraduate university students are presented. The second section describes the research instruments used in this study, including their psychometric characteristics. In addition, each of the eight variables in the model are operationalized and their descriptive statistics are presented. The third section describes the data collection and data analysis procedures used .

### **Subjects**

The subjects were a sample of 283 male and female undergraduate students recruited from the introductory psychology subject pool at the University of Manitoba. Subjects receive one credit point towards their final grade for participating in research studies conducted by university faculty members and graduate students. Data collected from 9 subjects were not included because their response sheets were incorrectly completed and/or they failed to complete the demographic questionnaire.

This section describes the subjects' characteristics including gender, age, marital status, living arrangements, structure of family of origin, years of university education completed, field of study, and parents' education. Fifty-seven percent of the subjects in the sample were female and 43 percent were male. The sample consisted of a slightly higher proportion of females and slightly lower proportion of males than the population of full-time undergraduate students at the University of Manitoba in 1997. Specifically, the percentages of female and male full-time

undergraduate students at the University of Manitoba in 1997 were 53 and 47, respectively (IS book, 1997).

At the time of testing, the ages of the subjects ranged from 17 to 49 years (see Table 2). Eighty percent of the subjects were between the ages of 17 and 22 and 20 percent of the subjects were between the ages of 23 and 49. The mean age was 21.2. The mean age of this sample was slightly lower than the mean age of full-time male and female undergraduate students at the university which was 22.2 years (IS book, 1997).

In addition, approximately 90 percent of the subjects were single, 8 percent were married, and just over 2 percent were separated or divorced (see Table 1). In terms of living arrangements at the time of testing, 48 percent of the subjects were currently living with both biological or adoptive parents and 15 percent were living with friends . Furthermore, 3 percent were living with a step and biological parent, 4 percent with relatives, 7 percent with a single parent, 8 percent with their spouse, 5 percent in a university residence, 9 percent alone, and 3 percent in arrangements other than those already listed ( see Table 1). Moreover, for the majority of time while growing up, approximately 86 percent of the subjects were living with both biological or adoptive parents. Of the remaining subjects, 3.3 percent were living with a step parent and a biological or adoptive parent, 2.2 percent were living with relatives, 7.3 percent with a single parent, and 1.1 percent indicated living in other arrangements (see Table 1).

The number of years of university education that the subjects had completed ranged from 0 to 4 years (see Table 4). The mean number of years of university completed was approximately 1. More specifically, at the time of testing, approximately 32 percent of the subjects had not completed 1 year of university, 53 percent had completed between 1 and 2 years, and the remaining

Table 1  
Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Categories</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
Marital Status	Single-never married	245	89.7
	Married or equivalent	22	8.1
	Seperated or divorced	6	2.2
Living Arrangements	Both biological or adoptive parents	131	47.8
	Step parent and biological parent	8	2.9
	Relatives	10	3.6
	Single parent	18	6.6
	Spouse	21	7.7
	Friend/s	40	14.6
	Residence	14	5.1
	Alone	25	9.1
	Other	7	2.6
Field of Study	Arts	119	43.4
	Education	8	2.9
	Human Ecology	9	3.3
	Nursing	6	2.2
	Social Work	1	.4
	Sciences	77	28.1
	Engineering	19	6.9
	Music	1	.4
	Phys ed./Recreation	7	2.6
	Other	27	9.9
Structure of Family of Origin	Both biological or adoptive parents	235	86.1
	Blended family	9	3.3
	Relatives	6	2.2
	Single parent	20	7.3
	Other	3	1.1

15 percent had completed over 3 years of university study. Furthermore, 43 percent of the subjects were registered in the Faculty of Arts and 28 percent were registered in the Faculty of Science. The remaining 29 percent represented other faculties including: Education, Human Ecology, Nursing, Social Work, Engineering, Music, and Recreation (see Table 1).

In addition to the number of years of education completed by subjects, the combined level of education attained by each subject's parents was assessed (see Table 6), as an indicator of socio-economic status (SES). Over half of the subjects' parents had not completed a community college level of education. However, approximately 13 percent of the subjects' parents had completed a Bachelor's degree and almost 9 percent had completed some post graduate education.

Marital status, field of study, structure of family of origin, and current living arrangements were not used as variables in the study because they lacked variability.

### **Measurement of Variables**

Eight variables were used in the analyses in this study. These variables, derived from the review of literature in Chapter 1, include *age*, *gender*, *years of university education completed* (by the subject), *parents' education*, *total family cohesion and adaptability*, *family ritual meaning*, *routine* in family rituals, and the level of *intimacy* experienced in a relationship outside the family. *Age*, *gender*, *years of university education completed*, and *parents' education* were assessed using a demographic questionnaire. In addition, *total family cohesion and adaptability* was assessed using the Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale (FACES II) (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1982). *Family ritual meaning* and

*routine* in family rituals were assessed using the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) (Fiese & Kline, 1993) and the level of *intimacy* experienced in a relationship was assessed using the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982).

This section includes descriptions of each of the instruments used followed by the frequencies, percentages, and descriptive statistics of the data collected from this sample for each of the variables. In addition, inter-item correlations and factor loadings are presented for each of the scales measuring *total family cohesion and adaptability*, *family ritual meaning*, *routine* in family rituals, and the level of *intimacy* experienced in relationships.

#### Demographic Questionnaire.

A demographic questionnaire was developed to obtain information on subject characteristics including age, gender, marital status, field of study, years of university education completed, current living arrangements, structure of family of origin, and SES of parents (see Appendix B). Previous research, as outlined in Chapter 1, has suggested that these variables may be associated with the degree of intimacy experienced in relationships. For instance, age, gender, and marital status have been cited in the literature as potential sources of variation in the experience of intimacy (Erikson, 1963; Romig & Bakken, 1992; Miller & Lefcourt, 1982).

The demographic characteristics that were used as variables in this study included *age, gender, years of university education completed, and parents' education*. Parental occupation and level of education attained by both parents were also assessed by the demographic questionnaire as indicators of SES.

However, as occupation and level of education attained by parents were highly correlated, *parents' education* was used as the sole indicator of SES.

Age. In response to question 2 of the demographic questionnaire, the subjects indicated their age. The frequencies and percentages for *age* are presented in Table 2. Descriptive statistics for *age* are presented in Table 3.

The ages of the subjects range from 17 to 49. The mean age for this sample is 21.22 years with a standard deviation of 4.95. The majority of subjects, approximately 80 percent, are between the ages of 17 and 22. One subject did not indicate his or her age.

As indicated in Table 3, the frequency distribution of this sample is positively skewed. In an attempt to normalize the distribution, the data were collapsed and recoded. The original and recoded data for *age* were highly correlated ( $r=.81$ ). Furthermore, a correlational matrix, constructed to examine relationships between both the original and transformed data for *age* and the other variables in the model, demonstrated that there was little difference between the raw data and recoded data in terms of the relationship between *age* and the other variables in the model. Similarly, separate analyses were conducted using the original and transformed data for *age* and there were no differences in the results. Consequently, the original data were used in the analyses.

Gender. In response to question 1 of the demographic questionnaire, the subjects identified their gender. Males are coded as 0 and females as 1. Out of a total sample of 274 subjects, 155 are female and 119 are male. Thus,

Table 2  
Frequencies and Percentages for Age

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
17	12	4.4
18	67	24.5
19	52	19.0
20	41	15.0
21	18	6.6
22	28	10.3
23	9	3.3
24	9	3.3
25	6	2.2
26	6	2.2
27	1	.4
28	2	.7
29	5	1.8
30	2	.7
31	2	.7
32	3	1.1
35	1	.4
36	3	1.1
38	1	.4
39	1	.4
43	1	.4
45	1	.4
48	1	.4
49	1	.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3  
Descriptive Statistics for Age

Mean	21.22	Standard Deviation	4.95
Mode	18.00	Median	20.00
Kurtosis	10.30	Skewness	2.90

approximately 57 percent of the subjects are female and approximately 43 percent are male.

Years of University Education Completed. Question 4 of the demographic questionnaire was taken from the Quality of Student Life Questionnaire developed by Clifton, Roberts, Welsh, Etcheverry, Hasinoff, and Mandzuk (1992). In responding to this question, subjects indicated how many years of university they have completed.

The frequencies and percentages for *years of university education completed* are presented in Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the data collected are presented in Table 5. The data are recoded to normalize the frequency distribution. The code of 0 represents 0 and .5 years of university completed. Furthermore, completion of between 1 and 1.5 years of university is represented by the code of 1. Completion of between 2 and 2.5 years of university is represented by the code of 2 and completion of between 4 and 6 years of university is represented by the code of 4.

The number of *years of university education completed* ranges from 0 to 4 years. The mean number of *years of university education completed* is 1.20 with a standard deviation of 1.15. Moreover, approximately 32 percent of the subjects have not completed their first year of university. Approximately 53 percent of the subjects have completed between 1 and 2 years of university and almost 15 percent have completed between 3 and 4 years of university. Only one subject did not indicate the years of university education he or she completed.

Parents' Education. In response to question 8 of the demographic questionnaire, the subjects indicated the highest level of education attained by

Table 4  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Years of University Completed

<u>*Years</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
.00	88	32.2
1.00	98	35.9
2.00	47	17.2
3.00	25	9.2
4.00	15	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\*Recodes: 0(0, 0.5); 1(1, 1.5); 2(2, 2.5); 4(4, 5, 6)

Table 5  
 Descriptive Statistics for Years of University Completed

Mean	1.20	Standard Deviation	1.15
Mode	1.00	Median	1.00
Kurtosis	-.04	Skewness	.85

each parent. This question was also taken from the Quality of Student Life Questionnaire developed by Clifton et al. (1992). Possible responses to the question include: "elementary school," "some high school," "completed high school," "some technical/vocational training," "completed community college," "some university," "completed a Bachelor's degree," "some education at the graduate level," and "completed a graduate degree." These responses were coded 1 through 9, respectively. *Parents' education* was calculated by adding the highest level of education attained by a subject's mother with the highest level of education attained by their father and dividing the sum by two.

The frequencies and percentages of *parents' education* are presented in Table 6. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 7. The mean is 4.67 with a standard deviation of 2.07 on the 9 point scale. In this sample, approximately 50 percent of subjects' parents have not completed a community college level of education. Nine subjects did not respond to this question.

#### Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale (FACES II)

The Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale (FACES II) is a 30 item self-report inventory which assesses family cohesion and adaptability (Olson et al., 1982). Respondents describe their family by rating the items on a five point scale ranging from (1) "almost never" to (5) "almost always." This version of the Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale was developed from an earlier 50 item version of FACES (Olson et al., 1982). In 1981, Olson and associates (1983) administered the 50 item scale to 2,412 individuals in a national survey and, based on a series of factor analyses, the number of items was reduced to 30.

Table 6  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Parents' Education

<u>Education</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
Elementary	21	7.9
Some High School	36	13.4
High School	41	15.5
Some Technical/ Vocational	42	15.9
Community College	40	15.1
Some University	28	10.6
Completed Bachelor degree	34	12.9
Some Graduate Ed.	19	7.2
Completed Graduate degree	4	1.5
Total	265	100.0

Table 7  
 Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Education

Mean	4.67	Standard Deviation	2.07
Mode	4.50	Median	4.50
Kurtosis	-.94	Skewness	.12

Sixteen of the 30 items measure family cohesion and the remainder measure adaptability. Family cohesion refers to "the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (Olson et al., 1982, p. 1). The family cohesion dimension consists of the eight related concepts of emotional bonding, family boundaries, coalition, time, space, friends, decision making and recreation. Family adaptability is "the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational or developmental stress" (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1982, p. 1). This dimension is composed of the concepts of assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation style, role relationships and relationship rules.

Olson and associates (1983) assessed the construct validity of FACES II using factor analysis. Factor loadings for cohesion items were moderate to strong ranging from .34 to .61. In addition, factor loadings for adaptability items ranged from .10 to .55. Although some of the adaptability items had weak factor loadings, they were not dropped from the scale because the authors thought that the items were necessary in describing the family system (Joanning, 1985).

The FACES II manual indicates that there is very good evidence of content and face validity as established by expert judges and student ratings (Olson et al., 1982). In order to assess the convergent validity of FACES II, Schmid, Rosenthal, and Braun (1988) administered FACES II and the Family Environment Scale (FES) to 183 undergraduate psychology students. Scores of the cohesion subscales from both instruments were compared and findings indicated a strong positive correlation ( $r=.74$ ) between the two subscales. Furthermore, the FES control subscale was expected to be negatively related to the FACES II adaptability subscale. A moderate inverse relationship ( $r= -.34$ ) was found,

supporting this expectation. Furthermore, the FACES II manual highlights findings by Hampson, Hulgus, and Beavers (1991) which demonstrated the concurrent validity of FACES II to be higher than FACES III. In their research, the authors compared both versions of FACES with the Dallas Self-Report Family Inventory (SFI) and found correlations between both scales of FACES II and the SFI to be stronger than those between FACES III and the SFI. Comparisons between the cohesion subscale of FACES II and the SFI as well as between the adaptability subscale and the SFI resulted in correlation coefficients of .93 and .79 respectively.

As a measure of internal consistency, Chronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for both the cohesion and adaptability scales using the scores from the national sample of 2,412 respondents. The alpha coefficients for the cohesion and adaptability scales were found to be .87 and .78 respectively (Olson et al., 1982).

Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability. In this study, *total family cohesion and adaptability* was assessed using FACES II. Subjects described their family of origin by rating each of the instrument's 30 items on a five-point scale ranging from (1)"almost never" to (5)"almost always."

As already noted, Olson et al. (1983) reported FACES II as being composed of two independent dimensions: cohesion and adaptability. To determine whether these dimensions were evident in this sample, a principal components factor analysis was conducted. In the initial factor analysis, two factors were extracted. Surprisingly, the results were inconsistent with the findings of Olson et al. (1983). Many of the items loaded on both factors, indicating that the two dimensions may be strongly related. This finding may be

due to the significant correlation between cohesion and adaptability in FACES II. In fact, Olson et al. (1982) reported correlations between the cohesion and adaptability dimensions as ranging from .25 to .65. Consistent with this finding, in a study examining the relationships among measures designed to assess family functioning, Schmid, Rosenthal, and Brown (1988) also found the FACES II cohesion and adaptability dimensions to be highly correlated ( $r=.52, p<.01$ ).

Based on these findings, a second factor analysis was conducted, extracting a single factor from the 30 items. The factor loadings for items 24 and 10 were .07 and .10, respectively, and these items were not used because they had weak factor loadings ( $<.30$ ). A third factor analysis was conducted using the remaining items. One factor was extracted from the 28 items and they all loaded on the factor. Specifically, factor loadings for the scale's items range from .30 to .77, indicating that the items moderately to strongly load on the factor (Table 8). The final scale consisted of 28 items and these items are reported in Appendix C.

The inter-item correlations and factor loadings for *total family cohesion and adaptability* are presented in Table 8. The inter-item correlation coefficients range from  $-.07$  to  $.64$ . The Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the total scale is  $.92$ , indicating strong internal consistency.

The frequencies and percentages for *total family cohesion and adaptability* are presented in Table 9. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 10. The subjects' scores range from 37 to 129, with possible scores for this scale ranging from 28 to 140. Higher scores indicate higher levels of family cohesion and adaptability. The FACES II scale is not capable of assessing extremely high (enmeshed) and extremely flexible (chaotic) family types and thus the highest scores are interpreted to mean "very connected" and "very flexible" (Olson & Tiesel, 1991). The mean score for this scale is 91.08 with a standard deviation of

**Table 8**  
**Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability**

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25	26	27	28	29	30	Factor	
1	1.00																													68
2	.44	1.00																												59
3	.41	.40	1.00																											64
4	.47	.40	.26	1.00																										65
5	.40	.25	.25	.31	1.00																									58
6	.27	.27	.23	.29	.22	1.00																								39
7	.41	.31	.43	.46	.60	.21	1.00																							74
8	.53	.50	.52	.48	.43	.30	.56	1.00																						77
9	.28	.09	.28	.19	.30	.05	.42	.29	1.00																					.41
11	.29	.26	.19	.34	.20	.11	.26	.25	.13	1.00																				.44
12	.21	.15	.19	.17	.12	-.07	.12	.15	.24	.17	1.00																			.44
13	.46	.36	.37	.41	.41	.25	.38	.55	.17	.25	.03	.20	1.00																	.32
14	.13	.34	.15	.19	.14	.29	.08	.25	-.06	.25	.03	.20	.10	1.00																.64
15	.28	.12	.25	.24	.35	.06	.47	.25	.31	.13	.29	.16	-.05	.10	1.00															.30
16	.32	.29	.24	.36	.29	.46	.32	.38	.10	.24	.07	.34	.28	.12	.10	1.00														.45
17	.53	.38	.47	.38	.47	.30	.58	.57	.34	.33	.20	.48	.11	.33	.34	.10	1.00													.50
18	.43	.38	.37	.41	.26	.24	.31	.42	.16	.22	.28	.39	.28	.27	.36	.44	.10	1.00												.63
19	.33	.36	.54	.29	.28	.15	.41	.38	.26	.21	.19	.29	.09	.26	.19	.56	.36	.10	1.00											.58
20	.32	.31	.30	.32	.27	.21	.35	.43	.17	.12	.08	.34	.13	.23	.23	.29	.27	.15	.10	1.00										.50
21	.30	.21	.22	.32	.25	.13	.32	.43	.21	.20	.22	.38	.14	.18	.25	.35	.40	.24	.32	.10	1.00									.51
22	.26	.24	.26	.37	.25	.20	.44	.35	.28	.29	.21	.27	.15	.28	.17	.40	.28	.29	.31	.38	.10	1.00								.56
23	.35	.23	.44	.39	.48	.14	.64	.54	.42	.18	.21	.42	.07	.34	.24	.56	.30	.32	.35	.34	.43	.10	1.00							.68
25	.39	.27	.41	.32	.30	.15	.41	.37	.18	.27	.20	.28	.16	.29	.21	.50	.34	.45	.14	.13	.27	.37	.10	1.00						.58
26	.43	.45	.38	.44	.27	.25	.44	.53	.16	.17	.19	.38	.21	.26	.37	.46	.48	.30	.36	.31	.35	.46	.32	.10	1.00					.67
27	.30	.23	.25	.34	.14	.13	.24	.24	.00	.41	.07	.24	.26	.14	.18	.29	.36	.20	.09	.25	.26	.16	.31	.35	.10	1.00				.44
28	.36	.42	.39	.39	.17	.16	.30	.40	.04	.33	.21	.32	.23	.15	.26	.42	.36	.29	.17	.21	.26	.25	.36	.37	.30	.10	1.00			.55
29	.31	.23	.21	.26	.19	.06	.33	.31	.13	.18	.16	.17	.02	.21	.16	.31	.24	.28	.17	.18	.21	.24	.37	.26	.12	.34	.10	1.00		.43
30	.26	.26	.34	.37	.30	.15	.43	.35	.31	.25	.20	.31	.12	.27	.21	.36	.32	.29	.33	.20	.35	.45	.29	.36	.21	.19	.09	1.00		.55

Eigenvalue = 9.07  
 Percent of Common Variance = 32.40

Table 9  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
37	1	.4
46	1	.4
48	1	.4
51	1	.4
53	1	.4
54	2	.8
56	2	.8
58	1	.4
59	1	.4
60	1	.4
61	1	.4
62	2	.8
63	2	.8
65	2	.8
67	3	1.2
68	2	.8
69	2	.8
70	6	2.3
71	3	1.2
72	2	.8
73	1	.4
74	3	1.2
75	1	.4
76	5	1.9
77	3	1.2
78	7	2.7
79	2	.8
80	4	1.6
81	10	3.9
82	2	.8
83	5	1.9
84	3	1.2
85	6	2.3
86	2	.8
87	7	2.7
88	5	1.9
89	8	3.1
90	3	1.2
91	9	3.5
92	9	3.5
93	12	4.7
94	5	1.9
95	3	1.2
96	4	1.6
97	4	1.6

Table 9 continued...  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Total Cohesion and Adaptability

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
98	11	4.3
99	5	1.9
100	6	2.3
101	5	1.9
102	6	2.3
103	5	1.9
104	3	1.2
105	4	1.6
106	3	1.2
107	6	2.3
108	5	1.9
109	1	.4
110	11	4.3
111	3	1.2
112	2	.8
113	2	.8
114	2	.8
115	3	1.2
116	3	1.2
118	2	.8
119	1	.4
120	2	.8
121	2	.8
122	1	.4
124	1	.4
125	1	.4
127	1	.4
129	1	.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 10  
 Descriptive Statistics for Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability

Mean	91.08	Standard Deviation	16.67
Mode	93.00	Median	92.00
Kurtosis	.02	Skewness	-.37

16.67. Data for 16 subjects were incomplete and therefore excluded from these computations.

As indicated in Table 10, the frequency distribution of this sample is slightly negatively skewed. In an attempt to normalize the distribution, the data were collapsed and recoded. The original and recoded data were highly correlated ( $r=.94$ ). Furthermore, a correlational matrix, constructed to examine relationships between both the original and transformed data for *total family cohesion and adaptability* and the other variables in the model, demonstrated that there was little difference between the raw data and the recoded data in terms of the relationship between *total family cohesion and adaptability* and the other variables in the model. Similarly, separate analyses were conducted using the original and transformed data for *total family cohesion and adaptability* and there were no differences in the results. Consequently, the original data were used in the analyses.

#### Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ)

The Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) is a 56 item self-report measure of family rituals based on the Wolin and Bennett Family Ritual Interview (Fiese & Kline, 1993). The format of the questionnaire is forced-choice. The respondent chooses which statement best describes his or her family and then indicates whether the statement is "really true" or "sort of true" (Fiese, 1993). The FRQ assesses level of ritualization according to eight dimensions and across seven settings. Specifically, the eight dimensions of family rituals include: occurrence, roles, flexibility, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, continuation, and deliberateness. Moreover, the seven settings consist of dinnertime, weekends, vacations, annual celebrations, special celebrations, religious holidays, and

cultural traditions. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, definitions for these dimensions and settings are included in Appendix A.

Factor analyses, conducted by Fiese (1992) indicated that the eight dimensions measured by the FRQ load on two main factors: meaning and routine. The meaning factor included the dimensions of occurrence, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, and deliberateness, and in the words of the author describes "the personal meaning ascribed to family rituals, highlighting the symbolic significance and affect associated with family rituals" (Fiese, 1992, p.157). Conversely, the routine factor included the dimensions of roles, flexibility, and continuation, and summarizes "the manner in which rituals are carried out, highlighting the repetitive routines practiced in family rituals" (Fiese, 1992, p.157).

Fiese and Kline (1993) conducted a series of four studies to determine initial reliability and validity data for the FRQ. Subjects consisted of undergraduate university students between the ages of 17 and 21. The FRQ was found to be a reliable instrument. Chronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated as measures of internal consistency, for both the setting and dimension scales. Alpha coefficients ranged from .52 to .90. Test-retest reliability was found to be .88 with a four week interval between testing. The construct validity of the FRQ was also assessed. Correlations were conducted between the FRQ and the Family Environment Scale (FES). The FES is a widely used measure of family functioning that assesses relationships, personal growth, and system maintenance (Moos & Moos, 1989). The FRQ positively correlated with the cohesion and organization subscales on the FES thereby lending evidence in support of the construct validity of the FRQ (Fiese & Kline, 1993).

In summary, the FRQ demonstrated strong internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. Furthermore, the FRQ has been used to assess

family ritualization in a number of relatively recent studies investigating family rituals (Fiese; 1993; Fiese, 1992; Fiese et al., 1993). The FRQ was selected for use in this study because it has been established to be a valid and reliable instrument useful for measuring the level of ritualization in families.

Meaning. Meaning associated with family rituals was assessed using the family ritual meaning scale of the FRQ. Each of the scale's items consisted of two statements from which subjects chose the statement which best described their family and indicated whether the statement was "really true" or "sort of true" for their family (Fiese, 1993).

Using the data collected from this sample, a principal components factor analysis was conducted. After the initial factor analysis of these items, item 38 was dropped because it had a low factor loading of .01. Using the remaining items, a second factor analysis was conducted. The final scale consisted of 34 items, all of which had factor loadings between .34 and .67 (Table 11). The 34 items included in the final scale are reported in Appendix C.

The inter-item correlation matrix and factor loadings for family ritual *meaning* are presented in Table 11. The inter-item correlation coefficients range from 0 to .67. The Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale is .92.

The frequencies and percentages for family ritual *meaning* are presented in Table 12 and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 13. The subjects' scores range from 36 to 126, with possible scores for this scale ranging from 34 to 136. Higher scores indicate greater personal meaning associated with family rituals. The mean score for the meaning scale is 85.25 with a standard deviation of 16.53. Data for 10 subjects were incomplete and therefore excluded from these computations.



Table 12  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Family Ritual Meaning

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
36	1	.4
38	1	.4
42	1	.4
43	1	.4
48	1	.4
49	1	.4
51	1	.4
52	2	.8
53	1	.4
54	1	.4
55	1	.4
56	2	.8
58	3	1.1
59	1	.4
60	2	.8
61	2	.8
62	4	1.5
63	2	.8
64	3	1.1
65	2	.8
66	1	.4
67	2	.8
68	4	1.5
69	5	1.9
70	5	1.9
71	3	1.1
72	2	.8
73	2	.8
74	6	2.3
75	2	.8
76	5	1.9
77	9	3.4
78	7	2.7
79	4	1.5
80	7	2.7
81	6	2.3
82	5	1.9
83	3	1.1
84	7	2.7
85	5	1.9
86	6	2.3
87	15	5.7
88	7	2.7
89	8	3.0
90	6	2.3

Table 12 continued...  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Family Ritual Meaning

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
91	6	2.3
92	8	3.0
93	3	1.1
94	8	3.0
95	5	1.8
96	6	2.3
97	5	1.9
98	4	1.5
99	3	1.1
100	4	1.5
101	3	1.1
102	3	1.1
103	6	2.3
104	6	2.3
105	1	.4
107	5	1.9
108	2	.8
109	3	1.1
110	2	.8
111	3	1.1
112	4	1.5
114	1	.4
115	2	.8
116	1	.4
118	1	.4
119	1	.4
122	1	.4
126	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

Table 13  
 Descriptive Statistics for Family Ritual Meaning

Mean	85.25	Standard Deviation	16.53
Mode	87.00	Median	87.00
Kurtosis	.08	Skewness	-.26

As indicated in Table 13, the frequency distribution of this sample is slightly negatively skewed. In an attempt to normalize the distribution, the data were collapsed and recoded. The original and recoded data were highly correlated ( $r=.98$ ). Furthermore, a correlational matrix, constructed to examine relationships between both the original and transformed data for *meaning* and the other variables in the model, demonstrated that there was little difference between the raw data and recoded data in terms of the relationship between *meaning* and the other variables in the model. Finally, separate analyses were conducted using the original and transformed data for *meaning* and there were no differences in the results. Consequently, the original data were used in the analyses.

Routines. The manner in which family rituals are carried out, *routines*, was assessed using the routine scale of the FRQ. Like the family ritual meaning scale, for each of the scale's items, subjects chose which of two statements best described their family and indicated whether the statement was "really true" or "sort of true" (Fiese, 1993). A principal components factor analysis was conducted. Items 2, 3, 7, 10, 15, 18, and 19 were dropped because they had weak factor loadings ( $<.30$ ). The final scale consisted of 14 items and the factor loadings for these items ranged from .31 to .66, indicating that the items are moderately to strongly related to the factor (Table 14). The 14 items included in the final scale are reported in Appendix C.

The inter-item correlations and factor loadings for *routine* are presented in Table 14. The inter-item correlation coefficients range from .03 to .51. The Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the total scale is .81.

Table 14  
Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Routines

Items	11	23	26	27	31	34	35	39	42	43	47	50	51	55	Factor Loadings
11	1.00														.36
23	.17	1.00													.31
26	.15	.14	1.00												.54
27	.14	.07	.24	1.00											.55
31	.06	.13	.21	.35	1.00										.50
34	.30	.03	.51	.16	.14	1.00									.54
35	.12	.16	.15	.35	.32	.16	1.00								.50
39	.09	.13	.22	.19	.31	.18	.25	1.00							.53
42	.18	.13	.44	.24	.21	.43	.22	.22	1.00						.66
43	.15	.20	.10	.48	.27	.19	.37	.18	.38	1.00					.61
47	.23	.22	.21	.31	.21	.30	.18	.36	.32	.43	1.00				.66
50	.23	.11	.38	.19	.16	.38	.18	.24	.46	.23	.32	1.00			.65
51	.12	.11	.09	.13	.21	.09	.21	.24	.29	.24	.29	.42	1.00		.51
55	.05	.09	.15	.22	.19	.10	.15	.37	.20	.23	.39	.31	.34	1.00	.51

Eigenvalue = 4.07  
Percent of Common Variance = 29.00

Table 15  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Routine

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
14	3	1.1
17	3	1.1
18	2	.7
19	4	1.5
20	5	1.8
21	4	1.5
22	5	1.8
23	7	2.6
24	7	2.6
25	7	2.6
26	8	2.9
27	10	3.7
28	16	5.9
29	15	5.5
30	10	3.7
31	19	7.0
32	18	6.6
33	20	7.3
34	15	5.5
35	17	6.2
36	15	5.5
37	10	3.7
38	11	4.0
39	11	4.0
40	2	.7
41	10	3.7
42	5	1.8
43	1	.4
44	3	1.1
45	5	1.8
46	2	.7
48	2	.7
50	1	.4
Total	273	100

Table 16  
Descriptive Statistics for Routine

---

Mean	31.83	Standard Deviation	6.77
Mode	33.00	Median	32.00
Kurtosis	-.03	Skewness	-.13

---

The frequencies and percentages for *routine* are presented in Table 15. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 16. The subjects' scores range from 14 to 50, with possible scores for this scale ranging from 14 to 56. Higher scores indicate the practice of more routine aspects of family rituals. The mean *routine* score is 31.83 with a standard deviation of 6.77. Data for 1 subject was missing and therefore excluded from these computations.

As indicated in Table 16, the frequency distribution for this variable is slightly negatively skewed. In an attempt to normalize the distribution, the data were collapsed and recoded. The original and recoded data were highly correlated ( $r=.94$ ). Furthermore, a correlational matrix, constructed to examine relationships between both the original and transformed data for *routines* and the other variables in the model, demonstrated that there was little difference between the raw data and recoded data in terms of the relationship between *routines* and the other variables in the model. Similarly, separate analyses were conducted using the original and transformed data for *routines* and there were no differences in the results. Consequently, the original data were used in the analyses.

#### Miller Social Intimacy Scale

The Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) is a 17 item measure of the level of intimacy currently experienced in a friendship or romantic relationship (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). The MSIS is appropriate for assessing intimacy in same sex or mixed sex dyadic relationships (Downs & Hillje, 1991). Six of the 17 items on the MSIS address frequency of intimate contacts, while the remainder address intensity (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). Respondents rate the frequency and intensity of intimate contacts on a 10 point scale (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982).

Miller and Lefcourt (1982) conducted a study to determine the psychometric characteristics of the MSIS. Two hundred and fifty-two subjects were recruited for participation in the study. The sample consisted of unmarried students, married students, and married couples seeking marital therapy. Test-retest reliability coefficients were found to be .96 and .84 over 2 month and 1 month intervals, respectively. Convergent validity for the MSIS was determined through comparisons with the Interpersonal Relationship Scale (IRS) and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Comparisons of the MSIS and the IRS resulted in a coefficient of .71. Subjects who indicated on the IRS that their relationship was characterized by a high degree of trust and intimacy also scored highly on the MSIS. A comparison of scores on the MSIS and the UCLA Loneliness Scale resulted in a coefficient of -.65. Subjects who considered themselves to be lonely as indicated on the UCLA Loneliness Scale scored low on the MSIS. Mean scores for subjects describing their closest friends were significantly higher than mean scores for subjects describing casual friendships thereby affirming the construct validity of the MSIS. Furthermore, mean scores for married students were found to be greater than mean scores for unmarried students. This finding is consistent with the popular belief that marital relationships involve greater intimacy than non-marital relationships (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). The study also found that the mean scores for both non-clinical married students and the unmarried students were greater than the mean scores for the married clinical subjects. The authors contend that this finding highlights the point that marital status, as such, should not necessarily be considered an assessment of intimacy.

In a re-evaluation of the MSIS, Downs and Hillje (1991) found the MSIS to be a reliable and valid measure of intimate relationships for both mixed and same sex dyads. The results of their study found unique relationship patterns

depending on the sex of the intimate. The MSIS has been used as a measure of intimacy in other studies. Miller & Lefcourt (1983), for example, examined the role of intimacy as a moderator of stress. Subjects who described their relationships as intimate on the MSIS were found to be less distressed than subjects who considered their relationships to be less intimate. Furthermore, the MSIS was also used as a measure of intimacy in a relatively recent study investigating intimacy in adult children of alcoholics ( Martin, 1995). The results of this study suggest that adult children of alcoholics experience less intimacy in their relationships than non-adult children of alcoholics.

As outlined above, the MSIS has demonstrated high test-retest reliability, convergent and construct validity. In addition, research has supported the ability of the MSIS to assess intimacy in same and mixed sex dyadic relationships. The ability of the MSIS to assess the experience of intimacy in both romantic relationships and friendships is particularly important, in this study, as many undergraduate students may not have been involved in romantic relationships at the time of testing.

Intimacy. The level of *intimacy* currently experienced in a relationship outside the family was assessed using the MSIS. The subjects described the frequency and intensity of intimate contacts by rating each of the instrument's 17 items on a ten point scale.

Using the data collected from this sample, a principal components factor analysis was conducted. The final scale consisted of 17 items and these items are reported in Appendix C.

The inter-item correlations and factor loadings for *intimacy* are presented in Table 17. The inter-item correlation coefficients range from -.19 to .83. Factor

Table 17  
Inter-Item Correlations and Factor Loadings for Intimacy

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Factor Loadings	
1	1.00																		
2	.43	1.00																	.69
3	.59	.31	1.00																.53
4	.53	.46	.59	1.00															.80
5	.32	.24	.36	.48	1.00														.78
6	.56	.42	.67	.70	.60	1.00													.60
7	.62	.36	.63	.55	.33	.63	1.00												.87
8	.41	.31	.50	.49	.49	.59	.55	1.00											.78
9	.59	.46	.63	.65	.52	.83	.61	.61	1.00										.73
10	.44	.37	.48	.49	.47	.60	.50	.65	.58	1.00									.86
11	.45	.50	.45	.52	.41	.60	.47	.43	.66	.49	1.00								.74
12	.55	.35	.79	.56	.42	.70	.70	.54	.67	.55	.52	1.00							.68
13	.46	.36	.63	.64	.51	.68	.59	.65	.68	.62	.41	.66	1.00						.83
14	.07	.09	-.09	-.08	.05	.00	.09	.04	.07	.08	.20	-.08	-.10	1.00					.82
15	.36	.29	.52	.55	.42	.56	.57	.56	.55	.51	.42	.52	.64	-.17	1.00				-.02
16	.56	.28	.81	.55	.34	.64	.68	.54	.63	.51	.39	.83	.70	-.19	.63	1.00			.72
17	.49	.49	.56	.63	.48	.71	.60	.53	.71	.68	.59	.60	.66	.04	.58	.58	1.00		.81
																			.82

Eigenvalue = 9.23  
Percent of Common Variance = 54.30

Table 18  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Intimacy

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
48	1	.4
54	1	.4
62	1	.4
63	3	1.1
67	3	1.1
68	2	.8
71	2	.8
74	2	.8
75	2	.8
77	1	.4
78	1	.4
79	3	1.1
81	1	.4
84	1	.4
85	3	1.1
87	1	.4
88	1	.4
89	2	.8
90	2	.8
91	2	.8
92	1	.4
93	3	1.1
94	3	1.1
95	1	.4
96	1	.4
97	2	.8
98	2	.8
101	4	1.5
102	5	1.9
103	1	.4
104	1	.4
105	3	1.1
106	3	1.1
107	3	1.1
108	3	1.1
109	2	.8
111	2	.8
112	4	1.5
113	2	.8
114	3	1.1
115	4	1.5
116	5	1.9
117	3	1.1
118	6	2.3
119	2	.8
120	1	.4
121	1	.4

Table 18 continued...  
 Frequencies and Percentages for Intimacy

<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
122	5	1.9
123	2	.8
125	1	.4
126	4	1.5
127	1	.4
128	5	1.9
129	3	1.1
130	6	2.3
131	3	1.1
132	6	2.3
133	3	1.1
134	1	.4
135	4	1.5
136	3	1.1
137	6	2.3
138	2	.8
139	7	2.6
140	4	1.5
141	2	.8
142	7	2.6
143	3	1.1
144	2	.8
145	3	1.1
146	2	.8
147	6	2.3
148	3	1.1
149	2	.8
150	2	.8
151	6	2.3
152	7	2.6
153	4	1.5
154	4	1.5
155	2	.8
156	4	1.5
157	2	.8
158	4	1.5
159	5	1.9
160	5	1.9
161	5	1.9
162	2	.8
163	2	.8
165	2	.8
166	2	.8
167	1	.4
168	2	.8
170	1	.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 19  
Descriptive Statistics for Intimacy

---

Mean	125.39	Standard Deviation	27.52
Mode	139.00	Median	130.00
Kurtosis	-.47	Skewness	-.57

---

loadings range from  $-.02$  to  $.86$ . With the exception of item 14, the factor loadings range from  $.53$  to  $.86$ , indicating that the items are strongly related to the factor. Although item 14 has a low factor loading, it is not necessary to drop the item as it does not appear to compromise the internal consistency of the scale. That is, although the Chronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the scale, excluding item 14, is  $.95$ , the Chronbach alpha coefficient for the total scale, including item 14, drops slightly to  $.94$ , maintaining excellent internal consistency.

The frequencies and percentages for *intimacy* are presented in Table 18. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 19. The subjects' scores range from 48 to 170, with possible scores for this scale ranging from 17 to 170. Higher scores indicate higher levels of intimacy experienced in relationships. The mean *intimacy* score is 125.39 with a standard deviation of 27.50. Data for 9 subjects were incomplete and therefore excluded from these computations.

As indicated in Table 19, the frequency distribution of this sample is negatively skewed. In an attempt to normalize the distribution, the data were collapsed and recoded. The original and recoded data were highly correlated ( $r=.99$ ). Furthermore, a correlational matrix, constructed to examine relationships between both the original and transformed data for *intimacy* and the other variables in the model, demonstrated that there was little difference between the data sets in terms of the relationship between *intimacy* and the other variables in the model. Similarly, separate analyses were conducted using the original and transformed data for *intimacy* and there were no differences in the results. Consequently, the original data were used in the analyses.

## Procedure

### Data Collection

As previously discussed, research participants were recruited from introductory psychology classes at the University of Manitoba. Participation in the study was voluntary, but students who participated were given one credit point towards their final grade. In an oral statement presented at the time of recruitment, I informed the students of the purpose of the study, the tasks required of them, and the time required to complete the tasks. The students were also informed of the confidentiality of all data collected.

Research sessions were held at the University of Manitoba. Questionnaire packages and IBM response sheets were administered to groups of approximately 50 students. The questionnaire packages and IBM sheets were numerically coded prior to the research sessions. Each questionnaire package had 2 IBM sheets with the same code to ensure that a subject's data set could be identified should the sheets become separated. Before completion of the questionnaires, I presented a standardized oral statement to the students informing them of the purpose of the research, the right to withdraw without penalty, and confidentiality of their responses. Instructions for recording responses on the IBM answer sheets and for completion of the first questionnaire (FRQ) were also given to students. Subjects were then told to proceed at their own pace and to place the testing materials face down when they completed the questionnaires.

Following completion of the research materials by all participants in the session, a written statement outlining the purpose of the study, a list of community counselling resources, and a blank envelope was given to the students. The statement outlining the purpose of the study was read orally and

questions were answered. As the questions related to family rituals and/or intimacy may, although not very likely, elicit feelings of discomfort among some participants, students were encouraged to see me immediately after the session if they experienced any "negative" feelings as a result of participating in the study. The students were also informed of the availability of campus and community counselling services. At the conclusion of three research sessions, three students, on an individual basis, disclosed to me that they had difficulties in establishing and/or maintaining relationships. After a brief discussion of these issues, each student was referred to the University of Manitoba Counselling Service.

All research participants were told that when the research results became available they would have the opportunity to obtain a summary of the findings. Blank envelopes were provided at each research session and participants were invited to self-address them if they would like the results of the research study. One hundred and thirty-one subjects self-addressed the envelopes provided. Furthermore, subjects were encouraged to attend a presentation of the research findings. (See Appendix D for the information verbally given to subjects at the time of recruitment, prior to completion of the questionnaires, and the feedback statement they received upon completion of the questionnaires.)

#### Data Analysis Methodology

The data are analyzed using structural equation modelling procedures. Structural equation modelling incorporates multiple regression techniques to examine the causal relationships between the variables in the model as guided by theoretical perspectives (Pedhazur, 1982; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; Pedhazur & Pedhazur Schmelkin, 1991). The theoretical model presented in

Chapter 1 (Figure 1) represents the proposed interrelationships between the eight variables measured in the study.

Pearson Product Moment correlations are first calculated between all pairs of variables in the model. Regression coefficients are then computed to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while holding the effects of the other variables constant (Norusis, 1996). In this study, both standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients are computed in estimating the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Regression coefficients denote the amount of change in a dependent variable that is related to a one unit change in an independent variable, while holding the remaining independent variables constant (Pedhazur, 1982; Norusis, 1996). Unstandardized regression coefficients are calculated from raw scores whereas standardized regression coefficients are calculated from standardized z scores with the mean and standard deviation for all variables being 0 and 1, respectively (Pedhazur, 1982; Norusis, 1996). Standardized regression coefficients are considered to be useful in comparing the relative effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable because the coefficients are based on the same scale of measurement. However, as standardized regression coefficients are considered to be sample specific, they cannot be generalized across different populations and settings (Pedhazur, 1982). In contrast, the use of unstandardized regression coefficients does not allow for the determination of the relative importance of the effects of the independent variables because the coefficients are based on varying scales of measurement (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; Pedhazur, 1982). When comparing the effects of variables across

populations and settings, however, the use of unstandardized regression coefficients is advised (Pedhazur, 1982).

In summary, this chapter described the methodology of the study in three sections. In the first section, the characteristics of the sample of male and female undergraduate students from the introductory psychology subject pool at the University of Manitoba were described. The second section presented the instruments used to measure the variables in the model and the descriptive statistics for these variables were reported. Finally, in the third section, the specific procedures used to collect and analyze the data from the students were outlined. Structural equation modelling procedures were used to examine the relationships between the variables in the model. The results of these analyses are presented in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Results**

This chapter outlines the results of the analyses conducted on the eight variables in the study. The first section of the chapter presents the results of the Pearson Product Moment correlations computed between all pairs of variables and the second section presents the results of ten multiple regression analyses. The effects of the demographic variables on the personal meaning associated with family rituals are examined in the first of the multiple regression analyses. The second group of analyses examines the effects of the demographic variables and family ritual meaning on the routine aspects of family rituals. Following this, the third group of analyses examines the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine on total family cohesion and adaptability. The final group of analyses examines the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, routine, and total family cohesion and adaptability on the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. The chapter concludes with a summary of the direct effects of the variables in the model.

### **Correlations**

Pearson Product Moment correlations were computed between each of the variables in the model. The correlations between the variables are presented in Table 20. The demographic variables of gender, age, and parents' education are significantly related to intimacy, meaning, and total family cohesion and adaptability, respectively. As expected, gender is positively correlated with the level of intimacy perceived in relationships ( $r = .42, p \leq .01$ ), indicating that female undergraduate students are more likely to perceive greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than male undergraduate students. Furthermore, age is

Table 20  
Correlation Coefficients for the Variables

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. AGE	1.00							
2. GENDER	-.08	1.00						
3. YUE	.21**	-.04	1.00					
4. PEDU	-.27**	.06	.06	1.00				
5. TFCA	-.01	-.03	.12	.17**	1.00			
6. MEANING	.12*	.07	.05	.01	.49**	1.00		
7. ROUTINE	.01	.04	.06	-.05	.16*	.62**	1.00	
8. INTIMACY	-.10	.42**	-.01	.10	.09	.15*	.07	1.00

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

(YUE=Years of University Education; PEDU=Parents' Education; TFCA=Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability)

positively correlated with family ritual meaning ( $r = .12, p \leq .05$ ), indicating that older undergraduate students are more likely to associate greater personal meaning with family rituals than younger students. In addition, parents' education is positively correlated with total family cohesion and adaptability ( $r = .17, p \leq .01$ ), indicating that undergraduate students with parents who have attained higher levels of education are more likely to perceive their families as having greater levels of family cohesion, or emotional bonding between family members, and flexibility with roles and rules than students with parents who are less educated.

Total family cohesion and adaptability is positively correlated with both family ritual meaning ( $r = .49, p \leq .01$ ) and routine ( $r = .16, p \leq .05$ ). These results suggest that undergraduate students who perceive their families as being cohesive and flexible are more likely to associate greater personal meaning with family rituals and to practice more routine aspects of family rituals than students who perceive their families as being less cohesive and flexible.

Finally, family ritual meaning is positively correlated with intimacy in relationships ( $r = .15, p \leq .05$ ), indicating that students who associate greater personal meaning with family rituals are more likely to perceive higher levels of intimacy in their relationships than students who associate less personal meaning with family rituals.

### **Multiple Regression Analyses**

This section presents the results of ten multiple regression analyses. After the effects of the set of demographic variables are determined, the remaining variables are added to the analysis in incremental steps in order to examine the independent effects of the variables while controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model. Direct and indirect effects of the variables are reported. In addition, the amount of variance in the dependent variables that can be

explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the squared multiple correlation coefficient ( $R^2$ ), is presented for each of the analyses.

#### Effects of Demographic Variables on Meaning

The following analysis examines the effects of the demographic variables on the degree of personal meaning that students associate with family rituals. The results are presented in Table 21. The findings show that age is the only demographic variable that has a significant effect on the degree of personal meaning associated with family rituals. Age has a positive effect ( $B = .14, p \leq .05$ ) on family ritual meaning, indicating that older students are more likely to associate greater personal meaning with family rituals than younger students.

The  $R$  indicates that, together, the four demographic variables explain only 3 percent of the variance in family ritual meaning. In other words, ninety-seven percent of the variance is not explained by the demographic variables and may be attributed to other variables and/or error in measurement.

#### Effects of Demographic Variables and Meaning on Routines

The next two analyses examine the effects of the demographic variables and family ritual meaning on routines, the manner in which rituals are carried out in terms of adherence to roles and degree of flexibility in routines. The first analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables and the second analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning.

As shown in Table 22, age, gender, years of university education completed, and parents' education do not appear to influence routine to any significant degree. That is, none of the demographic variables significantly affect the manner in which rituals are carried out in terms of adherence to roles and

**Table 21**  
**Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and**  
**Parents' Education on Meaning**

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	.14*	.46
Gender	.09	2.95
Years of University Education Completed	.03	.42
Parents' Education	.04	.30
$R^2$	.03	

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

Table 22  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and  
 Parents' Education on Routine

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.02	-.02
Gender	.07	.92
Years of University Education Completed	.07	.42
Parents' Education	-.06	-.20
$R^2$	.01	

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

degree of flexibility in routines. Consequently, the demographic variables explain only a small amount, 1 percent, of the variance in routine, as indicated by the  $R^2$ . Ninety-nine percent of the variance is not explained by the demographic variables in the model and may be attributed to other variables and/or error in measurement.

The family ritual meaning variable is included in the second analysis. Table 23 presents the effects of the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning on routines. The results of this analysis show that meaning and parents' education significantly affect routines. Specifically, meaning has a strong positive effect ( $B = .63, p \leq .01$ ) on the manner in which family rituals are carried out, routines, indicating that students who associate a greater degree of personal meaning with family rituals are more likely to practice the routine aspects of family rituals than students who associate a lesser degree of personal meaning with family rituals.

Furthermore, the addition of meaning to the analysis results in an increase in the effect of parents' education on routines from  $-.06$  (Table 22) to  $-.10$  (Table 23), suggesting that family ritual meaning suppresses the effect of parents' education on routines. Consequently, parents' education has a negative effect ( $B = -.10, p \leq .05$ ) on the manner in which family rituals are carried out, routines, indicating that students who have parents with less education are more likely to practice the routine aspects of rituals than students with parents who have more education.

The  $R^2$  indicates that, together, the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning explain 40 percent of the variance in routine. As shown in Table 22, the demographic variables alone explain only 1 percent of the variance in routine, and with the inclusion of family ritual meaning in the second analysis, the

Table 23  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed,  
 Parents' Education, and Meaning on Routine

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.09	-.12
Gender	.01	.01
Years of University Education Completed	.05	.30
Parents' Education	-.10*	-.34
Meaning	.63**	.26
R <sup>2</sup>	.40	

\* p ≤ .05 \*\* p ≤ .01

amount of variance in routine that is explained increases significantly to 40 percent (Table 23).

#### Effects of Demographic Variables, Meaning, and Routine on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability

The following three analyses examine the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine on students' perceptions of the degree of cohesion and flexibility with roles and rules within their families of origin, total family cohesion and adaptability. The first analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables; the second analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning; and the third analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine.

Presented in Table 24 are the effects of the demographic variables (age, gender, years of university education completed, and parents' education) on students' perceptions of the degree of family cohesion and flexibility in the family of origin, total family cohesion and adaptability. The results of this analysis show that years of university education completed ( $B = .13, p \leq .05$ ) and parents' education ( $B = .17, p \leq .01$ ) have significant positive effects on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students with more years of university education and students with parents who have higher levels of education are more likely to perceive their families as having greater levels of family cohesion and flexibility with roles and rules than students with fewer years of university education and students with parents who have less education.

Also included in Table 24 is the  $R^2$  which indicates that, together, the demographic variables explain only 5 percent of the variance in total family

Table 24  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed,  
 and Parents' Education on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.01	-.03
Gender	-.06	-1.93
Years of University Education Completed	.13*	1.86
Parents' Education	.17**	1.35
R <sup>2</sup>	.05	

\* p ≤ .05 \*\* p ≤ .01

cohesion and adaptability. Ninety-five percent of the variance is not explained by the demographic variables included in the analysis and may be attributed to other variables and/or error in measurement.

In the second analysis, family ritual meaning is added. The effects of the demographic variables and family ritual meaning on total family cohesion and adaptability are presented in Table 25. The results show that years of university education completed, parents' education, and family ritual meaning significantly affect students' perceptions of family cohesion and flexibility. As expected, family ritual meaning has a significant positive effect ( $B = .51, p \leq .01$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students who associate greater personal meaning with family rituals are more likely to perceive their families as being more cohesive and flexible than students' who associate less personal meaning with family rituals (see Table 25).

Consistent with the first analysis, years of university education completed has a positive effect ( $B = .11, p \leq .05$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students with more years of university education are more likely to perceive their families as having greater levels of family cohesion and flexibility with roles and rules than students with fewer years of education. Furthermore, comparisons between Table 24 and 25 show that the effect of years of university education completed by students decreases slightly from .13 to .11 when meaning is added to the analysis in Table 25. This finding suggests that some of the effect of years of university education completed on total family cohesion and adaptability is mediated by family ritual meaning. Specifically, family ritual meaning accounts for 15 percent of the effect of years of university education completed on total family cohesion and adaptability.

Similarly, as shown in Table 25, parents' education has a positive effect

Table 25  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed,  
 Parents' Education, and Meaning on Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.06	-.22
Gender	-.10	-3.27
Years of University Education Completed	.11*	1.58
Parents' Education	.15**	1.18
Meaning	.51**	.49
R <sup>2</sup>	.30	

\* p ≤ .05 \*\* p ≤ .01

( $B = .15$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students with parents who have higher levels of education are more likely to perceive their families as having greater levels of family cohesion and flexibility with roles and rules than students with parents who have lower levels of education. With the addition of family ritual meaning, the effect of parents' education on total family cohesion and adaptability decreases slightly from .17 (Table 24) to .15 (Table 25), indicating that family ritual meaning has a small mediating effect on parents' education that accounts for almost 12 percent of the effect on total family cohesion and adaptability.

The  $R^2$ , shown in Table 25, indicates that, together, the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning explain 30 percent of the variance in total family cohesion and adaptability. With the addition of family ritual meaning, therefore, the  $R^2$ s increase from 5 percent, reported in Table 24, to 30 percent, reported in this table.

The third analysis includes routine in addition to the demographic variables and family ritual meaning. The effects of these variables on total family cohesion and adaptability are presented in Table 26. The results show that years of university education completed by students, parents' education, family ritual meaning, and routine significantly affect students' perceptions of the degree of family cohesion and adaptability. More specifically, Table 26 shows that routine has a significant negative effect ( $B = -.22$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students who practice the routine aspects of family rituals to a lesser degree are more likely to perceive their families as being more cohesive and flexible than students who practice the routine aspects of family rituals to a greater degree.

Table 26  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed,  
 Parents' Education, Meaning, and Routine on Total Family Cohesion and  
 Adaptability

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.08	-.28
Gender	-.09	-3.04
Years of University Education Completed	.12*	1.67
Parents' Education	.12*	.99
Meaning	.65**	.63
Routine	-.22**	-.54
$R^2$	.33	

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

Furthermore, consistent with the two previous analyses, years of university education completed by students has a positive effect ( $B = .12, p \leq .05$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability. Similarly, parents' education has a positive effect ( $B = .12, p \leq .05$ ) on students' perceptions of total family cohesion and adaptability. With the addition of routine, however, the effect of parents' education decreases slightly from .15 (Table 25) to .12 (Table 26), suggesting that routine mediates a small amount of the effect of parents' education on total family cohesion and adaptability.

The results presented in Table 26 also show that family ritual meaning continues to have a strong positive effect ( $B = .65, p \leq .01$ ) on total family cohesion and adaptability. The addition of routine in this analysis raises the effect of family ritual meaning on total family cohesion and adaptability from .51 (Table 25) to .65 (Table 26). That is, the effect of family ritual meaning on total family cohesion and adaptability increases by 27 percent, indicating that routine suppresses the effect of family ritual meaning on total family cohesion and adaptability.

The  $R^2$  in Table 26 indicates that, together, the four demographic characteristics, family ritual meaning, and routine explain 33 percent of the variance in total family cohesion and adaptability. With the addition of routine, the  $R^2$  increases from 30 percent (Table 25) to 33 percent (Table 26). That is, an additional 3 percent of the variance in total family cohesion and adaptability is explained with the addition of routine to the model.

### Effects of Demographic Variables, Meaning, Routines, and Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability on Intimacy

The following four analyses examine the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, routine, and total family cohesion and adaptability on students' perceptions of the level of intimacy experienced in their relationships beyond their families. The first analysis examines the effects of the four demographic variables and the second analysis examines the effect of family ritual meaning in addition to the effects of the demographic variables. Furthermore, the third analysis examines the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine. Finally, the fourth analysis examines the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, routine, and total family cohesion and adaptability.

In the first analysis, the effects of the four demographic variables on students' perceptions of the level of intimacy in their relationships outside their families are examined. The findings, presented in Table 27, show that gender is the only demographic variable that has a significant effect on intimacy. In fact, gender has a very strong positive effect ( $B = .43, p \leq .01$ ) on intimacy, indicating that female students are more likely to perceive greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than male students. Although the four demographic variables, taken together, explain 20.2 percent of the variance in intimacy, as indicated by the  $R^2$  shown in Table 27, most of the variance explained results from gender alone.

Family ritual meaning is added in the second analysis and the effect of family ritual meaning in addition to the effects of the four demographic variables on students' perceptions of the level of intimacy experienced in their relationships are presented in Table 28. The findings show that gender and meaning significantly affect intimacy. Specifically, family ritual meaning has a relatively

Table 27  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, and Parents' Education on Intimacy

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.07	-.44
Gender	.43**	24.10
Years of University Education Completed	.03	.64
Parents' Education	.07	.89
R <sup>2</sup>	.202	

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

Table 28  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, and Meaning on Intimacy

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.08	-.50
Gender	.42**	23.37
Years of University Education Completed	.02	.58
Parents' Education	.04	.58
Meaning	.13*	.21
$R^2$	.211	

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

weak, yet significant, positive effect ( $B = .13, p \leq .05$ ) on intimacy, indicating that students who associate greater personal meaning with family rituals are more likely to perceive higher levels of intimacy in their interpersonal relationships than students who associate less personal meaning with family rituals. In addition, gender has a strong positive effect ( $B = .42, p \leq .01$ ) on intimacy, consistent with the first analysis (Table 27).

Together, the four demographic variables and family ritual meaning explain 21.1 percent of the variance in intimacy, as indicated by the  $R^2$  in Table 28. Examination of Tables 27 and 28 show that the amount of variance in intimacy explained increases from 20.2 percent to 21.1 percent with the addition of family ritual meaning.

The third analysis includes the routine variable. The effects of the four demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and the manner in which rituals are carried out, routine, are presented in Table 29. Consistent with the previous analysis, the findings show that gender and family ritual meaning significantly affect intimacy. With the addition of routine, gender continues to have a strong positive effect ( $B = .42, p \leq .01$ ) on intimacy, indicating, as previously mentioned, that female students are more likely to perceive greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than are male students. In fact, examination of Table 28 and 29 shows that the effect of gender on intimacy remains unchanged with the addition of routine.

In addition, the findings presented in Table 29 indicate that family ritual meaning has a significant positive effect ( $B = .16, p \leq .05$ ) on intimacy. Comparisons between Tables 28 and 29 show that the effect of family ritual meaning on intimacy increases slightly from .13 to .16 with the addition of routine.

Table 29  
 Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, Meaning, and Routine on Intimacy

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.09	-.52
Gender	.42**	23.32
Years of University Education Completed	.03	.66
Parents' Education	.04	.51
Meaning	.16*	.26
Routine	-.05	-.21
$R^2$	.212	

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

Together, the four demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine explain 21.2 percent of the variance in intimacy, as indicated by the  $R^2$  shown in Table 29. With the addition of routine, the  $R^2$  increases, slightly, from 21.1 percent (Table 28) to 21.2 percent (Table 29). The addition of routine, therefore, provides very little new information in explaining the development of intimate relationships for students.

The final analysis examines the effects of total family cohesion and adaptability in addition to the effects of the demographic variables, family ritual meaning, and routine on intimacy. Consistent with the previous analyses, Table 30 shows that gender and family ritual meaning continue to be the only variables that significantly affect intimacy. With the addition of total family cohesion and adaptability, the effect of gender on intimacy decreases slightly from .42 (Table 29) to .40 (Table 30), suggesting that some of the effect of gender on intimacy is mediated by total family cohesion and adaptability. Specifically, total family cohesion and adaptability accounts for almost 5 percent of the effect of gender on intimacy.

Moreover, the addition of total family cohesion and adaptability to the analysis influences the effect of family ritual meaning on intimacy. That is, with the addition of total family cohesion and adaptability, the effect of family ritual meaning on intimacy increases from .16 (Table 29) to .18 (Table 30). Thus, the effect of family ritual meaning on intimacy increases by approximately 12 percent, indicating that total family cohesion and adaptability suppresses the effect of family ritual meaning on intimacy.

Together, the four demographic variables, family ritual meaning, routine, and total family cohesion and adaptability explain 21.2 percent of the variance in intimacy as indicated by the  $R^2$  in Table 30. In fact, the  $R^2$ 's in Tables 29 and 30

**Table 30**  
**Effects of Age, Gender, Years of University Education Completed, Parents' Education, Meaning, Routine, and Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability on Intimacy**

Independent Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Age	-.08	-.51
Gender	.40**	22.85
Years of University Education Completed	.03	.77
Parents' Education	.07	.95
Meaning	.18*	.31
Routine	-.06	-.25
Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability	-.01	-.01
$R^2$	.212	

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

are equivalent, indicating that total family cohesion and adaptability, like routine, provides very little new information in explaining the development of intimate relationships for students.

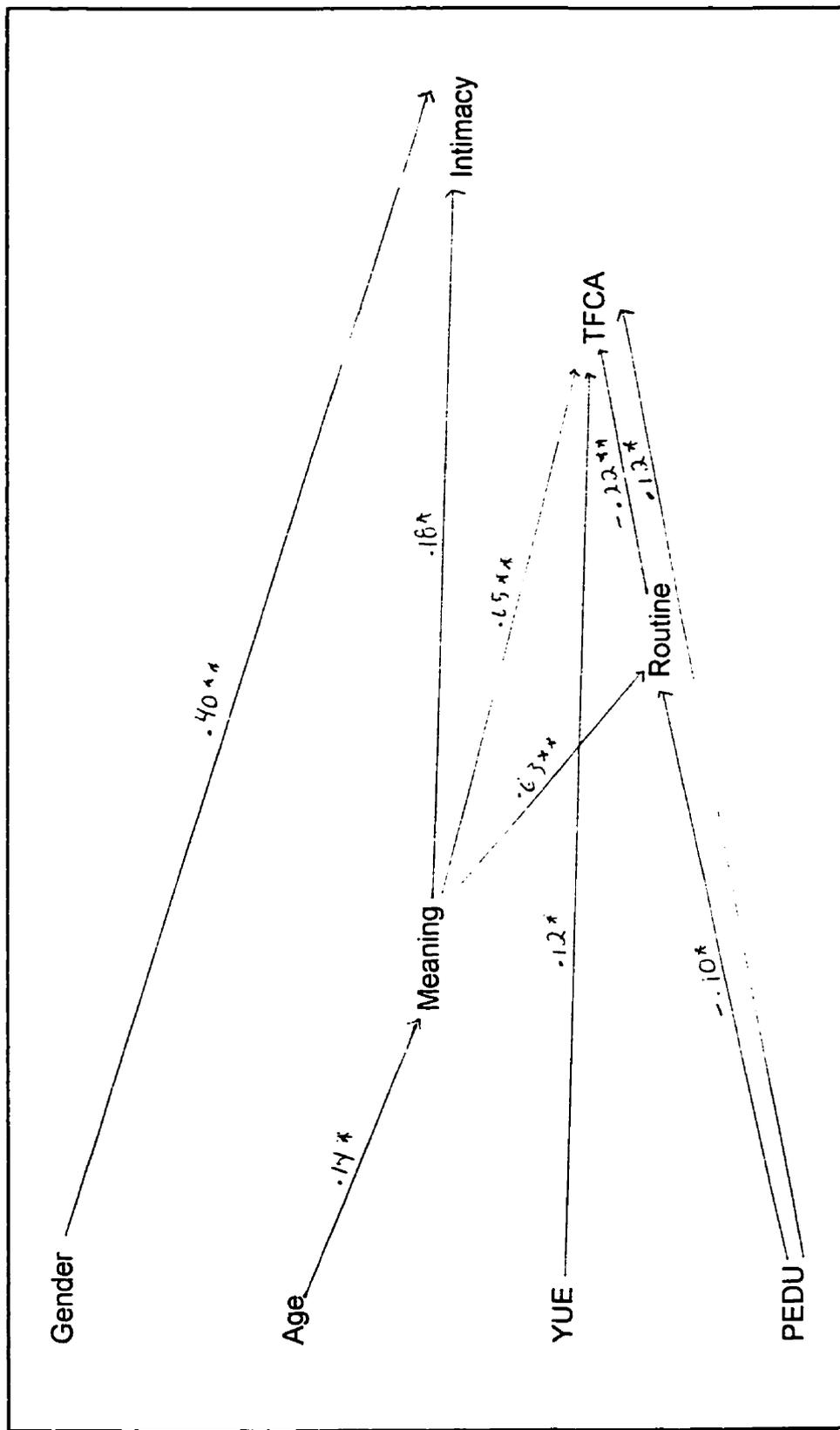
### Summary

Presented in Figure 2 is a model that outlines the major direct effects of the variables in the study. The strongest effect on intimacy in relationships outside the family was gender, with a direct effect of .40. Approximately 7 percent of the effect of gender on intimacy was mediated by routine and total family cohesion and adaptability. Family ritual meaning was the only other variable in the model that significantly influenced the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family, with a direct effect of .18.

The most powerful effect on total family cohesion and adaptability was family ritual meaning (.65) and the second strongest effect was routine (-.22). Years of university education completed (by subjects) also had a direct effect of .12 on total family cohesion and adaptability. Family ritual meaning mediated a small amount of this effect. Similarly, parents' education had a direct effect of .12 on total family cohesion and adaptability. Together, the total family cohesion and adaptability and routine variables mediated almost 30 percent of the effect of parents' education.

Personal meaning attributed to family rituals (meaning) had the most powerful effect on routine, the manner in which rituals are carried out (.63). In addition, parents' education had a significant direct effect on routine (-.10). Finally, age was the only demographic variable that significantly affected family ritual meaning, with a direct effect of .14.

Figure 2  
 Direct Effects of Gender, Age, Years of University Education, Parent's Education, Meaning, and Routine



\* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$

(YUE=Years of University Education; PEDU=Parents' Education; TFCA=Total Family Cohesion and Adaptability)

In summary, the results of the ten analyses were presented in this chapter. These results provide partial support for the theoretical model outlined in Chapter 1. In the following chapter, these findings are discussed within the context of the theoretical rationale presented in Chapter 1 and in relation to the four questions that guided the study. Furthermore, the next chapter describes the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 4

### Discussion

This chapter provides a summary and discussion of the results of the study in relation to the questions that guided the study. The first of these questions is: Do family rituals positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Second, do family rituals positively influence family cohesion and adaptability? Third, do family cohesion and adaptability positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? Fourth, does gender affect the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? The remainder of the chapter presents implications for policy and practice and directions for future research.

The first question to be addressed is: Do family rituals positively influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family? The results of this study partially support the link between ritualization in the family of origin and the level of intimacy experienced by students in relationships outside this family. The findings indicate that family ritual meaning has a direct positive effect on intimacy, suggesting that students who associate greater personal meaning with family rituals perceive their relationships as having a greater degree of intimacy than students who associate less personal meaning with family rituals. Furthermore, the amount of variance in intimacy that is explained increases by 0.9 percent, from .202 to .211, with the addition of family ritual meaning into the analyses (see change in  $R^2$  from Table 27 to Table 28). The additional variance explained by family ritual meaning lends support to the proposed relationship between family rituals and the level of intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family.

The finding that meaningful family rituals contribute to greater levels of intimacy in relationships outside the family, as reported by undergraduate

university students, may be interpreted within the context of theories of development which emphasize the importance of early experiences with caregivers in the development of later relationships outside the family (e.g., Erikson, 1963; Sullivan, 1953; Bowlby, 1973; Bowen, 1978). The nature and quality of early relationships are considered to be influenced by the predictability and consistency of the caregiver in meeting the emotional and physical needs of the child (Bowlby, 1973; Erikson, 1963; Sullivan, 1953). For instance, as described in Chapter 1, Sullivan's (1953) theory of interpersonal development posits that there are a number of interpersonal needs that must be resolved at each developmental stage in the life cycle and that the successful resolution of these issues provides the basis for the resolution of the interpersonal needs at the next developmental stages. In infancy and childhood, needs of affection, nurturance, and contact must be met by adult caregivers (Sullivan, 1953). Within the context of family rituals, as family members spend time together in predictable and consistent ways, interpersonal needs in the early stages of development may be met providing the foundation for the development of intimate relationships outside the family at a later period of time (Sullivan, 1953).

The link between family rituals and intimacy in relationships beyond the family may also be conceptualized within attachment theory. As described in Chapter 1, attachment theory proposes that early relationships with caregivers function as models for later relationships. These early experiences are believed to shape the child's internal "working model," beliefs about the self and others, that serve to guide individuals' interpersonal behavior in ways that are consistent with their beliefs (Bowlby, 1973). Furthermore, Bretherton (1985) suggests that event schemas or scripts, mental models developed through the experience of events, may contribute to internal working models. In fact, individuals may

construct event schemas on the basis of family ritual experiences. It is possible that students who perceive their family rituals as meaningful likely had positive family ritual experiences which may have contributed to a "working model" characterized by a sense of self worth and the belief that others are responsive and emotionally available. This internal model may contribute to an attitude that interactions with others are positive experiences which, in turn, may lead to the development of intimate interpersonal relationships. Whether or not family rituals actually contribute to the formation of internal working models, and hence influence future interpersonal behaviors, however, was not examined in this study and thus may be a goal of future research.

The finding that family rituals contribute to the level of intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family may also be interpreted within Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. As discussed in Chapter 1, Erikson (1963) argued that a clear sense of identity is necessary to be able to successfully establish intimacy in young adulthood. Erikson proposes that closeness to another individual may threaten individuality and that intimacy can only be developed after identity has been established (1963). Researchers have suggested that family rituals may play a role in identity development. More specifically, it has been suggested that family rituals may contribute to a sense of family identity from which grows a sense of individual identity ( Wolin & Bennett, 1984; Bennett, Wolin, & McAvity, 1988; Fiese, 1992; Imber-Black, 1988). As discussed in Chapter 1, family rituals may allow for the development of stable identities for relatively young university students, while at the same time promoting cohesiveness between family members. As intimacy is described as connecting with another while maintaining a sense of individuality (Erikson, 1963),

meaningful family rituals that allow for separateness and connectedness can contribute to intimacy development.

The finding that routine, the manner in which rituals are carried out in terms of adherence to roles and degree of flexibility in routines, does not significantly affect the level of intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family is consistent with the previous research of Fiese (1992). In her research, Fiese found that relative to routine, family ritual meaning was the most important factor in predicting adolescent identity status. In this respect, anthropologists and family therapists have proposed that the strength of rituals lies in the symbolic meaning of the patterned interactions and not necessarily in the patterned interactions themselves (van der Hart, 1983; Roberts, 1988). The findings of the present study support this belief as it is the meaning associated with rituals, not the routines themselves, that positively contribute to the level of intimacy perceived in the relationships students develop outside their families. In this sample, the routine aspect of family rituals is not a contributing factor in intimacy development. In a clinical sample, however, where families are often characterized by chaos, it is possible that the routine aspects of rituals may play an important stabilizing role (Fiese, 1992).

The second main question that the study attempts to answer is: Do family rituals positively influence family cohesion and adaptability? The results of this study indicate that the meaning component of family rituals contributes positively to total family cohesion and adaptability whereas the routine component contributes negatively to total family cohesion and adaptability. Seemingly, these results are contradictory. Nevertheless, in support of the hypothesized link between family rituals and total family cohesion and adaptability, the findings show that family ritual meaning has a direct positive effect on total family

cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students who attach greater personal meaning to family rituals are more likely to perceive their families as being more cohesive and flexible with roles and rules than students who associate less personal meaning with family rituals. Furthermore, when family ritual meaning is added to the analysis, the amount of variance in total family cohesion and adaptability that is explained increases by 25 percent, from .05 to .30 (see  $R^2$  change from Table 24 to Table 25).

The indirect effects of family ritual meaning on total family cohesion and adaptability also support the proposed link between family rituals and total family cohesion and adaptability. The findings show that family ritual meaning mediates a small part of both the effects of years of university education completed by subjects and parents' education on total family cohesion and adaptability (see Tables 24 and 25). Nevertheless, both parents' education and years of university education completed by subjects have relatively small, yet significant, direct effects on total family cohesion and adaptability (see Table 26). That is, the parents' SES, as indicated by parents' education, appears to affect, at least minimally, the degree of family cohesion and adaptability as reported by students. Specifically, students with parents who have higher levels of education are more likely to perceive their families as being more cohesive and flexible with roles and rules than students with parents who have less education. This finding is consistent with previous research examining the relationship between SES and family functioning (see for example: Alnajjar, 1996; Canfield, Hovestadt, & Fenell, 1992).

Not surprisingly, the number of years of university education completed by the subjects also has a small influence on total family cohesion and adaptability, indicating that students with more years of university education are more likely to

perceive their families as having greater levels of cohesion and flexibility than students with fewer years of education. This finding is consistent with the previous finding that indicated that parents' education influences family cohesion and adaptability. In fact, the suggestion made by many researchers that the education of parents is positively related to the educational attainment of their children, may help explain the congruency between these two findings (see Coleman, 1988; Majoribanks, 1983, 1988). Coleman (1988), for example, suggested that parents with higher levels of education may act as an educational resource that promotes the educational attainment of their children. Similarly, Majoribanks (1988) found that the combination of socioeconomic status and parental attitudes towards achievement contributed to children's educational attainment.

Together, these findings support, at least minimally, the popular belief that family rituals may promote feelings of belongingness or cohesion in families (Turner, 1967; van der Hart, 1983; Fiese et al., 1993). These findings also lend empirical support to the anecdotal evidence provided by Shipman (1982), as previously outlined in Chapter 1, which highlighted the important cohesion building function of family rituals as reflected in students' personal accounts of family rituals.

The finding that meaningful family rituals have a direct positive effect on total family cohesion and adaptability is consistent with the previous research findings of Fiese et al. (1993). Using a different measure of family cohesion, a different methodology, and a different subject sample, this study extends the work of Fiese et al. (1993). In fact, Fiese et al. (1993) "predicted that cohesion or belongingness with a partner would be positively related to the meaningful aspects of family rituals" (p.635). In her study, one hundred and fifteen married

couples with infants and/or preschool children participated in the study. An analysis of variance revealed that meaningful family rituals were associated with greater marital satisfaction and cohesion.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, family therapists have used family rituals as a tool to create cohesion within families (Wolin, Bennett & Jacobs, 1988; Cheal, 1988; Whiteside, 1989). The finding that meaningful family rituals contribute to total family cohesion and adaptability lends indirect evidence supporting the use of rituals as a therapeutic tool to promote healthy family cohesion.

The finding that routine, the manner in which rituals are carried out in terms of adherence to roles and the flexibility that individuals have with routines, has a direct negative effect on total family cohesion and adaptability does not lend support to the proposed link between family rituals and total family cohesion and adaptability. The findings indicate that students who practice the routine aspects of family rituals to a lesser degree are more likely to perceive their families as being more cohesive and flexible with roles and rules than students who practice the routine aspects of family rituals to a greater degree. This finding further indicates that students who strongly adhere to assigned roles and practice routines rigidly perceive their families as being less flexible with roles and routines and less cohesive implying that practicing routine aspects of family rituals without allowing for flexibility may hinder family cohesion. Thus, it appears that practicing rituals that are meaningful helps to bond family members together and the practice of routine aspects of family rituals without allowing for flexibility may negatively affect family cohesion.

These results suggest that it is not necessarily the routine aspect of family rituals that promotes a sense of togetherness between family members. For

example, young adults may be required to go to church every Sunday with their family, but if they find going to church to be of little importance then the ritual of "church-going" may result in the young adults not feeling close to other family members. Van der Hart described meaningless rituals as being "empty" (1983) and he further suggested that "empty" rituals may be perceived negatively, resulting in a diminished sense of cohesion between family members. The finding that the practice of routine aspects of family rituals without allowing for flexibility may have a negative impact on family cohesion highlights the need for allowing flexibility with the roles and routines in family rituals in order to promote cohesiveness between family members.

These findings have implications for therapists using rituals as a tool to create cohesion within the family. It appears that meaningful family rituals contribute positively to family cohesiveness whereas rigidly adhering to roles and routines have negative influences on family cohesion. Togetherness between family members may not be established simply through ritualized actions, the actions must be meaningful to the family members. As mentioned previously, the power of rituals seems to lie in the symbolic meaning of the patterned interactions and not necessarily in the interactions themselves (van der Hart, 1983; Roberts, 1988).

The third question to be discussed is: Do family cohesion and adaptability positively influence the level of intimacy perceived in relationships outside of the family? The results of this study do not support the proposed association between total family cohesion and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships outside of the family. Surprisingly, the findings indicate that the degree of family cohesion and flexibility with roles and rules does not have a direct effect on intimacy in relationships outside of the family.

This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Romig and Bakken (1992) who showed that family cohesion positively correlated with intimacy in relationships and that, more specifically, cohesion explained 5.3 percent of the variance in affection expressed and wanted. It is possible that the discrepancy in results between the two studies is due to differences in methodology, such as sample characteristics and measures. The participants in the study conducted by Romig and Bakken (1992) consisted of male and female high school students with a mean age of 16.3 years. In contrast, the present study consists of an older sample of undergraduate university students with a mean age of 21.2 years. Differences in the operationalization of intimacy may also contribute to the discrepancy in results. Using the Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Inventory- Behavior (FIRO-B), Romig and Bakken assessed intimacy development in terms of the level of affection expressed and desired. The present study assessed a broader definition of intimacy using the MSIS. The MSIS assesses intimacy in terms of the frequency and/or intensity of a variety of dimensions of intimacy including: affection expressed and received, empathy, feeling of closeness, self-disclosure, spending time together, and importance of the relationship.

The finding that total family cohesion and adaptability is not related to intimacy in relationships outside the family does not lend support to theories of development that stress the importance of early relationships within the family in the development of relationships outside the family (see, for example, Sullivan, 1953; Bowlby, 1973; Bowen, 1978). According to Bowen's theory of intergenerational influences of behavior, for example, patterns of interaction in current relationships reflect patterns of interaction in the family of origin (1978). In addition, life span views on attachment suggest that attachment to the family at

all ages may increase feelings of mastery over the environment that, in turn, may result in greater self-esteem and social competencies (Kalish & Knudtson, 1976; Bell, 1985). It is acknowledged, as discussed in Chapter 1, that this study did not ask the students to describe their families during any specific time reference (e.g. early childhood). Consequently, a major methodological limitation of this study is that the frame of reference for the subjects may not be consistent and this inconsistency may influence the results of the study.

Contrary to the standard theories of life span attachment (see Bowlby, 1973, 1977; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bretherton, 1985) other research has suggested that during adolescence and young adulthood, a high degree of family cohesion may, in fact, hinder individual development (Olson et al., 1983; Beavers and Voeller, 1983; Olson et al., 1979). This research suggests that levels of family cohesion need to diminish during adolescence. Such research lends support to theories of development that view adolescence and young adulthood as a time when students must separate themselves from their families in order to gain autonomy, competence, and identity (Chickering, 1969; Seltzer, 1982). In addition, during this developmental period the peer group is considered to replace parents as sources of intimacy (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987). The results of the present study do not confirm this position, however. The study simply indicates that there is no relationship between total family cohesion and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family.

In addition, the inability of this study to produce significant findings, regarding the relationship between total family cohesion and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family, may be attributed to the study's relatively small sample size. Moreover, as already discussed, the

subjects were not given a specific time reference from which to describe their families of origin. As a result, it is likely that the frame of reference was inconsistent between subjects and this may have affected the results of the study.

The fourth question to be addressed is whether or not gender affects the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family. The results of the study support the proposed link between gender and intimacy in relationships outside of the family. The findings show that gender has a strong positive effect on the level of intimacy perceived in relationships outside the family, indicating that female students are more likely to perceive greater levels of intimacy in their relationships than male students. Furthermore, this effect is largely direct with very little being mediated by the intervening variables.

These findings are consistent with previous research examining gender differences in intimacy. As discussed in Chapter 1, prior research has indicated that middle adolescent females engage in more intimate relationships and express a greater desire for intimate relationships than males (Bakken & Romig, 1992). Similarly, other research has found that females report higher levels of intimacy in their same-sex and opposite-sex relationships than males (Sharabany et al., 1981; Fischer, 1981; Blyth & Foster-Clark, 1987).

The findings of the present study may be explained by theories on women's psychosocial development. A number of researchers studying female psychosocial development have suggested that the developmental processes differ for males and females (e.g., Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Surrey, 1991; Kaplan & Klein, 1991). Gilligan (1982), for instance, has proposed that in young adulthood the primary importance for men is establishing independence and developing an individual identity. In contrast, for women the primary importance is establishing and maintaining relationships with others.

## Limitations

A major limitation of this study concerns external validity, the extent to which the findings can be generalized to people, settings, times, measurements, and characteristics other than those used in this study (Kazdin, 1992).

Generalizability of the results of this study are limited because undergraduate psychology students at the University of Manitoba were the only participants. Further research is required to extend the findings to other populations, such as young adults not attending university. It is possible that with other samples different findings may be generated regarding family rituals, family cohesion, and intimacy.

The use of self-report instruments in this study is another limitation. Self-report measures are considered to be problematic due to potential subject biases (e.g., social desirability), lack of evidence demonstrating that the variables of concern are adequately assessed, and absence of data showing that the measure is consistent with direct observation (Kazdin, 1992; Cone & Foster, 1993). To minimize the possibility of subject bias in this study, subjects were asked to complete the measures anonymously. Furthermore, instruments with demonstrated validity and reliability were used to increase the likelihood that the variables were adequately assessed. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the generalizability of these findings are limited to self reported perceptions of family rituals, family cohesion, and intimacy.

Another important limitation of this study is that causation cannot be unequivocally concluded from this study. The data in this study are analyzed using structural equation modelling procedures, which is a method that uses standardized multiple regression techniques to examine causal relationships among variables as guided by theory (Pedhazur, 1982). Structural equation

modelling provides possibilities for causal determinations among independent and dependent variables (Miller, 1991), going beyond simple correlational procedures. However, caution in interpreting findings is suggested in the following statement made by Miller (1991):

Extravagant hopes for causal explanations should not be entertained-at least not yet. The inability to deal with all variables in a social system, to measure and plot their exact interactions, makes the results in most problems only first approximations to causality. (p. 286)

It is acknowledged, that the language used throughout this study in describing the results imply causation. Specifically, it is hypothesized that family environment variables (family rituals and family cohesion and adaptability), for instance, may affect intimacy in relationships beyond the family. Due to the nature of structural equation modelling and the theoretical model outlined above, however, the language is considered appropriate.

The internal validity of this study is limited because there are at least two potential confounds that were not controlled. First, subjects were asked to describe their family of origin in terms of family rituals and family cohesion, but they were not directed to describe their families during a specific time reference (e.g., during early childhood). Thus, it is likely that the frame of reference may not have been consistent between subjects. That is, some subjects may have described their families during childhood whereas others may have described their families during young adulthood. Second, family ritual activities and cohesiveness between family members may change over time. Changes in such family dynamics were not assessed in this study. A specific time reference and possible changes in family dynamics over time may be important variables that could have influenced the findings of this study.

## **Implications**

Regardless of these limitations, the findings of this study have important implications for university counsellors, family therapists, and policy makers and administrators in education. As mentioned previously in this chapter, many family therapists use family rituals as a therapeutic tool to promote cohesion in the family. The findings that meaningful family rituals contribute to family cohesiveness whereas rigidly adhering to the roles and routines of family rituals may have a negative influence on family cohesion suggest that family therapists should ensure that the rituals are meaningful to family members if cohesiveness is to be established.

The finding that meaningful family rituals contribute positively to the degree of intimacy perceived in relationships outside the family also has important implications for university counsellors. If students present with relationship issues then the exploration of family rituals may be useful in providing insight into the nature of the problem, as it is widely believed that the dynamics within the family may influence psychosocial development. Family rituals may provide a window through which to observe family dynamics (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). For instance, by examining family rituals in the family of origin, important information regarding family relationships may be revealed. Clients may gain an understanding of how these familial relationships may have affected their current relationships outside their families. Furthermore, family rituals may be adapted to promote healthy relationships within the family which may translate into healthy relationships outside the family.

In addition, significant implications for policy makers and administrators in education are suggested by the findings that both parents' education and the number of years of university education completed by students affect, at least to

some level, the degree to which students perceive their families as cohesive and flexible with roles and rules. In addition to these findings, many researchers have further suggested that family cohesion may protect young people from developing problems with, for example, drug abuse, antisocial and delinquent behavior, and low self-esteem (Protinsky & Shilts, 1990; Tolan, 1988; Cooper, Holman, & Braithwaite, 1983). Taken together, these findings suggest that the educational attainment of students and their parents positively influence family cohesion which, in turn, may protect young people from developing emotional and behavioral problems. Thus, increased education among parents and their children may function, indirectly, to reduce emotional and behavioral difficulties for young people. Therefore, these findings suggest that policy makers and administrators should consider increasing accessibility to university education, possibly through increasing availability of part-time studies, student loans, scholarships, and on-site day care facilities. Increased accessibility to university education may increase the level of educational attainment among parents and their children, thereby contributing to increased family cohesion and, in turn, protecting young people from developing emotional and behavioral problems.

### **Directions for Future Research**

In addition to implications for policy and practice, the present study also raises a number of implications for future research. For instance, because of the relatively small sample size, separate analyses for each gender were not conducted. Consequently, follow-up studies with a larger sample of male and female subjects should be conducted to determine possible gender differences in the links between family rituals, family cohesion, and intimacy in relationships outside the family.

This study expands on previous research conducted by Fiese (1992), which found a positive relationship between family ritualization and adolescent identity status, by investigating the relationship between family rituals and intimacy in non-familial relationships. Future research may be directed towards examining the extent to which family ritual experiences contribute to other dimensions of psychosocial development such as trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. Furthermore, the effects of family rituals on all dimensions of psychosocial development, as described by Erikson, could be examined in longitudinal studies. A longitudinal approach could provide important information regarding the influence of family rituals on individual development over time. Such research would contribute to understanding the significance of family rituals in human development.

The present study investigated family rituals in a sample of undergraduate university students of which over 85 percent reported living with both biological or adoptive parents for the majority of time while growing up. Future research may extend this study by comparing levels of family ritualization between subjects from a variety of family structures (e.g., single parent, blended family, adoptive parents, biological parents). Family structure and changes in family structure may affect family rituals (Whiteside, 1989). For example, rituals within the family may be disrupted by divorce and remarriage.

Finally, further investigation is required to extend the findings of this study to other populations. Generalizability of the study's results are limited as the sample consists only of undergraduate university students. As mentioned in Chapter 1, prior research has found that family rituals may protect children of alcoholic parents from developing alcoholism, anxiety-related health symptoms, as well as emotional and behavioral difficulties (Wolin et al., 1980; Bennett,

Wolin, & Reiss, 1988). Further research examining the extent to which family rituals contribute to intimacy development among a sample of adult children of alcoholics will contribute to the body of literature exploring the role of family rituals.

### **Conclusion**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which family rituals and total family cohesion and adaptability contributes to the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family. The results of the study indicated that, among a sample of undergraduate university students, family rituals have a relatively small, yet significant, effect on the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. Specifically, the results suggested that it is the personal meaning attributed to family rituals, not routines, that influenced the level of intimacy in relationships.

The study also investigated the relationship between family rituals and total family cohesion and adaptability as it was proposed that family rituals promote a sense of cohesiveness in the family. The findings indicated that meaningful family rituals contribute positively to family cohesiveness and adaptability, whereas rigidly adhering to roles and routines in family rituals may have a negative impact on the perception of family cohesiveness and adaptability.

The proposal that intimacy in relationships outside the family is positively influenced by family cohesion and adaptability was not supported by the results of this study. The findings indicated, contrary to expectations, that there was no relationship between total family cohesion and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. The theoretical model, as described in Chapter 1, suggested that family rituals may promote family cohesiveness and adaptability and, in turn, the level of family cohesiveness and adaptability may

influence the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. As no relationship was found between family cohesiveness and adaptability and the level of intimacy in relationships beyond the family, this part of the theoretical model is not supported.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study do support the hypothesis that family rituals affect the level of intimacy in relationships outside the family. The findings highlight the importance of the meaning component of family rituals in influencing relationships both within and beyond the family. These findings suggest important implications for university counsellors and family therapists. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that gender contributed significantly to intimacy in relationships beyond the family, consistent with previous research investigating gender differences in intimacy. The results of this study contribute to the bodies of literature investigating both the role of family rituals in individual development and the factors that contribute to intimacy development.

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## APPENDIX A

**Definitions of settings and dimensions from the FRQ**  
( From Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, and Schwagler, 1993, p. 642)

**Settings**

Dinnertime	Shared family meal
Weekends	Leisure or planned activities that occur on nonworking days
Vacations	Events or activities surrounding a family vacation
Annual celebrations	Yearly celebrations: birthdays, anniversaries, or first day of school
Special celebrations	Celebrations that occur regardless of religion or culture: weddings, graduations, or family reunions
Religious holidays	Religious celebrations: Christmas, Chanukah, Easter, or Passover
Cultural and ethnic traditions	Celebrations tied to culture and ethnic groups: naming ceremonies, wakes, funerals, or baking particular ethnic foods

**Dimensions**

Occurrence	How often activity occurs
Roles	Assignment of roles and duties during activity
Flexibility	Degree of flexibility evident in routines
Attendance	Expectations about whether attendance is mandatory
Affect	Emotional investment in activity
Symbolic significance	Attachment of meaning to activity
Continuation	Perseverance of activity across generations
Deliberateness	Advance preparation and planning associated with activity

## APPENDIX B

## Demographic Information Questionnaire

Following are questions related to your personal background. Your answers to all questions are confidential and your identity cannot be traced from your responses.

**Record answers directly on this questionnaire. DO NOT USE THE BUBBLE SHEET!**

Please check one response for each question.

1. What is your gender?

Female \_\_\_                  Male \_\_\_

2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.

3. What is your marital status?

Single-never married                  \_\_\_

Married or equivalent                  \_\_\_

Separated or divorced                  \_\_\_

Widowed    \_\_\_

4. How many years of university education have you completed? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.

(If you have been a part-time student, then estimate the equivalent number of full-time years)

5. What Faculty are you registered in?

Arts    \_\_\_

Education    \_\_\_

Human Ecology    \_\_\_

Nursing    \_\_\_

Social Work    \_\_\_

Sciences    \_\_\_

Management    \_\_\_

Engineering    \_\_\_

Music    \_\_\_

Phys Ed/Recreation    \_\_\_

Other    \_\_\_

6. For the majority of time when growing up, who were you living with?

Both biological or adoptive parents \_\_\_

Blended family (ie. with a biological or adoptive parent and a step-parent) \_\_\_

With relatives other than your parents \_\_\_

In a single parent family \_\_\_

Other arrangements (such as in a group home) \_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

7. Currently I am living:

- with both biological or adoptive parents \_\_\_
- with a biological or adoptive parent and a step-parent \_\_\_
- with relatives other than my parents \_\_\_
- with a single parent (single parent family) \_\_\_
- with my spouse \_\_\_
- with a friend/friends \_\_\_
- in residence \_\_\_
- alone \_\_\_
- other \_\_\_

If chose other please specify \_\_\_\_\_

8. What was the highest level of education that your parents received?

Check one for each parent.

	Mother	Father
Elementary school	___	___
Some high school	___	___
Completed high school	___	___
Some technical, vocational training	___	___
Completed community college	___	___
Some university	___	___
Completed a Bachelor's degree (eg. B.Ed, B.A.)	___	___
Some education at the graduate level	___	___
Completed a graduate degree (eg. M.Ed, PhD)	___	___

9. What are your parents' occupations? (if they are retired or deceased, please indicate the occupations they held.) Check one for each parent.

	Mother	Father
Self-employed professional (eg. architect, dentist, engineer, M.D.)	—	—
Employed professional (eg. accountant, school teacher)	—	—
High level manager (eg. president, vice president, financial manager)	—	—
Semi-professional (eg. cameraman, musician, photographer)	—	—
Technician (eg. engineering technologist, life sciences technician)	—	—
Middle manager in business or government	—	—
Supervisor	—	—
Skilled clerical, sales, and service (eg. insurance agent, salesperson)	—	—
Skilled crafts and trades (eg. cabinet maker, painter, plumber)	—	—
Farmer	—	—
Semi-skilled clerical, sales, and service (eg. office clerk, library file clerk)	—	—
Semi-skilled manual (eg. bus driver, cook, taxi driver)	—	—
Unskilled clerical, sales, and service	—	—
Unskilled manual (eg. chambermaid, elevator operator, janitor)	—	—
Farm labourer	—	—
Other	—	—

## APPENDIX C

## Items Included In Scales

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Scale	Items included in scale
FRQ (Routines)	11*, 23*, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35*, 39, 42, 43*, 47*, 50*, 51, 55*
FRQ (Meaning)	1*, 4*, 5*, 6, 8, 9, 12*, 13, 14*, 16*, 17*, 20, 21*, 22, 24, 25*, 28*, 29*, 30*, 32*, 33, 36, 37*, 40*, 41, 44*, 45, 46*, 48, 49*, 52*, 53*, 54, 56
FACES II	1, 2, 3*, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9*, 11, 12*, 13, 14, 15*, 16, 17, 18, 19*, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25*, 26, 27, 28*, 29*, 30
MSIS	1, 2* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14*, 15, 16, 17

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## APPENDIX D

## **Recruitment Statement**

Hi! My name is Ilona Oszadzky and I am a Masters student in Educational Psychology. I need a large number of university students to participate in my thesis research which will investigate two areas: a) perceptions of family celebrations and traditions (such as birthdays, Christmas, dinnertime's) and b) intimacy experienced in relationships. Participation is voluntary, however if you decide to participate you will receive 1 credit point. You will be asked to complete four brief questionnaires which will take less than 1 hour to complete. All responses to the questionnaires are confidential and anonymous- you would not put any identifying information on the questionnaires.

All of you are eligible to participate in this study. Five research sessions will be held the week of September 22 -next week. Research sessions will be held in room 206 Tier on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 3:30- 4:30 and evening sessions will also be held on Monday and Wednesday from 6-7.

You may sign up for one of the sessions. Six binders will be circulated through the class today. There are 3 purple binders and 3 red binders. The purple binders contain folders with sign up sheets for the afternoon sessions on M, T, and W. The red binders contain folders for the evening sessions on M and W. Please decide which session you would like to participate in (afternoon or evening) and wait for that binder to come to you. Please fill in your name, phone number, and student number using the pencil provided. Only fill out the green section!! Make sure you take the reminder tab with you.

If you would like to participate, but all the spaces for that day are filled or you cannot make it to any of the sessions and would like to come at another time, please sign your name and phone number on the sign up sheet provided within each binder.

## Oral Statement Given at Beginning of Research Session

Hi! My name is Ilona Oszadszky and I am a Master's student in Educational Psychology. I would like you to participate in a study investigating two areas: a) interpersonal relationships and b) perceptions of family celebrations and traditions. You will be asked to complete four brief questionnaires. One questionnaire requests some demographic information about your background. The other three questionnaires contain questions related to closeness experienced in relationships as well as questions regarding family celebrations and activities. In total, it will likely take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete all four questionnaires.

To ensure confidentiality, I ask that you do not write your name, or any other identifying information, on the research instruments. Without any identifying information there is no way for any of the responses to the questionnaires to be traced to the participants in the study. Your identity will not be known.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the freedom to decline participation in the study, and at any point during the session you may withdraw from participating in the investigation without penalty.

After the data collection is completed, you will have an opportunity to ask questions. When the research results are available, you will have an opportunity to obtain a summary of the results of this investigation. Postings will be placed in the Duff Roblin building to inform you when and where the results will be conveyed to the participants in the study. If you have any further questions or concerns after today you may contact me (Ilona Oszadszky) at 255-0377.

Thanks!

## Feedback Statement

The purpose of the study you have just participated in is to examine the extent of the relationship between family ritualization, family cohesion, and intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family. The dynamics within the family environment is considered to play a significant role in the development of the individual. Research has provided evidence to suggest that family rituals, one aspect of the family environment, may influence individual development.

My research proposes that intimacy in relationships outside the family may be influenced by the experience of rituals in the family. In other words, I predict that a significant relationship will be found between family ritualization and intimacy experienced in relationships outside the family. It is further suggested that meaningful family rituals may promote cohesiveness, or emotional bonding, between family members. The consistent, predictable, and repetitive nature of family rituals may serve to create family cohesion. The enactment of the same ritual, time and time again, fosters a sense of trust and security within family members which promotes positive relationships. Togetherness may be established as family members spend time together, sharing common experiences and communicating with each other. As it is within the family of origin where we learn to handle distance or closeness with others, cohesiveness between family members may be very important as relationships within the family may serve as prototypes for relationships outside the family.

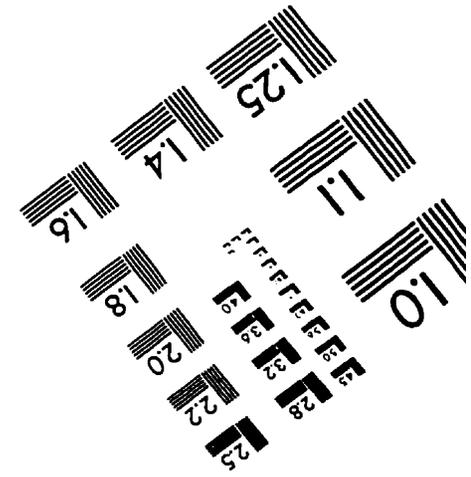
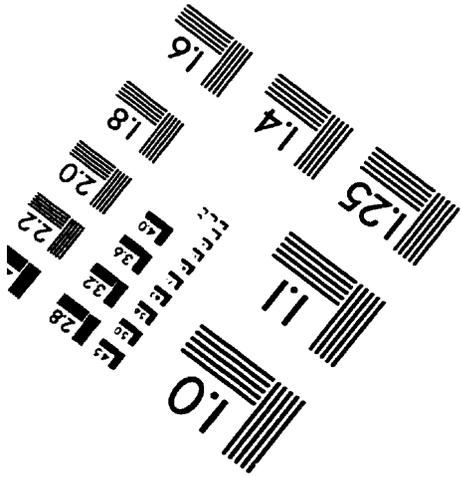
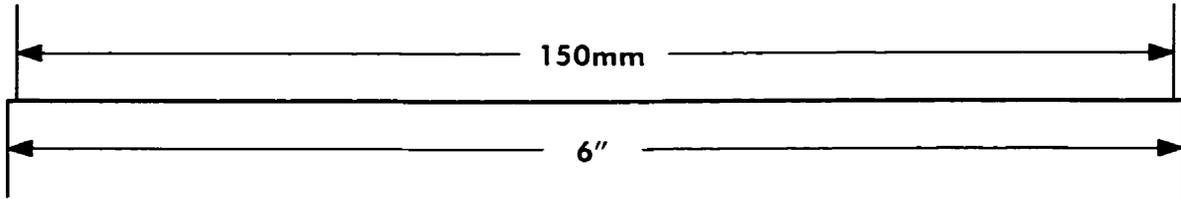
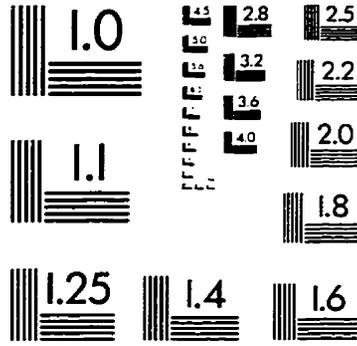
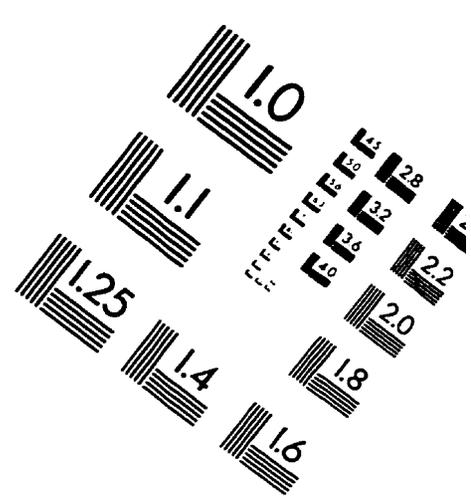
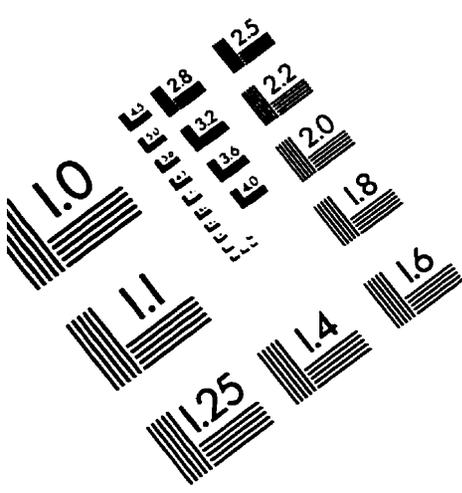
Thank-you for your participation in this study. It is greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions or comments after today, feel free to contact me (Ilona Oszadszky) at the following telephone number: 255-0377.

## **Winnipeg Counselling Resources**

University of Manitoba Counselling Service	474-8592
Family Centre of Winnipeg	947-1401
Youville Centre	233-0262 or 255-4840
Interfaith Marriage and Family Institute	786-9251
Klinic Crisis Line	786-8686

-telephone crisis counselling

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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