

Family Functioning and Psychosocial Development  
in Female and Male Undergraduates

by

Paula Battle

A thesis

presented to the University of Manitoba

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in Psychology

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**FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN FEMALE AND MALE UNDERGRADUATES**

**BY**

**PAULA BATTLE**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between family functioning and the psychosocial development of undergraduate students. It also examined gender differences in psychosocial development. Subjects were recruited from undergraduate classes at the University of Manitoba. Family functioning was assessed by the Family Environment Scale and the Family Hardiness Index. Psychosocial Development was assessed by the Measures of Psychosocial Development. As predicted, perceptions of healthier family functioning predicted better psychosocial development for both males and females. Females and males differed, however, on the following dimensions of psychosocial development: Intimacy, Isolation, Autonomy, Shame and Doubt, Generativity, and Stagnation with males more closely following the developmental sequence proposed by Erik Erikson. These findings suggest that Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is a better model of male development than it is of female development.

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## Introduction

The importance of the relationship between early family experiences and subsequent personality functioning in adulthood is an explicit component of most comprehensive theories of personality development (e.g., Freud, Horney, Adler, Allport, Cattrell) (Phares, 1991). The research literature supporting this assumption, however, is relatively recent. Psychosocial development, as postulated by Erikson, holds as a basic tenet that early experiences affect current and future development. This study proposes to examine the strength and quality of the relationship between family functioning and psychosocial development in young adults.

For adolescents and children, the family has traditionally been recognized as the primary socializing agent. The family transmits the culture's values as well as the family's more individual perspectives concerning issues such as the importance of work and education, religion, relationships, and sexual mores. From the family, children also develop beliefs about themselves and others and learn how to relate interpersonally (Forisha-Kovach, 1983).

This study reviews the current literature related to family functioning and personality development in university students. It focuses specifically on those family characteristics that have previously been found to be most pertinent to psychosocial development. The study investigates the relationship between these family functioning variables and the students' general level of psychosocial development. It also examines subjects' accomplishment of specific psychosocial tasks to determine whether there are gender differences in the achievement of these tasks. The finding of differences would lend support to the suggestion that Erikson's theory better describes the psychosocial development of males than that of females (Forisha-Kovach, 1983; Gilligan, 1982).

#### Family Functioning

In clinical literature and practice, therapists working from a psychodynamic perspective conceptualize an individual's present difficulties as relating to their early experiences. In therapy, themes that tend to re-emerge as problematic for the client are viewed as reflecting unresolved issues from the past. The therapeutic work, then, involves making these themes

explicit and addressing the underlying issues.

Many family therapists gain perspective about the genesis of a family's present functioning by learning about the functioning of the parents' families-of-origin. Problems experienced by children in a family are seen as related to the functioning of the entire family. They are also related to characteristics of the family such as the attitudes and behaviours of the parents and other family members.

At the societal level, there have been significant changes in family structure in the past few decades. These include an increase in the divorce rate and a concomitant increase in the number of single-parent families, for example. In the social sciences there has been increased study of the impact of these changes on families. This interest has in turn led researchers to pay greater attention to the psychological processes which take place in families and to the level of psychological health of individual members (Forisha-Kovach, 1983).

#### Family Systems Theory

Family Systems Theory postulates that the family, as a unit, is an open, interactive system in which

individual members affect and are affected by the other members (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Barker, 1986). Bradshaw (1990) offers the analogy that a family is like a mobile, with each family member corresponding to a piece of the suspended whole. A shift in one of these pieces activates the others and results in movement of all. This motion diminishes over time and ceases as the mobile regains its resting state. In family systems nomenclature, this resting state (in which a family is most comfortable) is referred to as a state of homeostasis, or "steady state." Families attempt to diminish disequilibrium, or stress created by changes in the system, by utilizing family rules or other forms of habitual behaviour to regain the steady state.

Conceptualizing the family as an interactive unit, as opposed to a group of individuals, began in the 1950's with the work of John Bell, Murray Bowen, Nathan Ackerman, Theodore Lidz, Lyman Wynne, Carl Whitaker and the Palo Alto Group: Gregory Bateson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, Don Jackson, and Virginia Satir (Broderick & Schrader, 1981). A consequence of this shift, clinically, was that family members were no longer

treated in isolation from each other. Not only were formerly individually treated patients often seen within the contexts of their families, but families rather than individuals were seen as the units of pathology or health (Barnhill, 1979).

Since the beginnings of family therapy, many researchers and clinicians have attempted to identify the rules by which families are governed. They have also studied what differentiates healthy or optimal family functioning from dysfunctional family functioning. Further, they have studied ways of promoting change in families.

Barnhill (1979) presents a comprehensive framework of family functioning which draws from many family theories. He delineates four types of family processes that, when taken together, determine family functioning. The first, Identity Processes, contains two dimensions: **individuation vs. enmeshment** and **mutuality vs. isolation**. Individuation is the process through which family members are permitted to develop independence of thought, feeling and action. It involves the development of autonomy, identity and appropriate personal boundaries. Enmeshment, in

contrast, refers to a lack of appropriate separateness between family members. Differences between members are perceived as threatening and are discouraged. Members of enmeshed families have difficulty developing individual identities and tend to define themselves in relation to others. Mutuality occurs when family members experience a sense of intimacy, joining and closeness with each other. Isolation is the experience of being disengaged or alienated from other members. Isolation can occur when family members are enmeshed and unable to reveal their individuality to other members and mutuality therefore, is not possible. It may also occur when members are rigidly disengaged from each other (Barnhill, 1979; Skynner, 1981).

The second area, Change Processes, consists of two dimensions, **flexibility vs. rigidity** and **stability vs. disorganization**. Flexible families have the capacity to appropriately respond to changes within the family - in relation to the changing needs of the children, for example - as well as to circumstances that impinge upon the family from the outside, such as unemployment, injury or other sources of external stress. In contrast, rigid families have greater difficulty



adapting to both internal and external change and may, instead, continue to repeat unsuccessful, or no longer appropriate, responses even in the face of corrective feedback (Barnhill, 1979).

Stability is evident in a family when there is predictability in daily functioning, when members feel secure and when adult members take responsibility for the operation of the family. Disorganization, in contrast, is evidenced by a lack of consistency and predictability in the family's functioning, by chaos, and by the failure of the adult members to assume responsibility for the stable operation of the family (Barnhill, 1979).

The third type of process addresses the family's Information Processes. It includes the following dimensions: **clear vs. unclear perception** and **clear vs. unclear communication**. Clear vs. unclear perception refers to the degree to which family members perceive shared events in a consensual way. Clear vs. unclear communication refers to the degree to which family members relate directly and openly to each other. Unclear communication consists of vague or confusing exchanges, behaviour that contradicts the verbal

message expressed, or communication that is routed from one family member to another through a third (or more) (Barnhill, 1979; Skynner, 1981).

The fourth area concerns Role Structures within the family. Families may have **role reciprocity** or **unclear roles and role conflict**. In families where there is role reciprocity, there are clearly defined functions, particularly for the adults in the family, that complement each other and promote the successful operation of the family system. In families with unclear roles, there is confusion and subsequent conflict over members' responsibilities (Barnhill, 1979).

Further role structures are seen in the family's response to **generational boundaries**. In families with clear generational boundaries, adult members of one generation are closely allied with each other. While they experience strong emotional connection with members of other generations, such as their children, they neither act like the children in the family, nor do they attempt to place the children in a parenting/adult role. The adult members also serve as the executive heads of the family. In families with

unclear or breached generational boundaries there are typically alliances between members of different generations. For example, one parent may ally with a child against the other parent or against another child in the family. Father-daughter incest is indicative of breached generational boundaries (Koverola & Battle, 1992; Barnhill, 1979; Skynner, 1981).

In addition to demonstrating these characteristics Skynner (1981) reported that optimal or healthy families evinced a predominantly affiliative attitude toward human encounters rather than distrust or withdrawal. These families were also characterized by high spontaneous interaction between family members and high levels of initiative rather than passivity.

Other researchers, such as Barker (1986) agree that the quality of the marital subsystem and the degree to which appropriate generational boundaries between children and parents in a family are maintained are important determinants of a family's functioning.

In summary then, the characteristics that these researchers seem to agree are most central to healthy family functioning are: emotional closeness between members, encouragement of individuation, flexibility

and stability, clearly defined roles, clear and open communication, and appropriate generational boundaries.

The quality of the parent-child relationship is also a family system variable that affects the adjustment of family members and is one that has most frequently been empirically studied. Early research has established for example, that overprotective and infantilizing parents tend to have overanxious children (Jenkins, 1968). Parents whose primary concern is limited to ensuring behavioural compliance and rule-following tend to have children with lower achievement motivation and lower self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967). Overindulgent parents tend to have children who are impatient, demanding, aggressive and have poor frustration tolerance (Baumrind, 1975). Parental use of physical discipline (Patterson, 1979) or highly inconsistent discipline in response to aggressive behaviour (Deur & Parke, 1970) leads to increased aggressiveness in children. Thoughtful, consistent and realistic discipline, on the other hand, is helpful in generating a sense of competence in the child (Baumrind, 1975).

Of particular relevance to the present study is

the recent increase in research examining family practices that influence adolescents' and young adults' personality development. From an extensive review of the literature, Forisha-Kovach (1983) concludes that tranquil, harmonious homes in which parents function as the executive heads while providing sufficient warmth to their children, tend to produce conventional, well-adjusted individuals. Families in which there is sustained conflict created by too much parental power or too little love, or sustained neglect created by too little of both, produce poorly-adjusted, psychologically disturbed individuals. Parents who promote optimal functioning in their offspring were found to a) wield an appropriate amount of power in combination with sufficient love; b) not suppress individual differences between family members and; c) allow their children opportunities to resolve their own difficulties.

Family functioning variables such as child rearing methods, parent characteristics and family environment factors have been found to influence specific aspects of adolescents' development such as level of self-esteem (Buri, 1989), autonomy (Paradeck & Paradeck,

1990), individuation (Bartle & Anderson, 1992), identity (Arnold, 1992; Bradley & Marcia, 1992), ego development (Leaper et al., 1989), psychological well-being and attributional style (Tiggemann, Winefield, Goldney, & Winefield, 1992).

Much of the research concerning families with adolescents has focused on the manner in which parents attempt to control their children. Becker (1964) divided the strategies into two categories: love oriented and power assertive. The love oriented style, which involves praising the youth and using reasoning, is more conducive to adolescents' feeling responsible for their actions than is the power assertive style. Other researchers have reported similar findings. Peterson, Rollins & Thomas (1985) found that this type of parenting leads to the development of individualism in adolescence while parental coercion leads to compliance. Kelly & Goodman (1983) found that a democratic style of parenting encourages the development of autonomy while an autocratic approach results in conformity to parental expectations when the parents are present.

Baumrind (1978) in the now classic research on

parental control and the development of adolescent autonomy, suggested that there are three types of parenting styles that produce differing results. In the authoritarian style, a parent values obedience and restricts the adolescent's autonomy. In the permissive style, a parent provides little structure and a great deal of freedom. In the authoritative style, a parent attempts to direct the youth's activities rationally, in relation to particular issues. The latter style has been found to be the most effective for promoting social responsibility and independence in the adolescent. This research further indicates that a love oriented approach in conjunction with an authoritative "democratic" parenting style best promotes adolescent autonomy (Paradeck & Paradeck, 1990).

Other important aspects of family functioning that have been empirically addressed and which will be further investigated in the present study are: family environment and family hardiness.

#### Family Environment

Moos & Moos (1976/1989) use the term family environment to denote multidimensional systemic

interaction within a family. This interaction involves (1) the social support family members provide to each other, (2) the goals and directions of personal growth emphasized in the family, and (3) the family's system maintenance and organizational characteristics.

Family environment, or family climate, appears to play an important role in explaining children's and adolescent's adjustment and social relationships. Social support provided by the family during childhood has been found to be related to subjects' current social interactions (Sarason, Sarason, & Shearin, 1986) and to have special importance during periods of stress (Dunst, Trivette, & Cross, 1986). Families in which the environment is characterized by cohesion, warmth, and support of individual members have also been found to buffer their children from the negative effects of stressful life events (Block, 1985; Garmezy, 1985).

There is also developing empirical support for the view that impaired family environment is associated with sexual abuse status when adult survivors are compared to non-abused controls (Harter, Alexander, & Neimeyer, 1988; Sexton, Hulsey, Harralson, & Nash, 1989). Battle and colleagues (1992) studied the family



environments of 56 intrafamiliially-abused, 91 extrafamiliially-abused and 380 non-abused female university students. They found that the abused groups reported significantly less family cohesion and significantly more conflict than did the non-abused group. They also found that the intrafamiliially-abused group reported significantly less family expressiveness and significantly more control than did the extrafamiliially-abused and non-abused groups.

#### Family Hardiness

Family stress theory examines how some families can successfully negotiate transitions and cope with life's hardships while other families, faced with similar challenges, are overwhelmed. This theory outlines the ways in which some types of families can buffer the effects of stressful life events and promote family adaptation (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1987).

From their research on family transitions, crises, and adaptations McCubbin & McCubbin (1987) have proposed four fundamental assumptions about family life: The first assumption is that families face hardships and changes as a natural and predictable part of life. The second assumption is that families

develop basic strengths and capabilities designed to foster the growth and development of their members and the family unit as a whole. These strengths and capabilities also protect families from major disruption in the face of normative family transitions and changes. The third assumption is that families develop unique strengths and capabilities to protect them from unexpected or non-normative stressors and to foster the family's adaptation following a family crisis, major transition or change. The fourth assumption is that families benefit from and contribute to the network of relationships and resources in the community, particularly during periods of family stress and crisis.

One important family characteristic McCubbin & McCubbin (1987) have studied is Family Hardiness, or a family's internal strengths and durability. This characteristic reflects the family's sense of control over life events, their sense of the meaningfulness of life, their involvement in activities and their commitment to experiencing new and challenging life events. Families who are hardy have a sense of purpose, feel that life is meaningful, feel in control

and empowered in the face of life stress, and are active participants in life (McCubbin & Thompson, 1987).

#### Psychosocial Development

Erik Erikson (1902-1994) proposed a life-span model of human development that, while rooted in psychoanalytic theory, is more optimistic than is classical psychoanalytic theory and extends the theory in important ways. Basic psychoanalytic theory stresses determinism, the belief that all human behaviour is driven by biological forces over which the individual has little control. It also stresses the central importance of unconscious conflicts in personality development. Erikson shared Freud's belief in the importance of the unconscious aspects of ego functioning. However, he placed greater emphasis on the more conscious role of the ego. In Erikson's view, the ego synthesizes an individual's unique experiences to make sense of the world, to sustain effective, consistent performance and to cope with anxiety and conflict. Another critical difference is that Erikson made explicit the social dimension of development that Freud only implied (McAdams, 1990; Engler, 1991).

Specifically, Erikson stressed the importance of an individual's "developmental history within the family and the particular societal, cultural, and historical ethos which shapes (and can be shaped by) the individual person" (McAdams, 1990, p. 381).

Erikson believed that an individual's personality development is influenced by the interpersonal-social-cultural-historical environment within which it occurs. While he did not refute the importance of the psychosexual dimensions of human development, Erikson viewed the stages of the life cycle as more psychosocial in nature, "the result of repeated transactions between the individual and society" (McAdams, p. 381). Thus, development was seen by Erikson in psychosocial terms, not in terms of transformations of the libido as proposed by Freud. (McAdams, 1990).

Erikson's psychosocial approach focuses on the development of the ego as an individual interacts with the ever-widening concentric domains of the family, community, and society. Personality is thought to develop throughout life as the result of the interaction between three realms: (1) irreversible

inner laws of development, (2) cultural influences that dictate socially desirable rates of development and selectively favour particular aspects of development at the expense of others, and (3) the unique way in which the individual responds to society's demands (McAdams, 1990).

During each of eight stages, from infancy to late adulthood, the individual is physically, emotionally, and cognitively challenged by particular tasks as specific psychosocial issues become important. How these issues are addressed by the individual and/or significant others in the individual's life at this time will influence the person's future development.

Each psychosocial issue was conceived by Erikson as a dichotomy between two alternative attitudes associated, in their extremes, with healthy and unhealthy development. The resolution of each stage results in the emergence of a "basic strength or ego quality from hope to wisdom" (Erikson, 1982, p. 80) that enables the ego to continue to develop (Engler, 1991). Mental health will result when, on the average, development of positive attitudes (basic trust to integrity) outweighs development of negative attitudes

(basic mistrust to despair). Where the converse occurs, a core pathology will develop (Erikson, 1982).

In Erikson's formulation individuals encounter the eight life stages in a fixed order. Each individual has their own timetable however, that is affected by idiosyncratic factors and cultural determinants. During each stage a particular developmental issue is "in ascendancy" (Erikson, 1959/1980) or particularly important. How this issue is addressed and resolved has implications for the resolution potential of subsequent issues because each stage builds upon those previous to it. Erikson (1959/1980) borrowed the "epigenesis principle" from embryology to describe this process. The epigenesis principle states:

anything that grows has a ground plan, and out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have risen to form a functioning whole (p. 53).

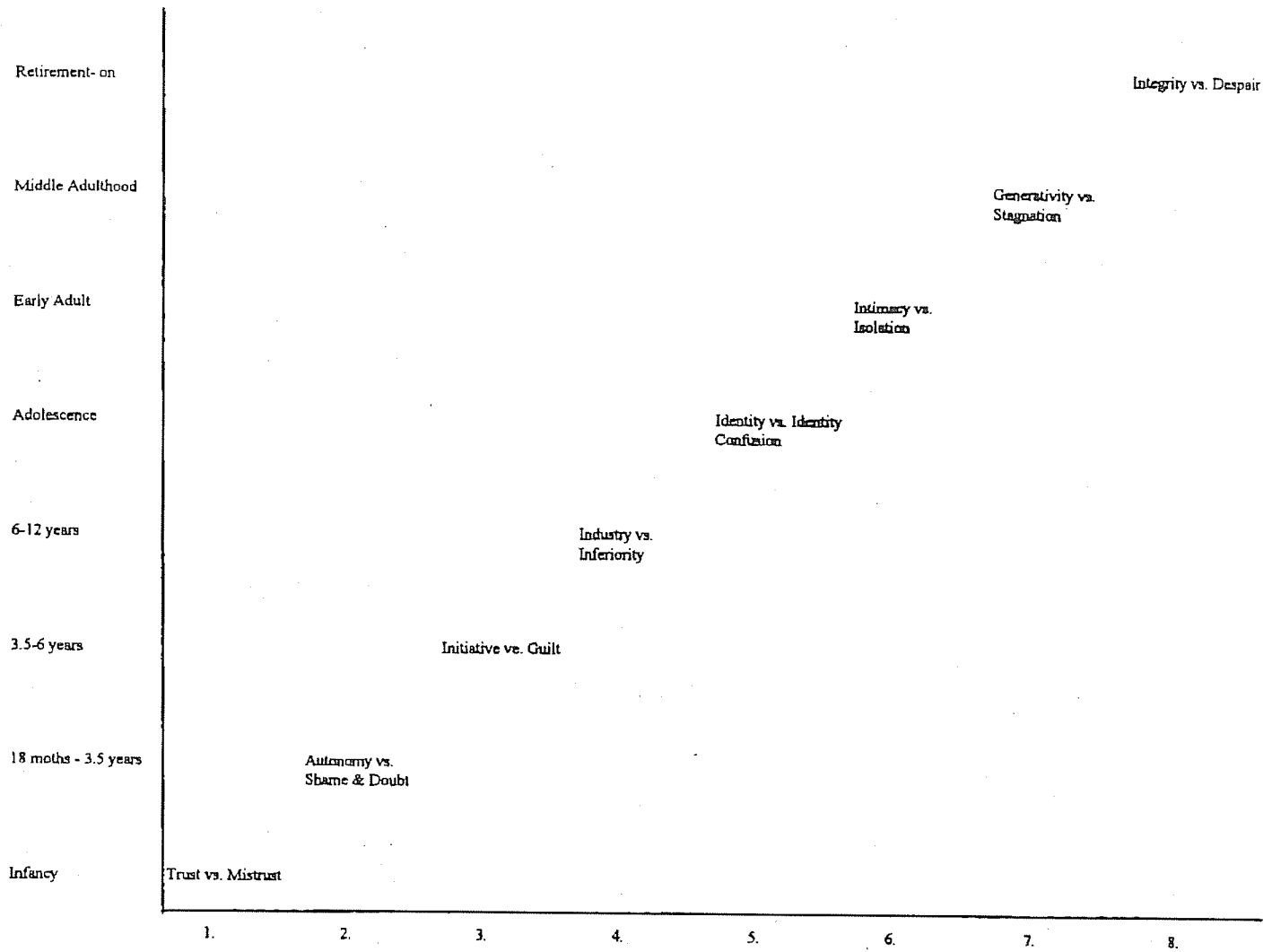
In this way, from the beginning of the life cycle, the individual contains the rudimentary origins of each of the eight psychosocial stages of development. It is only during the "critical period" of a particular

stage, however, that the individual is best equipped to address and resolve the issue in question.

Figure 1 illustrates the way in which the stages progress horizontally through time. They also progress diagonally such that each successive stage has roots in, and builds on, all previous ones. In this way, each stage exists in some form before its critical time arrives and in the less developed "earlier versions" of the present stage (Erikson, 1959/1980; 1982).

Following its period of ascendancy, each ego strength or virtue will develop further, although it will be subordinated to those that are subsequently in ascendancy. Ultimately, "the whole ensemble depends on the proper development in the proper sequence of each item" (Erikson, 1982, p. 29).

Figure 1. Erikson's eight psychosocial stages





In this model, difficulties resolving a stage issue can represent specific situational problems concerning the present task and/or an exacerbation of earlier failures (unsuccessful resolutions) arising from previous stages. As well, each crisis or conflict is never completely resolved, but during its period of ascendancy becomes most pronounced. For example, although the crisis of Identity versus Role Confusion is most pronounced during adolescence, a re-definition of one's ego-identity is also likely as one makes significant role changes in life: from student to worker or through marriage, divorce, parenthood, unemployment, serious illness, retirement or widowhood. Difficulties resolving identity issues in adolescence may be related to existing situational factors and/or to less than optimal resolution of previous stage issues (such as trust versus mistrust). Failure to resolve previous stage issues does not preclude the possibility of developing a firm sense of identity in adolescence. Nor does it preclude the possibility of being reworked later in subsequent re-definitions of ego identity, but it can hamper resolution of the present developmental task.

In Erikson's terminology, "crisis" denotes "decisive turning points where integrative development is mandatory" (1959/1980, p. 51) rather than a period of emotional emergency. "Versus" refers to the tension that exists on the continuum between the positive and negative poles of each developmental dimension. It also connotes the tension that Erikson believed continually drives the individual toward further development (Erikson, 1959/1980 p. 51).

In the descriptions of the eight stages that follow I have departed from the use of gender neutral wording for the sake of clarity and simplicity. I have alternated subject gender from one stage to the next but I wish to remind the reader that in Erikson's view each stage describes both male and female development. The "Eight Stages of Man"

Stage One: Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust.

During infancy, Erikson's first stage in the human life cycle, the central developmental issue is achievement of an inner sense of trust in oneself and others. This sense of trust is at the core of future development and is, according to Erikson "the cornerstone of healthy personality" (1959/1980, p. 58). Basic Trust develops

as the infant's needs are accurately read and adequately met consistently and predictably by a careprovider. Within this global sense of trust, specific trust in particular others develops. A generalized trust subsequently develops if the infant senses that the world and the people in it are good and well meaning.

From this basic (or generally unconscious) sense of trust a "generally calm, relaxed, optimistic, and generous attitude" develops (Hawley, 1984 p. 247). The individual develops a belief in herself as one who can successfully interact with the environment. She also develops the belief that the satisfaction of her needs and wants is sufficiently predictable that she can delay gratification. This will later develop into the ability to exert energy toward future satisfaction and goal attainment. It will also develop into trust that there is enough -love, food, care and so on, that one can give to others and receive from them as well (Erikson, 1959/1980; Hawley, 1984).

Arising from this sense of basic trust is also an openness and receptivity to the world and to new ideas. The trusting infant has developed a prerequisite for

the healthy resolution of future developmental issues and for developing confidence, optimism and a sense of security. As Erikson unequivocally stated: "The firm resolution of enduring patterns for the balance of basic trust over basic mistrust is the first task in the budding personality" (1959/1980, p. 65). If future events cause her faith in certain others to be violated, this basic sense of trust will help her recover and remain able to reach out to others again.

Inadequate or unpredictable care giving during infancy can result in the infant's developing an overriding feeling of mistrust and pessimism. If the infant experiences her world as inconsistent, stressful, painful, or unpredictable, Erikson's theory postulates that she may conclude that others are untrustworthy and that her needs will not be met. Further, she may believe that the world is frightening and potentially dangerous. She may also begin to expect that as she goes through life she will experience similar kinds of interactions with others. This may lead to a vigilant hypersensitivity to hurt by others and to the expectation that positive experiences will not persist, or at least are undependable. The

infant may also begin to lose faith in her own ability to cope with life. She learns through repeated delay or irregularity in need satisfaction that delaying gratification is not in her best interests and this leads, later, to the inability to delay gratification and to work toward future goals (Erikson 1959/1980; Hawley, 1984).

The mistrusting infant will go on to the next developmental stages hampered by these experiences and her ability to achieve healthy resolution of future developmental tasks will be compromised. While the opportunity to develop basic trust at its "critical period" has been lost, future experiences with trustworthy others may offset the deleterious effects.

A healthy resolution of the Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust crisis is evident in the individual who has a generally optimistic view of the world. This view is rooted in reality however, and the individual is appropriately mistrustful when the situation warrants it. It is also evident in the individual who has developed what Erikson defined as the human strength or ego quality "Hope." This is the conviction that one's wishes can ultimately be satisfied despite experiences

of disappointment and failure (Erikson, 1982; Engler, 1991).

Stage Two: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt. The issue at the second stage of life is between becoming an "autonomous, creative individual (or) a dependent, inhibited individual filled with self-doubt" (Muuss, 1975, p. 57). From the age of approximately 18 months to 3 1/2 years, the child who is developing a healthy sense of autonomy is beginning to experience "self control without loss of self-esteem" (Erikson 1959/1980, p. 70). The child can explore on his own and has the physical and cognitive capabilities to cause events to occur through his own volition. He feels pride in these accomplishments, a sense of personal power, and a sense of self-will as he becomes able to make some of his own decisions. Consequently, he experiences a sense of control over some aspects of his life. The attitudes toward autonomy that are developed during this stage become the precursors of the individual's comfort in making his own decisions even when others disagree with these choices. They are also the precursors to his feeling independent and free to be who he is, neither controlling nor being

controlled by others. This rudimentary form of the will to be oneself, in terms of future development, is a necessary precursor for the development of ego-identity during adolescence. Erikson stated: "there are clinical reasons to believe that the adolescent turning away from the whole childhood milieu in many ways repeats this first emancipation" (1968, p. 114; Hawley, 1984).

If early attempts at self-sufficiency continually fail and/or are punished, shame and doubt will develop. Shame was meant by Erikson to convey the sense that the child has "exposed himself prematurely and foolishly (while) doubt is secondary mistrust" (1959/1980 p. 71). In this state an individual harbours "a sense of being easily exposed as inadequate and . . . a wish to hide from others, to cover up one's despicability and worthlessness" (Hawley, 1984, p. 247). The individual may become self-conscious and apologetic, easily embarrassed or ashamed, doubtful of his abilities, plans, and actions and too compliant. He may become excessively reliant on the opinions and decisions of others, experience constant uncertainty and have great difficulty making decisions. Alternately, he may

become defiant, mistaking defiance for autonomy, and overcompensate for his feelings of uncertainty. For example, when he does make a decision, the individual feeling shame and doubt may stubbornly cling to his point of view rather than remain open to re-evaluating his position in response to new or different information. He may tend to do so because so much of himself seems to be at stake. Difficulties at this stage result in a general inability to be oneself. Not surprisingly, the identity crisis in adolescence revives unresolved autonomy issues that originate in this stage (Erikson, 1959/1980; Hawley, 1984).

To illustrate the dynamic interplay that occurs between the stages, both the basically trusting and the basically mistrusting infant may develop shame and doubt now as toddlers, due to their parents' difficulty tolerating their budding autonomy. The trusting toddler, however, is less affected because he has already developed a rudimentary sense of trust in himself and an optimistic outlook on life. The mistrusting toddler, in contrast, has had his negative view of himself and the world reinforced as his movement towards individuation is thwarted. These



negative effects will continue to compound themselves at successive stages if there continue to be obstacles to successful resolution of the developmental issues or there are no opportunities to re-work earlier issues.

This dynamic interplay is also evident intergenerationally when parents have difficulty meeting their children's developmental needs at particular stages due to their own unresolved issues at that stage. These parents may, however, support the child's development more readily at other stages. This intergenerational effect is made explicit by Erikson (1959/1980) when he states:

the kind and degree of a sense of autonomy which parents are able to grant their small children depends on the dignity and the sense of personal independence which they derive from their own lives. Again, just as the sense of trust is a reflection of the parents' sturdy and realistic faith, so is the sense of autonomy a reflection of the parents' dignity as individuals (p. 75).

A healthy resolution of the Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt issue is evident in individuals who have a realistic appreciation of their strengths and

weaknesses. These individuals can "live and let live," and do not generally become defensive when others disagree with them. They are individuals who have developed the ego quality "Will", which in Erikson's theory is the maturation of both free will and self-restraint. This forms the basis of one's subsequent acceptance of societal law (Erikson, 1982; Engler, 1991).

Stage Three: Initiative versus Guilt. During the third stage of life, between the ages of approximately 3 1/2 and 6 years, the pre-schooler is enlarging her radius of movement and learning more about how the world around her operates. She has an exuberant curiosity, more highly developed language skills and an expanded imagination. She also has a great deal of energy that she uses as she actively explores her environment. If her self-initiated activities are encouraged and esteemed and if she feels her efforts are effective, she begins to develop a strong sense of initiative. Initiative is defined by Hawley (1984) as "evidence of ambition, energetic drive in pursuit of accomplishment, a tendency to solve problems by planning and attacking, adventuresomeness, and a

tireless 'go-getting' quality" (p. 248). The attitudes toward initiative that are developed during this stage become the precursors of the drive toward excellence in academic and work-related pursuits. They also form the basis for developing confidence to take risks and attempt new endeavours.

If the child's explorations, activities and projects are met with criticism, resistance, ridicule or punishment, the child learns to feel guilt about being creative, ambitious, and self-directed. If the child's curiosity in taking things apart to see how they work is interpreted as destructiveness or if her stream of "why?" questions is interpreted as rudeness, then she may be made to feel guilty about her actions. Likewise, if her whole-hearted determination in competitive play is interpreted as aggressiveness, then her initiative may wane. If she is severely reprimanded or punished for showing curiosity and initiative, she may become immobilized by guilt, inhibited by fear and increasingly dependent on adults for direction. She may then hesitate to try new things, procrastinate, and fear censure. She may have greater difficulty in adolescence as she is called upon to try

out new roles and to move further away from important adults in her life (Hawley, 1984, Muuss, 1975).

A healthy resolution of the Initiative vs. Guilt issue is evident in individuals who are creative problem-solvers. These individuals take an active role in confronting difficulties and have a "high and yet realistic sense of ambition and independence" (Erikson, 1959/1980 p. 78). They may feel guilt about particular issues at certain times, but are not constricted by these feelings and are not inhibited. These individuals have developed the ego quality "Purpose" which Engler (1991) defines as:

a view of the future giving direction and focus to our mutual efforts. Purposefulness slowly enables one to develop a sense of reality that is defined by what is attainable and is not afraid of guilt or punishment (p. 178).

Stage Four: Industry versus Inferiority. During the early school years, children develop many new skills and competencies that enrich their sense of themselves. During this period, sometimes called "the apprenticeship of life," the child must learn to win approval and recognition. He gains feelings of success

by producing things, by doing this well and by bringing tasks to completion. If he experiences success in these endeavours, the child develops an active orientation toward work and these enterprises become a source of pleasure and recognition. He also develops confidence in his ability to achieve, becomes persistent in his efforts to complete tasks successfully, and develops a sense of mastery. The child begins to see himself as useful to others and as one who is able to accomplish useful things. He is interested in learning and new skills are eagerly acquired, practised, and valued. During this period, through participation in activities with age mates, the child also learns about cooperation, the rules of fair play, and the importance of teamwork. The attitudes towards purposeful activity that are developed during this stage become the precursors to investing in one's work or career and deriving pride and satisfaction from one's efforts, perseverance and accomplishments (Erikson, 1959/1980; 1982; Hawley, 1984).

If the child does not experience success in his endeavours or recognition for work well done, he may question his abilities, lose his industriousness and

begin to feel useless. The feelings of inferiority that subsequently develop are described by Hawley (1984) as "a despairing of one's skills and abilities, leading to a sense of being unable to be like others, of being doomed to mediocrity, and of an overwhelming feeling of incapability and isolation" (p. 248). Feelings of inferiority may be expressed through passivity, lack of ambition, procrastination and the inability to concentrate. They may also be apparent in the individual's lack of confidence in his ability to succeed, in work paralysis and in a pervasive sense of futility. Alternately, and seemingly paradoxically, Hawley (1984) also defines inferiority as involving excessive industriousness. In this instance the individual may immerse himself in his work to the detriment of other areas in his life to fend off feelings of inadequacy.

If a child enters this stage having experienced successful resolution of the previous stages, Erikson's theory suggests that he will be prepared to tackle these school-related tasks to the best of his ability. If, however, the child enters this stage with a legacy of mistrust and feelings of shame and doubt he will

likely have difficulty performing at an optimal level at school. He may therefore have difficulty at this stage as well.

A healthy resolution of this issue is evident in the individual who takes pride in his accomplishments and feels confident in his abilities. This individual, while realistic in his appraisal that some of his abilities are better developed than others, feels positive about his usefulness in the world. Less healthy resolution will be evident in the individual who has developed feelings of inferiority. It will also be evident in the individual who has received recognition and approval exclusively for his task performance and accomplishments and has consequently come to define his worth solely within the realm of industry. The individual who has successfully resolved this issue will develop the ego quality "Competence" which is "the ability to use one's intelligence and skill to complete tasks that are of value to one's society" (Engler, 1991, p. 179).

Stage Five: Identity versus Identity Confusion. During adolescence, an individual integrates the various roles she has taken on thus far with new present and future

self-concept decisions concerning issues of vocation, sexuality and social connectedness. Erikson defined ego identity as "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity . . . is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others (1959/1980, p. 94). She develops this consistent identity by consciously discovering and evaluating her basic values and attitudes concerning these roles as she struggles to answer the quintessential question of adolescence (and identity) "Who am I?."

As she evaluates previously held beliefs originating with her family in light of exposure to new and competing ideas, she may reject these old beliefs as personally inappropriate. She may then search elsewhere for those which better fit her emerging identity. The adolescent's peer group plays a critical role in this process and the group acts as a role model. As well, the group provides valuable feedback to the adolescent about how others see her. This information allows the individual to experiment with different roles as she seeks to discover the ones that fit.



As this process continues, the individual not only discovers who she truly is but begins to feel comfortable - in her body, work, family, affiliations, gender role - and appreciative of her uniqueness and individuality. She is then able to present herself to the world in a way that is consistent with her inner view of herself. She also develops a future orientation that addresses the questions of "Where am I going?" and "Who am I to become?" (Muuss, 1975, p. 60).

The attitudes towards oneself as an independent person that are developed during this stage become the precursors to establishing a life-direction and real intimacy with a significant other in the next stage. This development of a future direction is critical to the formation of identity according to Erikson (1959/1980). It is attained as she experiences

whole-hearted and consistent recognition of real accomplishment . . . Self-esteem, confirmed at the end of each major crisis, grows to be a conviction that one is learning effective steps toward a tangible future (p. 95).

The adolescent who is unable to integrate a

central identity will experience self-doubt. She will be uncertain of what role she is to play in life and she will be confused about her identity. The adolescent may experience wide gaps between who she is, who she wants to be, and who she seems to be to others. In addition to having doubts about her sexual identity, she may be unable to move toward a career because of her lack of direction. She may also have difficulty relating to others as an equal. She may be unsure of her basic values and beliefs and may not have a sense of her place in the world.

In an attempt to cope with this identity confusion she may become preoccupied with the opinions of others and adopt these, unquestioningly as her own. At the other extreme, she may no longer care about what others think and become increasingly alienated. In either case she may feel empty and lost.

Role confusion is "the inability to conceive of oneself as a productive member of one's society" (Engler, 1991, p. 180). In Erikson's view it is primarily the inability to settle on an occupational identity that disturbs adolescents.

A healthy resolution of Identity vs. Identity

Confusion is evident in individuals who know who they are and have formulated their basic beliefs and values. These individuals have developed an ideological point of view and a direction for the future. They are individuals who have developed the ego quality "Fidelity". Erikson defined this as "a higher level of the capacity to trust - to trust oneself - but also the claim to be trustworthy and to commit one's loyalty to something" (Erikson, 1982, p. 60).

#### Stage Six: Intimacy versus Isolation

Once a personal identity has been forged, in early adulthood, the desire for personal intimacy becomes important. Erikson defines 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 (Hawley, 1984, p. 249).

It implies the ability to share with, and care for, another individual without losing oneself in the process. Intimacy involves tolerating closeness in relationships. It also involves being authentic and able to share personal thoughts and feelings with a

partner or in other close relationships. In addition, it involves tolerating another's dependency and being vulnerable with that person. An individual who enters into an intimate relationship before achieving his identity hoping to find himself in finding another, will have great difficulty. Muuss states:

One must first find an answer to "Who am I?" before one can find a partner to match to this "I." As long as the "I" remains undefined or is still forming, the selection of a partner seems futile (1975, p. 64).

The ability to be intimate with others and to be truly present in important relationships will provide the basis for developing strong relationships with a partner and children. It will also become a precursor to investing oneself in nurturing the next generation, the task of the following stage (Hawley, 1984; Erikson, 1959/1980).

The individual who is unable to achieve intimacy in relationships with others often feels alone and alienated. He may be unable to tolerate closeness with others because he fears losing himself in the relationship. He may be emotionally distant in his

relationships and either self-absorbed or indiscriminately social and superficial (Hawley, 1984). The responsibilities and commitments inherent in an intimate relationship may be seen as too confining or limiting to his personal freedom and he may avoid this involvement (Muuss, 1975).

In some of his work, Erikson (1959/1980) referred to this resultant isolation as "distantiation . . . the readiness to repudiate, to isolate and if necessary, to destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own" (p. 101). At a societal level Erikson saw this "more mature and efficient repudiation" (p. 101) evident in politics and war. He also saw it evident at an earlier stage, in the blind prejudices of the adolescent. He suggested that in youth's search for identity, they are particularly sensitive to the differences between what is familiar and what is foreign and particularly intolerant of the unfamiliar.

Distantiation may also be seen in the "pursuer - distancer" dynamic evident in couples. In this dynamic, one partner craves greater closeness and pursues the other, who attempts to distant himself

further because he fears losing his identity. This distancing individual will likely also have difficulty as he faces the next developmental task of guiding the growth of the next generation. An individual who is unable to establish genuine and lasting intimacy will feel loneliness through the rest of the life cycle.

A healthy resolution of Intimacy vs. Isolation is evident in the individual who achieves an appropriate balance between sharing himself with others and maintaining his identity in the relationship. The individual who has successfully resolved this issue will develop the ego quality "Love" and transform the love he received as a child to care for others (Engler, 1991, p. 181).

Stage Seven: Generativity versus Stagnation. In middle adulthood, the developmental task is to be productive and creative through procreation and/or through endeavours such as one's work. The individual's domain of concern broadens from her own development and that of her immediate family to more altruistic issues of concern in the community and in the larger society. She becomes actively involved in making the world a better place for the next generation and in making a

meaningful contribution (Erikson, 1959/1980; Hawley, 1984). At the same time the individual is discovering new interests and is continuing to learn and grow.

The generative attitudes that develop during this stage become the precursors of contentment and satisfaction with one's life in the next stage. They also become the foundation for assisting the next generation to successfully navigate their developmental course. The individual who has successfully resolved this issue will develop the ego quality "Care" which is the "widening commitment to take care of the persons, the products, and the ideas one has learned to care for" (Erikson, 1982, p. 67).

The individual who is unable to develop generative caring and interest in life feels a deep and pervasive lack of purpose. She may be self-absorbed and self-indulgent, live for the moment and yet feel interpersonally impoverished. She may feel alienated and bored and as though she is merely existing (Hawley, 1984). Alternatively, she may develop an "obsessive need for pseudo intimacy" (Erikson, 1982, p. 103). She may limit herself to repeating routine interactions and work activities, fail to develop new interests and thus

stagnate in this regard as well.

Erikson (1959/1980), believed that the inability to achieve generativity is often found in early childhood, in faulty identification with one's parents. In this situation the child may have an excessively developed "self-love". She may have then developed into a self-centred adult. Another kind of inability to achieve generativity and to invest in the next generation originates "finally (and here we return to the beginnings) in the lack of some faith, some 'belief in the species', which would make a child appear to be a welcome trust of the community" (p. 103).

Successful resolution of this developmental issue is seen in the mature individual who is useful and productive and needed by others (Muuss, 1975).

Stage Eight: Integrity versus Despair. The last stage of the life cycle spans the years from retirement to old age and death. It is the time when one reviews one's life and integrates all that has taken place. If the individual is satisfied that his life has had meaning and involvement then he can accept both his successes and his failures. He develops integrity - "a sense of coherence and wholeness" (Erikson, 1982, p.



65).

Ego integrity is achieved in this stage when the individual feels dignity and wisdom. He has faith in the order and continuity of life and accepts that this order will endure after his death. The individual also feels content and satisfied with his life, his work and his accomplishments (Hawley, 1984). In addition, he feels acceptance that the life he has lived, with its difficulties and disappointments as well as its joys, has been the life he was meant to live (Erikson, 1959/1980; 1982). The individual who has successfully resolved this issue will develop the ego quality "Wisdom" which is the "informed and detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself" (Erikson, 1982, p. 61).

An individual who is unable to integrate his life experiences and to feel satisfied with his life develops a sense of profound despair and an often unconscious fear of death. He may feel remorse for choices made and opportunities lost, and may be preoccupied with "what might have been." As the individual realizes that there is not sufficient time to make changes and start anew, he may become

depressed, bitter and contemptuous of others. Erikson believes these feelings of displeasure and distrust reflect his contempt for himself. His resulting feelings of despair may also generalize beyond his own life to life and humankind in general (Hawley, 1984).

#### Gender Differences in Psychosocial Development

Erikson conceptualized psychosocial development as equally descriptive of the experiences of males and females. Differences between men and women that he noted were of little concern to him. These differences were subordinate in his thinking to the commonalities he ascribes to people of different eras, cultures and ages. One effect of this apparent disinterest in gender differences is that Erikson made no provisions for how they might alter his theory of development (Hodgson & Fischer, 1979).

Erikson was a product of his culture and his generation. Further, he was significantly influenced by Freudian theory. He assumed that differences between women and men reflected deficiencies in female development that he attributed to biological differences between the sexes. He then suggested that the limitations in female development potential were

due, in large part, to their maternal functions (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson based his conclusions about differences in female and male development primarily on a study he conducted between 1939 and 1941 with children between 10 and 12 years of age. In this study, he provided each of the children, individually, with a selection of toys and requested that they construct "an exciting scene out of an imaginary (movie)." He reported that the girls tended to use the toys to represent the interior of a room with a circle of furniture in it. The boys, in contrast, tended to construct towers and other structures. Based on these differences Erikson concluded that the girls emphasized "inner space" and qualities of openness versus closedness. The boys, on the other hand, concentrated on "outer space" and the qualities of highness and lowness (Erikson, 1951).

Erikson generalized his conclusions to hypothesize that a woman's development is influenced by her awareness of her reproductive capacity. He further hypothesized that a woman's maternal potential is a key determinant of her personality. Erikson concluded that "a woman's productive inner space is an inescapable

factor in her development whether social, historical, and other conditions lead her to build her life around it or not" (Engler, 1991, p. 190).

Erikson's conclusions and subsequent assumptions concerning gender differences in psychosocial development have been criticised on both empirical and theoretical grounds. Empirically, evidence has emerged which suggests that his study with 10 to 12 year olds does not unequivocally demonstrate that the differences he observed are biologically based (Caplan, 1979; Janeway, 1971; Millett, 1970; Penfold & Walker, 1983). Further, when the study was replicated by McKay, Pyke & Goranson (1984), these researchers failed to find significant differences in the ways in which the boys and girls used their play materials or in the materials they chose. Their failure to replicate Erikson's findings may suggest that the differences he reported were due to socialization effects that diminished in the 40-year interval between the two studies and not to inherent differences between males and females. Alternatively, the researchers' suggest, Erikson's psychoanalytic beliefs may have influenced his interpretation of his findings.

These specific conclusions as well as his theory as a whole, have been criticized for equating male development with child development and for interpreting women's differentness as deficiency. One of the central critiques of Erikson's theory concerns the notion that development evolves through stages of "ever increasing levels of separation and spheres of mastery and personal independence" (Jordan, et al., 1991, p. 1).

Some theorists (e.g., Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979) have suggested that Erikson's theory is more applicable to male development than it is to female development. Therefore, differences between the psychosocial development of males and females reflect the failure of the theory to adequately account for these variations, rather than to limitations in female psychosocial development (Forisha-Kovach, 1983).

Theoreticians at the Stone Centre for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College, are developing an alternate model of women's development that they are at present calling "self-in-relation". Of central importance to this conceptualization is the belief that the organizing

principle in women's lives is relational growth. They suggest that for women, development does not proceed as it does for men, along a continuum from connection with a care provider in early childhood, through successive steps of autonomy and separateness toward independence. Instead, for women, development of capabilities and self-knowledge occurs within the context of important relationships. Further, relational connectedness remains crucially important to women as they move toward interdependence (Jordan, et. al., 1991).

Surrey (1991) suggests that dynamic relationships in a woman's life are the motivating force that propel psychological growth and that her development can be traced through her participation in these specific relationships and relational networks. Kaplan & Klein (1991) add that a woman's self-esteem and feelings of competence are more often connected to the relational aspects of a situation than to other aspects of the situation.

Miller (1991), in her critique of Erikson's first four psychosocial stages, generally supports his emphasis on the relational focus for both male and female infants during the first stage of life. She

would argue, though, that the infant is a more active participant in the interactional process than Erikson suggested. During the second stage, however, when the child is developing a greater sense of her ability to influence her world, Miller believes that she does so only because of her actions and feelings in the relationship with her primary careproviders not because she is becoming separate from these relationships.

Through Erikson's next two stages, Miller does not dispute that girls are also involved in learning about the world and developing their skills. She believes, however, that Erikson neglected to account for the relational aspects of girls' development. Boys, for example, are seen to engage in competitive games and to dispute the rules and this is interpreted as their preparing themselves for competition later in life. Girls, on the other hand, are often reported to be "just talking" - about their families, their friendships and themselves "in relationship" - and this activity is apparently not seen as important preparation for sustaining relationships later in life. Girls' development vis a vis their relationships was largely ignored by researchers until the pioneering

work of Gilligan (1982) concerning adolescent female development began.

Miller and other theorists (Gilligan, 1982; Kaplan & Klein, 1991) conceive of the greatest differences between women and men as emerging in adolescence and young adulthood. Miller suggests that for a young woman, using all her capabilities and being "in relationship" with significant others are of primary importance. For a young man, developing himself and his independent identity are of primary importance. In terms of relationships, Miller (1976) suggests that by this time the young man has also adopted the societal expectation that the young woman he is involved with should adapt to him. Gilligan (1982) articulates the essence of the difference between men and women as these theorists see it when she states that

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)



For women then, they suggest, development takes place within a context of affiliation with and attachment to others. They suggest further that for women, identity develops through intimate relationships with others, not prior to intimacy with others. Miller (1976) suggests that as they develop, boys are rewarded for developing their power and skill and that gradually these aspects of their lives become as important as and then supersede, the importance of affiliations. Girls, on the other hand, are socialized to remain attached to others and to transfer their connection from their families to men as they grow older.

Gilligan (1991), in her study of female development, suggests that as they approach adolescence, at the age of approximately 11, young women face a relational crisis. They are faced with the choice between being, in essence, true to themselves at the expense of their relationships with important others such as parents, or denying their own feelings and desires to remain connected to these important others.

In her longitudinal study of girls at the Emma Willard School, Gilligan (1991) reported that girls

resist this state of disconnectedness, and tend to opt for being "nice", not hurting others' feelings and being ingenuine to maintain their relationships. In this way girls trade their authentic involvement with others in a relationship for being unauthentic because they fear losing the relationship. She adds that this central paradox "the taking oneself out of relationship for the sake of relationships" (p. 26) has negative implications for young women. These are reflected in such symptoms as lower levels of self-esteem, and a marked increase in episodes of depression and higher incidence of eating disorders and poor body image that develop disproportionately in young women during adolescence (Gilligan, 1991).

This new theoretical perspective on differences between male and female development, particularly in adolescence and young adulthood raises provocative questions about the applicability of some aspects of Erikson's theory to female development. A full exploration of this issue is beyond the scope of this investigation. The present study does, however, explore whether men and women in young adulthood differ in their development of identity and intimacy.

If, for men, "identity's most immediate heir is intimacy" as Marcia (1980, p. 160) has stated, and as Erikson, of course, postulated, then we would expect those men who score higher on intimacy to also score higher on achievement of identity. If the same holds true for women, we would expect to find this pattern to be evident for the women in the study as well. If, as Gilligan suggests, however, for young women the tasks of intimacy and identity are fused and if connectedness and affiliation are more important in female development, then we may see higher scores for the young women on intimacy than on identity. The young women may also, as a group, obtain higher scores on intimacy than do the young men.

#### Research on Psychosocial Development

Erikson's constructs have been studied in relation to loneliness in children and adolescents (Davis, 1990); the development of relationships in late adolescence (Eaton et al., 1991); and in relation to identity and multicultural issues (Hoare, 1991). They have also been studied in relation to the development of religious ideology (Phillips, 1992) and to the adjustment of western children raised in nonwestern

cultures while their parents served as missionaries (Wrobbel & Plueddemann, 1990). Specific psychosocial stages such as identity (Blustein et al., 1991; Dyk & Adams, 1990); intimacy (Dyk & Adams, 1990; Hamachek, 1990); generativity (Bradley & Marcia, 1992; Hamachek, 1990; Peterson & Stewart, 1990) identity and generativity (Arnold & Chartier, 1992); and integrity and despair (Hamachek, 1990) have also been studied.

Erikson has been seen as the most influential writer on identity in the past two decades and therefore empirical investigation of his theory has focused on this psychosocial task. Marcia's (1966, 1970, 1973) work on demarcating four identity statuses arose from his efforts to operationalize Erikson's concepts for empirical study (Marcia, 1980). These statuses have since been extensively studied, primarily in relation to male development, but in relation to female development as well. The four statuses are the different modes through which individuals may deal with the identity issues characteristic of late adolescence. They are: **Identity Achievement**, **Foreclosure**, **Identity Diffusion**, and **Moratorium** (Marcia, 1980). They differ in terms of the presence or absence of a decision-

making period (crisis) and the extent of personal investment (commitment) the young adult has made concerning occupation and ideology. In Marcia's terminology, **Identity Achievements** are those individuals who have experienced a decision-making period and have committed themselves to self-chosen occupation and ideological goals. **Foreclosures** are those who have committed themselves to occupational and ideological goals, but have not experienced the period of personal crisis out of which a self-chosen direction would emerge. They are more likely to have adopted goals chosen for them by their parents. **Identity diffusions** are those young people who have not yet chosen an occupational or ideological direction. These individuals may or may not have entered a decision-making crisis. **Moratoriums** are individuals who are currently experiencing a crisis concerning ideological and/or occupational issues and have not yet made commitments concerning these issues (Marcia, 1980).

In his extensive review of the empirical literature that examines the four statuses in young men, Marcia (1980) reported that **Identity Achievements** and **Moratoriums** tended to score higher on measures of

self-esteem, moral reasoning, autonomy, and intimacy than did **Foreclosures** and **Identity Diffusions**.

**Moratoriums** scored higher than did the others on measures of anxiety and tended to be the least cooperative of the four. **Foreclosures** were the most authoritarian. He concluded that for young men, **Identity Achievement** was the most positive status.

Marcia (1980) also described studies that examined parenting practices and their relationship to each of the four identity statuses in adolescent males.

**Identity Achievements** and both parents tended to have balanced perceptions of each other. They reported both positive and negative aspects of their relationships. **Moratoriums** had the most ambivalent relationships with their parents. They tended to see their parents as more disapproving of them, and seemed to have particular difficulty separating from their mothers.

**Foreclosures** reported the most positive perceptions of their parents. They tended to perceive their parents as accepting and encouraging and the parents saw themselves as child-centred and protective. These families were the most task-focused of the four and exerted the most pressure and support for

adolescent conformity to family values. These characteristics were viewed as positive by the adolescents.

**Identity Diffusions** reported experiencing "rejection and detachment" (Jordan, 1970, 1971 cited in Marcia, 1980, p. 171) from their parents. Further, their fathers were reported to be the least involved of the statuses (Marcia, 1980).

Research designed to apply the ego-identity status constructs to college women has yielded different patterns. Marcia and Friedman (1970) found that for these women, **Foreclosures**, not **Identity Achievements** had the highest self-esteem and the lowest anxiety. **Identity Diffusions** were reported to be the most anxious although, based on their previous findings with young men, the researchers had predicted that the **Moratoriums** would be most anxious. Marcia concluded that for young men, the presence of a decision-making period or crisis was most crucial to resolution of identity issues. For young women, the commitment to beliefs, whether these beliefs were self or other-generated was the most critical factor.

The researchers hypothesized that the **Identity**

**Achievement** women experienced greater anxiety than did the **Foreclosure** women for relational reasons. They suggested that the identity crisis inherent in a personal decision-making process likely involved conflict with parents, greater distance from family members and therefore relational stress. These young women might also have experienced greater alienation from their peers, resulting in the lower self-esteem these subjects reported. The **Foreclosures**, in comparison, were hypothesized to receive a high degree of social support and parental approval. This resulted in their experiencing lower anxiety and higher self-esteem (Marcia, 1980).

A recent study conducted by Dyk & Adams (1990) investigated the association between identity and intimacy in 71 male and 71 female college students. The researchers were attempting to determine whether there was empirical support for the view that identity precedes intimacy for males and that identity and intimacy are fused for females. The researchers reported that when they added the variable, gender-role orientation (i.e., masculinity and femininity) to the investigation, in addition to subjects' biological sex,



an interesting interaction appeared.

They found that for males, both those obtaining high masculinity scores and those obtaining high femininity scores, identity formation predicted intimacy development, as Erikson postulated. They found the same pattern as well, however, for those females who also obtained high masculinity scores. Identity and intimacy were fused only for the group of females who obtained high femininity scores.

#### Family Environment and Psychosocial Development

The relationship specifically between family functioning variables and psychosocial development has been investigated in three studies. In the first, Wrobbel & Plueddemann (1990) assessed the psychosocial development of 292 "Missionary Kids." The subjects were western males and females over the age of 23 years who had been raised in nonwestern cultures while their parents served as missionaries. The researchers found significant positive correlations between participants' perceptions of their families (feeling loved in the family, family cohesion and idealization of the family) and their psychosocial development.

The only reported dimension in which differences

in psychosocial development occurred as a function of participant gender was the effect of the boarding school experience. For the 136 men in the sample, there were no significant differences in psychosocial development between the 94 who had boarded and the 42 who had not. For the 154 women in the sample, this was not the case. One hundred and fifteen of the women had boarded and 39 had not. A significant negative correlation was found between boarding and Industry and between boarding and the Resolution Score for Industry vs. Inferiority. The women who had boarded scored lower on Industry and achieved less resolution of Industry vs Inferiority than did those women who had not boarded.

This study can be seen to suggest that family relationships are particularly important to the development of industry in females. The absence of ongoing family involvement had a deleterious effect on the women's development of industry but not on the men's development of this characteristic.

In the second study, Gavazzi & Sabatelli (1990) assessed family system dynamics, the individuation process and the psychosocial development of 50 female

and 50 male college students. They found that family conflict, parental intrusiveness and psychological interconnectedness were significant predictors of the participants' psychosocial maturity. Those students, both male and female, who had individuated tended to have families in which individual members were well differentiated. The researchers found that the males in the sample were more financially and psychologically independent from other family members than were the females. No other gender differences were obtained on any of the other family system or individuation variables explored.

In the third study, Battle and colleagues (1992) assessed the relationship between family functioning variables and psychosocial development in sexually abused and non abused female undergraduates. They found that positive family functioning was associated with positive psychosocial development for both abused and non-abused subjects. The study examined the role of family functioning dimensions as measured by the Family Environment Scale (FES) and the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) as predictors of psychosocial development as assessed by the Measures of Psychosocial Development

(MPD) in 712 female undergraduate students at the University of Manitoba.

The results indicated that positive psychosocial development, as measured by Total P on the MPD, was associated with a family environment characterized as having higher levels of expressiveness, family-oriented activity, family organization, and intellectual-cultural interests as measured by the FES.

Negative psychosocial development, as measured by Total N on the MPD, was associated with lower levels of family cohesion, lower levels of family-oriented activity, and lower levels of family interest in intellectual and cultural interests. It was also associated with higher levels of openly expressed conflict as measured by the FES.

Better resolution of developmental tasks, as measured by Total R on the MPD, was associated with higher levels of family cohesion, expressiveness, family-oriented activity, and intellectual and cultural interests as measured by the FES.

The results of this study indicated that four of the ten FES subscales were particularly relevant to the psychosocial development of this population of female

university students. These four subscales were more related to the social support family members provide to each other. The remaining six FES subscales were not as relevant.

A Multiple Regression Analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) subscales and MPD. A stepwise regression analysis indicated that positive psychosocial development, as measured by Total P on the MPD, was associated with higher levels of Family Co-oriented Commitment, Confidence and Challenge as measured by the FHI. Negative psychosocial development, as measured by Total N on the MPD, was associated with lower levels of Co-oriented Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control as measured by the FHI. Better resolution of developmental tasks as measured by Total R on the MPD was associated with higher levels of Confidence and Challenge on the FHI.

The relationship between the FHI and FES was also examined. A canonical correlation demonstrated a significant relationship between these measures, providing evidence of convergent validity for the family functioning construct.

Purpose of the Present Study and Research Hypotheses:

The purpose of this study was to further examine the relationship between family functioning, specifically family expressiveness, cohesion, recreational activity level and intellectual-cultural interest and the psychosocial development of undergraduate students. For this study as well, family functioning was assessed using the Family Environment Scale and the Family Hardiness Index. Psychosocial development was again assessed using the Measures of Psychosocial Development. A second purpose of this study was to investigate gender differences in the psychosocial development of these students.

The present study extends research on the relationship between family functioning and psychosocial development in a number of ways. First, those dimensions of family functioning previously found to be particularly relevant to the psychosocial development of university women were applied to both men and women. Second, the applicability of Erikson's theory, as measured by the MPD for both male and female young adults was empirically investigated. Third, this study investigated whether there were specific

dimensions of psychosocial development on which males and females differed.

On the basis of the existing theoretical and empirical literature that has examined the relationship between family functioning and psychosocial development, as well as on the previous research described above, it was hypothesized that positive family functioning would predict positive psychosocial development in the university students. Specifically, the following hypotheses were advanced:

Hypothesis 1

It was predicted that, overall, a healthier family environment would predict better psychosocial development. Specifically, it was predicted that the following dimensions of family environment would be significant predictors of psychosocial development:

(a) Higher levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Expressiveness and Organization as measured by the FES would be predictive of positive psychosocial development as measured by Total P on the MPD.

(b) Higher levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Expressiveness and Cohesion as measured by the FES would be predictive of better resolution of psychosocial developmental issues as measured by Total R on the MPD.

(c) Lower levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, and Cohesion, and higher levels of openly expressed Conflict as measured by the FES would be predictive of negative psychosocial development as measured by Total N on the MPD.

#### Hypothesis 2

It was predicted that, overall, greater family hardiness would predict better psychosocial development. Specifically, it was predicted that the following dimensions of family hardiness would be significant predictors of psychosocial development:

(a) Higher levels of family Co-Oriented Commitment, Confidence, and Challenge as measured by the FHI would



be predictive of positive psychosocial development as measured by Total P on the MPD.

(b) Higher levels of family Confidence and Challenge as measured by the FHI would be predictive of positive resolution of psychosocial developmental issues as measured by Total R on the MPD.

(c) Lower levels of family Co-Oriented Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control as measured by the FHI would be predictive of negative psychosocial development as measured by Total N on the MPD.

### Hypothesis 3

It was predicted that males and females would differ on specific subscales of the Measures of Psychosocial Development related to Identity and Intimacy.

Specifically, it was predicted that:

(a) Males would obtain higher scores than would females on measures of Identity: Identity (P5) and Identity vs Identity Confusion (R5), while females would obtain higher scores on Identity Confusion (N5).

(b) Females would obtain higher scores than would males on measures of Intimacy: Intimacy (P6) and Intimacy vs Isolation (R6), while males would obtain higher scores on Isolation (N6).

#### Exploratory Analysis 1

Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine whether gender differences were evident on other subscales of the Measure of Psychosocial Development.

#### Exploratory Analysis 2

An exploratory analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between participants' scores on the Intimacy and Isolation subscales of the Measures of Psychosocial Development and their reported involvement in an intimate relationship.

#### Exploratory Analysis 3

An exploratory analysis was conducted to examine the association between participants' scores on the Identity and Intimacy subscales of the Measures of Psychosocial Development.

## Method

### Subjects

The subjects were 205 females and 181 males aged 18-24, enrolled in introductory psychology courses at the University of Manitoba. These subjects were drawn from a total sample of 283 female and 245 male undergraduates and included only those subjects with no more than one missing data point on the questionnaires of interest.

### Measures

(1) Demographic Information Questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed for the present study to obtain information concerning subject age, gender, socioeconomic status, marital status and involvement in an intimate relationship (see Appendix A).

(2) Family Environment Scale. The Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Moos & Moos (1976/1989) is a self-report measure that assesses the family's social environment. This scale is a 90 item, true-false instrument. Examples of statements on the FES are: "Family members really help and support one another," and "We feel it is important to be good at whatever we do." Test-retest reliabilities have been

calculated and range from .68 for Independence to .86 for Cohesion. The authors also report adequate construct validity and discriminant validity (Moos & Moos, 1989).

The FES has three forms: the Real Form (Form R) which evaluates individuals' perceptions of their nuclear or conjugal family environments, the Ideal Form (Form I), which measures individuals' conceptions of ideal family environments, and the Expectations Form (Form E) which measures individuals' expectations about possible changes in the family setting. The Real Form was used in this study to assess present family characteristics.

The FES has ten subscales that evaluate three underlying sets of dimensions: The **Relationship Dimensions**, the **Personal Growth Dimensions**, and the **System Maintenance Dimensions**. The **Relationship Dimensions** are measured by the **Cohesion**, **Expressiveness** and **Conflict** subscales. Scores on each subscale may range from 0-9. In relation to the previous descriptions of family functioning, the **Cohesion** subscale evaluates a family's support of its members, its commitment to the family, and its level of

affiliation. Higher scores on this subscale indicate a higher degree of affiliation. The **Expressiveness** (Express.) subscale assesses the degree to which open communication is fostered and straightforward actions are encouraged. Higher scores on this subscale indicate healthier communication. The **Conflict** subscale assesses the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict between family members. While the expressiveness subscale measures the healthy expression of different points of view, this dimension assesses more problematic communication. Higher scores on this subscale indicate high levels of friction.

The **Personal Growth Dimensions** are measured by the **Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation,** and **Moral-Religious Emphasis** subscales. The **Independence** (Indep.) subscale measures the extent to which family members are assertive and self-sufficient. Higher scores indicate greater emphasis on these attitudes. The **Achievement-Orientation** (Achieve.) subscale measures the extent to which family members are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework. Higher scores indicate more family focus on

individual achievement. The **Intellectual-Cultural Orientation** (Intelec.) assesses the family's degree of interest in politics, social, intellectual, and cultural activities. Higher scores on this subscale suggest family sharing of interest in these areas. The **Active-Recreational Orientation** (Active.) measures the extent to which family members take part in family-oriented activities. Higher scores on this subscale indicate a higher level of involvement in these types of activities. The **Moral-Religious** (Moral.) subscale measures the degree of emphasis in the family on ethical and religious issues and values. Higher scores indicate more family unauthentic on these issues.

The **System Maintenance Dimensions** are measured by the **Organization** and **Control** subscales. The **Organization** (Organize.) subscale assesses the importance of structure, predictability and clear expectations in a family. Higher scores indicate higher levels of family structure. The **Control** subscale assesses the extent to which rules and procedures are used to direct family life. Higher scores on this subscale indicate higher levels of control.

(3) Family Hardiness Index. The second measure of family functioning used in the present study was the Family Hardiness Index (FHI). This scale, constructed by McCubbin, McCubbin & Thompson (1986) was developed to measure the characteristic of hardiness in families. Hardiness is defined as a resource families can utilize under conditions of stress, that may mediate the negative effects of the stress or demands, and assist the family to adjust and adapt to the stress. Family Hardiness as conceived by McCubbin, McCubbin & Thompson (1986) refers specifically to the "internal strengths and durability of the family unit and is characterized by a sense of control over the outcomes of life events and hardships" (p. 292). It represents a view of change as beneficial and growth producing and is characterized by an active rather than passive orientation to dealing with stressful events. The FHI is a 4-point, 20 item instrument that consists of four subscales: **Co-oriented Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control.** Respondents indicate the degree to which the following statements are False, Mostly False, Mostly True, or True of their current family situation: "In our family trouble results from

mistakes we make," "In our family we listen to each others' problems, hurts and fears." The **Co-oriented Commitment** subscale assesses the family's sense of internal strengths, dependability and ability to cooperate with each other. Scores may range from 0-24 on this subscale. The **Confidence** subscale assesses the family's ability to plan for future events and to appreciate each others' efforts. It also assesses their ability to endure hardships, to experience life with interest and to find life meaningful. Scores may range from 0-12 on this subscale. The **Challenge** subscale assesses the family's efforts to be creative problem-solvers, to be active, to enjoy new experiences, and to learn from these experiences. Scores may range from 0-15 on this subscale. The **Control** subscale assesses the family's sense of being in control of family life and not shaped by outside events and circumstances. On this subscale scores may range from 0-9. For all subscales, higher scores indicate more of the family resource and reflect positive attitudes about the family. The FHI has internal reliability of .82 and validity coefficients ranging from .15 to .23 (McCubbin, McCubbin & Thompson,



1987) (See Appendix B).

(4) Measures of Psychosocial Development. The Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD) was used to assess participants' psychosocial development. The instrument was developed by Hawley, (1984) to translate the constructs of Erikson's theory into objective measures that would encourage further investigation and application of Erikson's work. The MPD is a 112-item, self-report inventory that consists of 27 scales, representing the attitudes and dynamics outlined in Erikson's framework. The eight **Positive Scales** measure **Trust, Autonomy, Initiative, Industry, Identity, Intimacy, Generativity, and Ego Integrity**. The eight **Negative Scales** measure **Mistrust, Shame and Doubt, Guilt, Inferiority, Identity Confusion, Isolation, Stagnation, and Despair**. The eight **Resolution Scales** assess the status of conflict resolution for each of the stages: **Trust vs Mistrust, Autonomy vs Shame & Doubt, Initiative vs Guilt, Industry vs Inferiority, Identity vs Identity Confusion, Intimacy vs Isolation, Generativity vs Stagnation, Ego Identity vs Despair**. The three **Total Scales** (**Total Positive, Total Negative, and Total Resolution**) assess overall psychosocial

adjustment. The **Total Positive (Total P)** and **Total Negative (Total N)** scores provide measures of the individual's status in relation to the positive and negative attitudes associated with the eight developmental stages. The **Total Resolution (Total R)** score presents a measure of conflict resolution across the stages. Average or high **Total R** scores indicate a positive level of conflict resolution and psychosocial health. A low **Total R** score suggests psychosocial stress resulting from the lack of resolution of stage conflicts. Table 1 presents the MPD scales by name.

Each positive and negative scale contains seven statements that reflect the seven subconstructs Hawley (1984) identified as contributing to each stage. High scores on the **Trust** subscale, for example, would indicate that the respondent (1) perceives him/herself (2) and the world, as basically trustworthy; (3) feels optimistic and confident both personally (4) and in relation to life in general. (5) The person is trusting that the world is predictable and that future

Table 1: Measures of Psychosocial Development Scales

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Positive Scales

Trust	(P1)	Identity	(P5)
Autonomy	(P2)	Intimacy	(P6)
Initiative	(P3)	Generativity	(P7)
Industry	(P4)	Ego Integrity	(P8)

Total P: Overall measure of positive psychosocial development

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Negative Scales

Mistrust	(N1)	Identity Confusion	(N5)
Shame/Doubt	(N2)	Isolation	(N6)
Guilt	(N3)	Stagnation	(N7)
Inferiority	(N4)	Despair	(N8)

Total N: Overall measure of negative psychosocial development

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Resolution Scales

Trust vs Mistrust	(R1)
Autonomy vs Shame & Doubt	(R2)
Initiative vs Guilt	(R3)
Industry vs Inferiority	(R4)
Identity vs Identity Confusion	(R5)
Intimacy vs Isolation	(R6)
Generativity vs Stagnation	(R7)
Ego Integrity vs Despair	(R8)

Total R: Overall measure of resolution of stage issues

satisfactions are worth working and waiting for and is (6) open and receptive to the world and (7) to new ideas. High scores on the **Positive Scales**, low scores on the **Negative Scales** and high scores on the **Resolution Scales** are desirable, indicating good psychosocial development while the converse is undesirable, indicating poorer psychosocial development.

The 112 descriptive statements are presented within a Likert scale response format. Subjects are asked to indicate whether each statement is (0) not at all like me, (1) not much like me, (2) somewhat like me, (3) like me, or (4) very much like me. Examples of statements on the MPD are: "Self-sufficient; Stand on my own two feet; Generally trust people".

The MPD has been normed for males and females separately in four age groupings: 13-17 (adolescents), 18-24 (young adults), 25-49 (adults), and 50+ (upper-aged adults). T scores and percentiles may be used to facilitate analysis of the pattern of MPD scores but are not required and were not used in the present study.

Because this measurement tool is not as widely

known as is the FES, additional information concerning its psychometric properties will be reported. Based on data obtained during the construction and validation of the MPD, the test-retest reliability coefficients for the 16 scales (eight positive and eight negative) over a 2-13 week interval were found to range from .67 to .89. Positive scale coefficients ranged from .75 (Trust) to .85 (Initiative) and those for the negative scales ranged from .67 (Inferiority) to .89 (Identity Confusion). The overall positive test-retest reliability coefficient was .83 and the overall negative reliability coefficient was .91. Hawley (1984) concluded that "the stability coefficients for the MPD appear to be particularly strong for a personality measure and provide substantial support for the test-retest stability of the instrument" (p. 102).

The internal consistency of the 16 scales - the degree to which items contributing to the same scale were homogeneous and sufficiently different from items contributing to different scales - was determined during the construction and validation of the measure using a series of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. For the positive scales, coefficients ranged from .65

(Trust) to .84 (Industry). The coefficients for the negative scales ranged from .69 (Guilt) to .83 (Identity Confusion). Trust and Guilt were the only two alpha coefficients that failed to reach .70. These results are within an acceptable range for personality measures and provide "support for the conceptual base underlying the item selection procedure for the MPD" (Hawley, 1984, p. 107).

The content validity of the MPD was established by submitting 225 statements that had been obtained from a review of Erikson's writings on the stages to five expert judges. The judges were required, individually, to classify the items on the basis of the Pole (negative or positive) and the stage they appeared to measure. A criterion of 60% inter-judge agreement (three of five judges) was established as the criterion for item content validity. Of the 112 items, 30 (26.8%) were agreed upon by all five judges, 66 (58.9%) were agreed upon by at least four judges, and 94 (83.9%) were agreed upon by at least three judges. The remaining 18 items (16.1%) were chosen by Hawley from those agreed upon by less than three judges to adequately cover the content domains described by

Erikson's theory (Hawley, 1984).

The stages for which it was difficult to obtain representative sampling were Shame and Doubt, Initiative, Guilt, Inferiority and Stagnation. Overall, however, despite the difficulties in obtaining a sufficient number of items for all domains of the measure, Hawley (1984) concluded that there appeared to be strong evidence of the content validity of the MPD.

Construct validity was examined using the multitrait-multimethod matrix design (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) with the MPD and two other measures of Erikson's constructs: The Inventory of Psychosocial Development (IPD) (Constantinople, 1966) and the Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) (Boyd, 1966) (cited in Hawley, 1984). This design is based on the assumption that any test measures a particular trait by a particular method. To assess the relative contributions of the trait and method components of the test score, more than one trait and more than one method are examined. Intercorrelations are calculated between tests that measure at least two traits using at least two methods. Convergent validity is demonstrated when the correlations between the same traits measured by

different methods is high, while discriminant validity is demonstrated when the different traits are not highly correlated even when measured by the same method (Hawley, 1984)

In the first phase of the multitrait-multimethod matrix, the monomethod comparisons, analyses focused on issues related to convergent and discriminant validity and were concerned with the MPD's internal congruence. Test-retest reliability coefficients (the monotrait-monomethod values) represent measurement of the same trait by the same method. Theoretically, they should be the highest in the matrix. The reliability coefficients ranged from .75 to .85 for the positive poles and from .67 to .89 for the negative poles. Hawley concluded that "these coefficients (were) sufficiently large to provide evidence of convergent validity for the MPD" (p. 128).

Discriminant validity was evaluated by examining the correlations among different traits. It is demonstrated when correlations between two measures of the same traits (reliabilities) are higher than correlations between the measures of different traits (heterotraits). Of the 112 possible correlations



between heterotraits on the MPD, all but three (for the Inferiority scale) were lower than the reliabilities. Hawley concluded that "the results of these comparisons provided strong internal evidence for the discriminant validity of the MPD" (p. 129).

In the second phase of the multitrait-multimethod analyses, the construct validity of the MPD was demonstrated using heteromethod comparisons that involved calculating the degree of agreement between two methods of measuring a particular trait. In this method, the independent measures of the same trait should show high correlations with each other and lower correlations than the trait reliabilities. Correlations between the same traits on the MPD and the IPD ranged from .46 to .78, and on the MPD and the SDQ ranged from .28 to .65. The lower correlations associated with the SDQ, Hawley suggested, were due to problems with this instrument. Nonetheless, she concluded, "these values are sufficiently different from zero and are sufficiently large to support the convergent validity of the MPD" (p. 131).

The third phase of the multitrait-multimethod analysis involved examining comparisons of the

monomethod (Phase 1) and heteromethod (Phase 2) blocks of the multitrait-multimethod matrix for evidence of the MPD's construct validity. The values obtained provided support for the positive scales and mixed support for the negative scales (Hawley, 1984).

In summary, convergent and discriminant validity for the MPD was supported by evidence from monomethod, heteromethod, and across-method comparisons, with some inconsistencies appearing in the heterotrait/same pole comparisons (Hawley, 1984).

#### Procedure

Students were recruited from introductory psychology classes as part of a larger study and received course credit for participating in the study. The questionnaire packages were group-administered to approximately 60 students at a time. Subjects were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw their consent without penalty. (See Appendices C, D, and E for the information verbally given to subjects at the time they were recruited, the consent form they signed prior to completing the questionnaire packages and the feedback form they received upon completing the questionnaires).

Results

Demographic Information

The average age of subjects was 18.8 years. Fifty-four percent were female and 46% were male. Eighty-nine percent of the women were between 18 and 20 years of age with the remaining 11% between 21 and 24. Eighty-three percent of the men were between the ages of 18 and 20 and 17% were between the ages of 21 and 24. Eighty percent of the sample were caucasian, 10% were asian and the remaining 10% reported other ethnic origin. Thirty-five percent of the subjects reported an average family income of over \$55,000. Thirty-nine percent reported a family income of between \$35,000 and \$55,000 and 25% reported a yearly family income of less than \$35,000. Within the sample 68% of subjects lived with their parents, 15% lived with a room/house mate and the remaining 17% reported other living arrangements. Ninety-five percent of subjects were single and an additional 4% were engaged or cohabiting.

A series of chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were mean differences on demographic variables between those subjects missing no more than one data point, whose data were used for

subsequent analyses, and those missing more than one data point. No significant differences between the groups were detected. Data from the 389 subjects with no more than one missing data point were used in all subsequent analyses.

A series of chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were mean differences between males and females on demographic variables. The only variable for which significant gender differences were detected was involvement in an intimate relationship. Of the 49% of respondents who indicated that they were involved in an intimate relationship (N= 191), 60% (N= 114) were women.

#### Test of Assumptions

Univariate tests were used to test for violation of assumptions. Violations of the assumptions of multicollinearity and linearity were not found. To ensure that the assumption of singularity was not violated the 3 MPD scales (in which Total R is a linear combination of Total P and Total N) were analyzed separately.

The sample distribution was skewed towards psychological health with a moderately negative skew on

some of the positive and resolution MPD scales and some moderate to severe positive skew on some of the negative MPD scales. This type of distribution was anticipated given the relatively high functioning level of university students. The pattern of mean scores also falls within normal limits on the normed MPD profiles for men and women aged 18-24. There was also moderate negative skew in the direction of healthy family functioning on the family measures. Again, this was not unexpected given the sample.

Transformations were not performed on the data for two reasons. First, the most skewed scores, the negative scales of the MPD, were required for calculation of the resolution scale scores on the MPD. The loss in meaningfulness of subsequent calculations using the transformed scores outweighed the potential advantages of transforming them. In addition, the sample size was judged to be sufficiently large that variable skew would not likely make a significant difference in the analyses (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1983).

#### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that, overall, healthier family functioning would predict better

psychosocial development. Specifically, it was predicted that:

(a) Higher levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Expressiveness and Organization as measured by the FES would be predictive of positive psychosocial development as measured by Total P on the MPD.

(b) Higher levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Expressiveness and Cohesion as measured by the FES would be predictive of better resolution of psychosocial developmental issues as measured by Total R on the MPD.

(c) Lower levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, and Cohesion, and higher levels of openly expressed conflict as measured by the FES would be predictive of negative psychosocial development as measured by Total N on the MPD.

Multiple Regression Analyses were used to test this hypothesis for the three MPD summary scores: Total P, Total R and Total N. The regression procedure is most applicable when the intent of the analysis is

prediction (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). Multiple regression tests the ability of several independent variables to predict a dependent variable. Because they permit the independent variables to be correlated multiple regression analyses are particularly useful in complex natural settings where nature or circumstances rather than the experimenter have manipulated the independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). They were particularly useful in the present study because the subscales of the family measures are correlated. The ten Family Environment Scale subscales, namely, Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-cultural Orientation, Active-recreational Orientation, Moral-religious orientation, Organization and Control served as the independent variables. The three Measures of Psychosocial Development summary scores, Total Positive, Total Negative and Total Resolution served as the dependent variables.

The stepwise selection procedure was chosen because of its appropriateness for use in model-building studies. It is used to identify a subset of independent variables that are useful in predicting the

dependent variable and to eliminate those independent variables that do not provide additional prediction given this subset. Stepwise regression analyses can however, yield variable beta weights in samples from the same population. Thus the relative contributions of the independent variables may vary between samples from the same population as well. The alpha level for each stepwise regression was .20.

Total P. The Cohesion, Active-Recreational Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Moral-Religious Orientation, Independence and Expressiveness subscales of the FES were significant predictors of Total P. Higher levels of family cohesion, intellectual-cultural interest, moral-religious focus, independence and expressiveness were associated with higher levels of positive psychosocial development. Together these variables accounted for 21% of the variance in Total P scores. Table 2 presents the FES subscales that were significant predictors of Total P, Total R and Total N with their beta values and significance levels.

Total R. The Cohesion, Active-Recreational Orientation, Independence, Moral-Religious Orientation,



Table 2: Family Environment Subscales as Predictors of Psychosocial Development

Psychosocial Scale	FES Subscale	B	model R	p<
TOTAL P				
	Cohesion	1.0	.12	.0001
	Active	1.9	.15	.0001
	Intelec.	1.3	.17	.0031
	Moral	1.6	.19	.0109
	Indep.	1.6	.20	.0068
	Express.	1.5	.21	.0357
TOTAL R				
	Cohesion	3.3	.17	.0001
	Active	3.7	.20	.0001
	Indep.	4.8	.23	.0006
	Moral	2.7	.25	.0046
	Express	2.7	.26	.0243
TOTAL N				
	Cohesion	-1.8	.16	.0001
	Indep.	-2.8	.19	.0001
	Conflict	1.5	.21	.0019
	Active	-2.1	.23	.0039

$\alpha = .05$

and Expressiveness subscales of the FES were significant predictors of Total R. Higher levels of family cohesion, activity, independence, moral-religious focus, and expressiveness were associated with better resolution of the psychosocial stages. Together these variables accounted for 26% of the variance in Total R scores.

Total N. The Cohesion, Independence, Conflict and Active-recreational orientation subscales of the FES were significant predictors of Total N. Lower levels of family cohesion, independence and active-recreational orientation, and higher levels of family conflict were associated with negative psychosocial development. Together these variables accounted for 23% of the variance in Total N scores.

#### Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that, overall, greater family hardiness would predict better family functioning. Specifically, it predicted that (a) Higher levels of family Commitment, Confidence, and Challenge as measured by the FHI would be predictive of positive psychosocial development as measured by Total P on the MPD.

(b) Higher levels of family Confidence and Challenge as measured by the FHI would be predictive of positive resolution of psychosocial developmental issues as measured by Total R on the MPD.

(c) Lower levels of family Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control as measured by the FHI would be predictive of negative psychosocial development as measured by Total N on the MPD.

Multiple Regression Analyses were used to test this hypothesis as well for the three MPD summary scores: Total P, Total R and Total N. The four Family Hardiness Index subscales, namely, Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control served as the independent variables. The three Measures of Psychosocial Development summary scores, Total Positive, Total Negative and Total Resolution served as the dependent variables.

The stepwise selection procedure was again chosen because of its appropriateness for use in model-building studies and its usefulness in predicting which subset of the independent variables account for the most variance in the dependent variables. The alpha level for each stepwise regression was .20.

Total P. The Challenge and Confidence subscales of the FHI were significant predictors of Total P. Higher levels of family belief in their ability to rise to life's challenges and confidence in themselves were associated with positive psychosocial development. Together these variables accounted for 18% of the variance in positive psychosocial development in the samples. Table 3 presents the FHI subscales that were significant predictors of Total P, Total R, and Total N with their beta values and significance levels.

Total R. The Confidence, Challenge and Control subscales of the FHI were significant predictors of Total R. Higher levels of family confidence in the future and their abilities, their ability to rise to challenges, and their sense of being in control of family life were associated with good resolution of psychosocial issues. Together these variables accounted for 32% of the variance in resolution of developmental issues in the samples.

Total N. The Confidence, Challenge and Control subscales of the FHI were significant predictors of Total N. Lower levels of family endurance and confidence in planning their future; lower levels of

Table 3: Family Hardiness Subscales as Predictors of Psychosocial Development

Psychosocial Scale	FHI Subscale	B	model R	p<
<hr/>				
TOTAL P				
	Challenge	2.6	.15	.0001
	Confidence	2.1	.18	.0001
<hr/>				
TOTAL R				
	Confidence	6.9	.25	.0001
	Challenge	4.9	.30	.0001
	Control	2.9	.31	.0162
<hr/>				
TOTAL N				
	Confidence	-5.0	.29	.0001
	Challenge	-2.2	.31	.0001
	Control	-2.1	.33	.0044
<hr/>				

$\alpha = .05$

ability to rise to life's challenges and less tendency to feel in control of family life were associated with negative psychosocial development. Together these variables accounted for 33% of the variance in negative psychosocial development.

### Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicted that males and females would differ on two specific subscales of the Measures of Psychosocial Development: Identity vs Identity Confusion and Intimacy vs Isolation. Two Analysis of Variance Tests (ANOVAs) were employed to test this hypothesis. Analysis of Variance Tests compare two or more group means to determine whether there are reliable differences between the groups on a particular variable. In these analyses subject gender was the independent variable and the two Measures of Psychosocial Development subscale scores were the dependent variables.

Identity vs Identity Confusion. No differences were found between males and females on this subscale ( $F(1, 384) = .29, p < .59$ ). Table 3 presents the mean scores for males and females on the Identity and Intimacy subscales of the MPD.

Intimacy vs Isolation. A significant difference was found between males and females on this subscale. The women were found to have higher levels of intimacy than were the men ( $F(1, 384) = 30.52, p < .0001$ ).

### Exploratory Analyses

#### Exploratory Analysis 1

The first area of exploratory analysis focused on ascertaining whether gender differences were evident on other subscales of the Measures of Psychosocial Development. Erikson's theory postulates that while issues related to identity and intimacy would be most salient to young adults, earlier versions of the later stage issues would also be evident. A series of ANOVAs were conducted with subject gender as the independent variables and mean scores on each of the remaining positive, negative and resolution MPD subscale scores as the dependent variables. On the positive scales gender differences were found on P2 (Autonomy) ( $F(1,384) = 6.03, p < .01$ ), and P7 (Generativity) ( $F(1,384) = 11.74, p < .0007$ ). Males were higher in autonomy and females were higher in generativity. On the negative scales gender differences were found on N6 (Isolation) ( $F(1,384) = 7.26, p < .0074$ ), and N7

Table 4 ANOVA for Comparison of Male and Female  
Group Scores on the Identity and Intimacy  
Subscales of the MPD

MPD Subscale	Mean Male	Mean Female	F	<p
P5 Identity	17.6	17.4	.29	.59
N5 Identity Confusion	10.8	9.9	2.64	.11
R5 Identity vs Identity Confusion	6.8	7.5	.51	.47
P6 Intimacy	18.2	20.8	30.52	.0001****
N6 Isolation	11.1	9.6	7.26	.007 **
R6 Intimacy vs Isolation	7.1	11.2	19.14	.0001****

\* p<.05  
\*\* p<.01  
\*\*\* p<.001  
\*\*\*\* p<.0001



(Stagnation) ( $F(1,384) = 14.96, p < .0001$ ). Males obtained scores indicating a higher level of isolation and stagnation than did the females. On the resolution scales gender differences were found on R2 (Autonomy vs Shame & Doubt) ( $F(1,384) = 6.68, p < .01$ ), and R7 (Generativity vs Stagnation) ( $F(1,384) = 21.30, p < .0001$ ). Males demonstrated better resolution of Autonomy vs Shame & Doubt while females demonstrated better resolution of Generativity vs Stagnation. Table 5 presents the ANOVA results for males and females on the positive, negative, and resolution subscales of the MPD.

#### Exploratory Analysis 2

The second area of exploratory analysis further examined participants' intimacy levels in relation to their involvement in an intimate relationship. A series of ANOVAs were conducted with respondents' responses to the question: "Are you currently involved in an intimate relationship?" as the independent variable and mean scores on the Intimacy subscale (P6), the Isolation subscale (N6), and the Intimacy vs Isolation subscale (R6) of the MPD as the dependent variables.

Significant differences were found between

Table 5: ANOVA for Comparison of Male and Female Group Scores on the Measures of Psychosocial Development Scales

MPD Subscale	Mean Male	Mean Female	F	<p
<b>POSITIVE SCALES</b>				
P1 Trust	19.4	19.8	.86	.35
P2 Autonomy	19.6	18.5	6.03	.01**
P3 Initiative	17.0	16.2	3.11	.08
P4 Industry	19.9	20.0	.01	.93
P5 Identity	17.6	17.4	.29	.59
P6 Intimacy	18.2	20.8	30.52	.0001****
P7 Generativity	14.8	16.3	11.74	.0007**
P8 Ego Integrity	16.4	17.0	1.78	.18
<hr/> *     p<.05                   ***   p<.001 **    p<.01                   ****  p<.0001				

Table 5: ANOVA for Comparison of Male and Female Group Scores on the Measures of Psychosocial Development Scales

MPD Subscale	Mean Male	Mean Female	F	<p
<b>NEGATIVE SCALES</b>				
N1 Distrust	10.0	9.7	.35	.55
N2 Shame & Doubt	11.5	12.3	3.14	.08
N3 Guilt	10.7	10.1	2.06	.15
N4 Inferiority	8.8	8.8	.02	.90
N5 Identity Confusion	10.8	9.9	2.64	.11
N6 Isolation	11.1	9.6	7.26	.007**
N7 Stagnation	8.6	7.0	14.96	.0001****
N8 Despair	7.4	6.9	1.16	.28
* p<.05                      *** p<.001 ** p<.01                     **** p<.0001				

Table 5: ANOVA for Comparison of Male and Female Group Scores on the Measures of Psychosocial Development Scales

MPD Subscale	Mean Male	Mean Female	F	<p
<b>RESOLUTION SCALES</b>				
R1 Trust vs Mistrust	9.4	10.1	.73	.39
R2 Autonomy vs Shame & Doubt	8.1	6.1	6.68	.01**
R3 Initiative vs Guilt	6.3	6.1	.07	.79
R4 Industry vs Inferiority	11.2	11.2	.00	.98
R5 Identity vs Identity Confusion	6.8	7.5	.51	.47
R6 Intimacy vs Isolation	7.1	11.2	19.14	.0001****
R7 Generativity vs Stagnation	6.2	9.3	21.30	.0001****
R7 Ego Integrity vs Despair	9.0	10.1	.8	.18

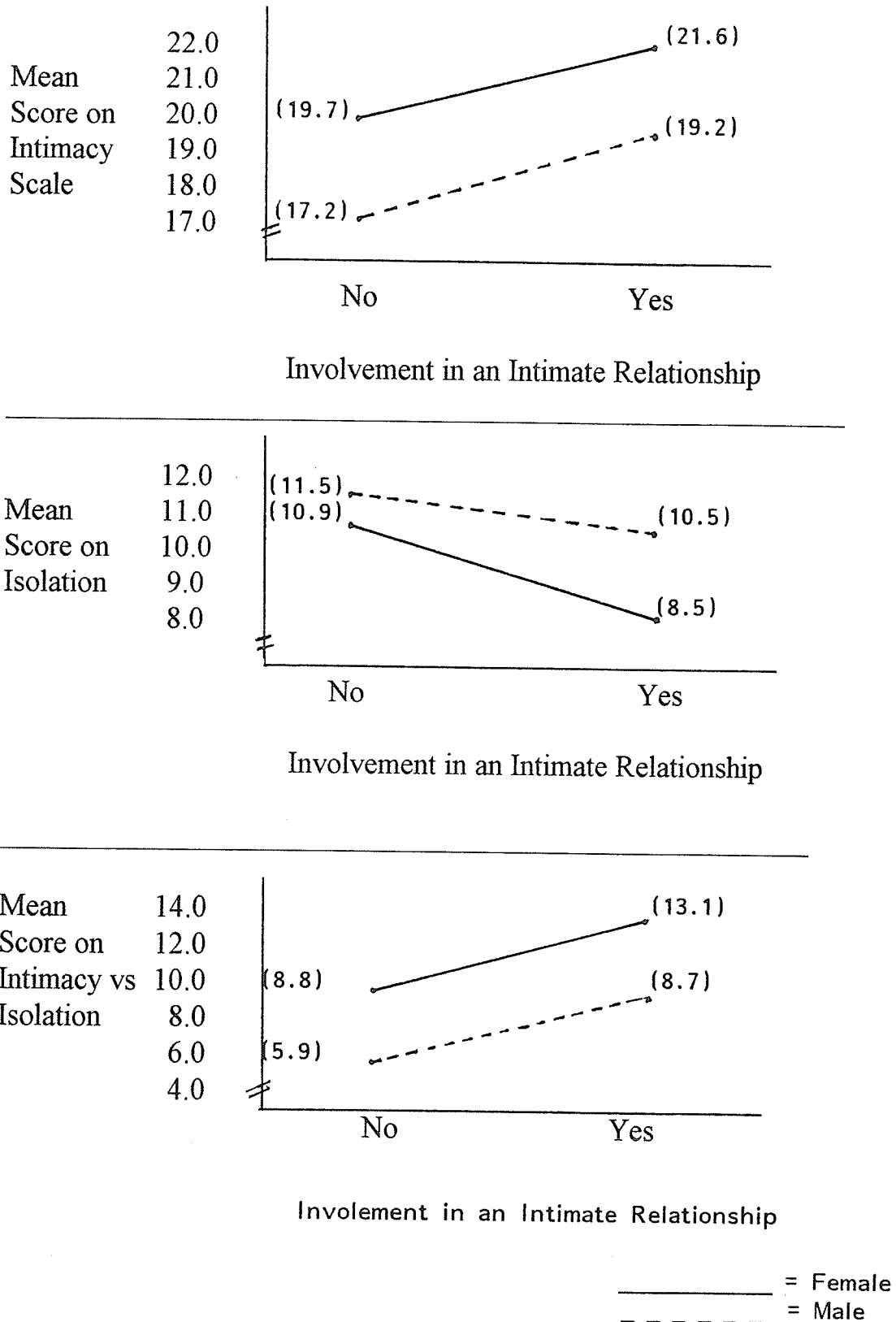
\* p<.05  
 \*\* p<.01  
 \*\*\* p<.001  
 \*\*\*\* p<.0001

participants involved in an intimate relationship and those not involved on each of the subscales regardless of subject gender. Males and females involved in an intimate relationship obtained higher Intimacy (P6) scores than did those not involved in such relationships ( $F(1,382) = 14.83, p < .0001$ ). They also obtained higher resolution of Intimacy vs Isolation scores (R6) ( $F(1,382) = 14.94, p < .0001$ ). Those participants not involved in intimate relationships obtained higher Isolation (N6) scores than did those involved in such relationships ( $F(1,382) = 14.94, p < .0001$ ). There were significant gender effects on these subscales as reported in Hypothesis 3 and Exploratory Analysis 1 above; no interaction effects between participant gender and their involvement in intimate relationships were found. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between involvement in an intimate relationship and intimacy, isolation and resolution of the two for females and males.

### Exploratory Analysis 3

The third area of exploratory analysis focused on the association between participants' identity achievement and intimacy level. Pearson product-moment

Figure 2. Involvement in an intimate relationship and mean scores for male and females on the intimacy and isolation subscales of the MPD.



correlation coefficients were calculated between mean scores on the Identity (P5) subscale and mean scores on the Intimacy (P6) subscales. Correlation provides a measure of association between related variables when neither has been manipulated and inferences regarding causality are not required (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). The correlations were calculated separately for females and males. For females there was a moderate positive correlation between identity and intimacy ( $r = .49$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). For males there was also a moderate positive correlation between these two variables ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

An additional ad hoc analysis was conducted to determine whether gender differences were evident on the FES and FHI subscale scores. An ANOVA indicated that significant differences were evident on 5 subscales. Males reported higher levels of family Achievement Orientation ( $F(1, 384) = 5.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) while females reported higher levels of the other four variables: Intellectual-Cultural Orientation ( $F(1, 384) = 6.0$ ,  $p < .05$ ); Challenge ( $F(1, 384) = 5.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ); Co-oriented Commitment ( $F(1, 380) = 4.39$ ,  $p < .05$ ); and Control ( $F(1, 383) = 4.54$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Discussion

Hypothesis 1

In the first hypothesis it was predicted that subjects' perceptions of their families' environment would be predictive of their achievement of their psychosocial developmental tasks. It was also predicted that a healthier family environment would predict better subject psychosocial development. Specific predictions concerning those aspects of family environment that would be most predictive of psychosocial development achievement were made.

Subjects' perceptions of their families' environment were found to be predictive of their psychosocial development. The specific aspects of family environment hypothesized to be most predictive of psychosocial development were partially supported. There was some variation between the subsets of family environment variables hypothesized to be the best predictors of positive and negative psychosocial development and successful resolution of the developmental stages and those found to be most predictive.

Total P. Higher levels of family Cohesion,



Active-Recreational and Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Independence, and Expressiveness were significant predictors of positive psychosocial development. These findings indicate that members who perceived their families in the following ways had the most positive psychosocial development. The families tended to be viewed as supportive, affiliative and committed to each other. They were also seen as encouraging open communication, assertiveness, self-sufficiency, and individuation in their members. Further, the families were perceived as enjoying shared interests in a variety of areas, encouraging achievement, and having a history of involvement in joint activities. The families were also characterized by their members as emphasizing ethical/religious issues and values.

Based on these findings it may be postulated that families in which members experience feelings of closeness and affiliation, encouragement for their individuation, and clear, open communication tend to produce young adults who report optimal levels of psychological health. This kind of family appears to provide the type of environment in which their children

are able, overall, to achieve each of their developmental tasks from Basic Trust to Integrity and thus demonstrate good psychosocial adjustment.

Families who provide this type of healthy environment would thus tend to provide their children with adequate levels of communicated love and encouragement of growth consistent with the child's needs at each of his or her developmental stages. The cumulative effect of this support of the child's evolving needs is the young adult who, overall, reports positive feelings about him or herself in many contexts as well as positive feelings about others and the world in general.

These findings were similar to those predicted, but based on the findings of previous research it had been predicted that Organization rather than Cohesion and Moral-Religious Emphasis would be a significant predictor of positive psychosocial development. The present finding is consistent with the previous findings, overall, because Cohesion and Moral-Religious Emphasis are characteristics of the Relationship and Personal Growth Dimensions that were found in the previous research to be the dimensions most relevant to

psychosocial development. One possible explanation for the discrepancy is that there are unidentified differences between the samples. The discrepancy does not, however, appear to be due to the inclusion of males in this sample. An ANOVA conducted with subject gender as the independent variable and mean scores on each FES subscale results did not detect gender differences in level of Cohesion, Moral-Religious Emphasis, or Organization.

Total R. Higher levels of Cohesion, Active-Recreational Orientation, Independence, Moral-Religious Emphasis and Expressiveness were predictive of better resolution of the psychosocial issues. These findings indicate that with the exception of Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, the family characteristics predictive of positive psychosocial development were also those predictive of better resolution of developmental stage issues.

These findings, again, point to the association between 1) feelings of affiliation between family members - through emotional connection as well as through shared activities and beliefs; 2) the encouragement to individuate, and 3) clear, open

communication and the psychosocial development of a family's young adults.

The cumulative effect of this support of the child's evolving needs through childhood and adolescence appears to be the young adult who not only reports more positive psychosocial development, but also reports a healthy resolution of their developmental tasks and good psychological adjustment.

These findings were similar to those predicted. In this study, however, Independence and Moral-Religious Emphasis rather than Intellectual-Cultural Orientation were significant predictors of healthy resolution. One explanation for this discrepancy is related to the fact that all of these factors are part of same dimensions - the Personal Growth Dimensions. It may be that this area of family functioning, taken as a whole, is important to the resolution of psychosocial tasks though there may be some differences between samples concerning those specific factors that are most important. Another possible explanation is that gender differences accounted for the difference between samples. Because males were included in this sample but not in the previous one, it may be that

their lower reported level on this variable contributed to its loss of predictive power in this study.

Total N. Lower levels of Cohesion, Independence, Active-Recreational Orientation, and higher levels of Conflict were significant predictors of negative psychosocial development. These findings indicate that members who perceived their families as less supportive and affiliative; as not encouraging individuation; as not engaging in many family-oriented activities; and as characterized by more openly expressed anger and conflict had poorer psychosocial development.

Families who provide this type of environment tend not to provide their children with adequate levels of communicated love and encouragement of growth consistent with the child's needs at each of his or her developmental stages. The cumulative effect of this lack of support of the child's evolving needs is the young adult who, overall, reports more negative than positive feelings about him or herself in many contexts as well as negative or pessimistic feelings about others and the world in general. This type of young adult, therefore, reports less healthy psychosocial development and therefore poorer psychological

adjustment.

These findings were similar to those predicted. In this study, however, Independence rather than Intellectual-Cultural Orientation was a significant predictor of negative psychosocial development. As was the case for Total R, both these factors are part of the Personal Growth Dimensions and therefore may represent differences between samples concerning the specific components of the dimensions that are most important. In particular, gender differences between the samples may be reflected in this difference due to the lower male reports of Intellectual-Cultural Orientation in their families.

These findings, taken together, indicate that subjects' psychosocial development was related to their perceptions of their families' functioning. Higher levels of family Cohesion, Independence, and Active-Recreational orientation were significant predictors of both positive psychosocial development and better resolution of the psychosocial tasks. Lower levels of these three family environment characteristics were also significant predictors of negative psychosocial development.

Higher levels of Moral-Religious Orientation and Expressiveness were also significant predictors of both positive psychosocial development and better resolution of the developmental tasks though lower levels of these characteristics were not significant predictors of negative psychosocial development. In addition, higher levels of family Intellectual-Cultural Orientation were predictive of positive psychosocial development and higher levels of Conflict were predictive of negative psychosocial development.

These findings corroborate those reported by other studies that families with healthy environments - those demonstrating some combination of high cohesion, expressiveness, shared family activities and interests, suggesting a feeling of affiliation, in combination with low family conflict - have a positive impact on their members. Families high in Cohesion and Active-Recreational Orientation and low in Conflict, for example, have been found to be more egalitarian (Ollendick, LaBerteaux, & Horne, 1978). Higher levels of family Cohesion and Expressiveness and lower levels of family Conflict have also been associated with higher self-esteem in adolescents (Hirsch, Moos, &

Reischl, 1985).

The results also corroborate those of other studies suggesting that perceptions of high levels of family conflict are associated with low levels of satisfaction in family life and greater psychological distress in family members. In a study on the effects of parental divorce on adolescents, for example, Dancy and Handel (1980, 1984) found that adolescents' perceptions of high family conflict (in both intact and divorced families) were associated with their reports of a lack of family cohesion, expressiveness, organization, and religious emphasis. The adolescents from families high in conflict also reported more psychological impairment and less satisfaction with their social lives (Dancy & Handel, 1980, 1984; Woody et. al., 1984). Family environments high in conflict and low in cohesion and expressiveness have also been associated with hyperactivity and aggressiveness in boys (McGee, Williams, & Silva, 1984). Further, the combination of high conflict and high life stress in addition to low cohesion and recreational orientation in families has been associated with depressed mood in junior high school students (Friedrich, Reams, &



Jacobs, 1982).

Studies using the FES to assess family climate, such as those cited above, have found relationships between specific aspects of family life and particular outcomes, such as hyperactivity or self-esteem. Level of Cohesion and Conflict appear to be of particular importance because they were consistently related to all of these outcomes. The present study demonstrated that these two family characteristics are also predictive of more global psychosocial development as well.

The seven aspects of family environment found to be most important to psychosocial development in the present study are all measures of the **Relationship Dimensions** (Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Conflict) and the **Personal Growth Dimensions** (Independence, Active-Recreational Orientation, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation) on the FES. The six aspects of family environment found to be most relevant to psychosocial development in the previous study (and hypothesized for this study as well) were almost exclusively measures of the **Relationship** and **Personal Growth Dimensions** as well. The only exception was

Organization, found in the previous research to be a significant predictor of positive psychosocial development.

It appears then, that the most relevant dimensions of family environment to the psychosocial development of the family's youth are those related to the quality of relationships between members and to the value placed on providing opportunities for members' growth. The FES **System Maintenance Dimension** (Organization and Control - the use of rules and procedures) seems to be of less importance to psychosocial development.

These results provide empirical support for the position of family theorists such as Barnhill (1979) and Skynner (1981) who have pointed out particular characteristics that appear to be most relevant to family functioning. They also suggest that certain of these characteristics are particularly important to psychosocial development. Family feelings of mutuality, opportunities for individuation, and open communication appear to be those characteristics most consistently related to healthier psychosocial development and their converse to more problematic development. The findings also suggest that generic

family conflict, a characteristic not specifically delineated in many family theories, may also be important.

These findings have potential practical relevance to therapists. While a causal relationship between these family environment variables and psychosocial development cannot be inferred, the findings suggest that therapy designed to increase feelings of closeness and connection between family members, to encourage opportunities for members' individuation, to improve communication, and to reduce conflict may be associated with healthy psychosocial development in their young people. They also suggest that encouraging time spent together as a family and the development of shared family interests may contribute to a family environment that is associated with good psychosocial development.

#### Hypothesis 2

It was hypothesized that subjects' perceptions of their families' hardiness (or stress-resistance and durability) would be predictive of their achievement of their psychosocial developmental tasks and that higher levels of family hardiness would predict better

psychosocial development. Specific hypotheses concerning those aspects of family hardiness that would be most predictive of the achievement of these tasks were made.

Subjects' perceptions of their families' hardiness were found to be predictive of their psychosocial development. The specific aspects of family hardiness hypothesized to be most predictive of psychosocial development were partially supported. There was some variation between the subsets of family hardiness variables found in previous research to be the best predictors of positive and negative psychosocial development and successful resolution of the developmental stages and the subsets found in this study.

Total P. Higher levels of family Confidence and Challenge were significant predictors of positive psychosocial development. These findings indicate that members who perceived their families in the following ways had the most positive psychosocial development. The families tended to be characterized by their members as having confidence in their abilities and in the future, as finding life interesting and meaningful

and as appreciative of each others' efforts. They were also perceived as creative problem-solvers, active, welcoming of new experiences and able to learn from their experiences.

In this type of family, members likely develop a sense of trust in themselves and others and a pervasive sense of optimism about the future. In addition, this type of family would likely help their members develop confidence in their abilities and support them in feeling challenged rather than overwhelmed by the tasks in each of the developmental stages encountered. Therefore children in this type of family would be better able to accomplish their developmental tasks and report more positive psychosocial development.

These findings were similar to those predicted. In this study, however, family Co-oriented Commitment, or sense of members' dependability and co-operation, was not a significant predictor of positive psychosocial development as it had been in the previous research.

One possible explanation for the discrepancy is that there was a significant difference between males' and females' perceptions of their families' level of

Co-oriented Commitment with females reporting higher levels of the characteristic. The inclusion of males in this sample, therefore, may have contributed to the decrease in importance of this variable in the present study.

Total R. Higher levels of family Confidence, Challenge, and a sense of family Control were significant predictors of better resolution of the psychosocial issues. These findings indicate the two factors predictive of positive psychosocial development (Confidence and Challenge) also predicted better resolution of developmental tasks. In addition, however, a higher level of family Control was also important. This was the sense that the family was in control of family life rather than unduly influenced by outside events and circumstances.

These findings were similar to those predicted. It had not been predicted, however, that family Control would be a significant predictor of healthy resolution as it was found to be. This discrepancy cannot be explained by the inclusion of males in this sample. A gender difference was evident but the females reported the higher scores. If Control was generally predictive

of better resolution of psychosocial tasks for women, we would expect that the sample made up solely of women would identify Control as a predictive variable. This was not the case. The difference may be due, then, to other, unidentified variables.

Total N. Lower levels of Confidence, Challenge, and Control were significant predictors of negative psychosocial development. These findings indicate that members who perceived their families as demonstrating characteristics opposite to those predictive of better resolution of developmental tasks had more problematic psychosocial development. They saw their families as lacking confidence in their abilities and in the future, as finding life uninteresting and lacking meaning and as unappreciative of each others' efforts. The families were also perceived by their members as having difficulty solving problems, as being less active, as tending to be more threatened than challenged by new experiences and as having more difficulty learning from their experiences. In addition, they were seen to be excessively influenced by events and influences over which they felt they had little control.

In this type of family, members likely develop a sense of mistrust in themselves and others and a sense of pessimism about the future and their ability to cope with future events. This type of family would therefore be unlikely to help their members develop confidence in their abilities. Members could therefore feel overwhelmed by challenges and by the tasks in each of the developmental stages encountered. In addition, a family that did not feel in control of its destiny, but rather unduly influenced by external forces would likely have members who felt insecure and anxious about the present and future. Children in this type of family would tend, overall, not to develop the confidence necessary to accomplish their developmental tasks and would thus demonstrate poorer psychosocial development and less healthy psychological adjustment.

These findings were similar to those predicted. It had been predicted, however, that Co-oriented Commitment would also be a significant predictor of negative psychosocial development. In the present study, however, this variable was not a significant predictor of negative psychosocial development. This difference may be explained by gender differences



between samples. The females in this sample, as a group, reported higher levels of Co-oriented Commitment than did the males. If this variable is more predictive of negative psychosocial development for women then we would expect that it would be a more powerful predictor in an all-female sample.

These findings, taken together, indicate that subjects' psychosocial development was related to their perceptions of their families' functioning. Higher levels of family Confidence and Challenge were significant predictors of both positive psychosocial development and better resolution of the psychosocial tasks. In addition, the latter was also predicted by higher levels of family Control. Lower levels of these three characteristics were found to be significant predictors of negative psychosocial development.

These findings as well provide further empirical support for the position that family characteristics have an impact on the development of youth in the family. Families who find life interesting and meaningful and have confidence in the future; who are active, creative problem-solvers, challenged by life; who feel that they control their family life rather

than see themselves as shaped by outside events and circumstances, tend to have young adults who report good psychosocial development and better resolution of developmental issues. Young adult members who report poor psychosocial development and poor resolution of developmental issues tend to perceive their families as demonstrating the opposite attitudes.

These findings also have potential practical relevance to family therapists. They suggest that therapy that assists a family to feel a greater sense of confidence in themselves and their ability to solve problems may assist members in their psychosocial development. In fact, the process of therapy itself seems to provide a unique opportunity in which family members can experience themselves as actively working to solve their problems. Experiencing success in this endeavour may, through the process itself, assist the family to develop a greater degree of hardiness.

### Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicted that males and females would differ in their achievement of developmental tasks related to identity and intimacy. Males and females differed in their achievement of

intimacy with females reporting higher levels of intimacy and resolution of intimacy versus isolation and males reporting higher levels of isolation. No gender differences were detected in the achievement of the identity dimension.

The finding that females and males differed in their achievement of intimacy provides support for the suggestion made by theorists such as Miller (1976) and Gilligan (1982) that Erikson's theory of psychosocial development does not fit males and females equally well. Erikson's theory would predict that following the establishment of identity, which both males and females in this sample have achieved to the same degree, an individual seeks intimacy with another. In this study, the females as a group, demonstrated a higher level of intimacy than did the males as a group. Thus, in the establishment of intimacy males and females appear to be following somewhat different paths.

The young women in this sample were more likely to indicate that they were able to enter into and enjoy close relationships with others than were the young men. More women than men also indicated that they were

involved in intimate relationships. Further, the women were more likely to have achieved a healthy balance between sharing themselves with others and maintaining their identities in the relationship. The young men were more likely to indicate that they felt alone, isolated and alienated and that they had difficulty entering into close relationships with others.

The question that arises, however, is whether the females studied are following the sequence of stages proposed by Erikson or whether their development is different than Erikson proposed. It may be that the females are moving through the psychosocial stages in the sequence Erikson proposed but have accomplished the tasks associated with intimacy more quickly than have the males studied.

Alternatively, it may be that the young women are following a different developmental path. It could be, as Gilligan (1982) suggested, that for women the development of identity and intimacy are fused and not sequential. The findings are consistent with the view that women develop their capabilities and self knowledge - their identity - within the context of intimacy. It could also be, as Miller (1976)

postulated, that the intimacy suggested by being "in relationship" precedes the development of identity in women, as well as the accomplishment of earlier developmental tasks such as initiative and industry.

The finding that males and females did not differ in their accomplishment of identity provides support for Erikson's assertion that the establishment of individual identity is the task of adolescence regardless of one's gender. For males, this finding also provides support for Erikson's view that the establishment of identity is the precursor to the establishment of intimacy. For females, however, Erikson's view is not clearly supported. While the establishment of identity may indeed precede the achievement of intimacy, for young women there are other possible explanations as well. The tasks associated with intimacy may be accomplished at an earlier point in development as girls remain relationally connected to important others in their lives while they simultaneously accomplish earlier stage tasks. Alternatively, girls may develop their identities while simultaneously establishing intimacy with others. Thus, through the establishment of close

relationships with others and their experiences of these relationships young women may be also be defining themselves.

The finding that males and females demonstrated equally good identity development, would not have been predicted by Marcia (1980) who identified gender differences in dealing with identity issues. Gender differences in the accomplishment of identity-related tasks were also predicted in the present study. The finding that this group as a whole evidenced accomplishment of identity-related tasks might also be due in large part, for both genders, to idiosyncratic characteristics of the sample. Erikson believed that occupational identity was the most important aspect of ego-identity. It is possible that in this university sample both males and females tend to perceive themselves as moving toward careers and therefore have established a firm sense of identity in this regard. In other samples, with young adults not attending university for example, and perhaps not as firmly on route to an occupational identity, there may be greater variability in the achievement of tasks related to this stage for both genders.

Exploratory Analysis 1

It was expected that gender differences would be evident in the accomplishment of specific psychosocial stages. Exploratory analyses revealed gender differences in psychosocial development in the areas of Autonomy and Shame & Doubt, and Generativity and Stagnation.

Autonomy and Shame & Doubt. The finding that males as a group obtained higher scores than did the females in the accomplishment of tasks related to autonomy is interesting in light of Erikson's assertion that the development of autonomy is the precursor to ego-identity in adolescence. Since there were no gender differences detected with identity, one would expect, given Erikson's formulation, that there would similarly be no gender differences evident on the autonomy dimension. In this instance as well then, Erikson's model does not seem to fit the experience of females to the same degree that it does that of males. For females, autonomy does not appear to be the precursor to identity that it is for males. It may be instead, as suggested by the "self-in-relation" model of women's development, that women do not disconnect

from important others in their lives to the same degree as men do as they complete successive developmental tasks.

Generativity and Stagnation. The finding that females obtained higher scores on the measure of generativity in addition to their higher intimacy scores points to the conceptual link Erikson postulated between intimacy and generativity. Erikson believed that the ability to be intimate was the basis for developing strong relationships with partners and children, nurturing the next generation, and broadening one's focus of concern outward to the societal level. It appears that the females in this study were better able to achieve the tasks related to both intimacy and generativity.

The finding also provides support for the self-in-relation model of women's development. The view that girls and women grow and learn through their connections with others suggests that they are likely predisposed at an earlier age to looking outside of themselves - to other people, and perhaps to broader issues in the community as well. It also suggests that women (at an earlier age) could tend to derive greater



feelings of satisfaction from their relational involvement with others and issues outside of themselves. Further, it suggests that women are socialized to care more for others and that this caring may also become translated into a higher level of social concern.

The finding that the males in the sample obtained higher scores on the measure of stagnation again provides support for the conceptual link between intimacy (or isolation) and generativity (or stagnation) because the males also obtained lower intimacy scores than did the females. It also suggests that the males in this sample may be feeling disconnected to others both at a personal as well as at a societal level.

#### Exploratory Analysis 2

This exploratory analysis revealed that for both males and females, involvement in an intimate relationship was associated with greater feelings of intimacy, less feelings of isolation and better resolution of the issues related to Intimacy versus Isolation. While the females demonstrated higher levels of intimacy and lower levels of isolation

whether they were involved in a relationship or not, this finding also suggests that for both men and women, involvement in a close relationship with another person is associated with the successful accomplishment of this developmental stage.

### Exploratory Analysis 3

This exploratory analysis revealed that for both males and females, higher levels of identity development were associated with higher levels of intimacy. For males, this finding supports Erikson's contention that intimacy follows from the achievement of identity. Those young men who have achieved identity then engage in their next developmental task, the establishment of an important, close relationship with another person. The finding suggests that the process may be the same for women as well.

However, the findings that women, overall, had higher levels of intimacy and that more women than men were involved in intimate relationships suggests that the issue may be more complex. It may be, for example, that involvement in an intimate relationship is a mediating variable that influences male and female intimacy levels. It may also be that involvement in an

intimate relationship influences the development of identity in both young women and young men. This question and others related to the processes of intimacy and identity development in males and females would be fascinating subjects for further research.

#### Summary

The results of this study indicated that specific dimensions of family environment and family hardness were predictive of psychosocial development in young adults. They also indicated that males and females differ in their achievement of psychosocial tasks related to Autonomy versus Shame & Doubt, Intimacy versus Isolation, and Generativity versus Stagnation.

Based on these findings it appears that Erikson's theory of psychosocial development may not be equally applicable to the experiences of men and women. This is true particularly in the relationship between the establishment of ego-identity and the achievement of intimacy. It appears that Erikson's theory is more applicable to male development than it is to female development. Further, it appears, as Gilligan (1982) and Miller (1976) have suggested, that a theory of female development must take into account the

relational aspects of women's experience. The young women reported higher levels of both intimacy and generativity than did their male counterparts. This suggests that these women are accomplishing these developmental tasks at a different rate than are the men. These findings suggest that there may be factors related to the relational nature of these tasks that are important to explaining these differences.

## Limitations

The primary limitation of this study concerns external validity, the extent to which the results can be generalized or extended to people, settings, times, measurements and characteristics other than those used in this particular research arrangement (Kazdin, 1992). First, concerning the sample characteristics, university students were the only participants in the study. The age of the subjects was appropriate for the study of psychosocial tasks related to identity and intimacy. However, the sample did not include 18-24 year olds not attending university and therefore the generalizability of the findings is restricted to university students. Young adults not attending university could generate different findings regarding their identity formation, their involvement in intimate relationships and their intimacy level.

Characteristics of the measurement tools may also limit generalizability of the findings. Self-report measures have been criticized because of potential biases on the part of the subject and lack of evidence that the measure adequately assesses the characteristics of concern (Kazdin, 1992). This study

attempted to minimize possible subject distortion by having subjects complete the measures under conditions of anonymity. Measures with demonstrated validity and reliability were also used to minimize the possibility that the characteristics of concern were not adequately assessed. In addition, the use of two family functioning measures and theoretically compatible subscales on the psychosocial development measure that provide complementary results allows us to have greater confidence that the measures assess what they were intended to assess. Nonetheless, the generalizability of these findings are limited to self-reported perceptions of family functioning and psychosocial development.

#### Directions for Future Research

The present study has raised a number of questions concerning the applicability of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development to women's development. One method of further investigating the relevance of this model for women would be to assess the psychosocial development of males and females at different ages and within non-academic settings. Longitudinal or cross-sectional research would be particularly helpful to

delineating precisely where the differences in identity development and intimacy originate.

Future research should also be directed toward operationalizing and testing the self-in-relation model of women's development. The present findings provide support for the theoretical position that the relational context is of particular importance to understanding gender differences in psychosocial development. To date, however, only qualitative research using an interview format has been used to study this model. Further empirical research is required to test the self-in relation model before it can be offered as an alternate model of personality development.

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**Appendix A**



decision - making period deciding what you want to do with your life?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered YES to Question 8 above:

9. Did this decision-making process create conflict with your parents?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered YES to Question 9:

10. Was this conflict upsetting for you?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you made a commitment to particular beliefs (e.g. religious, ideological, moral) that are important to you?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix B**

### Family Hardiness Index

Please read each statement below and decide to what degree it describes your family. Is the statement

False = 1  
Mostly False = 2  
Mostly True = 3  
Totally True = 4  
Not Applicable = 5

about your family? Indicate a number 1-5 on the attached computer sheet to match your feelings about each statement.

In our family:

1. Trouble results from mistakes we make.
2. It is not wise to plan ahead and hope because things do not turn out anyway.
3. Our work and efforts are not appreciated no matter how hard we try and work.
4. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good things that happen.
5. We have a sense of being strong even when we face big problems.
6. Many times I feel I can trust that even in difficult times that things will work out.
7. While we don't always agree, we can count on each other to stand by us in times of trouble.
8. We do not feel we can survive if another problem hits us.
9. We believe that things will work out for the better if we work together as a family.
10. Life seems dull and meaningless.

11. We strive together and help each other no matter what.
12. When our family plans activities, we try new and exciting things.
13. We listen to each others' problems, hurts, and fears.
14. We tend to do the same things over and over ... it's boring.
15. We seem to encourage each other to try new things and experiences.
16. It is better to stay at home than go out and do things with others.
17. Being active and learning new things are encouraged.
18. We work together to solve problems.
19. Most of the unhappy things that happen are due to bad luck.
20. We realize our lives are controlled by accidents and luck.

Appendix C

Hi, my name is Paula Battle and I am a Master's student in Psychology. I'm doing my masters thesis on university students and I need a large number of men and women between the ages of 18 and 24 only to participate. The study is called "Kingston" and it will look at university students' perceptions, feelings and attitudes about themselves, their families, life events such as physical and sexual assault and interpersonal relationships. I am interested in both male and female perceptions about these topics.

Participation would involve completing a number of questionnaires. It would take approximately 2 hours and it would give you 2 of the 7 points you are able to earn toward your final grade by participating in studies. All responses to the questionnaires are confidential and anonymous -you would not put your name or student number on any of the sheets. We would like those of you who would like to participate, to complete the questionnaires in groups of about 70 during the weeks of September 20 and 27. We have booked 100 FA from 2:30 to 4:30 Monday to Thursday of those two weeks for this purpose.

During your class today we will circulate 8 clipboards. The purple ones are for women to sign up in and the green ones are for the men to sign up in. Two of the purple ones are marked Week of Sept. 20th and two are marked Week of Sept 27. The same is true of the green ones. This is to facilitate the binders being circulated. What you should do is decide what days (Monday to Thursday) you would be free between 2:30 and 4:30 and look for that clipboard to come past you (purple-women and green-men). Inside the binder you will find the specific day. Fill in your name, phone number and student number and take the reminder tab with you. We will fill in the other bubbles. Then come to FA 100 on the date you have picked. Please send all the binders down to the front of the class when they have been around to everyone.

If you can only come on a particular day and all the spaces for that day are filled, please speak to one of us at the end of this class when we come back to

pick up the clipboards. And one last encouragement to participate in this experiment. 1) We'd really like your input and 2) sometimes students put off participating and think they will become involved later in the term-- this way you will already have 2 marks by the end of the month, and sometimes there are other restrictions in studies - i.e women or men only and you may not have as many studies to choose from as you thought you would. Thanks. Any questions?

**Appendix D**

**CONSENT FORM**

This is a study examining university students' perceptions, feelings, and attitudes about family life, interpersonal relationships, and life events such as sexual and physical assault. Should you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires pertaining to the topics mentioned. The completion of the questionnaires will take approximately 2 hours and you will receive 2 experimental credits. You may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Please be assured that your responses will be kept strictly confidential

Your signature below indicates your consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Appendix E**

### FEEDBACK

The purpose of the study you have just participated in, is to examine those family characteristics which have the greatest impact on the psychosocial development of young adults. In Erik Erickson's conceptualization, development follows a particular sequence and is affected by an individual's resolution of particular psychosocial tasks. This resolution is influenced decisions one makes and by significant others in an individual's environment. We are most interested in those characteristics of families which most greatly affect the accomplishment of the tasks Erikson has delineated.

Another area of interest is whether males and females accomplish all these tasks in the same order. While Erikson has proposed that the establishment of identity must precede intimacy, there is a growing body of literature which suggests that for women at least, intimacy may precede or be fused with the development of identity. The study will also examine this issue.

At the completion of the study, general summary of the results will be available at Rm 106 Fletcher Argue. Your participation in this study was greatly appreciated. Thankyou.