PERCEPTIONS OF THE ADULT SON/HUSBAND'S MEDIATION STYLES IN CHINESE

MOTHER/DAUGHTER-IN-LAW CONFLICTS

By

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Abstract

From the perspectives of mothers-in-law ($n = 316$, M age $= 62.80$, $SD = 8.07$) and daughters-in-law ($n = 287$, M age $= 37.17$, $SD = 8.12$), this study examined the son/husband's mediation role in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts in the People's Republic of China. An analysis of variance with a between subject factor (2 participant groups: mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) and a within subject factor (4 mediation styles: the problem solving, accommodating, avoiding and competing styles) was first conducted to examine how perceptions of the son/husband's mediation style compare between and within the mother- and daughter-in-law groups. For both groups, results indicated that the problem-solving style was most used by the son/husband, followed by the accommodating, avoiding, and competing styles. While both groups evaluated the son/husband's use of the problem-solving, competing and avoiding styles similarly, the mother-in-law group rated the son's use of the accommodating style at a significantly higher degree than the daughter-in-law group did about the husband. Second, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine the predictability of four criterion variables (i.e., relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband, and judgments about the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness) on perceptions of the son/husband's mediation style. Supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2, for both groups, results indicated that the son/husband's use of the problem-solving style was a significant and positive predictor of all criterion variables whereas his use of competing style was a significant and negative predictor; the son/husband's use of the accommodating style positively predicted judgments of his mediation appropriateness. In addition, the son/husband's use of the avoiding style negatively predicted judgments about his mediation appropriateness and effectiveness for the mother-in-law group and negatively predicated judgments about his mediation effectiveness for the daughter-in-

law group. Third, SOBEL tests were conducted to examine the indirect effects of filial piety and shared family identity with the in-law on the four criterion variables. In general, results showed that filial piety and shared family identity had indirect effects on relational satisfaction in the family context. These findings were discussed with reference to the prior literature on culture and interpersonal conflict management, the Common Ingroup Identity Model, family relationships, as well as culture change in China.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The metaphor of "double-sided tape" is often used by Chinese people to refer to the

son/husband's intermediary role in the mother/daughter-in-law relationship. Indeed, like double-

sided tape sticks two surfaces together, a married man is the person who brings his mother and

wife into an in-law relationship. He often helps the two women manage relational distance and

negotiate power (Serewicz, 2006b). In mother/daughter in-law conflicts, how the son/husband

intervenes influences the triadic relationships among the three family members. For example,

Rittenour and Soliz (2009) reported that the daughter-in-law's perception of the husband's

loyalty to his mother negatively predicted the relational quality with the mother-in-law, while the

perception of the husband's loyalty to his wife positively predicted the relational quality with the

mother-in-law. In a study of marital success, Bryant, Conger, and Meehan (2001) found that the

husband's alliance with his wife enhanced the couple's marital satisfaction. Meanwhile, some

couples divorced due to unresolved mother/daughter-in-law conflicts. In another study focusing

on South Asian daughters-in-law in the United States, Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, and

Silverman (2006) found that intimate partner violence correlated significantly and positively

with emotional abuse by the mother-in-law. In face of unfavorable conditions, some daughters-

in-law might use suicidal behaviors as self-defense strategies against mistreatment by their

mothers-in-law and husbands (e.g., Liu, 2002; Meng, 2002; Xie, 1999). These findings jointly

indicate the importance of the son/husband's intermediary role in mother/daughter in-law

conflicts.

One prerequisite to understanding the son/husband's mediation in mother/daughter in-law

conflicts is to recognize the heterogeneity of the mother/daughter in-law relationship across

cultures (Datta, Poortinga, & Marcoen, 2003; Serevicz, 2006b). In many Western cultures, adult children have separate residence from their parents and hold more responsibility for their own aging parents than for their parents-in-law (Altman, Brown, Staples, & Werner, 1992; Datta et al., 2003). Split households and fewer obligations toward parents-in-law reduce the power of parents-in-law over adult children as they have less opportunity to influence children-in-law. Additionally, the emphasis on individualism and the primacy of the marital relationship over intergenerational relationships within a family reduce the status difference between parents- and children-in-law (Serewicz, 2006b). In general, married couples in Western cultures, such as the US, are relatively more autonomous and independent of their parents/parents-in-law than those in the Eastern cultures, such as China.

Many Eastern cultures have explicit role expectations for the mother/daughter in-law relationship. For example, in India, it is traditional for daughters-in-law to live with and take care of the aging parents-in-law (Datta et al., 2003). In China, the Protection Law of Senior Citizen's Rights and Interests states that married couples share the obligation of supporting their aging parents on both sides. Adult children have the obligation to provide financial, physical, and psychological supports for aging parents or parents-in-law who cannot live on their own. Violators who shirk this obligation or abuse their parents/parents-in-law in any manner might face lawsuit (The Standing Committee of National People's Congress, 1996). In practice, a Chinese daughter-in-law will receive compliments from peers, family members, friends, and/or neighbors if she displays filial piety (e.g., providing good care and showing respect/obedience) to her parents-in-law. Otherwise, she will face condemnation for being unethical (Gao & Ting–Toomey, 1998). These examples indicate the existence of role/age-based hierarchy and potential tension in the mother/daughter in-law relationship in the East (Altman et al., 1992; Datta et al.,

2003). Extending prior research on intergenerational communication in the family context, the current study focuses on the mother- and daughter-in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's mediation role in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts in China.

Chinese people traditionally endorse harmony as the cardinal value in family life. They believe that any accomplishment is possible in a harmonious family (*jiahe wanshi xing*, 家和万事兴). When a conflict occurs, direct confrontation will threaten conflict parties' *mianzi* (i.e., face) and cause emotional uneasiness (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Hwang, 1998). Through recruiting a mediator, the parties of a conflict retain mutual face and harmony on the surface, and obtain some bargaining power (Ma, 1992; Read & Michelson, 2008). In China, mediation means reconciliation, whereas resolving a family dispute in court is a sign of an irreconcilable relationship (Bishop, 1987; Read & Michelson, 2008). Therefore, when the mother-in-law and the daughter- in-law run into conflicts with each other, they often seek justice and reconciliation through the son/husband's mediation. When mediating, a married man interacts with his mother and wife separately, thus reducing the risk of escalating in-law conflicts and minimizing potential damage to family harmony. In this respect, the son/husband's mediation style is reflected in his conflict management strategies when interacting dyadically with his mother and his wife.

The use of particular conflict styles influences relational satisfaction and perceived communication appropriateness and effectiveness (Afifi, McManus, Steuber, & Coho, 2009; Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989; Gross & Guerrero, 2000). In general, prior research in Western cultures has demonstrated that the problem-solving and accommodating styles associate positively with relational satisfaction and communication appropriateness and effectiveness while the competing and avoiding styles are negatively related to these outcomes (Afifi et al.,

2009; Mackey, Diemer, & O'Brian, 2004; Canary, Cupach, & Serpe, 2001). In light of previous findings, the present study will examine (1) the mother/daughter-in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's mediation style; (2) the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation style and relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband, as well as judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness.

This study also considers the influence of shared family identity with the in-law on the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction, as well as the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), people tend to associate themselves and others with certain groups (e.g., based on the categories of age, gender, and culture). They compare their groups with other groups for positive distinction. Group membership creates the in/outgroup boundary and is often associated with differentiated treatments (e.g., in-group favoritism and outgroup derogation). Many scholars have identified the influence of social identity deriving from various group markers on people's communication in different settings, for example, "stepfamily" in Braithwaite, Olson, Golish, Soukup, and Turman (2001) and "age stereotype" in Hummert et al. (2004), Williams and Giles (1996), and Williams and Nussbaum (2001). In the family setting, shared family identity has been found to be an important factor contributing to solidarity in the grandparent-grandchild relationship (e.g., Harwood, 2000; Soliz & Harwood, 2006).

The in/outgroup identity influences Chinese people's interpersonal communication. China is a collectivistic culture, which emphasizes family and group goals more than individual interests (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). People of one family/group are supposed to speak from the same perspective (e.g., *yi jia ren bu shuo liang jia hua*, 一家人不说两家话), value harmony (e.g., *yi he wei*

gui, 以和为贵), and remain quiet in mind and peaceful in disposition even in conflict situations (e.g., *xin ping qi he*, 心平气和). Nevertheless, Chinese people may manage conflicts with outgroup members differently than they do with ingroup members (Leung, 1988; Leung, Koch & Lu, 2002). For example, Chinese used the avoiding style more with friends and less with strangers (Leung, 1988).

In addition to shared family identity, this study examines the influence of filial piety on the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction as well as his mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Chinese people endorse the value of filial piety (*xiao*, 孝) in intergenerational family communication, which emphasizes younger people's accommodation, respect, and support for older people (Chu & Ju, 1993; Chen, 2002; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). Traditionally, filial piety has been perceived as the most important of all virtues (i.e., *bai shan xiao wei xian*, 百善孝为先) and is still a central criterion used to assess family life in the modern Chinese society. For example, Chinese families consider it as an honor to be selected by their neighborhoods as a "Five-Virtue Family" (*wu hao jia ting*, "五好家庭"; a family outstanding in its respect for the law, work ethic, family planning, family harmony, and household management). Among the five aspects, family harmony emphasizes filial piety, loving of the young, and gender equality (Joint Announcement, 1996).

Prior studies on shared family identity, filial piety, and Chinese traditions suggest that the differences in age and/or family identity among the son/husband, the mother-in-law, and the daughter-in-law may constitute intergroup boundaries that interfere with communication. That said, shared family identity and filial piety could reduce this interference and enhance in-laws' relational satisfaction as well as their perceptions of the son/husband's communication appropriateness and effectiveness. Therefore, this study also examines the influence of filial

piety and shared family identity in studying Chinese son/husband's mediation role in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts.

In summary, the present study intends to investigate the son/husband's mediation styles in in-law conflicts from the perspectives of mothers- and daughters-in-law in the People's Republic of China. This study first aims to compare perceptions of the son/husband's use of mediation styles between the two participant groups. Second, it will test the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband as well as his mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Third, this study will examine the influence of filial piety and shared family identity with the in-law on the above associations. The following chapters include reviews of the prior literature and major theoretical frameworks used to guide this study, descriptions of the methods designed to conduct the present study, reports of the major findings, and a discussion of the findings along with their theoretical contributions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mediation Styles, Relational Satisfaction, and Mediation Appropriateness and Effectiveness

Prior research on mediation in the West focuses on how professionals provide services and training in court, workplace, clinic, or international crises (e.g., Beardsley, Quinn, Biswas, & Wilkenfeld, 2006; David, 1992; McDermott & Obar, 2004). Bercovitch, Anagnoson, and Wille (1991) define mediation as "a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state, or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law (p. 8)." It is a professional norm that mediators should not have interests benefiting directly from negotiation outcomes so as to presume neutrality and objectivity in mediation (Cobb & Rifkin, 1991). With this prerequisite, some mediation styles, such as facilitation, formulation, and manipulation, have been identified (Beardsley, Quinn, Biswas, & Wilkenfeld, 2006). However, none of these mediation styles can reflect accurately the complexity of the son/husband's mediation in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, in which the son/husband has close relationships with both conflict parties and thus might be affected by the mediation outcomes.

When intervening in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the son/husband has multiple concerns. The mother-son affection accumulated over the years makes a married man remain connected with his mother after he gets married (Meyerstein, 1996). In the meantime, if the husband wants to maintain a satisfactory spousal relationship, he cannot ignore his wife's needs. Spousal supports and alliances in unfavorable conditions can enhance marital satisfaction (e.g., Bryant et al., 2001). When it comes to mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the son/husband's union

with one party (i.e., either his mother or wife) and competition against or avoidance of another create heightened family tensions (Liu, 2002). Rittenour and Soliz (2009) found that, from the perspective of daughters-in-law, a man siding with his mother acted as a hindrance to in-law conflict management while his allegiance to his wife had a positive impact on the mother/daughter-in-law relationship. Nevertheless, this spousal loyalty could result in problematic repercussions, such as the mother-in-law's jealousy, resentment towards the daughter-in-law, or relational instability between the two women. Therefore, the son/husband should balance these concerns and exercise caution in communicating with his mother and wife about in-law conflicts.

In China, when mediating mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the son/husband often communicates with each party separately and privately to save face and preserve harmony. Therefore, a conceivable means to examine the son/husband's mediation style is to measure his conflict management styles reflected in his dyadic interactions with his mother and his wife.

Among many scales measuring conflict styles, scholars cite the dual concern model (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) most frequently for its theoretical and heuristic values (Cai & Fink, 2002). Evolving from Blake and Mouton's (1964) and Thomas' (1976) studies, the dual concern model measures an individual's conflict styles based on whether one has a high or low concern for "self" and "the other" party. Using a conceptualization similar to that of Blake and Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1976), Rahim (1983) developed the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory—II (ROCI—II) to measure interpersonal conflict management styles in the organizational context. He categorized five conflict styles (i.e., integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising) along two basic dimensions: concern for self (the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy his/her own concerns) and concern for others (the degree to which a

person wants to satisfy others' concerns). Rahim and Magner (1995) further modified ROCI—II with 28 Likert-type items assessing the above five styles. Many researchers have used the mode of ROCI—II or its modified version (Rahim & Magner, 1995) to study interpersonal conflict management in various contexts (e.g., van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990; Cai & Fink, 2002). Some scholars find that the compromising style is not significantly different from the integrating and accommodating styles in practice (Cai & Fink, 2002; Putnam & Wilson, 1982; van de Vilert & Hordijk, 1989; Witteman, 1992). Based on prior findings, the present study uses four distinctive conflict styles – competing, accommodating, avoiding, and problem-solving – to measure the son/husband's mediation styles.

In the dyadic communications between mother and son and between husband and wife, each mediation style reflects the degree of the son/husband's concern for one conflict party (e.g., mother) and his concern for others (e.g., wife, himself, and/or other family members). Although the son/husband is not the direct cause of in-law conflicts, outcomes of the in-law conflict management may affect him in many aspects, such as his marital quality, the mother-son relationship, and the overall familial harmony. In interaction with his mother, the son/husband has two major concerns: concern for his mother and concern for others. Concern for others may include the son's concern for himself, his wife, and/or other family members. Similarly in interaction with his wife, the son/husband's two major concerns include the concern for his wife and that for others. "Concern for others" may consist of that for himself, his mother, and/or other family members. Along the two major dimensions of "concern for mother or wife" and "concern for others," the son/husband's mediation styles are categorized into four styles in each dyadic interaction with his mother and wife respectively. For example, in the mother-son dyadic communication, the *competing* style indicates the son's need to control or dominate the conflict

situation by pushing for his position or goal at the cost of his mother's interest. This position or goal may reflect the interests of himself, his wife, and/or other family members. The *problem-solving* style reflects the son's need to balance his mother's and other concerns for the sake of conflict resolution and relational harmony. The *avoiding* style involves the adult son's evasion of the conflict topic, the conflict party/parties, or the conflict situation altogether. The *accommodating* style reflects the son's high concern for his mother beyond his own and/or others' interests in order to achieve relational satisfaction or harmony. The same conceptualization applies to the husband-wife interaction.

Prior research has identified significant associations between conflict management styles and relational satisfaction in different contexts. In general, the problem-solving style used by both conflict parties and the accommodating style used by one's counterpart positively predict relational satisfaction in different cultural and relational contexts (e.g., Kim & Leung, 2000; Zhang, Harwood, & Hummert, 2005). By contrast, one conflict party's use of the competing style (e.g., verbal aggressiveness) is negatively related to another party's relational satisfaction (Teven, Martin, & Neupauer, 1998). However, verbal avoidance by both conflict parties can negatively predict relational satisfaction (Afifi et al., 2009). For example, research has demonstrated that constructive and destructive conflict behaviors are associated with the quality of marriage over time (Fletcher & Thomas, 2000). In particular, the competing and avoiding styles influence spouses' relational satisfaction by increasing the likelihood of separation and divorce. In another study, Rusbult et al. (1991) found that, compared to dissatisfied couples, satisfied couples are more likely to exhibit the accommodating style in marital conflicts. In the organizational communication context, Kim (2008) reported that employees were more satisfied

with their superiors when the superiors used the problem-solving and accommodating styles rather than the competing and avoiding styles.

In addition, cultural context influences how people manage conflict. People in low-context cultures tend to be more confrontational and direct than people in high-context cultures (Ma, 1992; Ting-Toomey, et al., 1991). China is a high-context culture (Hall, 1976; Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998). In conflict situations, Chinese people traditionally tend to avoid direct confrontation with others to preserve relational harmony. From their point of view, competing and aggressive behaviors indicate impoliteness that will produce an insult not easily forgiven in people's network (Chen, 2002; Shenkar & Ronen, 1987). Influenced by this cultural norm, Chinese children are often taught to avoid confrontation with peers (Chiu & Kosinski, 1994). In the workplace, Chinese employees favor the avoiding, accommodating, or problem-solving styles to resolve conflicts with their colleagues (Peng, He, & Zhu, 2000; Liu & Chen, 2000). By studying the conflict management styles of some Chinese university students in Australia, Brew and Cairns (2004) found that both passive and solution-oriented styles emerged in the participants' workplace conflicts. The passive style was the dominant of the two and related to cautious communication styles for other-face threat. In addition to the avoiding style, Chinese people often seek intermediaries to handle conflicts in order to reduce direct and negative emotional responses between the conflict parties (Ma, 1992; Yu, 1997).

While scholars on conflict management generated a rich literature on the use and evaluation of the problem-solving, accommodating, and competing styles, different findings were reported regarding the avoiding style in East Asian cultures (Kim & Leung, 2000; Zhang, 2007; Zhang et al., 2005). In a study on Chinese intergenerational conflict management at work place, Zhang et al. (2005) found that the avoiding style used by the young adults in

intergenerational conflict were perceived as neither appropriate nor effective by both younger and older adults. Older adults were especially not satisfied with younger people' avoiding style in intergenerational conflict situations. In another study on Chinese family communication patterns and their effects on children's conflict styles and perceptions of parent-child relationship satisfaction, Zhang (2007) reported that Chinese children are more satisfied with the parent's collaborating/problem-solving and accommodating styles than the competing and avoiding styles in parent-child relationships. Results also revealed that the avoiding style was not associated with relational satisfaction. These findings indicate the perceptual complexities, differences, and contradictions regarding the avoiding style among Chinese people. On the one hand, consistent with the collectivistic and high-context nature of the Chinese culture, the avoiding style is generally used by Chinese in conflict situations. On the other hand, when power hierarchy is very obvious in a relationship, the use of the avoiding style by people with less power was evaluated very negatively by people at both ends of the hierarchy, especially by people with more power (Lee & Rogan, 1991; Zhang et al., 2005). Older adults and males usually possess more power than younger people and females in Chinese families. Among the mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law, and the son/husband, the mother-in-law often has a higher family status than the daughter-in-law and the son/husband simply by her older age.

In addition to relational satisfaction, communication appropriateness and effectiveness are frequently used to evaluate conflict styles. Communication appropriateness derives from situational and relational rules that dictate the proper way of behaving. Effective communication, on the other hand, is goal-oriented and addresses whether or not a task is accomplished or a problem is solved (Canary & Cupach, 1988). Previous research has identified the connections between conflict styles and communication appropriateness and effectiveness (Canary et al.,

2001; Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach, 1994; Suppiah & Rose, 2006). By and large, the problem-solving style is both effective and appropriate; competing is only effective in terms of achieving one party's goals but inappropriate because the partner's goals are not considered; the avoiding style is neither effective nor appropriate; the accommodating style is generally perceived as neutral. However, some perceive themselves to be less effective and relationally appropriate when they use accommodating styles (Papa & Canary, 1995; Gross & Guerrero, 2000). Ting-Toomey (1988) assumes in her face negotiating theory that the accommodating style is both effective and appropriate to manage conflicts in many Asian cultures. Based on the above findings, this study addresses the following research question and hypotheses:

RQ1: How do participants' perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles compare between and within the mother- and daughter-in-law groups?

Hypothesis 1: Participants' perceptions of the son/husband's use of the problem-solving and accommodating styles will be positive predictors of relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness.

Hypothesis 2: Participants' perceptions of the son/husband's use of the competing and avoiding styles will be negative predictors of relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness.

Social Identity Approach

In intergroup interactions, individuals' group identities often correlate with differentiated treatment and relational satisfaction. Communication partners may heighten intergroup distinction when group categories become salient, such as gender (Tannen, 2003), age (Harwood,

2000), and race/ethnicity (Killian, 2001). The social identity approach to studying intergroup communication consists of three major theories: social identity theory, self-categorization theory, and the common ingroup identity model.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), people tend to categorize themselves and others into different groups, expecting to gain high self-esteem and positive distinctiveness out of group comparison. In/outgroup identity may trigger differentiated treatments (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which in turn affect the quality and quantity of intergroup contacts as well as intergroup relational satisfaction (Harwood, Raman, & Hewstone, 2006; Hornsey, 2008). Self-categorization theory (Turner, et al., 1987) suggests that individuals' identity is multifaceted and dynamic. People highlight certain group identities based on contexts and shift perceptions in the direction favored by their ingroup members. The third theory, Common ingroup identity model (CIIM; Gaertner, et al., 1999), introduces the concept of superordinate identity with four subgroups: one group without distinction (i.e., the sense of "We"), one superordinate group with the recognition of group difference (i.e., "I" + "They" = "We"), individuals, and two distinctive groups without common ground (i.e., "I/We" and "They"). CIIM predicts that group membership influences individuals' differentiated group evaluation (e.g., ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation). Moreover, the formation of a superordinate identity can help reduce intergroup conflicts. People with dual identities who accept the superordinate group identity with the recognition of distinctiveness from another group can help to either reduce intergroup tensions or maintain the associative link to additional outgroup members (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). To put it simply, these three theories suggest that an individual's perception of in/outgroup identity is associated with differentiated treatments,

which consequentially influence intergroup relationships. In particular, a superordinate identity relates to a favorable group treatment and a positive relationship evaluation.

In the family setting, one type of superordinate identity is shared family identity (SFI). Family is inherently a shared ingroup for all members (Galvin, 2003; Gudykunst & Lee, 2001; Killian, 2001; Soliz & Harwood, 2006). Prior research on family communication examining the relationship between group categorization and intergroup relationship shows that there is a strong positive relationship between SFI and relational satisfaction (e.g., Serewicz & Canary, 2008). Identifying the family as a unified group is a key element in determining family harmony and positive communication (Harwood, 2006). SFI has a significant influence on family cohesiveness, conformity and diffusion of responsibility (Braithwaite et al., 2001; Davis & Herrera, 1998). In the family context, age may be a group marker, but SFI can ameliorate the negative aspect of generational difference in communication, enhance the intergenerational relationship and the conceptualization of one family among grandparents and grandchildren (Soliz & Harwood, 2006).

Conflict styles are related to shared family identity (Chen, 2002; Chiu, Wong, & Kosinski, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1994a). In general, collectivistic cultures tend to have a sharper distinction between ingroup and outgroup than individualistic cultures (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). In the collectivistic culture of China, in/outgroup categorization is prevalent in daily activities (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). Ingroup members try to avoid direct confrontation with one another for the sake of saving mutual face and prioritizing loyalty to the group even to the extent of sacrificing themselves (Chen, 2002; Chiu, et al., 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1994a). They endorse harmony to make major problems less serious and small problems disappear (*da shi hua xiao, xiao shi hua wu*, 大事化小，小事化无; Hwang, 1998). Nevertheless, in the face of competition, frustration, and

other signs of interpersonal discord with outgroup members, Chinese may prefer direct

confrontation to defend their individual interests (Cai & Fink, 2002; Chen, 2002). In terms of

family relationships, there is a traditional belief that the mother-in-law and her children are one

family forever but the mother- and daughter-in-law are not due to their different family heritage

(*er nv benjia ren*, *po xi wai xing ren*, 儿女本家人，婆媳外姓人). Therefore, when mother/daughter-in-

law conflicts occur, how the mother- and the daughter-in-law evaluate the son/husband's

mediation may be associated with perceptions of shared family identity with the in-law. In the

current study, shared family identity with the in-law reflects the extent to which the mother- and

daughter-in-laws identify themselves as one family. The following question is proposed to

examine the potential influence of shared family identity with the in-law on the relationships

between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-

law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments about the son/husband's

mediation appropriateness and effectiveness:

RQ 2: Do participants' perceptions of shared family identity with the in-law mediate the

associations between the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-

law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments about the son/husband's

mediation appropriateness and effectiveness?

Filial Piety

Chinese families (*jia*, 家) extend kinship by blood, marriage, or adoption (Gao & Ting-

Toomey, 1998). It is common to see several generations living in the same household in China.

In general, male and older family members possess higher status and more power than female

and younger ones (Thornton & Lin, 1994). In the intergenerational communication between adult

children and aging parents in China, sons and daughters-in-law are expected to act by the value

of filial piety (*Xiao*, 孝) (Gallois et al., 1999). They should demonstrate their virtues before mothers/mothers-in-law with respect, obedience, and support when needed (Chu & Ju, 1993; Chen, 2002; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). Reciprocally, a Chinese mother-in-law feels obligated to educate and assist her adult children in daily life, such as helping with household chores and child-rearing (Chen, 2002). The value of filial piety emphasizes younger people's communication accommodation in interaction with the older adults. Zhang et al. (2005) have examined the conflict management styles between older and younger adults in China. Results show that in conflict situations, older adults favor younger people's accommodating style over the problem-solving style. Young adults either prefer the problem-solving style to the accommodating style or judge the two styles as equally positive. Therefore, even though filial piety remains popular among both young and elderly Chinese, the two age cohorts vary in the degree to which they endorse it.

Under the influence of modernization and globalization, Chinese family life has undergone some changes in the past several decades. Nowadays, as Chinese people value equality and individualism more than before, they have a stronger desire than in the past for their personal lives with less interruption from other family members (Song & Zhang, 2008; Zhang & Harwood, 2004). A burgeoning commercial housing industry impels many couples to move out of patrilocal residence into their own (Wang & Murie, 2000). In many Chinese families, both the husband and wife have their own financial resources. Couples work out household plans together, decide family affairs through consultation, share the housework, and support each other's jobs. Either the husband or wife can become the household "head" if he or she has extensive social connections and a decent income. In short, Chinese daughters-in-law have witnessed an obvious increase in family status and power.

These changes create a challenge for the mother/mother-in-law's authoritarian status in family life and to the superiority of mother-son relationships over marital ties. There are some reports about power struggles between mothers- and daughters-in-law over family issues (Liu, 2002; Yan, 1997). They may fight for the love and care of the same man – the son/husband, dispute over residence and parenting styles, or disagree on child reproduction (e.g., many mothers-in-law preferring grandsons to granddaughters) (Liu, 2002).

Power distance influences people's choice of conflict management tactics (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002; Liu & Chen, 2000; Peng et al., 2000). People of equal status are more likely to resolve disputes through problem-solving or competing styles than through avoidance or accommodation (Liu & Chen, 2000; Peng et al., 2000). Otherwise, if one party is more empowered than the other, he/she is more likely to use a competing style whereas the inferior party tends to use an avoiding or accommodating strategy (Liu & Chen, 2000; Peng et al., 2000). Therefore, in the context of mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the power distance among the mother/mother-in-law, son/husband, wife/daughter-in-law may affect their beliefs in filial piety and the in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles, relational satisfaction, as well as his mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Hence, the following question is proposed regarding the potential influence of filial piety on the associations between the son/husband's mediation styles and the four criterion variables.

RQ 3: Do participants' perceptions of filial piety mediate the associations between the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments about the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study has examined the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. It has also examined the potential influence of shared family identity with the in-law and filial piety on these associations. Questionnaires were distributed to mother- and daughter-in-law volunteers in China for data collection.

Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted to detect any potential problems embedded in the research design and procedures. The pilot test also aimed to check the reliability and clarity of the measures used in this research before data collection for the main study.

Participants

Forty-eight mothers- and daughters-in-law from the People's Republic of China were recruited via the snowball sampling. All participants were residents of a Midwestern city in the United States. Due to the limited sample size of the mother-in-law participants ($n = 7$), their answers mainly served the purpose of a clarity check. Data from the daughter-in-law participants ($n = 41$; M age = 35.84, $SD = 9.95$; M years of education = 19.46, $SD = 4.42$; M years of residence in US = 4.95, $SD = 5.96$) were used for reliability checks for the major constructs. All participants completed the surveys independently.

Procedures and Measures

The study was first designed in English and then translated to Chinese by the researcher. A Chinese graduate student proficient in both languages did the back-translation to preserve

measurement equivalence between the English and Chinese versions. The researcher and another bilingual Chinese national compared the original measures with the back-translated ones and modified the Chinese translation based on points of divergence. Five daughters-in-law and two mothers-in-law residing in China proofread the Chinese questionnaires to improve accuracy in expression. Further changes were made based on their feedback.

Both the mother- and daughter-in-law questionnaire includes two sections. In Section I, questions were asked pertaining to participants' general information, such as age, education, and years of residence in the United States. Section II consists of six major measurements used in this study reflecting the mother/daughter-in-law's perceptions of (1) filial piety, (2) shared family identities with in-law, (3) relational satisfaction with the in-law, (4) relational satisfaction with the son/husband, (5) the son/husband's mediation styles, and (6) the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. When completing the questionnaire, participants received instructions to spend one or two minutes thinking about their relationship with their mother-/daughter-in-laws and sons/husbands, how their families functioned in general and what they liked or disliked about one another. Next, participants were asked to recall some mother/daughter-in-law conflict situations in their own families (e.g., disagreements, arguments and frictions). In these situations, the husband was not the direct source of the problem. Following that, participants started to rate the six measurements based on a 7-point Likert scale. The scale indices range from 1 to 7 (1 = "strongly disagree", 7 = "strongly agree"), indicating to what extent the construct items matched participants' situations or perceptions. The following are the measurements used in the pilot test.

Adult son's mediation styles. A 24-item measure was adapted from Rahim & Magner's (1995) *Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict* to examine participants'

perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts. In each questionnaire, six items reflected the mediation style of problem-solving (M daughter-in-law = 5.02, SD = 1.76, Cronbach's alpha = 0.97), (e.g., "In general, when my mother-in-law and I had a conflict, my husband tried to integrate his ideas with mine to come up with joint decisions"). Six items reflected the mediation style of *avoiding* (M daughter-in-law = 2.67, SD = 1.44, Cronbach's alpha = 0.88) (e.g., "In general, when my mother-in-law and I had a conflict, my husband tried to stay away from the disagreements between me and my mother-in-law"). Six items reflected the mediation style of *competing* (M daughter-in-law =2.37, SD = 1.51, Cronbach's alpha = 0.89) (e.g., "In general, when my mother-in-law and I had a conflict, my husband argued with me to show the merits of his position only). Six items reflected the mediation style of *accommodating* (M daughter-in-law = 3.61, SD = 1.61, Cronbach's alpha = 0.94) (e.g., "In general, when my mother-in-law and I had a conflict, my husband tried to satisfy my expectations").

The adult son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and communication effectiveness were assessed by adapting Gross, Guerrero, and Alberts' (2004) communication competency scale (CCS). In each questionnaire, eight items were used to examine *appropriateness* (e.g., "In general, when my son intervened in the conflicts that I had with my daughter-in-law, my son said things that seemed out of place in our communication") (M daughter-in-law = 4.97, SD = 1.23, Cronbach's α = 0.91). Six items were used to measure *effectiveness* (e.g., "In general, when my husband intervened in the conflicts that I had with my mother-in-law, I found my husband's mediation was very useful and helpful to manage the in-law conflicts.") (M daughter-in-law = 5.27, SD = 1.19, Cronbach's α = 0.93).

Filial Piety. Using nine items adapted from Ho's (1994) Filial Piety Scale (FPS) and Gallois et al.'s (1999) Structure of Filial Piety (SFP), the pilot test measured participants' general perceptions of filial piety (e.g., "Young people's sacrifice is worthwhile for the sake of being respectful and polite to older people"). The nine items were used to calculate a mean index of filial piety (*M* daughter-in-law = 5.07, *SD* = 1.14, Cronbach's α = 0.89).

Shared family identity with the in-law. Six items were included to measure participants' perceptions of shared family identity with the in-law (*M* daughter-in-law = 5.46, *SD* = 1.59, Cronbach's α = 0.94). In each construct, five items were adapted from Soliz and Harwood's (2006) scale of shared family identity (e.g., "I am proud to be in the same family as my mother-in-law") and one item was added to reflect Chinese people's concept of "face" (i.e., "When others praise my daughter-/mother-in-law, I feel that it brings honor to our family").

Relational satisfaction. In each construct, seven items adapted from Hendrick's (1988) *Generic Measure of Relationship Satisfaction* were used to measure mother-in-law participants' relational satisfaction with the in-law (e.g., "My relationship with my daughter-in-law is good compared to most" and "In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with my daughter-in-law") (*M* daughter-in-law = 5.30, *SD* = 1.42, Cronbach's α = 0.90). The same seven items were used to measure daughter-in-law participants' relational satisfaction with the son/husband with the change on wording to indicate the appropriate relationships between participants and the party involved (i.e., the son or husband) (e.g., "My relationship with my mother-in-law is good compared to most" and "In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with my mother-in-law") (*M* daughter-in-law = 5.84, *SD* = 0.99, Cronbach's α = 0.87).

Results and Discussion

One objective of this pilot test was to examine the reliability of the measurements used in the present research. As shown above, all the measures achieved satisfactory reliability in the current sample.

The second objective of this pilot test was to detect any problems embedded in the research design and procedures. Based on participants' feedback in the pilot test, minor changes were made. For example, in section II, the original six items reflecting the competing strategy were rephrased with more emphasis on the controlling nature of the son/husband's reaction to mother/daughter-in-law conflicts.

<center>*Main Study*</center>

Method

Participants. A total of 603 Chinese women participated in this study *(N* = 603), among whom 316 were mothers-in-law (*M* age = 62.80, *SD* = 8.07) and 287 daughters-in-law (*M* age = 37.22, *SD* = 8.11). On average, mothers-in-law had completed significantly fewer years of education than daughters-in-law (*F*(1, 587) = 323.57, *p* < .001; *M* mother-in-law's years of education = 8.36, *SD* = 4.00; *M* daughter-in-law's years-of-education = 13.63, *SD* = 2.97). Every participant independently completed a questionnaire regarding her perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts.

Procedures. There are two sections in each questionnaire. In the first section, participants answered questions pertaining to their general information, such as age and education. Section II consisted of six measurements reflecting in-laws' perceptions of (1) the son/husband's mediation styles, (2) the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness in mediation, (3) filial piety, (4) shared family identities with the in-law, (5) relational satisfaction with the in-law, and (6) relational satisfaction with the son/husband.

In Section II, participants spent one or two minutes thinking of their relationships with the mother/daughter-in-law and the son/husband, how their families functioned in general and what they liked or disliked about one another. Next, participants were asked to recall some mother/daughter-in-law conflict situations in their own families (e.g., disagreements, arguments, and frictions). In these situations, the married man was not a direct source of conflicts. After this, participants rated the above-mentioned measurements based on a 7-point Likert scale (1= "strongly disagree", 7 = "strongly agree"), indicating to what extent the construct items matched their situations and perceptions.

Measures

Adult son/husband's mediation styles. Participants rated their perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles using the same 24 items in the pilot test adapted from Rahim and Magner (1995). Six items were used to measure the mediation style of problem-solving (*M* mother-in-law = 5.15, *SD* = 1.43, Cronbach's α = 0.88; *M* daughter-in-law = 5.04, *SD* = 1.70, Cronbach's α = 0.93). Six items were used to measure the mediation style of avoiding (*M* mother-in-law = 3.54, *SD* = 1.32, Cronbach's α = 0.74; *M* daughter-in-law = 3.34, *SD* = 1.52, Cronbach's α = 0.84). Six items were used to measure the mediation style of competing (*M* mother-in-law = 3.26, *SD* = 1.43, Cronbach's α = 0.84; *M* daughter-in-law = 3.02, *SD* = 1.50, Cronbach's α = 0.86). Six items were used to measure the mediation style of accommodating (*M* mother-in-law = 4.67, *SD* = 1.34, Cronbach's alpha = 0.85; *M* daughter-in-law = 3.86, *SD* = 1.45, Cronbach's α = 0.85) (see Table 2 and 3).

In order to test the translation quality and validity of the mediation-style instrument in Chinese used in this study, two maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to determine the "goodness of fit" of the mediation models based on two data sets (i.e.,

the mother- and daughter-in-law groups). Each CFA model specifies 24 items to measure the

son/husband's mediation styles as the indicators of the four latent factors (i.e., mediation styles).

Data were analyzed using Lisrel 8.8 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 2006) to test the goodness of fit of the

measurement model. Both models involved the same 24 manifest indicators. The variance of

each latent variable was fixed to 1.0 to serve as a reference variable and set the metric.

In the first confirmatory factor analysis of the daughter-in-law group, results showed that

the four-factor model demonstrated acceptable fit, χ^2 (246, n = 287) = 660.1, $p < .001$; RMSEA =

0.077; CFI = 0.96; NNFI = 0.95. In the second confirmatory factor analysis of the mother-in-law

group, results also showed that the four-factor model demonstrated acceptable fit, χ^2 (246, n =

316) = 770.49, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.084; CFI = 0.93; NNFI = 0.92. Therefore, the translation

quality and validity of the mediation-style measurement are satisfactory.

The adult son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. The adult son's

mediation appropriateness and communication effectiveness were assessed by adapting Gross et

al.'s (2004) Communication Competency Scale (CCS). Eight items reflected *mediation*

appropriateness (*M* mother-in-law = 5.11, *SD* = 1.20, Cronbach's α = 0.82; *M* daughter-in-law =

4.57, *SD* = 1.24, Cronbach's α = 0.80). Six items were used to measure *communication*

effectiveness (*M* mother-in-law = 5.06, *SD* = 1.28, Cronbach's α = 0.79; *M* daughter-in-law =

4.85, *SD* = 1.31, Cronbach's α = 0.79).

Filial piety. Nine items adapted from Ho's (1994) Filial Piety Scale (FPS) and Gallois et

al.'s (1999) Structure of Filial Piety (SFP) were used to measure participants' general

perceptions of age-based hierarchy. In the mother-in-law's group, *M* = 5.32, *SD* = 1.22,

Cronbach's α = 0.87. In the daughter-in-law's group, *M* = 5.38, *SD* = 1.18, Cronbach's α = 0.88.

Shared family identity. Shared family identity with the mother/daughter-in-law was measured with five items from Soliz and Harwood (2006) plus one item reflecting Chinese people's concept of "face" concerning family relationship (i.e., "When others praise my mother/daughter-in-law, I feel that it brings honor to our family"). Each participant identified to what extent she considered herself and her mother-/daughter-in-law one family (*M* mother-in-law = 5.77, *SD* = 1.43, Cronbach's alpha = 0.94; *M* daughter-in-law = 5.37, *SD* = 1.52, Cronbach's α = 0.93).

Relational satisfaction. Seven items were adapted from Hendrick's (1988) *Generic Measure of Relationship Satisfaction* to measure participants' relational satisfactions with the in-law and the son/husband respectively. For the relational satisfaction with the in-law, *M* mother-in-law = 5.41, *SD* = 1.24, Cronbach's α = 0.85; *M* daughter-in-law = 5.16, *SD* = 1.27, Cronbach's α = 0.84. For the relational satisfaction with the son/husband, *M* mother-in-law = 5.79, *SD* = 1.13, Cronbach's α = 0.84; *M* daughter-in-law = 5.49, *SD* = 1.24, Cronbach's α = 0.85.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Comparison of Mediation Styles

RQ1 aimed to compare participants' perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles (i.e., problem solving, accommodating, competing, and avoiding) between and within the mother- and daughter-in-law groups. To address RQ1, a 2 (participant group membership: mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law) x 4 (4 mediation styles) analysis of variance with a within subject factor (i.e., mediation style) and a between subject factor (i.e., participant group membership) was conducted. Results from this analysis revealed a significant mediation style main effect, Wilks' $\Lambda = .58$, $F(3, 599) = 146. 02$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .42$, a significant mediation style by group interaction, Wilks' $\Lambda = .90$, $F(3, 599) = 21.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and a significant main effect for participant group membership, $F(1, 601) = 19.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Table 4 reports the means and the standard deviations of the mediation styles for the two participant groups. To decompose the significant interaction effect, the group membership effects within each mediation style and the effects of mediation styles within each participant group were examined. For the post hoc comparisons, Bonferroni adjustments were made to alphas to control for Type I error (Green & Salkind, 2003).

To examine the group effects within mediation styles, a 2 (participant group membership) x 4 (mediation styles) multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. Results from this analysis revealed a significant group main effect, Wilks' $\Lambda = .89$, $F(4, 598) = 18.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. Results of univariate analysis of variance indicated a significant group main effect for the accommodating style only, F accommodating $(1, 601) = 50.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$, not for the styles of problem-solving, F problem-solving $(1, 601) = .85$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .00$, competing, F

competing (1, 601) = 3.97, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and avoiding, F avoiding (1, 601) = 3.09, $p > .05$, η^2

= .01. In order to compare participants' perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles, six

paired-samples t-tests of mediation styles were conducted within each participant group. Results

revealed that all the comparisons were significant ($p < .001$). For both groups, the problem-

solving style was most used, followed by the styles of accommodating, avoiding, and competing

(See Table 1).

Table 1 *Means and Standard Deviations for Mediation Styles by Participant Group Membership*

	Mother-In-Law		Daughter-In-Law	
Mediation Style	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
Problem-Solving	5.15 [a]	1.43	5.03 [a]	1.70
Accommodating***	4.67 [b]	1.34	3.86 [e]	1.45
Competing	3.26 [c]	1.43	3.02 [c]	1.50
Avoiding	3.54 [d]	1.32	3.34 [d]	1.52

Note. Means with different superscripts differ significantly in columns and rows. *** $p < .001$.

Mediation Styles as Predictors of Relational Satisfaction, Judgments of Mediation

Appropriateness and Effectiveness

Hypothesis 1of this study predicted positive associations between participants' perceptions

of the son/husband's problem-solving/ accommodating styles and relational satisfaction with the

in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as the son/husband's mediation

appropriateness and effectiveness in in-law conflicts. Hypothesis 2 predicted negative

associations between participants' perceptions of the son/husband's competing/avoiding styles

and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as

the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Four hierarchical regression

analyses were conducted on the four criterion variables. In each analysis, participants' age and education were entered in the first model followed by the son/husband's four mediation styles in the second model. Results showed participants' age and education as a whole did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in both mothers- and daughters-in-law's perceptions of relational satisfactions with the in-law. A similar pattern was found with the mother-in-law's judgment of the son's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. That said, model I statistics indicated that age and education significantly predicted the daughter-in-law's perceptions of the husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. After controlling for the effects of mediation styles, age and education were not significant predictors of any of the criterion variables. Model 2 statistics indicated that the son/husband's mediation styles contributed to a significant additional proportion of criterion variance for both groups (See Table 4).

Results were generally supportive of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. For both the mother- and daughter-in-law groups, the problem-solving style was a significant and positive predictor of the participants' perceptions of relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, the son/husband's mediation appropriateness, and communication effectiveness. Additionally, the accommodating style was significantly and positively associated with the son/husband's mediation appropriateness. In the mother-in-law's group, the accommodating style was a significant and positive predictor of the son's communication effectiveness (See Table 4). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is partially supported.

For both groups, the competing style was a negative predictor of the participants' perceptions of relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, the son/husband's mediation appropriateness, and communication effectiveness. Additionally, the avoiding style was significantly and negatively associated with the son/husband's

communication effectiveness in both groups. In the mother-in-law's group, the avoiding style

related negatively to the son's mediation appropriateness (See Table 4).

Table 2 *Means, Standard Deviation and Correlations Between Predictor Variable, Criterion Variables, and Potential Mediators (Mother-In-Law Data Set)*

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Problem-soving	5.15	1.43									
2.Avoiding	3.54	1.32	.01								
3.Competing	3.26	1.43	-.14*	.55**							
4.Accommodating	4.67	1.34	.66**	.12*	.12*						
5.Relational Satisfaction with Daughter-in-Law	5.41	1.24	.55*	-.03	-.18**	.35**					
6.Relational Satisfaction with Son	5.79	1.13	.54**	-.03	-.17**	.39**	.76**				
7.Mediation Appropriateness	5.11	1.20	.55**	-.22**	-.41**	.40**	.42**	.48**			
8. Mediation Effectiveness	5.06	1.28	.58**	-.28**	-.38**	.33**	.49**	.55**	.71**		
9.Filial Piety	5.32	1.22	.12*	-.03	.01	.17**	.21**	.37**	.11	15**	
10.Shared Family Identity	5.77	1.43	.54**	-.02	-.13*	.34**	.78**	.69**	.38**	.46**	.28**

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 *Means, Standard Deviation and Correlations Between Predictor Variable, Criterion Variables, and Potential Mediators (Daughter-In-Law Data Set)*

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Problem-soving	5.04	1.70									
2.Avoiding	3.34	1.52	-.17**								
3.Competing	3.02	1.50	-.18**	.66**							
4.Accommodating	3.86	1.45	.54**	.29**	.25**						
5.Relational Satisfaction with Mother-in-Law	5.16	1.23	.58**	-.17**	-.27**	.26**					
6.Relational Satisfaction with Husband	5.49	1.24	.63**	-.26**	-.37**	.31**	.68**				
7.Mediation Appropriateness	4.57	1.24	.62**	-.24**	-.34**	.37**	.42**	.57**			
8. Mediation Effectiveness	4.85	1.31	.62**	-.42**	-.48**	.17**	.60**	.61**	.65**		
9. Filial Piety	5.38	1.18	.35**	.01	-.05	.19**	.51**	.36**	.16**	.30**	
10.Shared Family Identity	5.37	1.52	.53**	-.07	-.08	.21**	.77**	.52**	.29**	.48**	.64**

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 *Predictors of Relational Satisfaction with the In-Law, Relational Satisfaction with the Son/Husband, and Mediation Appropriateness and Effectiveness*

Criterion Variables								
	Relational Satisfaction with In-Law		Relational Satisfaction with Son/Husband		Mediation Appropriateness		Mediation Effectiveness	
Predictors	β	sr^2	β	sr^2	β	sr^2	β	sr^2
Mother-In-Law Participants								
Model 1	$R^2 = .01$		$R^2 = .02$		$R^2 = .01$		$R^2 = .00$	
	R^2 change $= .01$		R^2 change $= .02$		R^2 change $= .01$		R^2 change $= -.00$	
	$F = 1.18$		$F = 2.55$		$F = 1.82$		$F = .44$	
Age	.09	.01	.12*	.01	.10	.01	.04	.00
Education	-.00	.00	-.01	.00	-.02	.00	-.02	.00
Model 2	$R^2 = .32$		$R^2 = .32$		$R^2 = .47$		$R^2 = .45$	
	R^2 change $= .31$***		R^2 change $= .30$***		R^2 change $= .46$***		R^2 change $= .45$***	
	$F = 23.10$		$F = 23.56$		$F = 45.55$		$F = 41.10$	
Problem-Solving	.52***	.14	.45***	.10	.36**	.06	.48***	.11
Accommodating	-.00	.00	.10	.00	.25***	.03	.11	.01
Competing	-.13*	.01	-.12*	.01	-.32***	.07	-.21***	.03
Avoiding	.03	.00	-.01	.00	-.13**	.01	-.20***	.02
Daughter-In-Law Participants								
Model 1	$R^2 = .02$		$R^2 = .02$		$R^2 = .04$		$R^2 = .04$	
	R^2 change $= .02$		R^2 change $= .02$		R^2 change $= .04$**		R^2 change $= .04$**	
	$F = 2.38$		$F = 2.50$		$F = 5.89$		$F = 5.20$	
Age	-.12	.01	-.14	.02	-.18**	.03	-.19**	.03
Education	.03	.00	-.02	.00	.05	.00	-.00	.00
	$R^2 = .37$		$R^2 = .48$		$R^2 = .48$		$R^2 = .55$	
Model 2								
	R^2 change $= .36$***		R^2 change $= .46$***		R^2 change $= .44$***		R^2 change $= .51$***	
	$F = 27.03$		$F = 41.23$		$F = 41.50$		$F = 54.67$	
Problem-Solving	.60***	.20	.54***	.16	.47**	.12	.59***	.19
Accommodating	-.05	.00	.09	.00	.19***	.02	-.06	.00
Competing	-.13†	.01	-.29***	.04	-.24***	.03	-.23***	.02
Avoiding	.03	.00	-.01	.00	-.06	.00	-.16***	.01

*Note. sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation coefficient. *P < .05. ** P < .01. *** P < .001.*

† *p < .10*

Shared Family Identity with In-Law as a Mediator - Testing for the Indirect Effect

RQ 2 aimed to examine the influence of shared family identity with the in-law (SFI) on the associations between participants' perceptions of mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Certain prerequisites should be met to examine the mediator effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Mediation occurs when (1) the potential mediator is correlated significantly with both the predictor (e.g., mediation styles) and the criterion variable (e.g., relational satisfaction with the in-law, the son/husband, and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness); (2) the predictor and criterion variable are also correlated significantly. If the predictor is no longer significant when the mediator is controlled for, the finding supports full mediation. If the predictor is still significant when the mediator is controlled for, the finding supports partial mediation. Using the bootstrapping estimation method, the indirect effect of shared family identity with the in-law and filial piety were tested based on the conditions proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Preacher and Hayes (2004) for a test of indirect effect. The effects of age and education were controlled for by entering them into the covariance model. Significance of mediation was assessed by examining whether the associations between mediation styles and criterion variables were significantly reduced by inclusion of a mediator with critical values of +/− 1.96 (Sobel, 1982).

Tables 5.1 through 5.5 show that in both participant groups, shared family identity with the in-law (SFI) partially mediated the associations between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, and judgments of the son/husband's mediation effectiveness. In addition, SFI partially mediated the associations

between the accommodating style and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness. In the daughter-in-law group, SFI fully mediated the relationship between the accommodating style and judgments of the son/husband's mediation effectiveness. In the mother-in-law group, SFI partially mediated the associations between the problem-solving style and judgments of the son's mediation appropriateness. SFI also partially mediated the associations between the competing style and relational satisfactions with the in-law and with the son, judgments of the son's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. No other mediation effect was identified.

Filial piety as a mediator - testing for the indirect effect

RQ 3 aimed to examine the influence of filial piety on the associations between mediation styles and relational satisfaction with the in-law, relational satisfaction with the son/husband, as well as judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Tables 5.1 through 5.5 show that in both groups, participants' perceptions of filial piety partially mediated the association between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the man. In addition, filial piety partially mediated the associations between the accommodating style and relational satisfactions with the in-law and the son/husband. In the daughter-in-law group, participants' perceptions of filial piety partially mediated the association between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the in-law, as well as the association between the accommodating style and judgments of the husband's mediation effectiveness.

Table 5.1 *Mediation in the Relation between Problem-Solving and Dependent Measures*:

Mother-In-Law Participants

	Problem-Solving-**RS-with-In-Law**		Mediator-RS-with In-Law		Problem-Solving-RS-with-In-Law via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.47	.04***	.60	.04***	.15	.04***	.32	9.46***
Filial Piety	.47	.04***	.14	.04***	.46	.04***	.01	1.67
	Problem-Solving-**RS-with-Son**		Mediator-RS-with Son		Problem-Solving-RS-with-Son via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.42	.04***	.44	.04***	.18	.04***	.24	8.24***
Filial Piety	.42	.04***	.28	.04***	.39	.04***	.03	2.00*
	Problem-Solving-**Appropriateness**		Mediator-Appropriateness		Problem-Solving-Appropriateness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.46	.04***	.09	.05***	.41	.05***.	.05	1.97***
Filial Piety	.46	.04***	.04	.05	.46	.04***	.00	.69
	Problem-Solving-**Effectiveness**		Mediator-Effectiveness		Problem-Solving-Effectiveness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.52	.04***	.18	.05***	.41	.05***	.10	3.61***
Filial Piety	.51	.04***	.08	.05***	.50	.04***	.01	1.26

Note. 1) When filial piety regresses on problem-solving, $β = .10$, SE = .05, $p < .05$; when shared family identity regresses on problem-solving, $β = .54$, SE = .05, $p < .001$.

2) R^2 = indirect effect size; SFI = shared family identity with the in-law; RS-with-In-Law = relational satisfaction with the in-law; RS-with-Son = relational satisfaction with the son.

3)*$P < .05$. ** $P < .01$. *** $P < .001$.

Table 5.2 *Mediation in the Relation between Competing and Dependent Measures*: *Mother-In-Law Participants*

Mediator	Competing- **RS-with-In-Law**		Mediator-RS-with In-Law		Competing-RS-with-In-Law via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	-.16	.05***	.67	.03***	-.08	.03*	.08	-2.24*

Mediator	Competing- **RS-with-Son**		Mediator-RS-with Son		Competing-RS-with-Son via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	-.14	.04**	.53	.03***	-.07	.03*	.07	-2.23*

Mediator	Competing-**Appropriateness**		Mediator-Appropriateness		Competing-Appropriateness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	-.34	.04***	.28	.04***	-.31	.04***	.03	-2.12*

Mediator	Competing-**Effectiveness**		Mediator-Effectiveness		Competing-Effectiveness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	-.34	.05***	.37	.04***	-.29	.04***	.05	-2.17*

Note. 1) When shared family identity regresses on the competing style, β = -.13, SE = .06, *p* < .05. 2) R^2 = indirect effect size; SFI = shared family identity with the in-law; RS-with-In-Law = relational satisfaction with the in-law; RS-with-Son = relational satisfaction with the son.

3)*P* < .05. ** *P* < .01. *** *P* < .001.

Table 5.3 *Mediation in the Relation between Accommodating and Dependent Measures*: *Mother-In-Law Participants*

	Accommodating-RS-with-In-Law		Mediator-RS-with In-Law		Accommodating-RS-with-In-Law via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*R²*	*z*
SFI	.32	.05***	.65	.03***	.09	.03***	.23	6.08***
Filial Piety	.32	.05***	.15	.05**	.30	.05***	.02	2.02*
	Accommodating-RS-with-Son		Mediator-RS-with Son		Accommodating-RS-with-Son via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*R²*	*z*
SFI	.33	.04***	.49	.03***	.15	.04***	.18	5.85***
Filial Piety	.33	.04***	.28	.05***	.28	.04***	.04	2.73**
	Accommodating-Appropriateness		Mediator-Appropriateness		Accommodating-Appropriateness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*R²*	*z*
SFI	.36	.05***	.23	.04***	.27	.05***	.08	3.99***
Filial Piety	.36	.05***	.04	.05	.35	.05***	.01	.63
	Accommodating-Effectiveness		Mediator-Effectiveness		Accommodating-Effectiveness via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*β*	SE	*R²*	*z*
SFI	.32	.05***	.35	.05***	.19	.05***	.13	4.82***
Filial Piety	.32	.05***	.10	.06***	.30	.05***	.02	1.45

Note. 1) When filial piety regresses on the accommodating style, *β* = .16, SE = .05, *p* < .01; when shared family identity regresses on accommodating, *β* = .36, SE = .06, *p* < .001.

2) *R²* = indirect effect size; SFI = shared family identity with the in-law; RS-with-In-Law = relational satisfaction with the in-law; RS-with-Son = relational satisfaction with the son.

3)**P* < .05. ** *P* < .01. *** *P* < .001.

Table 5.4 *Mediation in the Relation between Problem-Solving and Dependent Measures*: *Daughter-In-Law Participants*

	Problem-Solving-RS-with-In-Law		Mediator-RS-with In-Law		Problem-Solving-RS-with-In-Law via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	r^2	z
SFI	.43	.04***	.54	.04***	.18	.03***	.25	8.60***
Filial Piety	.43	.04***	.37	.05***	.34	.04***	.09	4.78***
	Problem-Solving-RS-with-Husband		Mediator-RS-with Husband		Problem-Solving-RS-with-Husband via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	.46	.03***	.21	.04*	.36	.04***	.10	4.52***
Filial Piety	.46	.04***	.17	.05**	.42	.04***	.04	2.90**
	Problem-Solving-Appropriateness		Mediator-Appropriateness		Problem-Solving-Appropriateness via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	.45	.03***	-.04	.05	.47	.04***	.02	-.86
Filial Piety	.45	.03***	-.07	.05	.47	.04***	.02	-1.38
	Problem-Solving-Effectiveness		Mediator-Effectiveness		Problem-Solving-Effectiveness via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R^2	z
SFI	.48	.04***	.19	.05*	.39	.04***	.08	3.62***
Filial Piety	.48	.04***	.11	.05	.45	.04***	.03	1.85

Note. 1) When filial piety regresses on problem-solving, $\beta = .24$, SE = .04, $p < .001$; when shared family identity regresses on problem-solving, $\beta = .47$, SE = .05, $p < .001$.

2) R^2 = indirect effect size; SFI = shared family identity with the in-law; RS-with-In-Law = relational satisfaction with the in-law; RS-with-Husband = relational satisfaction with the husband.

3)*$P < .05$. ** $P < .01$. *** $P < .001$.

Table 5.5 *Mediation in the Relation between Accommodating and Dependent Measures*: *Daughter-In-Law Participants*

	Accommodating-**RS-with-In-Law**		Mediator-RS-with In-Law		Accommodating-RS-with-In-Law via Mediator		Indirect Effect	
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.22	.05***	.63	.03***	..09	.03*	.13	3.58***
Filial Piety	.22	.05***	.51	.05***	.15	.04*	.08	3.04**
	Accommodating-**RS-with-Husband**		Mediator-RS-with Husband		Accommodating-RS-with-Husband via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.26	.05***	.39	.04***	.18	.04**	.09	3.39***
Filial Piety	.26	.05***	.33	.05***	.21	.05**	.05	2.79**
	Accommodating-**Appropriateness**		Mediator-Appropriateness		Accommodating-Appropriateness via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.32	.05***	.18	.05***	.28	.05***	.04	2.67**
Filial Piety	.32	.05***	.09	.06	.30	.05***	.01	1.38
	Accommodating-**Effectiveness**		Mediator-Effectiveness		Accommodating-Effectiveness via Mediator			
Mediator	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	R²	z
SFI	.15	.05***	.40	.05***	.06	.05	.08	3.34***
Filial Piety	.15	.05***	.31	.06*	.10	.05*	.05	2.67**

Note. 1) When filial piety regresses on accommodating, $β = .15$, SE = .05, $p < .01$; when shared family identity regresses on accommodating, $β = .22$, SE = .06, $p < .001$.

2) R^2 = indirect effect size; SFI = shared family identity with the in-law; RS-with-In-Law = relational satisfaction with the in-law; RS-with-Husband = relational satisfaction with the husband.

3)*$P < .05$. ** $P < .01$. *** $P < .001$.

CHATPER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary of the Major Findings

This study first compared perceptions of the son/husband's use of mediation styles in mother- and daughter-in-law conflicts as perceived by the mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Both groups perceived the problem-solving style as that most used by the son/husband, followed by the accommodating, avoiding, and competing styles. In comparison, both groups perceived the son/husband's use of mediation styles similarly except for the accommodating style. Mothers-in-law indicated that their sons used the accommodating style significantly more than did daughters-in-law.

Second, this study examined the associations between perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles and the four criterion variables of the mother- and daughter-in-law's relational satisfaction with each other and with the son/husband as well as judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the problem-solving and accommodating styles would be positively associated with the four criterion variables, whereas Hypothesis 2 predicted negative associations for the avoiding and competing styles. Findings were generally supportive of the hypotheses in that the problem-solving style positively and the competing style negatively predicted all the criterion variables. In addition, for both groups, perceptions of the son/husband's accommodating style were positively associated with judgments of his mediation appropriateness, and the avoiding style was negatively associated with judgments of his mediation effectiveness. Mother-in-law participants' perception of their sons' use of the avoiding style was negatively related to judgments of his mediation appropriateness.

Thirdly, this study examined the mediating roles of filial piety and shared family identity with the in-law (SFI) on the hypothesized relationships between mediation styles and the criterion variables. Results indicated that for both the mother- and daughter-in-law groups, filial piety partially mediated the relationships between the accommodating style and relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband. Filial piety also partially mediated the associations between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the son/husband. In the daughter-in-law group, filial piety partially mediated the relationship between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the in-law and the association between the accommodating style and judgments of the husband's mediation effectiveness.

For both cohorts, SFI partially mediated the relationships between the problem-solving/accommodating style and relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband. In the mother-in-law group, SFI partially mediated the relationships between perceptions of the accommodating style and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. SFI also partially mediated the relationships between the son's competing style and all the criterion variables. In the daughter-in-law group, SFI fully mediated the relationship between the son/husband's accommodating style and judgments of his mediation effectiveness. Altogether these findings indicate three themes: (1) SFI and filial piety partially mediated most associations across the two participant groups; the mediator effects of SFI and filial piety mainly occurred to the associations between the problem-solving and accommodating styles and criterion variables across the groups; (2) SFI was a more powerful mediator variable than filial piety; (3) SFI mediated the associations between the competing style and criterion variables only for the mother-in-law group.

In summary, from the participants' perspectives, the problem-solving style is a constructive mediation style used by the son/husband to manage mother/daughter-in-law conflicts appropriately and effectively, and it ultimately enhances positive intergenerational and marital relationships in the family setting. As reported by both mothers- and daughters-in-law in this study, among the four mediation styles, the problem-solving style is the most used by the son/husband to mediate in-law conflicts. In contrast, the competing style is the least used. It undermines the intergenerational and marital relationships between the mother- and daughter-in-law, and the son/husband, and garners negative evaluations of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness from the in-laws. Additionally, the son/husband's accommodating style has no significant association with relational satisfaction albeit it is related to mediation appropriateness. Different from some prior traditional positive views of the avoiding style among Chinese people, the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's use of avoiding style were negatively associated with judgments of the appropriateness and ineffectiveness of his mediation in in-law conflicts. Finally, shared family identity and filial piety have positive indirect effects on relational satisfaction with in-law and the son/husband, and perceptions of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness.

Implications and Contributions

This study has revealed important findings. First, consistent with the prior literature on conflict management in both Western and Eastern cultures, results showed that perceptions of the problem-solving style positively whereas the competing style negatively predicted relational satisfaction and judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness (e.g., Afifi et al., 2009; Cai & Fink, 2002; Mackey et al., 2004; Ting-Toomey, 1998). In addition, the son/husband's perceived use of the accommodating style was a positive predictor and the

avoiding style was a negative predictor of judgments about the son/husband's mediation appropriateness whereas the avoiding style was a negative predictor of judgments about the son/husband's mediation appropriateness. The avoiding style was also a negative predictor of mediation effectiveness. These findings in general indicate that perceptions of conflict styles across cultures are generally similar.

Prior studies on family relationships have mainly examined the dyadic communication dynamics, such as those between in-laws, parent-child, grandparent-grandchildren, and husband-wife. For example, research has found that between mother/daughter-in-laws, jealousy, competition, transference, displacement, poor distance regulation, and discrepant role expectations are associated positively with low relational satisfaction between them (Adler, Denmark, & Ahmed, 1989; Serewicz, 2006b). In terms of the marital relationship, studies have demonstrated that length of marriage, love, sexual satisfaction, communication, and satisfaction with the dual-career lifestyle between spouses influence marriage quality (e.g., Perrone & Worthington, 2001; Vaillant, & Vaillant, 1993). In reality, family communication extends beyond the dyadic level. When a dyad is experiencing a conflict, it is common for one or both parties to draw in a third party for intervention. Vuchinich, Emery, and Cassidy (1988) once reported that in dyadic family conflicts, other family members might be important third parties involved. These third parties could frequently join dyadic family conflicts, attempt to intervene in the conflicts, and sometimes form alliances with one conflict party. Third parties' intervention strategies were related to the outcome of the conflict as well as its patterning. Extending previous research, this investigation found that a third party's mediation could influence the qualities of dyadic family relationships significantly. This finding supported the Common Ingroup Identity Model in that people with dual identities (e.g., the son/husband) within a superordinate group

(e.g., family) can help reduce intergroup tensions and enhance connections between people of different groups (e.g., the son/husband to the mother/daughter-in-law dyad) (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Harwood et al., 2006; Hornsey, 2008). Therefore, future family studies should continue to consider the influence of intermediary parties on dyadic family relationships, especially in conflict situations, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the interdependent nature of family subsystems.

Inconsistent with the prior research on conflict styles (e.g., Afifi et al., 2009; Gross & Guerrero, 2000; Ting-Toomey, 1988), no significant relationship was identified between the accommodating style and perceptions of relational satisfaction as well as judgments of mediation effectiveness albeit it was significantly and positively associated with judgments of mediation appropriateness. These results suggest that although the son/husband's accommodative mediation style may please his mother and wife, and is perceived as appropriate by both groups, but may not necessarily enhance relational satisfaction and the effective management of in-law conflicts. Thus, the accommodating style used by the son/husband in mediating family conflict between wife and mother is not as constructive as the problem-solving style. Consistent with prior research in intergenerational communication in the Chinese context, the endorsement of filial piety in the Chinese cultural context motivates adult children to accommodate to their elders in conflict situations (Zhang & Hummert, 2001). However, findings from this study indicate that accommodation motivated by blind filial piety is not necessarily effective in managing family intergenerational conflict. Hence, future research needs to further examine the effects of filial piety on family relationships.

Likewise, no significant relationship was found between the mother/daughter-in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's use of the avoiding style and relational satisfaction. The

son/husband's use of the avoiding style might reflect his incompetence, passive resistance, or effort to preserve mutual face for the sake of harmony. Different interpretations of the son/husband's motivation to use the avoiding style could influence participants' evaluations of this mediation style. Some of these motivations might be perceived positively in managing face to maintain harmony, but negatively in regards to effective problem solving in in-law conflicts. Thus, the motivations behind the son/husband's use of the avoiding style in the Chinese cultural context might be more complex than the traditional Western view of the style as reflections of low concerns for self and other and the uniform traditional positive conceptualization of the style as an effective face saving technique in social conflict. The insignificant results may reflect Chinese mother/daughter-in-law's mixed perceptions of the avoiding style. On a positive note, the avoiding style protects the other parties' negative face by giving them the freedom of action/inaction in conflict situations. However, the use of the avoiding style reflects lack of interest, knowledge and/or skills in handling conflicts, thus disregards one's own and others' positive face.

For both groups, perceptions of the son/husband's use of the avoiding style were associated negatively with judgments of mediation effectiveness, which is understandable since in-law conflicts might remain unresolved. Besides, for the mother-in-law participants, the son/husband's use of the avoiding style was associated negatively with judgments of his mediation appropriateness. This finding reflects the prevalence of filial piety in Chinese intergenerational communication and is consistent with some prior studies (Lee & Rogan, 1991; Zhang et al., 2005) about the negativity of the avoiding style in that when hierarchy is involved, the use of the avoiding style by people with less power was evaluated very negatively by people at both ends of the hierarchy. Due to the status difference among the mother/daughter-in-law and

the son/husband, the mother-in-law might consider the son's avoiding style as a sign of shifting responsibility, passive resistance, or support for the daughter-in-law in in-law conflicts (Yan, 1997). Hence, the married man might violate the role expectations of a filial son, whose mediation would be perceived as inappropriateness. These findings reinforce some prior arguments that the use of the avoiding style in conflict management has become less popular and is evaluated more negatively in the contemporary China than in the past (e.g., Zhang, 2007; Zhang et al., 2005). The over arching findings about the son/husband's use of the avoiding style in his mediation of mother- and daughter-in-law conflict reveal nothing but negative perceptions. Future research on conflict management and mediation should continue to clarify the conceptualization of the typology of the avoiding style.

Second, findings about shared family identity (SFI) in this study are supportive of the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM). CIIM proposes that recategorization of outgroup members with one superordinate group identity can increase their sense of similarity and enhance their relationships. In the family setting, shared family identity has been identified as a positive mediator (albeit it might be a partial mediator) between family communication and relational satisfaction (e.g., Soliz & Harwood, 2006). Consistent with previous findings, this investigation demonstrated that regardless of the nature of mediation styles, SFI generally has positive indirect effects on family relationships and perceptions of the mediation styles. In this study, the mean scores of SFI in both groups were above the midpoint value based on 7- point Likert scales (*M* mother-in-law = 5.77; *M* daughter-in-law = 5.37), indicating that Chinese mothers/daughters-in-law generally consider each other as belonging to one family. On another note, perceptions of SFI had significant influence mostly on the associations between the problem-solving/accommodating styles and relational satisfaction. These findings indicated that

in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the son/husband's use of cooperative mediation styles might have enhanced in-laws' belief in SFI, which in turn led to higher relational satisfaction.

Although the mother-in-law's perceptions of the son's competing style negatively predicted SFI and relational satisfaction, SFI still had positive indirect effects on the mother-in-law's relational satisfaction with her daughter-in-law and the son. This implies that though perceptions of the son's competitive mediation may negatively influence the relationships between the in-law and between the mother and the son, the mother's shared family identity with her daughter-in-law can reduce the degree of relational negativity. However, similar indirect effects of SFI did not emerge to the daughter-in-law group. This group difference seems to suggest that the mother-in-law is more tolerant of her son's aggressive communication than is the daughter-in-law with her husband. Despite the son's use of the competing style, the mother-in-law still considers the daughter-in-law as one family, thus the shared family identity helps to enhance her relational satisfaction with the daughter-in-law and the son. On the contrary, when the husband used the competing style with his wife in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, his wife's belief in shared family identity with the mother-in-law might reduce significantly or even disappear, thus leaving the relational negativity unchanged. Therefore, future studies on family communication should pay more attention to the group difference on functions of shared family identity and how this difference influences communication styles and family relationships.

Third, this study reveals that SFI partially influences the associations between the son/husband's mediation styles and judgments of his mediation appropriateness and/or effectiveness as perceived by the in-laws. In the mother-in-law group, partial mediation effects of SFI have been found on the relationships between three mediation strategies (i.e., problem-solving, competing, and accommodating) and judgments of mediation appropriateness. In the

daughter-in-law group, SFI partially mediates the associations between the problem-solving style and mediation effectiveness, and between the accommodating style and judgments of mediation appropriateness. SFI also fully mediates the accommodating style and judgments of mediation effectiveness. These mediator effects indicate two things: first, SFI is significantly associated with judgments of mediation appropriateness and effectiveness; secondly, the problem-solving and accommodating styles enhance the in-laws' belief in SFI, thus leading to higher judgments of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and/or effectiveness.

Fourth, this investigation provides some empirical evidence for the significant influence of filial piety on the associations between the son/husband's mediation styles and the relational satisfaction with the in-law and with the son/husband. Results showed that filial piety still prevails among Chinese people in family communication (M mother-in-law = 5.32; M daughter-in-law = 5.38). In the mother-in-law group, filial piety partially mediates the associations between the problem-solving style and relational satisfaction with the son, and the associations between the accommodating style and relational-satisfactions with the daughter-in-law and the son. In the daughter-in-law group, filial piety partially mediates the associations between the problem-solving/accommodating style and relational satisfactions with the mother-in-law and the husband. The significant associations between filial piety and relational satisfactions found in this study are consistent with traditional Chinese values of "*he*" and "*xiào*" (i.e., "harmony" and "filial piety") (Chen & Chung, 1994; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998), which require that ingroup members should avoid direct competition for the sake of harmonious relationship and younger people should display respect for, obedience and accommodation of older adults. In mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, the son/husband's mediation styles of problem-solving and

accommodating may enhance the in-laws' belief in filial piety, thus triggering higher relational satisfaction.

Fifth, this investigation provides some empirical evidence for the significant influence of filial piety on the associations between the husband's use of the accommodating style and judgments of his mediation appropriateness and/or effectiveness from the daughter-in-law's perspective. The daughter-in-law group's filial piety index is relatively high above the midpoint ($M = 5.38$) and correlates positively with perceptions of the husband's accommodating style and his mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. These findings indicate three things: first, the husband's use of the accommodating style may invite more positive reaction from his wife (e.g., perceiving the husband's mediation as appropriate) to be more willing to carry out the value of filial piety in interaction with her mother-in-law; second, the daughter-in-law's practice of filial piety may reduce the risk of in-law competition and increases the chance of cooperation with the husband and as a result, the likelihood of managing in-law conflicts effectively.

Limitations

Scrutiny of the investigation revealed some limitations of this study. First, conflict management can be examined from two perspectives: "self" and "other". This study has only investigated the perspectives of "other" (the mother- and daughter-in-law). In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the man's mediation role in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts, future research can direct attention to the son/husband's perception of his mediation styles in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts.

Second, findings are limited by the fact that assessments are taken at a single point in mother- and daughter in-law participants' life. Will these findings be consistently in different stages of life in the family context? As this study used cross-sectional data to examine the

influence of filial piety and shared family identity with the in-law on the associations between mediation styles and relational satisfaction as well as communication appropriateness and effectiveness, even though these two variables' indirect effects have been identified, no causal relationship can be claimed. Therefore, scholars may conduct longitudinal and/or experimental studies in the future to examine the consistency/inconsistency of these findings.

Third, as all the data were collected from China, it remains unknown that to what extent the findings of this study can be applied to Western cultures. Therefore, more cross-culture studies can be done to compare the son/husband's mediation role in in-law conflicts in different societies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the mother/daughter-in-law's perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles in in-law conflicts, shared family identity, and filial piety directly and/or indirectly influenced in-laws' relational satisfaction with each other and with the son/husband, as well as their evaluations of the son/husband's mediation appropriateness and effectiveness. From the mother- and daughter-in-law's perspectives, the son/husband's problem-solving style was a constructive mediation strategy in that it could enhance in-law and marital relationships and manage in-law conflicts in an appropriate and effective manner. Nevertheless, the competing style was a destructive mediation strategy since the more the son/husband competed with his mother and his wife, the less likely he would mediate in-law conflicts appropriately and effectively, and the more dissatisfied the mother/daughter-in-law felt with each other and with him. Additionally, in general, shared family identity and endorsement of filial piety could not erase or reduce the destructive effect of the competing style on family relations and perceptions of its effectiveness and appropriateness. Furthermore, the mother/daughter-in-law intergenerational relationship is essentially hierarchical, of which status difference is

involved in the Chinese family context. Thus, the son/husband's use of the avoiding style was perceived negatively as inappropriate and/or ineffective. Dodging in-law conflicts did little to solve the in-law problems. Similarly, the son/husband's use of the accommodating style had little effects on in-law conflict management albeit it was perceived as appropriate to both the mother/daughter-in-law. Extending previous literature, this study demonstrated that shared family identity positively mediated the associations between family communication and intergenerational and marital relationships. Therefore, in-laws, especially the daughter-in-law, may take initiative efforts to promote the superordinate common ingroup identity with the mother-in-law over their differences, for example by increasing contact with the mother-in-law and establishing friendly in-law relationship. Finally, it is beneficial for cultures like China which traditionally endorse filial piety to continue to uphold this value for the sake of relationship enhancement.

In conclusion, the son/husband is an important liaison between his mother and wife in Chinese in-law conflict management. The mother- and daughter-in law's perceptions of the son/husband's mediation styles, shared family identity, and filial piety have direct and indirect effects respectively on the intergenerational and/or marital relationships among the three family members. As a practical reference to family relationship development, it is necessary for all family members, no matter they are biologically related or not, to cooperate with each other, demonstrate mutual respect, increase shared beliefs, emphasize interpersonal similarities, and enhance individual members' sense of belonging to a common ingroup — sense of "we-ness" as a family. Just as a traditional Chinese saying goes, by "transforming the hatchet into jade and silk," people are capable of managing ubiquitous conflicts constructively and enjoy family harmony in the long run.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Daughter-In-Law Participants

Thank you for your participation. Please complete this survey independently. It will take you approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete it.

Section I. General Information

[Instructions: Please answer all of the following questions by checking the appropriate box or filling in the corresponding blank.**]**

1. What is your current marital status?
   $ (1) Married $ (2) Divorced
   $ (3) Widowed $ (4) Other _____
                     (Please specify)

3. What is your mother-in-law's marital status?
   $ (1) Married $ (2) Divorced
   $ (3) Widowed $ (4) Other _____
                   (Please specify)

2. Years of Education: _____
(Starting from elementary school, e.g., College Undergraduate ≈16)

4. Your Age: _____

Section II. The following questions measure your perceptions of family relationships, communication, and filial piety. If you have more than one son/daughter-in-law, please randomly choose one son/daughter-in-law to rate the following measures accordingly. There is no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions truthfully.

1. **Instructions:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. Younger adults' sacrifice is worthwhile for the sake of being respectful and polite to older people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. No matter how older adults conduct themselves, younger adults must respect them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If there is a quarrel between a younger and an older person, the younger person should listen to the older person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Young adults should listen patiently to older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Young people should please older adults and make them happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Young people should obey older adults no matter what.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Young people should satisfy older adults' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Young people should look after older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Young people should communicate often with older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. **Instructions:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. I am proud to be in the same family as my mother-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My shared family membership with my mother-in-law is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Above all else, I think of my mother-in-law as a family member.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My mother-in-law is an important part of my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel as if my mother-in-law and I are family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. **Instructions:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My husband meets my needs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. In general, I am satisfied with my spousal relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My spousal relationship is good compared to most.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I often wish I had not married my husband.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My spousal relationship has met my initial expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I love my husband.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. There are many problems in my spousal relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. **Instructions:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My mother-in-law meets my needs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. In general, I am satisfied with my in-law relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My in-law relationship is good compared to most.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I often wish I had not had this mother--in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My in-law relationship has met my initial expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I love my mother-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. There are many problems in my in-law relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Instructions: Recall the conflicts that have happened between you and your mother-in-law. In general, how did your husband intervene in the conflicts? How did he communicate with you (e.g., what did he say or do to you)? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (Circle <u>one </u>response for each statement.)

"In general, when my mother-in-law and I had conflicts…,

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My husband integrated his ideas with mine for joint decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My husband stayed away from the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My husband used his authority to make decisions only in his favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My husband accommodated my wishes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My husband argued with me to show the merits of his position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My husband tried not to talk with me about the in-law conflicts to avoid hard feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My husband tried to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the conflicts could be resolved in the best possible way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My husband avoided being involved in the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My husband talked with me to understand the conflicts well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My husband tried to satisfy my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My husband avoided seeing me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My husband insisted on his solutions to the conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My husband went along with my suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My husband used his influence to get his ideas accepted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. My husband tried to work with me to find solutions to the conflicts that satisfied us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. My husband used his expertise to make a decision only in his favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. My husband avoided open discussion with me about the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My husband used his power to win a competitive situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My husband tried to satisfy my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. My husband tried to avoid unpleasant exchanges with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. My husband made concessions to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. My husband exchanged accurate information with me to solve the in-law conflicts together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. My husband helped me to make decisions only in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. My husband investigated the in-law conflicts with me to find acceptable solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

[**Instructions:** How would you evaluate your husband's mediation in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (Circle <u>one</u> response for each statement.)

"In general, when my husband intervened in the conflicts that I had with my mother-in-law…,

	Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**
1. My husband said things that seemed out of place in our communication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My husband was a smooth conversationalist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My husband said some things that should not have been said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My husband's communication was very suitable in the conflict situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Some things my husband said were embarrassing to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My husband's communication was very proper.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. At least one of my husband's remarks was rude.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. The things my husband spoke about were all in good taste.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My husband's mediation was very unsuccessful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My husband achieved his mediation goal through communication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My husband's communication with me was useless to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My husband's communication was very useful and helpful to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My husband achieved his mediation goal by communicating with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My husband's mediation was very unrewarding to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 2
Questionnaire for Mother-In-Law Participants

Thank you for your participation. Please complete this survey independently. It will take you approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete it.

Section I General Information

[**Instructions**: Please answer all of the following questions by checking the appropriate box or filling in the corresponding blank.]

1. Your Age: _____

2. What is your current marital status?
$ (1) Married $ (2) Divorced
$ (3) Widowed $ (4) Other _____
        (Please specify)

3. Years of Education: _____
(Starting from elementary school, e.g.,
Junior High ≈ 8, College Undergraduate
≈16)

Section II. The following questions measure your perceptions of family relationships, communication, and filial piety. If you have married more than one time, please randomly choose one marriage experience to rate the following measures accordingly. There is no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions truthfully.

1. **Instructions:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle one number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. Younger adults' sacrifice is worthwhile for the sake of being respectful and polite to older people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. No matter how older adults conduct themselves, younger adults must respect them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If there is a quarrel between a younger and an older person, the younger person should listen to the older person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Young adults should listen patiently to older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Young people should please older adults and make them happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Young people should obey older adults no matter what.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Young people should satisfy older adults' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Young people should look after older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Young people should often communicate with older adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Instructions: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. I am proud to be in the same family as my daughter-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My shared family membership with my daughter-in-law is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Above all else, I think of my daughter-in-law as a family member.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My daughter-in-law is an important part of my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel as if my daughter-in-law and I are family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Instructions: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My son meets my needs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with my son.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My relationship with my son is good compared to most.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I often wish I did not have my son.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My relationship with my son has met my initial expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I love my son.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. There are many problems in my relationship with my son.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Instructions: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> number/response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My daughter-in-law meets my needs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with my daughter-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My in-law relationship is good compared to most.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I often wish I did not have this daughter-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My in-law relationship has met my initial expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I love my daughter-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. There are many problems in my relationship with the daughter-in-law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Instructions: Recall the conflicts that have happened between you and your daughter-in-law. In general, how did your son intervene in the conflicts? How did he communicate with you (e.g., what did he say or do to you)? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> response for each statement.

"In general, when my daughter-in-law and I had conflicts…,

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1.	My son integrated his ideas with mine for joint decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My son stayed away from the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My son used his authority to make decisions only in his favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My son accommodated my wishes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	My son argued with me to show the merits of his position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	My son tried not to talk with me about the in-law conflicts to avoid hard feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	My son tried to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the conflicts could be resolved in the best possible way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	My son avoided being involved in the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	My son talked with me to understand the in-law conflicts well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	My son tried to satisfy my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	My son avoided seeing me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	My son insisted on his solutions to the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	My son went along with my suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	My son used his influence to get his ideas accepted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	My son tried to work with me to find solutions to the conflicts that satisfied both of us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	My son used his expertise to make a decision only in his favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	My son avoided open discussion of the in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	My son used his power to win a competitive situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	My son tried to satisfy my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	My son tried to avoid unpleasant exchanges with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	My son made concessions to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	My son exchanged accurate information with me to solve the in-law conflicts together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	My son helped me to make decisions only in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	My son investigated the in-law conflicts with me to find acceptable solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Instructions: How would you evaluate your son's mediation in mother/daughter-in-law conflicts? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please circle <u>one</u> response for each statement.

"In general, when my son intervened in the conflicts that I had with my mother-in-law…,

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. My son said things that seemed out of place in our communication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My son was a smooth conversationalist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My son said some things that should not have been said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My son's communication was very suitable in the conflict situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Some things my son said were embarrassing to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My son's communication was very proper.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. At least one of my son's remarks was rude.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. The things my son spoke about were all in good taste.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My son's mediation was very unsuccessful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My son achieved his mediation goal through communication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My son's communication with me was useless to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My son's communication was very useful and helpful to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My son achieved his mediation goal by communicating with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My son's mediation was very unrewarding to the management of my in-law conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 3 Questionnaire for Daughter-In-Law Participants (In Chinese)

该调查采用不记名方式, 非常感谢您的参与。为保证问卷有效, 请<u>认真, 独立地</u>回答<u>每个</u>问题。问卷共五页, 包括两大部分, 大约需要 **20-30 分钟**完成。

第一部分 基本情况

说明: 第一部分 共 **4** 题。请根据下面的问题填写或选择与您情况相符的答案。在选中的答案上划勾或将答案填写在相应的横线上

1. 您目前的婚姻状况?
　(1) 已婚　　　　　(2) 离异
　(3) 配偶已去世　　(4) 其他 _____
　　　　　　　　　　(请具体说明)

2. 您受过多少年的教育: ___年 (从小学算起,
　包括进修, 例如, 大学本科毕业可能是 **16** 年)

4. 您婆婆目前的婚姻状况?
　(1) 已婚　　　　　(2) 离异
　(3) 配偶已去世　　(4) 其他 _____
　　　　　　　　　　(请具体说明)

3. 您的年龄: _____岁

第二部分 请继续根据您丈夫和婆婆的情况填写问卷。答案没有对错。为保证问卷有效, 请您根据自己的情况回答<u>每个</u>问题。

1. [说明：共 **9** 题。您认为年轻人应该如何与老年人交往**?** 请在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。**1= 很不赞同 7 = 很赞同]**

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1. 无论老年人举止如何, 年轻人都应该尊敬他们。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 为了尊敬老人,对老年人有礼貌, 年轻人做出任何牺牲都得。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 当年轻人与老年人发生争执时, 年轻人应该听从老人的意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 年轻人应该耐心听从老年人的意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 年轻人应该让老年人高兴。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 无论老年人说什么，年轻人都应该听从。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. 年轻人应该满足老年人的需求。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. 年轻人应该照顾老年人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. 年轻人应该与老年人常交流。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. [说明：共6题。请回想一下您对<u>婆婆</u>的感觉。您喜欢或不喜欢她的哪些方面？在日常生活中作为一家人你们是如何相处的？请在下面每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。1= 很不赞同，7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1. 我为和婆婆是一家人感到骄傲。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 我的婆婆对我很重要。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 不管怎么样，我认为我和婆婆是一家人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 婆婆是我的家庭中一个重要的成员。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 我感觉和婆婆象一家人一样。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 别人表扬婆婆时我认为是给我们家争光.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3.[说明：共7题。请回想一下您与<u>婆婆</u>之间的关系。然后在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。1= 很不赞同，7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1. 我需要什么, 婆婆都能够满足我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 总的说来, 我对我和婆婆的关系非常满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 与其他人的婆媳关系比起来,我和婆婆的关系算是很好的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 我常希望我没有这个婆婆。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 我和婆婆的关系完全象我希望的那么好。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 我很敬爱婆婆。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. 我和婆婆的关系有很多的问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.[说明：共7题.请回想一下您与<u>丈夫</u>的关系。然后在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。1= 很不赞同，7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1. 我需要什么, 丈夫都能满足我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 总的说来，我对我和丈夫的关系非常满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 与其他人的夫妻关系比起来,我和丈夫的关系算是很好的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 我常希望我没有和这个丈夫结婚。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 我和丈夫的关系完全象我希望的那么好。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 我很爱我的丈夫。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. 我和丈夫的关系有很多的问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. [说明: 共 24 题。请回忆一下发生在您与婆婆之间的一些分歧, 不愉快的事, 小摩擦, 甚至矛盾冲突。想一想, 一般说来, 您丈夫为了解决这些问题, 是如何与您沟通交流的（例如，他对您说了什么话或做了什么事）。请在下面每句话后选择一个数来表明该说法从多大的程度上符合或不符合你们的情况。数字越大表明越赞同; 1 = 很不赞同，7 = 很赞同]

"一般说来, 当我与婆婆发生分歧/不愉快/小摩擦/矛盾冲突时, ……

		很不赞同						很赞同
1.	丈夫综合他和我的意见, 共同想出解决这些问题的办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	丈夫不管我和婆婆之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	事情发生后, 丈夫利用在家的权威, 提出只有利于他的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	事情发生后, 丈夫尊重我的想法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	事情发生后, 丈夫和我争论, 想证明他的解决办法是有道理的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	事情发生后, 为了家庭和睦, 丈夫尽量避免和我谈论这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	为了找到最好的解决办法，丈夫坦诚地和我交换意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	为了避免尴尬, 丈夫不管我和婆婆之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	丈夫尽量和我一起正确看待我和婆婆之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	丈夫处理这些问题时, 说话做事尽量不让我失望。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	事情发生后, 丈夫躲着不见我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	事情发生后, 丈夫坚持按他的办法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	事情发生后, 丈夫一切都听我的, 尽最大努力让我满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	事情发生后, 丈夫对我施加影响, 让我接受他的办法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	事情发生后, 丈夫尽量和我一起寻求我们都满意的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	事情发生后, 丈夫利用他的经验, 提出只有利于他的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	丈夫避免和我直接谈论我与婆婆之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	事情发生后, 丈夫利用他的权利, 坚持按他的方式解决这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	事情发生后, 丈夫尽可能地满足我的要求。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	事情发生后, 丈夫为避免不愉快, 不和我谈这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	事情发生后, 丈夫尽量按照我的意见来解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	丈夫与我客观公正地交换想法, 来一起解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	事情发生后, 丈夫用对我有利的办法来解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	丈夫和我一起分析这些事, 寻找夫妻双方都能接受的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

这些事发生后, 您如何评价您丈夫与您的沟通呢? 请继续回答下列问题。

请在下面每句话后选择一个数来表明该说法从多大的程度上符合或不符合你们的情况。数字越大表明越赞同; 1 = 很不赞同，7 = 很赞同]

"一般来说, 当我与婆婆发生分歧/不愉快/小摩擦/矛盾冲突时, ……

	很不赞同					很赞同
1. 事情发生后, 丈夫对我说话很不得体。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 事情发生后, 丈夫很会说话, 讨我高兴。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 事情发生后, 丈夫对我说了些不该说的话。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 事情发生后, 丈夫对我说的话很合适。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 事情发生后, 丈夫对我说的有些话让我尴尬。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 事情发生后, 丈夫对我说的话恰到好处。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. 事情发生后, 丈夫至少对我说了一句粗鲁的话。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. 事情发生后, 丈夫与我交谈时说话有水平。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. 事情发生后, 丈夫尽管与我进行了沟通,但没能解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. 事情发生后, 通过与我沟通, 丈夫达到了解决问题的目的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. 事情发生后, 丈夫和我的沟通对解决问题不起任何作用。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. 事情发生后, 丈夫与我的沟通对解决这些事很有帮助。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. 事情发生后, 丈夫与我的沟通成功地 解决了 这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. 事情发生后, 丈夫与我的沟通无 益于解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

感谢您的宝贵时间和帮助。最后, 为保证问卷有效, 请您检查一下是否回答了所有问题。

祝您生活幸福!

Appendix 4

Questionnaire for Mother-In-Law Participants (In Chinese)

该调查采用不记名方式, 非常感谢您的参与。为保证问卷有效, 请 独立回答每个问题。问卷共五页, 包括两大部分, 大约需要 20-30 分钟完成。

第一部分

基本情况 [共 3 题, 请根据下面的问题填写或选择与您情况相符的答案。在选中的答案上划勾或将答案填写在相应的横线上]

1.您的年龄: _____ 岁

2.受过多少年的教育: ____年(从小学算起, 包括进修。例如:初中毕业可能是 8 年)

3.您目前的婚姻状况?
  (1) 已婚   (2) 离异
  (3) 配偶已去世   (4) 其他 _____
                    (请具体说明)

第二部分 请根据您儿子和媳妇的情况填写问卷 (如果您有两个或两个以上的儿子/媳妇, 请任选一对儿子和媳妇来回答下列问题)。答案不分对错。为保证问卷有效, 请独立回答每个问题。

1. [说明：共 9 题.您认为年轻人应该如何与老人交往? 请在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。1=很不赞同，7=很赞同]

	很不赞同						很赞同
1.无论老人举止如何, 年轻人都应该尊敬他们。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.为了尊敬老人, 对老人有礼貌, 年轻人做出任何牺牲都值得。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.当年轻人与老人争执时, 年轻人应该听从老人的意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.年轻人应该耐心听从老人的意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.年轻人应该让老人高兴。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.无论老人说什么，年轻人都应该听从。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.年轻人应该满足老人的需求。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.年轻人应该照顾老人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.年轻人应该与老人常交流。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2.[说明:共6题.请回想一下您对<u>这个</u>媳妇的感觉。你们喜欢或不喜欢对方的哪些方面？在日常生活中作为一家人你们是如何相处的？请在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法,数字越大表明越赞同, 很不赞同,7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1.我为和这个媳妇是一家人感到骄傲。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.我和媳妇是一家人这对我很重要。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.不管怎么样，我认为我和媳妇是一家人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.这个媳妇是我的家庭中一个重要的成员。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.我感觉我和这个媳妇是一家人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.别人表扬这个媳妇时我认为是给我们家争光.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. [说明：共7题.请回想一下您与<u>这个</u>媳妇之间的关系。然后在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。很不赞同, 7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1.我需要什么, 我的媳妇都能够满足我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.总的说来, 我对我和这个媳妇的关系非常满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.与其他人比起来, 我和这个媳妇的关系算是很好的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.我常希望我没有这个媳妇。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.我和这个媳妇的关系完全象我希望的那么好。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.我很疼爱这个媳妇。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.我和这个媳妇的关系有很多的问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.[说明：共7题.请回想一下您与<u>这个</u>儿子的关系。然后在下面表格中的每句话后选择一个数表明您从多大的程度上同意或不同意该说法。数字越大表明越赞同。1=很不赞同, 7=很赞同]

	很不赞同					很赞同	
1.我需要什么, 这个儿子都能满足我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.总的说来, 我对我和这个儿子的关系非常满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.与他人的母子关系比起来, 我和儿子的关系算是很好的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.我常希望我没有这个儿子。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.我和这个儿子的关系完全象我希望的那么好。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.我很疼爱我这个儿子。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.我和这个儿子的关系有很多的问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. [说明: 共 24 题。请回忆一下发生在您与<u>这个</u>媳妇之间的一些分歧, 不愉快的事, 小摩擦, 甚至矛盾冲突。想一想, 一般说来, 您儿子为了解决这些问题, 是如何与<u>您</u>沟通交流的（例如，他对您说了什么话或做了什么事）。请在下面每句话后选择一个数, 表明该说法从多大的程度上符合或不符合你们的情况。数字越大表明越赞同; 1 = 很不赞同，7 = 很赞同]

"一般说来, 当我与媳妇发生分歧/不愉快/小摩擦/矛盾冲突时, ...

		很不赞同						很赞同
1.	儿子综合他和我的意见,共同想出解决这些问题的办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	儿子不管我和媳妇之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	儿子利用在家的权威,提出只有利于他的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	事情发生后,儿子尊重我的想法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	事情发生后儿子和我争论, 想证明他的解决办法是有道理的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	事情发生后,为了家庭和睦,儿子尽量避免和我谈论这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	为了找到最好的解决办法，儿子坦诚地和我交换意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	为了避免尴尬,儿子不管我和媳妇之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	儿子尽量和我一起正确看待我和媳妇之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	儿子处理这些问题时, 说话做事尽量不让我失望。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	事情发生后,儿子躲着不见我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	事情发生后,儿子坚持按他的办法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	事情发生后,儿子一切都听我的, 尽最大努力让我满意。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	儿子对我施加影响, 让我接受他的办法来解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	事情发生后,儿子尽量和我一起寻求我们都满意的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	儿子利用他的经验,提出只有利于他的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	儿子避免和我直接谈论我与媳妇之间的这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	儿子利用他的权利,坚持按他的方式解决这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	事情发生后,儿子尽可能地满足我的要求。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	事情发生后,儿子为避免不愉快,不和我谈这些事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	事情发生后,儿子尽量按照我的意见来解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	儿子与我客观公正地交换想法,来一起解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	事情发生后,儿子用对我有利的办法来解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	儿子和我一起分析这些事,寻找我俩都能接受的解决办法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

这件事发生后,您如何评价您儿子与您的沟通呢? 请继续回答下列问题。

请在下面每句话后选择一个数来表明该说法从多大的程度上符合或不符合你们的情况。数字越大表明越赞同; 1 = 很不赞同，7 = 很赞同]

"一般来说, 当我与媳妇发生分歧/不愉快/小摩擦/矛盾冲突时, ……

	很不赞同						很赞同
1. 事情发生后, 儿子对我说话很不得体。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. 事情发生后, 儿子很会说话, 讨我高兴。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. 事情发生后, 儿子对我说了些不该说的话。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. 事情发生后, 儿子对我说的话很合适。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. 事情发生后, 儿子对我说的有些话让我尴尬。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. 事情发生后, 儿子对我说的话恰到好处。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. 事情发生后, 儿子至少对我说了一句粗鲁的话。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. 事情发生后, 儿子与我交谈时说话有水平。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. 事情发生后, 儿子尽管与我进行了沟通, 但没能解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.事情发生后, 通过与我沟通, 儿子达到了解决问题的目的。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.事情发生后, 儿子和我的沟通对解决问题不起任何作用。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.事情发生后, 儿子与我的沟通对解决这些事很有帮助。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.事情发生后, 儿子与我的沟通成功地 解决了这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.事情发生后, 儿子与我的沟通无 益于解决这些问题。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

感谢您的宝贵时间和帮助。最后, 为保证问卷有效, 请您检查一下是否回答了所有问题。

祝您生活幸福!