

“ WHAT DID SHE SAY?”
INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES OF FILIAL OBLIGATION IN AN
URBAN AREA OF INNER MONGOLIA, CHINA

By

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Abstract

Filial obligation, a central concept in Confucianism describes how children should treat their parents. In traditional Chinese society, older adults become fully dependent on their children later in life. However, recent studies have shown that the concept of traditional filial obligation is undergoing significant change due to rapid economic and demographic development. Through in-depth interviews with 27 women from 9 families in the city of Hulunbeier, China and a refined filial scale at the end of each interview, this study compared intergenerational differences among three generations: the older generation (G1), the Chinese baby boomer generation (G2), and the one-child generation (G3). Intergenerational differences of filial obligation were explored in regard to definition and practice. Applying a grounded theory approach, I found that the concept of filial obligation is changing: among those respondents, the focus of filial obligation has shifted from material support to emotional support; parents now prefer their daughters as opposed to their sons to care for them; although previous research suggested that obedience has gradually lost its importance, my study suggests obedience still exerts strong influence in the practice of filial obligation.

Keywords: filial obligation, intergenerational relationship, gender, obedience

Traditionally, children are expected to take care of their parents in East Asian culture. Filial obligation, known as “Xiao” in Chinese, is a central concept in Confucianism, and it concerns the practice and expectations of children to care for parents (H. J. Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). It requires both material and emotional support; adult children owe aging parents respect, obedience, loyalty, material provision, and physical care (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). In China, before the era of modernization, there were two specific patterns related to the traditional practice of filial obligation: older adults were taken care of by adult children and typically chose to live with their sons (Lee & Hong-kin, 2005).

Historically, the patrilocal pattern of filial obligation resulted in a highly gendered practice of filial obligation. Women were in a suppressed and submissive position—before marriage, they should obey their fathers. After marriage, they were supposed to listen to their husbands. When they were old and if their husbands died, their son would be in charge of their lives. In contrast to their sons, parents expected daughters to leave their natal families after marriage and become a part of their husbands’ families. Hence, they were devalued as temporary members of natal families, who were considered not only unable to fulfill filial obligation to their parents but also wasting families’ resources (Shi, 2009).

In 1978, the Chinese government moved away from planned economic policy and shifted toward a market-driving policy. (Naughton, 2007) The tremendous urbanization

and modernization that followed profoundly changed Chinese demographics and significantly enhanced social mobility. According to the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, the 2010 population census showed that urban residents increased by 13.46 % within ten years (Ma, 2011).

In part because of rapid urbanization, family size has been declining since the start of the 21st century. During the 1950s and 1960s the government followed Russia's example of applying pro-natalist policy, which resulted in the Chinese baby boomer generation. During these two decades, each woman had an average of four children; therefore, each Chinese baby boomer today has at least three siblings on average to share the responsibility of elder care. In 1979, the government implemented the One-Child Policy (OCP) in response to China's population growth. The average urban household size decreased from 3.89 members in 1985 to 3.50 in 1990 and 3.23 in 2000 and 2.97 in 2005 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1985, 1990, 2000, 2005). The implementation of the OCP is one core contributor to the shrinking family size. The OCP limited the number of children that a couple in urban areas could have to one, thus dramatically changing urban family structure to an "inverted pyramid": four grandparents—two parents— one child (H. J. Zhan & Montgomery, 2003).

Although long accused of depriving women of free will in family planning, research has shown that women, especially in urban areas, gained more equality and opportunity because of the OCP (Deutsch 2006). The low fertility rate has given women a chance to pursue their own careers outside the family; with a steady income, women are now capable of providing for their parents financially (Fong 2002). The growing gender

equality and the shrinking family size in China worked together to undermine the foundation of traditional gendered filial obligation.

Previous studies already predicted modification and possible erosion of filial obligation (A. C. Y. Ng, Phillips, & Lee, 2002; William Keng-Mun, 2005). Changes in social structure have had profound impacts on the lives of individuals. Women, especially in urban areas, are playing a more active role in caring for parents compared to their male counterparts. With the improved living standard, there may be more emphasis on emotional support instead of material provision. In regard to the expectation of filial obligation, several scholars (D. Wang, Laidlaw, Power, & Shen, 2010; H. J. Zhan, 2004) observed that the Chinese baby boomer generation has already lowered their filial expectation for the one-child generation in order to deal with the anticipated lessening of involvement from their children. Hence, we may expect emerging new values in intergenerational relationships.

From a life course perspective, Alwin and McCammon define period effects as the widespread changes, which initiated by a set of historical events, affect the entire society. (Jeylan T. Mortimer, 2003) In line with them, both of the economic reform and the One-Child Policy in 1978 and 1979 are period effects and they reshaped the life trajectories of G1s, G2s and G3s. The period effects on each generation, however, might differ by age. On the one hand, generations were born and grew up in different times so that generations are bringing different histories with them. On the other hand, aging brings people to life stages that have different concerns. For instance, G2s are the main

caregivers in their families, they have the responsibility to take care of both their mothers and daughters. Whereas G3s are young and more career-oriented: most of them focus on either further education or getting promotions. However, it is usually hard to disentangle the age—period—cohort effect. (Jeylan T. Mortimer, 2003) Since filial obligation is a multigenerational activity, it is crucial to study how different generations perceive the concept and how they shoulder the consequences differently.

However, few studies have identified the intergenerational differences in regard to the concept and practice of filial obligation. My research is designed to discover how women perceive the concept of filial obligation in different social contexts and how the meaning of the OCP, as well as the improving gender equality in China has changed different generations' practices and expectations of filial obligation. My research contributes to extend the study of filial obligation by carefully analyzing its definition from three generations and making intergenerational comparisons that are missing in previous research.

I conducted 27 in-depth interviews in Inner Mongolia, China. In the interviews I focused on how participants from different generations define the concept of filial obligation, which sheds light on its definitions and expectations. My study suggests that the focus of filial obligation has shifted from material support to emotional support as we go from G1 to G3. There are different degrees of recognition to the components of filial obligation across generations. This is especially true for some traditional components of the concept, such as “maintaining the graves of ancestors” and “saving face for parents.”

Although previous studies suggested obedience was devalued across generations (Lee & Hong-kin, 2005; 2002), I found all three generations believe that obedience is still important in the practice of filial obligation. Parents prefer daughters rather than sons and daughters-in-law to take care of them. Instead of fully depending on their only child, the G2s put more expectations on public sectors such as long-term care institutions.

Literature Review

Because it served as the root of virtues for centuries, it is reasonable to believe that filial obligation still exerts strong influence on individuals in Chinese society today. However, with rapid modernization and urbanization in China, especially in urban areas, the definition and practice of filial obligation can hardly stay the same. The literature about modifications to filial obligation in contemporary China from 1990 to 2011 reveals two general themes: the modifications of filial obligation in a emerging social context and gender inequality in the practice of filial obligation.

The Modifications of Filial Obligation in a Emerging Social Context

Cheung and Kwan (2009) examined the levels and interaction between modernization and filial piety in six major cities in China. By using a questionnaire, they found that peoples' belief in filial piety was negatively associated with the level of modernization. In other words, the more modernized the city is, the less filially obligated the citizens feel. Cheung and Kwan believed that modernization encouraged ageism, shrinking of family size and the erosion of traditional social norms, which could weaken people's sense of responsibility to take care of older adults. Not entirely pessimistic, Cheung and Kwan discovered that education in China today was still capable of

countering the negative contextual influences of modernization. Namely, higher educated people preserved a stronger sense of filial piety compared to those with less education in modern society.

However, Zhan (2004) did not completely agree with Cheung and Kwan on education. She found the G3s, who received more education, were less willing to sacrifice their careers to take care of their parents. That is, the only child with higher education did respect their parents; however, when they had to choose between their careers and fulfilling their filial obligations, they were more likely to put their career first, regardless of their gender.

Although they did not consider it to be erosion, several scholars observed the modification of filial obligation in the changing social context. After doing in-depth interviews with 50 elders in public housing estates in Hong Kong, Ng et al. (2002) found filial obligation in a modified form: although adult children still listen to and respect their parents, absolute respect and obedience are not considered necessary anymore. Adult children might not show their sympathy for the parent's situation.

More recent research reported that instead of living together with their children, the older generation accepted living in institutions or living alone in order to reduce family caregiving pressures (Chen, 2011). Other studies further argued that living separately from children did not affect whether older adults could receive economic assistance from their children or not; however, it did limit their ability to request assistance with daily activities (Sun, 2002). More commonly, adult children used financial assistance to compensate for their absence from parents' lives (Cheung &

Kwan, 2009; Lee & Hong-kin, 2005; A. C. Y. Ng et al., 2002; Sun, 2002). Financial concern and social desirability played into the negotiation between the older generation and their adult children. The process of negotiation redefined the traditional concept of filial obligation.

Although several scholars noticed the modification of filial obligation, they did not specifically analyze which aspects were redefined and what the differences were across generations in regard to its definition.

Gender Differences in the Practice of Filial Obligation

Filial obligation also has a gendered component: due to the patriarchal structure of traditional families, sons and daughters-in-law provided support and care for aging parents. Daughters were looked down upon because they could not make contributions to their families. However, this might not be the case anymore. Compared to the past, women in China now are taking a more active role in fulfilling filial obligations to their natal parents. Analyzing the data collected in the 1990s, researchers found married daughters, especially those who co-resided with their parents, provided more financial support to their parents than did married sons (Silverstein, Parrott, & Bengtson, 1995). Beyond proving their abilities to care for their natal parents financially, women's advantages in caregiving became evident. Moreover, in a recent study Shi (2009) observed the preference for daughters taking care of their parents in a rural area of China. Using participant observation and interviews, she found parents considered daughters more filial than sons—not only would they provide financial care for their natal parents,

they were also more considerate and understanding when dealing with parents' emotional issues.

Other factors also lead to women's active role in elder care. Both modernization and implementation of the One-Child Policy (OCP) contributed to improving gender equality in the one-child generation. Studies have already shown that the OCP weakened patriarchal traditions in China. Through interviews with 84 senior university students, Deutsch (2006) found the OCP appeared to promote gender equality: the only child in the study endorsed more liberal gender attitudes than those with siblings. The positive effect of the OCP on the only daughters in urban areas was especially noteworthy. In the traditional patriarchal family, parents had few incentives to invest in their daughters. The only daughters now, however, enjoyed full parental support because they did not have to compete with brothers for parental investment (Fong, 2002). In addition, lower fertility enabled women to work full-time and gave them a chance to demonstrate their ability to fulfill filial obligation by providing for their own parents (Fong, 2002). With this empowerment, the only daughters in urban areas could experience opportunities and equalities that had never before been enjoyed by Chinese women. However, in the context of a declining patrilocal tradition of caregiving, research showed women as caregivers might have suffered from detrimental effects as they were likely to live longer but have fewer children available to help them (H. J. Zhan & Montgomery, 2003).

In spite of the growing gender equality in China, most of the studies mentioned above still focused on the increasing financial contribution that women could make to their natal families. They did not fully answer the questions of how women support their

parents emotionally and whether females are preferred in urban areas as well as in rural areas.

In sum, previous studies suggested that as a cultural norm, filial obligation still exerted strong influences in contemporary China (Fong, 2002; Lee & Hong-kin, 2005; Sheng & Settles, 2006). Even the one-child generation, which had a bad reputation of being “little emperors” or “little princesses”, expressed a strong sense of responsibility in taking care of their parents (H. J. Zhan, 2004). However, they were less willing to co-reside with their parents and were more likely to make their career the priority when jobs and parental care were in conflict (H. J. L. Zhan, Guangya Guan, Xiping, 2006). On the one hand, fulfilling filial obligation brought heavy pressures to the Chinese baby boomer generation, and sometimes, unbearable strains for the one-child generation. On the other hand, the older generation and Chinese baby boomer generation adjusted to the reality and lowered their expectations for filial obligation. Meanwhile the shifting gender equality and shrinking size of households in China undermined the basis of traditional filial obligation.

Most of the research agreed with the modifications of filial obligation across generations; however, few studies illustrated clearly how the concept of filial obligation was redefined by different generations. Intergenerational comparison of participants’ perceptions of filial obligation is rare. Most of the studies that used this comparison concentrated on two generations: either the older generation and the Chinese baby boomer generation, or the Chinese baby boomer generation and the one-child generation (Fong, 2002; Sun, 2002; H. J. Zhan, 2004). Comparisons of how G1s, G2s and G3s

perceive the concept of filial obligation differently have not been conducted. Although previous studies have focused on the empowerment and rising social status of women in modern society, especially for only daughters (Deutsch, 2006; Shi, 2009), no study has pointed out how these unprecedented shifts affected women's perception of filial obligation in the family context.

My study is designed to understand the intergenerational differences of filial obligation in an urban area of China. By analyzing interviews from women of the three generations from nine families, I hope to reveal issues that are missing from previous studies, such as what filial obligation means to these women, how they define filial obligation in different social contexts and what they consider to be the most important component in filial obligation.

Method

Participants

I chose to use in-depth interviews to reveal the meaning of filial obligation to the participants. This study focused exclusively on women because social changes and social policies in China, such as the OCP, have a more profound impact on women as compared to men. In addition, it is well known that women play a significant role in passing down culture and traditions in the familial context. I interviewed 27 women from three generations in 9 families in the city of Hulunbeier in the summer of 2011. The city of Hulunbeier belongs to the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the northeast part of China on the border between China, Mongolia and Russia. It has a population of 250,000,

including 36 ethnic groups. Beginning with a G2's class reunion and using a snowball sampling method, I collected information on families that contain the three generations: G1 (grandmothers mainly born in 1930s), G2 (mothers mainly born in 1960s) and G3 (singleton daughters mainly born in late 1980s and early 1990s). Three key informants that I knew personally helped to introduce me and recruit the participants. I first talked to G2s about this research and received their permission to contact their mothers and daughters. All of the participants were informed about the research topic, and they all agreed to participate. I used pseudonyms for all of the participants. Recruiting families with three generations of females was not easy: more than half of the G2s in the business class reunion had only sons instead of daughters; many mothers of the G2s have severe health problems or have already passed away. After initial telephone contact, eleven families were selected based on their availability; however, one family dropped out the study because of G1's health issue. Another family's G1 respondent refused to participate in spite of her daughter's strong persuasion. In the end, 27 members from 9 families agreed to participate in the research. Below (Table 1) is the age distribution of my sample.

Table 1 The age of participants from the three generations

Generation Family	G1	G2	G3
Chen	90	50	23
Guan	72	51	26
Kong	68	47	23
Lu	71	50	21
Wang	76	50	21
Wu	80	49	23
Zhang	86	51	23
Zhao	70	48	23
Zhi	81	51	25

The three generations of women grew up in fairly different historical contexts. Mainly born in the 1920s and 1930s, the G1s witnessed the changes of regimes in contemporary China. Wars and famines accompanied them until the 1960s. In fact, most of the G1s were not originally from Inner Mongolia. Because of the vast famine in the 1950s, they moved from central parts of China to Hulunbeier, which has less population and more natural resources. Born after the founding of People's Republic of China (PRC), G2s have had an easier life compared to their mothers. Back in the 1960s, however, China was still recovering from years of warfare and colonization. Having several siblings in their families, most of the G2s learned to be independent and take care

of the entire family at an early age. Unlike their parents and grandparents, G3s enjoy their steady and affluent lives that their parents have made possible for them. As the only children in families, G3s possess all of the love and resources from G2s and G1s.

Because most of the participants were recruited from a G2's class reunion, all G2 participants' educational attainment was controlled, which resulted in having the same socio-economic status. All of the nine G2 participants in this research are college-educated women. In the late 1980s, when most of the G2 graduated from college, China was still in the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, so large numbers of young professionals were needed. Majoring in business or accounting, the G2s in my sample were offered decent jobs after graduation. Thus, most of their families belong to the middle class in China.

Procedures

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at KU approved this research and the participants were recruited in the summer of 2011 in Hulunbeier. The process of data collection used semi-structured interviews conducted in Mandarin, the official language of China, and took place over four weeks. Interviews were conducted in the offices or homes of the participants and two local ice cream shops. Beginning with a verbal explanation of the study, each participant was handed a copy of the consent form written in Chinese. I used an electronic recorder during the interview, and the average length of each interview was 55 minutes.

Interview Questions

I conducted 27 semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol (see Appendix) contained 12 open-ended questions and a filial scale at the end of interview. Open-ended questions were used to explore respondents' opinion about the concept, current practice and future expectations of filial obligation. I divided the practice of filial obligation into three categories: (1) material support—financial assistance, including money for daily living expenses, medication and traveling, buying daily necessities such as groceries and cleaning supplies and gifts; (2) emotional support—providing a sense of presence with activities such as texting, calling, visiting, spending quality time together and companionship; and (3) assistance with daily living such as cleaning, cooking, doing laundry, and other chores. When talking about the definition of filial obligation, I did not ask participants specifically about obedience and its relationship with filial obligation. The questions for the three generations were basically the same except differences in wording. At the end of the interview, a filial scale measured the different degree of priority of the components of filial obligation. In a Korean study of how to conceptualize the concept of filial obligation, the author summarized the themes in an ancient Chinese book called *The 24 Stories of Filial Obligation* (Sung, 1995). Based on this study, I designed a filial scale of 17 components to measure their different degrees of importance. A portion of the scale came from the Korean study; the other part came from previous readings and my daily observations. At the end of each interview, I asked participants to rate the importance of each component on a five-point scale, ranging from “Very important” to “Not important at all”.

Data Analysis

All of the 27 interviews were later transcribed in the original language. Following the grounded theory approach (Carol A.B. Warren, 2010) to the analysis, initial codes were developed after the open coding process for 3 weeks. Using NVivo (QSR International, 2002) the interviews were coded under different themes. Analytical categories were built and then further comparisons among categories were made. Both differences within family and across generations were observed. However, my study will only focus on differences across generations. Although the data was carefully collected and analyzed, this study is based on cross-sectional data, so it will not be able to document the intergenerational changes of filial obligation across time.

Findings

My results reveal two common themes in intergenerational definitions of filial obligation: emotional support and obedience. For G1s and G2s, the concept of filial obligation was directly linked with improving parents' living standards, whereas for G3s, filial obligation was mainly about providing emotional support to their parents. In the first section, I discuss the participants' definitions of filial obligation, especially for the repeated concept of obedience, followed by the result of the filial scale. Then in the second section I examine the gendered practice and expectation of filial obligation. I conclude with the intergenerational differences of filial obligation and the limitation of my study.

What is Filial Obligation?

Self-definition and the most important element.

Definition of filial obligation varied depending on the generation of the participants. Different generations are in different stages of their lives. Generally speaking, the G3s, who did not have much experience in care giving, were more inclined to use abstract concepts to describe filial obligation, such as “a habit” or “a harmonious relationship.” Whereas G2s and G1s, who are or used to be primary caregivers in their family, were more practical—they demonstrate the concept of filial obligation through their actions, for instance “spending more time with them” and “helping them immediately when they are in need.”

Half of the G1s considered the concept of filial obligation as a combination of material support and emotional support. A filial child in their mind was responsible for providing not only things that they needed, such as food or clothes, but also emotional comfort. In fact companionship was often highly emphasized over material provision. There were two G1s that limited the concept of filial obligation to only emotional care. Emotional comfort was very meaningful for G1s, as was obedience, which was mentioned repeatedly in the interviews. Four G1s believed the core of filial obligation was obedience. The G1 in the Wang family explained why she thought obedience was crucial:

“To me, obedience is filial obligation... No matter how old you are, you cannot challenge your mother like she is no big deal. I raised them up in extreme hardship...If your children argue with you and make you feel angry and hard to breathe, will you be

happy about that? I have money, and I don't bother them with other things except for saving the face of their mother! They shouldn't let me feel speechless."

Saving face in China means a combination of "moral imperatives, social honor and self-respect" (Yang 2001). Being confronted by their children, G1s may feel their children are attacking their honor and self-respect, whereas having obedient children may help to boost parents' self-esteem and positive self-recognition.

However, an inconsistency between how people define filial obligation and what they consider as the most important issue in filial obligation is observed in the G1s. The most common definition for filial obligation is still emotional support—a sense of being there. However, when asked about the most important component in filial obligation, obedience, instead of emotional support, becomes the most frequently mentioned element in G1s. Assistance with daily living is the second most important element. Two of the G1s stressed that assistance with daily living when they are ill is the most important aspect. In contrast, only two G1s considered companionship and emotional care as the most important elements in filial obligation.

As the middle generation in the families, the G2s have double identities as care givers for their mothers and potential care receivers from their daughters. Caregiving, however, is the primary identity of G2s. When talking about the concept of filial obligation, most of the G2s prioritized emotional support. They tried to be considerate, not let their mothers feel lonely and keep them in a cheery mood. To them, keeping their mother happy was what it means to fulfill their filial obligations. Instead of saying

obedience directly, two of the G2s stated indirect forms of obedience, such as not contradicting or arguing with parents. Assistance with housework and daily living are also mentioned along with companionship and obedience. In regard to what they considered to be the most important component of filial obligation, unlike their mothers, G2s' answers were consistent with their definitions of filial obligation.

G3s in this study are generally in their early 20s. As the only children in their families, they do not have much experience as caregivers. Three of the G3s told me directly that they wouldn't think about filial obligation without being prompted, and it was hard for them to summarize what filial obligation is in their minds. All of the G3s connected filial obligation with emotional support for their parents. Three of them directly related obedience with parents' and grandparents' happiness. Being obedient and following parents' and grandparents' advice was a way to please them. This was especially true for pleasing grandparents. Most of the G3s believed that later in their lives, their grandmothers have the right to do what they want. The G3 in Zhi's family said: "*My grandma wants to do so many things but my mother wouldn't let her because of my grandma's health problems. ... I said, 'my grandma is in her 80s; let her do what she wants!' I think we should treat seniors as babies, if she is wrong, we can compensate afterwards.*" The other two G3s believed that not letting their parents worry about them is fulfilling their filial obligations. The G3 in Chen's family said: "*The last thing that a filial child wants to do is to keep their parents worried constantly.*" All G3s agreed that emotional support especially companionship is the most important component of filial obligation.

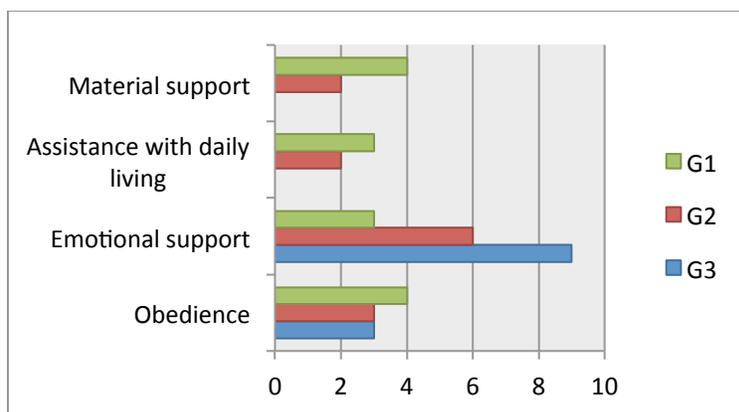


Figure 1 The definition of filial obligation across generations (generations can cite more than one feature)

Emotional support and obedience are the two common themes across the three generations related to participants' definitions of filial obligation. Many respondents use these themes to define filial obligation in their mind. However, intergenerational differences do exist. (See Figure 1) Material support is valued the most in G1s, less valued in G2s and barely mentioned in G3s. Assistance with daily living, is stressed by G1s and G2s, whereas the idea of assistance is completely over-powered by emotional care in G3s' concepts of filial obligation. Although obedience is one of the common themes in the concept of filial obligation, four G1s, one G2 and zero G3s consider it as the most important factor in filial obligation. In general, my study suggests a decreasing tendency of valuing material support; the importance of assistance is steady in G1s and G2s, but declines among G3s. Accordingly, the importance of emotional support grows across all generations.

What is more important? Results of the filial scale.

Positive and negative congruence across generation.

I found both congruence and divergence in the participants' responses in regard to the filial scale. I further divided congruence into two categories— positive and negative. Positive congruence means participants agreed that a certain component is very important or important to filial obligation, whereas negative congruence means respondents found a component “not very important” or “not important”. All participants expressed high positive congruence in the following four categories: showing respect for parents, love and affection for parents, making parents happy and comfortable, and harmonizing family relations around parents. Most of them agreed that showing respect and love to parents and letting parents live in a comfortable and harmonious family are important or very important. (See Table 2)

Table 2 The results of the filial scale

<i>Generations/ Attitudes</i>	<i>G1</i>			<i>G2</i>			<i>G3</i>		
	<i>Very important / Important</i>	<i>It depends</i>	<i>Not very important / Important</i>	<i>Very important / Important</i>	<i>It depends</i>	<i>Not very important / Important</i>	<i>Very important / Important</i>	<i>It depends</i>	<i>Not very important / Important</i>
	Congruence (positive)								
Respect parents	9	0	0	9	0	0	9	0	0
Love and affection for parents	9	0	0	9	0	0	9	0	0
Harmonizing family relations around parents	9	0	0	8	1	0	9	0	0
Making parents happy and comfortable	9	0	0	7	2	0	9	0	0
	Congruence (negative)								
Giving parents enough money	1	2	6	2	4	3	4	0	5
	Divergence (increasing tendency)								
Help parents with daily activities	1	5	3	2	5	2	5	3	1
Fulfilling responsibility to parents	5	2	2	9	0	0	9	0	0
Repayment of debts to parents	6	2	1	6	1	2	7	0	2
Sympathy for aged and sick parents	6	0	3	7	1	1	8	1	0
Chatting with parents often and listen to them with attention	7	1	1	8	1	0	9	0	0
	Divergence (declining tendency)								
Harmonizing relations with neighbors	9	0	0	6	0	3	6	0	3
Realizing parents' wishes	7	1	1	6	0	3	6	0	3
Maintaining graves of ancestors	9	0	0	5	1	3	4	4	1
Be successful and bringing honor to the family	6	2	1	4	0	5	2	0	7
Deep concern for the continuity of family	5	0	4	2	1	6	2	0	7
Following religious teachings about parent	1	0	8	2	0	7	0	0	9
	Interval divergence								
Saving face for parents	9	0	0	5	1	3	8	1	0

Several studies used material support to measure the practice of filial obligation (Sun, 2002; Yu, Yu, & Mansfield, 1990). Receiving money from children is certainly a way to know that their children still care about them and want them to live a good life. However, there are other ways for their children to show their love and care for parents. According to my study, receiving money is certainly not the favorite way. (See Table 2) G1s and G2s in my sample tend to prioritize talking with parents and providing companionship. Meanwhile, they do not neglect the importance of material provision: if their parents do not have enough income, many G1s and G2s believe it is necessary to provide for their parents financially. When talking to G3 respondents, most of them realize their parents have sufficient financial resources and they do not need to worry about this in their parents' lives. However, knowing their parents have enough money is not the only reason why G3s think giving their parents money is not important. Seeing how their parents take care of their grandparents in everyday lives, some of the G3s think their mothers are not doing a good job in regard to caring for their grandmothers. Several G3s accused the G2s of neglecting their grandmother's emotional health. *"She thinks giving lots of money to my grandma is fulfilling her filial obligation"* said the G3 in Zhi's family, *"sometimes she is even rude to my grandma. She tells my grandma disapprovingly what she should do. I think that is so wrong."*

Divergence across generations.

Apart from positive and negative congruence, I also found divergences across different generations. On the one hand, five components gained more recognition as we

go from G1s to G3s. (See Table 2) It confirms the finding in the last section that G3s emphasize emotional support more than their mothers and grandmothers. From Table 2 we can see that G3s have a stronger sense of responsibility and indebtedness towards their parents. I agree with previous studies (Sun, 2002; Tsai, Chen, & Tsai, 2008; H. J. Zhan, 2004) which suggest although the practice may be different, the one-child generation is still very filial to their parents. The “only child” identity even enhances their awareness of taking care of their parents since they have no siblings to share the responsibility with.

On the other hand, several components lost their prominence in the G2s’ and G3s’ answers. These six components include “maintaining the graves of ancestors”, “trying to be successful and bring honor to the family”, and “maintaining relations with neighbors” etc. (See Table 2) Those components are the most traditional aspects in filial obligation, which involve social approval by others. On the one hand, because of the modernization process, individuality has more impact on recent generations, especially for G3s. On the other hand, great geographic mobility of G2s and G3s allowed many of them live in a place far away from their hometown.

Take “maintaining the graves of ancestors” as an example. All of the G1s think this is a very important or important component of filial obligation. Although I only asked them about maintaining graves, G1s also liked to talk about other death-related issues. The G1 from Guan’s family said: *“People want to have kids, especially a boy, because your dead body will be placed in your son’s home before burial. No daughter will do that for her parents. Why would people want to have kids in such a hard time? It*

is because you need somebody to take care of you after death.” For G1s, fulfilling one’s filial obligation not only means caring for living parents daily, but also includes funeral rituals after death. Contrary to the G1s’ emphasis on after-death rituals, only half of the G2s believe that maintaining their ancestors’ graves is important. Although this is a topic that G2s will discuss with their parents, most of them pay more attention to fulfilling filial obligations when their parents are still alive. The opinion of “serving the parents generously while they are alive instead of giving them a lavish funeral once they pass away” is held by many of them. For G3s, the topic of after-death rituals did not even come up until the end of interview when I asked them to specifically rate these on the filial scale. Only three out of eight G3s agreed that rituals of respect after death are important.

The same situation happened with regard to “harmonizing relations with neighbors”. There is an old Chinese saying that says, “Far relatives are no better than close neighbors.” In traditional Chinese society, relationships with neighbors were a key issue in daily life. Because of geographical intimacy, neighbors took care of and watched out for each other. However, due to modernization and urbanization, more and more people moved into modern condominiums where the distance between people is greater and each family is more isolated from another. During the interview, both G2s and G3s said that today neighbors no longer cared for one other. Although they may have lived in their current residences for several years, many of them still did not know their neighbors’ names.

Except for the increasing and decreasing tendencies that were mentioned above, there is an interval divergence in the filial scale. When talking about “saving face for parents”, all G1s felt it is important or very important for children to save their parents’ face and to maintain their parents’ dignity, whereas only half of the G2s agreed with their parents. Interestingly, all of the G3s shared the same idea with their grandmothers—they believe that saving face for seniors in the family is crucial for the practice of filial obligation.

Unexpected results.

Previous research suggested obedience was devalued by participants (Lee & Hong-kin, 2005; A. C. Y. Ng et al., 2002; X. Y. S. H. Ng, 1999), however, my study reveals that obedience is still crucial especially for the practice of filial obligation. In addition, I also find that material support, which used to be the main measure of filial obligation, to be less emphasized by participants, especially by the one-child generation. I will first discuss the role of obedience and then participants’ attitudes toward material support.

Obedience.

Although I did not ask specifically, many participants brought up obedience when they were defining filial obligation. In traditional Chinese culture, obedience was a concept that was tied to filial obligation. In order to be considered filial, one would have to obey their parents without question no matter how old he or she is. Elders in the family, especially male seniors were considered to be the head of the family unit. All

family members should obey the head of the family so that order in the family was harmonious and sustained. When asked about the relationship between obedience and filial obligation, some G1s told me their stories of obedience to their parents. When they were young, their parents were fairly authoritative— they respected their parents absolutely or were even scared of their parents, especially their fathers. They had to follow their parents' wishes exactly. However, for their own children, G1s did not require as much obedience from their children as their own parents did. Most of their concerns focused on obedience in communication— filial children should not contradict their parents even if their parents' ideas are wrong. When communicating with their parents, arguing and retorting were considered to be unfilial or even unthinkable. Other G1s lowered their demands for obedience to “Do not criticize me” or “Don't make me angry.”

The process of bargaining becomes clear in intergenerational communication. Bargains are a part of daily life; people give up what they have in exchange for things or services that are more desired. The exchange process is dynamic. Some of the G1s considered their age advantageous for bargaining; others thought it was their time to be compliant to their children. The G1 in Zhi's family said: *“I know sometimes what I am saying is wrong, but you have to be considerate: I am already 81 years old. If I am right, you should listen to me; if I am not, you shouldn't contradict me.”* On the contrary, after several verbal conflicts with one of her daughters, the G1 in Wang's family learned how to communicate with her children:

“Sometimes my daughter says things that upset me, but I won’t point them out. I am the mother and they are my children, what is the point of arguing with each other about who is wrong and who is right? If I criticize them too much, they will be upset as well. Now, all I want to do is to keep them happy, if my silence can do that then I will just keep quiet.”

Recognizing their mothers’ expectations, most of the G2s would listen to their mothers and behave accordingly. If there were conflicts, instead of arguing with their mothers, G2s would try to convince them in a more subtle way. Both G2s and G3s realized their mothers or grandmothers were in their 70s or 80s, and consequently their opinions would sometimes be out of date. Instead of telling them what is right and how things should be, G2s and G3s would pretend to agree with G1s or at least keep silent so that their mothers or grandmothers were happy. Like the G2 in Zhi’s family said: *“My mom is 81 years old, who knows how many years she can live. I will let her do whatever she wants as long as she is happy.”* In the northern part of China, when talking about irrational behaviors of older adults, many people like to address seniors as “old kids”. The underlying assumption is that the more a person ages, the more dependent and irrational he/she might become, just like a little child. People are more likely to accept seniors’ mistakes and pamper them like adults treat babies. This attitude is exactly what G2s and G3s think they should do for their mothers or grandmothers.

In summary, most G1s do value obedience in their heart and it is part of their criteria in deciding whether a child is filial or not. However, the concepts and demands

for obedience are largely reduced to the level of communicational. For G2s, they would listen to their mothers and when they think their mothers are wrong, instead of contradicting them directly, most would talk to them in a subtle way or discuss the question later when sides have calmed down. G2s value obedience but not as much as their mothers. G3s do not value obedience, however, they would also be compliant towards their mothers and grandmothers just to please them. Thus, my study implies that although obedience is not valued as much by later generations, its importance is still obvious in the practice of filial obligation.

Material support.

When money is not everything.

According to previous research, financial assistance is a crucial way to show love and care for parents, especially G3s. Since G3s are busy and often away from home, sending money to their parents seems to be a good substitution for taking care of them on a daily basis. However, in my study, all the G3s did not think giving money to their parents was an appropriate way to express their love and fulfill filial obligations. Most of them knew their parents have enough money and felt that what they really need is emotional support. Most G2s and G1s shared the same idea with their daughters or granddaughters. Moreover, several G2s still helped their children financially even if their children had sufficient incomes. The G3 in Guan's family, who is 26 years old and works in an elite accounting firm in Beijing said "*Although my salary is quite steady, I never give money to my parents. My mom always says 'Just keep the money yourself, we don't*

need it.' And sometimes if I run out of money, my parents will wire money to my bank account." Having only one-child in the family means that parents' resources are concentrated rather than spread over several children as the case was with the previous generations. G2s love their "little princesses" too much to let them shoulder the burden of caring for their parents when they get old. Most of the G2 generation hopes they do not need their children to take care of them financially. They understand the burden that is placed on their only child. When they were talking about their lives after retirement, they expressed determination in giving their children a hand when they are in need. The G2 in Guan's family said:

"We don't need her to provide for us financially, we have salaries now and after retirement we have pensions and insurance as well. We already started to save more money to pay for our medical bills and fees for the nursing home in the future. Bringing her any trouble is the least thing that we want to do. If she needs me, I will help her with her babies for sure."

In spite of the heavy emphasis on emotional support, participants, especially G2s and G3s, were conscious of the necessity of material support. Many participants mentioned that if a child's mother did not have sufficient income, it was important for the child to provide for his/her mother. For those who have enough income to cover their daily lives, emotional support, especially companionship, is considered far more important than income.

When money was everything

During the interviews, I found filial obligation to not only be a concept that guides children to provide material and emotional support to their parents, but one that also promises a better life for their parents. The majority of the G1s migrated to Hulunbeier from other provinces in the 1940s and 1950s when large parts of China were suffering from war and famine. Scarce resources and lack of birth control methods made the lives of G1s almost unbearable. The only concern in their minds was how to find enough food for their hungry children. Since most of the G1s were migrants, they left home when they were in their 20s and had to leave their parents behind. The G1 in Lu's family described her life several decades ago as "unimaginably hard":

"I had to leave my hometown because of the famine; there was no food for me and my baby. All my baby could eat was porridge and the porridge was as thin as water. So we left, but my mom stayed in our hometown. Transportation was so inconvenient, plus my husband and I didn't make much money; in three or four years I could only go back home once. But my mother didn't blame me for not being by her side, because I sent money to her every one or two months."

To G1s, the only way to fulfill their filial obligation was to send money back home regularly. For those G1s who took their mothers with them during the migration, the situation was hardly better. The G1 in Wang's family said:

"I gave birth to 5 kids in 6 and half years. My husband and I had to work everyday to support our family. To be honest, if my mom hadn't helped me with my babies, not all of them would have survived. But I did nothing for her. My mom sacrificed

so much for me and all I did was take from her. I missed the chance to give her a better life. Compared to my children, I am so unfilial. I wish my mom was still alive so I could fulfill my filial obligation to her and give her a life without worry.”

The G2 in Wang’s family still remembered the situation when she was little, “*Life was just so tough back then that my mother couldn’t give my grandma a more comfortable life; she failed to fulfill her filial obligation.*” The concept of filial obligation is multi-dimensional. However, with limited resources, material support became more prominent than any other component in filial obligation. For G1s, filial obligation used to directly relate to improved living standards. Now having more affluent lives, G1s value emotional support more than material provision, so do their daughters and granddaughters.

Practice of Filial Obligation

In Chinese history the practice of filial obligation was highly gendered. As said previously, sons and daughters-in-law were supposed to do all the care work for parents. However, because of modernization and improving gender equality, daughters now are more involved with fulfilling their filial responsibilities. In my study, parents even preferred daughters to sons and daughters-in-law in regard to the practice of filial obligation.

Gendered practice.

Because G2s are currently caregivers for both G1s and G3s, the practice of filial obligation revolves around them. When I asked about the labor division between sons and daughters and how participants decided who should do what, all of the participants said that there was no labor division in regard to caring for elders in the family. Although this was what they said, I found that, as could be expected, females rather than males did most of the care work, such as cleaning, preparing meals and doing laundry, etc. Some G1s expected daughters rather than sons to take care of them. The G1 in Lu's family said: *"My son visits and calls me regularly, and I think he is filial enough."* When talking about future plans, the G1 in Wu's family said:

"My three daughters told me I shouldn't be worried about the future. I may be a little bit lonely now living by myself, but after five or six years they will be retired, and they said they would take turns looking after me. Each month, I can spend 10 days with each of their families. I am not relying on my son for the rest of my life; my daughters serve me very well."

Moreover, there was one G1 participant who indicated that her daughter-in-law should take care of her rather than her daughters and sons. The G1 in Chen's family said, *"I don't need my children to fulfill their filial obligation. When my daughters-in-law all have to work, how can they fulfill their filial obligation to me?"* This respondent is 90 years old and is the oldest of my interviewees. She was born and grew up during the final days of the Qing dynasty when traditional submissive female roles were pervasive in society. Although she did not ask her daughters-in-law to take care of her, her understanding of the role for daughters-in-law in the family remained unchanged. With

the exception of her, none of the 27 participants expected their daughters-in-law to care for the seniors in the family.

Gender preferences.

93% of the participants preferred daughters rather than sons in regard to care for parents. The most important reason was the belief that females are normally more compassionate than males. Participants largely agreed that daughters are detail-oriented, loving and considerate. They paid attention to parents' needs even when they are trivial. On the other hand, compared to daughters, sons were commonly said to be careless and negligent. Some of the participants also felt that they worried less about their daughters, because their daughters were very well behaved and lived close to the family so they knew where their daughters were and what they were doing at all times. Sons are thought of spending less time at home, more career-oriented, and do not tell their mothers much about their lives. It is a sense of relief and security for mothers to be well informed about their children' lives.

Moreover, G1s and G2s felt their relationships with their daughters were closer than those with their sons. Many of them quoted the idiom "A daughter is mother's little quilted vest" to illustrate that mother-daughter relationship is about warm feelings and closeness. Even if there were misunderstandings and conflicts between mothers and daughters, it is typically easier for mothers and daughters to reconcile and forgive each other than it is for mothers and sons or mothers and daughters-in-law. With more caring abilities and emotional closeness, participants in this study believe that daughters are

obviously more suited to care for their aging parents. In addition, the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in China is usually tense and carries negative associations. Four G2s said that one important reason why their parents were inclined to live alone or live with them, rather than with their male siblings, was because they did not want to deal with their daughters-in-law. The G2 in Wu's family said, "*No matter how badly a mother criticizes her daughter, the daughter will not hold a grudge. It is also easy for a mother-in-law to interact with a son-in-law; however, a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law will not get along very well.*" Four out of nine G2 respondents agreed with what the G2 in Wu's family said.

When asked about gender preference for their children in general, only four participants stated that they liked sons better than daughters, while the other 23 participants either liked daughters better than sons or had no gender preference. Along with the reasons mentioned above, economic factors are also important as to why daughters are treated as well as or better than sons. Many G1 participants complained about the financial burden that they would have if they had more sons than daughters. To parents, daughters are easier to raise because they tend to be more well-behaved compared to sons and because they do not need a significant financial contribution from parents with regard to marriage.

It is a commonly expected norm in China that the groom's family should provide housing for the future couple. Looking back to her life, the G1 in Zhi's family said:

“I miscarried a son, and I consider that lucky. If I had him, my life would have been terrible. We had such a hard time back then and I would have had to sacrifice all I had to find him a wife and I wouldn’t have been able to make it to the city... I pinched and saved so that I could send her to Hulunbeier for school and provide better living conditions. If I had a son, I would have had to spend my whole life out in the countryside. As long as I give birth to this child, I am responsible for him, and I have to buy an apartment for him. How could I have lived if I had a son?”

G1 respondents who had both sons and daughters were more conscious about the sacrifice they had to make in exchange for their sons’ marriages. Having only daughters, G2 s who had only daughters preferred girls rather than boys primarily because of the closeness between mothers and daughters as mentioned previously.

No matter whether they prefer sons or daughters, many parents in my study showed an independent attitude and put more expectation on the public sector later on in their lives, especially for G2s.

“People in my generation always say, ‘Well, we can’t count on our children at all, we should all go to nursing homes in the future,’ ” said the G2 in Guan’s family, *“I don’t think we should live a luxurious life now, we should save more money to support ourselves later on. Caring for the elders is a huge problem in China because we all have only one child. You can’t say a child is unfilial if he/she doesn’t visit you often—it is unrealistic if you ask your child to see you everyday.”*

Like the G2 in Guan's family, all G2s have already made plans to go to long-term care facilities when they are old.

Conclusion

This study showed the changing picture of intergenerational differences in filial obligation across three generations. Generally speaking, the main concern for filial obligation shifted from material support to emotional support, with all three generations emphasizing the importance of companionship. I went beyond previous studies by connecting different social contexts of each generation and operationalizing filial obligation into 17 components and measuring the intergenerational differences with regard to the importance of each component. Because of the modernization process, several traditional components of filial obligation, such as "maintaining the graves of ancestors", "bringing honors to the family" and "maintaining good relationships with neighbors", seemed to lose their significance as we go from G1s to G3s. Fully understanding the differences across generations may contribute to reduce intergenerational conflicts within families.

I partially agreed with the previous study that suggested that the parent-child relationship has become more egalitarian (Sheng & Settles, 2006) and obedience was devalued by both older and younger generations (X. Y. S. H. Ng, 1999). Through in-depth interviews and intergenerational comparison, I found most of the G1s still consider obedience an essential element in filial obligation, whereas G2s and G3s value obedience less. However, obedience still guides G2s and G3s' practice of filial obligation, and they will behave compliantly to their parents because they want them to be happy. In the

practice of filial obligation, participants prefer daughters to take care of them because they think daughters are more compliant and compassionate as compared with their male counterparts. Although gender equality has improved in China since the establishment of PRC, most of the G2s and G3s still hold traditional gender expectations for their daughters or themselves. If the gender ideology does not change, females will still be expected to shoulder more caregiving responsibilities.

During the interviews many participants expressed an independent attitude about caring for themselves, however, the interaction of filial obligation is still an interdependent process. *“My mom always tells us not to worry about her and be responsible for our work,”* said the G2 in Chen’s family, *“but if none of us show up or call her for several days, she will call us one by one and ask what’s going on and why we don’t visit her.”* With help from siblings, G2s can still manage to take care of their parents while balancing their lives. However, 20 or 30 years later, when G2s need help with daily life, their only children may be at the peak of their careers or have to handle their teenage children, or possibly have to deal with both of these problems together. Although they expressed strong willingness to take care of their parents by themselves in the future, it will be extremely hard for G3s to handle parental care, child-rearing, and their career all at the same time.

Since long-term care institutions are underdeveloped in China, related social service programs need to be advanced in order to provide better care for elders and release caregiving burdens, especially for the only child generation. It is also essential for long-term care institutions to improve their facilities and service standards in order to

meet the demand of a growing older population. It is estimated that in the year 2015, the number of people who are 80 and above will reach 24 million in China (R. M. Wang, 2011). Since empty-nest families are becoming more and more common, understanding the intergenerational differences of filial obligation is crucial for satisfying the needs of different generations and providing better care for the aging population.

There are four limitations to my study. First of all, as stated in the methods section, the educational attainment of G2 participants was controlled; all participants came from middle class families in China. Zhan's (2004a) study suggested that economic status affects G3s' opinion about filial obligation. Middle class families are mostly in urban areas where more facilities can be found to help elders. Because their parents have a strong sense of economic security, G3s foresee their parents affording other caring methods, instead of fully relying on them. This may be one of the reasons why G3s are confident in their abilities to fulfill filial obligation in spite of knowing the heavy burden of caregivers. Second, participants are from the city of Hulunbeier, which is located in the northeast part of China. Regional and rural-urban differences were not explored in this research. Third, this study is based on cross-sectional data. Longitudinal data may provide better information about intergenerational change in filial obligation. Thus, it is important for future research to use longitudinal data to investigate the change in filial obligation among different social classes and generations. Comparison among different regions of China may also help to further understand the concept of filial obligation. Finally, my study only focuses on women. It is also necessary to explore the male

perception of filial obligation and how the increasing gender equality in China possibly reshapes the way men fulfill filial responsibilities.

This paper has looked at the intersection of rapid social change with historically different generations at different stages of their lives. Although undergoing modifications, filial obligation survives across generations. The most interesting questions for future research revolve around G3s. Most of the G3s will become parents and primary caregivers in their families. How will G3s understand filial obligation differently in the future? And later in life, how will they guide the next generation? Perhaps future longitudinal studies about G3s and their perceptions of filial obligation will provide us with the answers to these questions.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

INSTRUCTIONS

In this interview I will ask you about your family life and perceptions of filial obligation. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel. You can refuse to answer any question and we can stop anytime you like.

RECORDER INSTRUCTIONS

If it is okay with you, I will be recording our conversation with a recorder. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential.

CONSENT FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this consent form. (Hand participants consent form) (After participants signed and returned consent form, turn recorder on.)

Q1. If it is ok, I would like to start with some basic questions to know more about you:

- a. When and where were you born?
- b. What is your marital status?
- c. How many children and grandchildren do you have? Where do they live? (For G1s and G2s)
- d. Who do you live with? With children's family / with spouse/ with parents/ live alone/ live in institution
- e. Educational attainment

Probe: Do boys and girls in your generation have equal opportunities for education and why?

- f. Where do/ did you work?
- g. Income

Probe: Do you have enough salary/ pension/ insurance to cover your daily life? If not, who supports you financially?

Q2. Would you please describe a typical day of your life? Start from when you wake up in the morning and end with when you go to sleep at night.

Probe:

- a. Is there any difficulty that you experience in your typical day? And who will you call for help?
- b. What are some activities in a day that you consider to be enjoyable?

Q3. Could you continue telling me about your experiences by describing a typical week in your life? Please start with Monday and ends with Sunday.

Probe:

- a. What are the days or moments that you feel most happy and most torturing in the week?
- b. How many times will your children/ grandchildren visit you in one week? And how many times you children/ grandchildren call you in one week?
For G3s— How many times will you call your parents/ grandparents each week and how often do you visit them?

Q4. What's your definition of filial obligation?

Probe:

- a. What does a filial child mean in your generation?
- b. Should people sacrifice their own careers to take care of their parents?
- c. Do people have to generate off spring for the family's continuity?
- d. If you were considering changing a part of your body, such as changing your hairstyle, when you were young, did you have to ask for your parents' permission?
- e. If your daughter is thinking about changing their hair color or piecing ear holes, would you like them to let you know first?
- f. Who should do the care work for parents? Male or female?

Q5. What do you think is the most important factor in filial obligation?

Q6. Do you think people should be filial to their parents and why?

Q7. Do you remember when did you start to care for your parents and what do you do for them? (For G3s) / Do you remember when did your children begin to support you? (For G2s and G1s) Do they give the same amount and kind of support to you? If not, what are the differences? (If G1s have multiple children)

Probe: Would you prefer your sons or daughters to take care of you? (For G1s)

Q8. Do you have any expectation for your children / yourself of how they/ you should fulfill filial obligation?

Probe:

- a. Would you expect them to do at least what you have done for your parents? (Only for G2s and G1s)
- b. Is there any improvement that you think your children should make in regard of the support that they are giving you, and why? (Only for G2s and G1s)

Q9. Do you have any preference in regard to the gender of your children? Why?

Q10. Now in some cities if a couple belongs to the one-child generations, they can have more than one baby. How many children would you suggest your child/ grandchildren to have in the future and why?

Q11. What do you think of this situation: A's mom is seriously ill and an operation is needed to be done. However, on the day of the operation, A is absent because he/ she needs to work. After the operation, A hires a paid-worker to take care of his/her parent.

Q12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the concept of filial obligation?

If you don't have any other questions or comments, would you please rate the items on this filial scale from very important to not important at all? I will read the items to you one by one. (Read the items and ask participants to rate)

That is the end of the interview, thank you so much!