

Courier, Kathryn. Grace. (2022). Like Mother, Like Daughter? A Cross-Generational Analysis of the Intergenerational Effects of Mothers' Conflict Styles on Daughters' in the Mother-Daughter Dyad. *China Media Research*, 17(2)(1556-889X), 6-17

**Keywords:** Mother-Daughter Conflict, Relational Closeness, Satisfaction, Intergenerational Effects

### Article Summary

**Literature review:** In Wills and Zhang's article, the relationship being examined is the mother-daughter relationship and the complications and conflicts within it. A mother-daughter relationship is like no other. The bond between each other is the most significant intergenerational familial relationship and women keep their intergenerational ties with their parents and offspring more than men do (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.7). The study shows how women use the methods their mother's used to raise them and how these women use the same or similar methods on their children. The **Social Cognitive Theory** is being used to frame the study. We learn through observation within the context of social interactions. They used this theory because it covers the mechanisms of observation such as attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.7). It has been proven that one of the ways we learn is through observation, so the social cognitive theory shows how children observe their parents behavior and may imitate these behaviors. There are two hypotheses that capture the nature of intergenerational effects. "Daughters will report closer and more satisfied relationship with their mothers than their mothers do with their mothers (i.e., grandmothers) and Daughters' perceptions of their mothers's conflict styles will be more integrating, compromising, obliging, but less competing and avoiding, than mothers' perceptions of their mothers' (i.e., grandmothers')" (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.11). These hypotheses were made because society is becoming more feminine and democratic which can cause the mother-daughter relationship to become friendlier and lead to a closer relationship with integrating, compromising and obliging behaviors and less competing and avoiding behaviors (Wills & Zhang, 2021).

**Method:** The method being used in this study is a survey. Mothers and daughters were asked a series of questions to help researchers better understand the relationship between mother and daughter. This is a **quantitative study**. It attempts to understand the varying dynamics between mother and daughter. They used a **self-report** where they gave the mothers and daughters surveys to complete. For this study, 184 females comprising 92 mother-daughter dyads completed a survey. It consisted of white, black, hispanic and other races. 100% were biological mothers, 78% of the mothers' mothers were living and 22% of the mothers' mothers were deceased (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.11). It was preassigned so the responses could be matched after the data collection was complete. Both mothers and daughters had to answer questions concerning their mothers' conflict styles and their mother-daughter relational closeness and satisfaction. The daughters were college students from a private university in the Northeast that completed their portion of the survey in communication classes. When they went home for break they would give the survey to their mothers to fill out. Participation was anonymous for those who volunteered (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.11). The reason this study was conducted was to determine the relational closeness between mother and daughter, how much they liked each other, and the relational satisfaction in the relationship. In addition, to better understand the comparison of the relationship to others, including conflict styles. Measuring 20 five-point

Likert-type questions, they had to answer within a scale of 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. This was based on conflict negotiation behavior to find the perceptions of the mothers conflict styles (Wills & Zhang, 2021).

**Discussion:** The authors found that daughters have a closer relationship with their mothers than their mothers do with their mothers. This proves that the first hypothesis stated is supported (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p.14). The authors found that daughters believed they had better conflict resolution skills with their mothers than their mothers had with theirs. Daughters believe they approach conflict with their mothers in a way that reaches understanding in a respectful way, where their mothers and grandmothers would both think they were correct or just completely avoid discussion. This makes the second hypothesis I stated partially supported. The purpose of this study was to examine the intergenerational effects of mothers' conflict styles through the eyes of the daughters from three generations (Wills & Zhang, 2021, p. 15). These findings make sense due to our changing culture trend towards femininity and affectionate and positive parent-child relationship. Through the social cognitive theory daughters mimic and imitate their mothers conflict styles through social interaction. Daughters may also develop expectancies about appropriate mothers' conflict behaviors which are known as **other-imposed**. Three main takeaways from this article are that daughters compare their relationships with their mothers to the relationship of their mothers with their grandmothers, daughters imitate their mothers' conflict styles and carry them over to their own daughters, and lastly the way conflict is dealt with changes from generation to generation (Wills & Zhang et al., 2021).

### **Evaluation**

I thought that this was a very fascinating article. All the ideas were clearly defined and stated. I believe that mothers and daughters can take a lot from this article and apply to their everyday lives. It can help mothers set a good example for their daughters to carry throughout generation after generation. The **relational uniqueness** was interesting to learn how different your mothers relationship with your grandmother can be from your relationship with your mother. I liked how they included the culture changes including **feminine dimensions of culture** such as affection and how much it impacts these relationships. The findings in this article can provide for some interesting directions for future research. After reading this article, it sparked my interest in two areas. My mother and her mother had a very close relationship. I am wondering about the percentage of findings that show daughters perceiving their mother and grandmother 's approach to conflict to be healthy and worth replicating. I am also interested in learning more about mother-daughter relationships and how birth order plays a role. I am the youngest of four daughters in my family. I am curious if the relationship between mother and daughter changes and evolves from the first born daughter to the youngest daughter in the family (Wills & Zhang et al., 2021).

## Works Cited

Wills, M., & Qin Zhang. (2021). Like Mother, Like Daughter? A Cross-Generational Analysis of the Intergenerational Effects of Mothers' Conflict Styles on Daughters' in the Mother-Daughter Dyad. (Abstract). *China Media Research*, 17(2), 6–21.