

Filial Piety, Family Values, and Exchanges between Generations

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This study is interested in exploring the relationship between values of filial piety and exchanges between generations. Are adult children who agree more strongly with traditional family values more likely to have exchanges with their elderly parents? How does socio-economic status and elderly health mediate the relationship between filial piety values and exchanges?

Chinese cultural norms of filial piety, or *xiao*, play a major role in maintaining the tradition of adult children caring for elderly parents. The Chinese government even codified adult children caring for parents into law. In recent years however, adult children have become less available because of geographic mobility, social change, and the demographic pressures of having fewer young people having to care for large numbers of older adults. How will these social, economic, and demographic changes influence the parent-child dynamic?

The data for this project come from the 2002 wave of the Social Dynamics Survey of Adult-Children Family in China (SDSCF) and the linked 2002 wave of the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS). The Center of Healthy Aging and Family Studies at Peking University, China National Research Center on Aging, and Mainland Marketing Company conducted both surveys in the summer of 2002. Out of the 22 provinces/municipalities in the CLHLS, nine were chosen as the sampling pool for the SDSCF. These 9 provinces/municipalities are Beijing, Liaoning, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong and Guangxi, which are in the eastern, coastal regions of China. One of the CLHLS respondent's adult children aged 35-65 who lives in the same county/city is chosen randomly to be included in the survey. Of 9,239 elderly respondents from those 9 provinces/municipalities, 6,984 had at least one eligible child, and in the end 4,364 were interviewed.

This particular research project only looks at only children. The reason is that there is limited information on the siblings, and we cannot assume that their characteristics are randomly distributed. Questions to the elderly about relations with children were asked pertaining to all children, not to each child individually, thus making

it difficult to parse out responses between the matched adult child in the SDSCF and other children.

The dependent variable in these preliminary analyses is a count of whether the adult child provided any money, food, or days of care to either biological parent within the past year. The report comes from the adult child. The variable ranges from 0 (none of the mentioned exchanges) to all 3. The key independent variables are 5 factors relating to filial piety and family values. The respondents in the SDSCF were given a series of 22 statements and asked to what extent they agreed with the statements, ranging from not very important (1) to very important (5). Factor analysis was carried out and the statements loaded onto five different factors shown in table 1.

Table 1: Filial Piety/Family Values Factors

Factor 1: Respect	Factor 3: Modern
F1-1 Gratitude for parent’s raising you	F1-10. If older parents have good health and a good economic condition, then they should not depend on children.
F1-2. Treat parents well, even if they treated you poorly.	F1-11. Elder living in institutions (nursing home, welfare house, group living) can also have a happy later life
F1-3. Give up your own pursuits, in order to realize your parent’s dream for you.	F1-12. Family should sign an agreement to support the elderly
F1-5. Support parents and make their lives comfortable.	F1-13. Daughters should have the same responsibility of supporting older parent as sons
F1-6. Praise your parents and consider their feelings.	Factor 4: Family Oriented
F1-9. Daughter should frequently visit natal parents after marriage.	F2-1. An adult should marry
Factor 2: Tradition	F2-2. Avoid marriage dissolution as much as possible
F1-4. Son should live with parents after marriage	F2-3. Bringing up offspring in order to make them useful for society
F2-9. Husband is responsible for making money, wife is responsible for housework	F2-4. Family relations should be harmonious
F2-10. Three generations in a household is best.	F2-5. for the sake of the children, whatever happens, don’t get divorced

F2-11. Young people should live with older people after marriage	F2-6. Family is good for individual's development
Factor 5: Continuation of Family	F2-7. Earn enough money to support the family
F1-7. Have at least one son in order to continue the family	F2-8. Hope family or relatives will give you a hand when experiencing difficulties
F1-8. Do your best for your kinship	

Our proposed control variables for these analyses are characteristics of the adult child, the elderly parent, or both. These include gender, coresidence status, marital status, education level, and monthly household income. On average, adult children in the sample who coreside with one or more parents report giving more money, food, or caregiving days. Nearly half of the sample who coreside with a parent give both money, food, and days of care to a parent (all 3 items).

Table 2 shows the overall mean of our independent variables, as well as a breakdown by coresidence status. We see that there are significant differences in the tradition factor, the age of the adult child, and the age of the parent between those who coreside and those who do not. The sample size is 901 child-parent dyads.

Table 2: Descriptives							
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	coresidence with dyad parent Mean	SE	lives separately from dyad parent Mean	SE	t-test
Factor 1: Respect	3.803	0.527	3.818	0.022	3.776	0.030	
Factor 2: Tradition	3.181	0.687	3.264	0.028	3.020	0.038	***
Factor 3: Modern	3.179	0.636	3.151	0.027	3.217	0.035	
Factor 4: Continuation of family	3.447	0.793	3.467	0.033	3.403	0.044	
Factor 5: Family oriented	4.014	0.482	4.007	0.020	4.013	0.028	
Age of adult child	53.840	8.947	52.953	0.363	54.265	0.528	*
Education level of adult child	2.505	1.259	2.533	0.051	2.472	0.074	
Monthly income of adult child	1665.054	1529.989	1628.306	60.950	1732.899	93.063	
Economic self-rating of child	3.153	0.706	3.183	0.030	3.104	0.038	
Age of parent	87.528	11.076	88.863	0.444	85.189	0.649	***

In China, however, flows between generations often go both ways, with elderly parents providing financial transfers or care for grandchildren. Subsequent analysis will also look at aid given to adult children from elderly parents.