ETD Archive

2012

The Role of Verbal Aggression and Humor in Father-Son Relationships and Its Impact on Relational Satisfaction

Paul M. Palisin
Cleveland State University

THE ROLE OF VERBAL AGGRESSION AND HUMOR IN FATHER-SON

RELATIONSHIPS AND ITS IMPACT ON RELATIONAL SATISFACTION

PAUL PALISIN

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Management

Cleveland State University

May, 2008

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

at the

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

May, 2012

THESIS APPROVAL

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

This thesis has been approved for the

School of Communication

And the College of Graduate Studies by:

_____Jill E. Rudd_____

Thesis Committee Chairman

School of Communication

_____May 23, 2012_____

(Date)

_____Kimberly A. Neuendorf_____

Committee Member

School of Communication

_____May 23, 2012_____

(Date)

_____Elizabeth Babin_____

Committee Member

School of Communication

_____May 23, 2012_____

(Date)

Dedication

To my family and friends who have supported and encouraged me throughout the process of writing this thesis. To my mother, Jeani, who helped keep me motivated and who spent hours being there for me so that I would have the time to write. I would also like to thank my father, Paul, who supports me in anything that I do. Additionally I would like to thank my brother, Shawn, who is always there for me and who has always emphasized the importance education and striving to better myself.

Finally I would like to thank all of the faculty, staff, and students in the School of Communication. All of the professors in this program are wonderful. I cannot say enough about my experience there, in both my undergraduate and graduate studies.

THE ROLE OF VERBAL AGGRESSION AND HUMOR IN FATHER-SON

RELATIONSHIPS AND ITS IMPACT ON RELATIONAL SATISFACTION

PAUL PALISIN

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was the examine the role of verbal aggression and humor within the father and adult son relationship. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between verbal aggression and humor orientation and how this relationship impacted relational satisfaction within the father and son dyad. A total of 101 father and son pairs were surveyed. The Humor Orientation scale (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991) and the Verbal Aggression Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986) were used to measure communication traits and a modified version of Quality Marriage Index (Norton, 1983) was used to measure relational satisfaction.

Generally, most of the verbally aggressive message types were not significantly related to humor orientation. That being said, teasing was the only verbally aggressive message type to be significantly and negatively related to humor orientation. Further analysis found several significant main effects and interactions impacting relational satisfaction. Most notably, fathers' humor orientation, fathers' verbal aggression, and the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and fathers' verbal aggression were significant predictors of both fathers' and sons' relational satisfaction.   Directions for future research are presented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The relationship between a father and son may be one of the most influential and

significant same-sex relationships that men form throughout their lifetime (Floyd &

Morman, 2003). The father and son relationship has been examined across several

contexts within communication (Beatty & Dobos, 1992; Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, & Rudd,

1994; Floyd, 2001; Morman & Floyd, 1999). Specifically, past research investigated the

role of verbal aggression in fathers' planning of messages, fathers' communication

apprehension, sons' perceptions of fathers' sarcasm and criticism, and more recently

affection between fathers and sons (Morman & Floyd, 2002; Strasser, 2009).

Additionally, the role of verbal aggression within the parent-child relationship has been

examined (Palazzolo, Roberto, & Babin, 2010; Roberto, Carlyle, & Goodall, 2007;

Roberto, Carlyle, & McClure, 2006) and the father and son dyad has also been the

specific focus of such research within verbal aggression (Beatty, Burant, Dobos, & Rudd,

1996; Beatty & Dobos, 1992; Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994; Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-

Bauer, & Dobos, 1997). As reflected above, much of the previous research within the

father and son dyad has focused of the negative aspects of this relationship (Floyd &

Mormon, 2003).

There are indications that humor orientation has positive effects on relational satisfaction and more inclusive studies indicate that verbal aggression has negative effects. However, the connection between the use of verbally aggressive messages (especially sarcasm and teasing) and humor orientation remains unclear. Teasing, in particular, is a message that bridges both humor and verbal aggression, andthere are several implications that each of these concepts hold in terms of the satisfaction of a relationship. Research shows that individuals who are high in verbal aggression are not as well liked in their relationships and that the inverse is true for those with a high humor orientation (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1996).

Relationships that contain individuals with high verbal aggression often result in negative relational outcomes. Further questions exist regarding the relationship between humor orientation and verbally aggressive messages within the father/son relationship because, while it is a male relationship, it also contains a differential in power and status. Examining the relationship between humor orientation and verbal aggression in the father and son relationship within conflict and its impact on relational satisfaction may provide insight into how communication functions in such an important relational dyad. Building upon the existing father and son research the current study seeks to investigate verbal aggression and its relationship to humor and how this may affect relational satisfaction within conflict

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Father/Son Relationship

The father and son relationship has been regarded as being the most significant (Floyd & Mormon, 2003) and the most challenging (Floyd, 2001) relationship that is experienced between two men within their lifetime. The father and son relationship is important because fathers have significant influence on their sons' social development and how they adjust and identify themselves throughout adolescence and into adulthood (Grando & Ginsberg, 1976). Unfortunately, it has also been recognized as the familial relationship that is most often overlooked (Beatty & Dobos, 1992). Within communication, the father and son relationship has been studied across a number of contexts including affectionate communication (Floyd, 2001; Morman & Floyd, 1999), sexual communication (Wilson & Koo, 2010), parenting (Floyd & Mormon, 2000), media portrayals (Meyers, 2005) and within the verbal aggression literature (Beatty & Dobos, 1992; Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, & Dobos, 1997).

Much of what we know about this relationship has emerged out of the contexts above. Fathers' and sons' are more likely to express affection through the use of supportive activities than through direct verbal statements (Floyd, 2001). This finding

implies the need to not only look at communication traits within this relationship but also identifies the need to examine the actual behavior that occurs. Additionally, men communicate more affection to their sons than they report receiving from their fathers (Floyd, 2001; Strasser, 2009). This implies that there is a generational difference between how fathers and sons behave within their relationships and that the norms for how to behave in the relationship may change over time (Morman & Floyd, 2002). It is also likely, while social norms surrounding the relationship change, men's' patterns of relating to their fathers is also likely to change throughout their life course (Morman & Floyd, 1999).

Finally, it is important to recognize that even though the father and son relationship is a familial relationship, it is also a relationship between two men. Relationships between two men are typically the least affectionate, the least intimate, and the least close when compared to female-female or opposite sex relationships (Morman & Floyd, 1999). The relationship is commonly seen as contentious, competitive, and aggressive because of the cultural influences on masculine behavior and the relationship still contains these elements regardless of the familial influence (Morman & Floyd, 2002).

Verbal Aggression

Since the 1980's aggressive communication has been a subject of interest to many communication scholars. Infante and Wigley (1986) defined verbal aggression as the "exchange of messages between two people where at least one of the people is attacking the self concept of the other person in order to inflict psychological pain (p. 67)." Verbally aggressive messages present themselves in the form of character attacks,

competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and nonverbal emblems (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992; Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990). Numerous studies have examined trait verbal aggression and verbally aggressive message types across a variety of contexts such as organizational behavior (Infante & Gordon, 1991; Infante, et al., 1993; Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2010), between instructors and students (Myers & Rocca, 2001), within the sibling relationship (Martin, Anderson, Burant, & Weber, 1997; Myers & Bryant, 2008; Myers & Goodboy, 2006), within romantic dating relationships (Olson, 2002; Sutter & Martin, 1998) , within marriage (Infante, Chandler, & Rudd, 1989; Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990) between parents and children (Martin & Anderson, 1997; McClure, Carlyle, and Roberto, 2005; Roberto, Carlyle, Goodall, & Castle, 2009; Weber & Patterson, 1997), and more specifically between fathers and sons (Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, & Rudd, 1996; Beatty, Burant, Dobos, & Rudd, 1996; Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, & Dobos, 1997). The focus of this study is on the relational dyad of the father and son, and therefore the discussion of literature is limited to verbal aggression in relational and family contexts.

Verbally Aggressive Messages

An important distinction that needs to be made within verbal aggression research is the difference between verbal aggression as a trait and verbal aggression as a behavior. Verbally aggressive messages include character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and nonverbal emblems (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992; Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990). Individuals who are high in trait verbal aggression are more verbally aggressive by nature and are therefore more likely to use a verbally aggressive message than is someone who is low in

trait verbal aggression (Sutter & Martin, 1998). The presence of trait verbal aggression impacts not only how one person communicates, it impacts the individual's interpretation of messages as well. Individuals high in trait verbal aggression perceive verbally aggressive messages as less hurtful than those who are low in trait verbal aggression and therefore they may assume that the recipients of such messages experience the message in the same way (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992). Myers and Bryant (2008) found that verbally aggressive messages share in the theme of personal denigration or relational devaluation as a means to make the other person feel less favorable about themselves or their role in the relationship. Past research found that character attacks may induce more violent reactions than other verbally aggressive messages. However, the use of swearing, competence attacks, and threats also differentiated between violent and non-violent disagreements (Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990).

Research has also examined the possibility of verbal aggression having a positive impact on relationships. In a study of the effectiveness of verbal aggression, Olson (2002) reported that some couples viewed aggression as constructive because it helped "clear the air," get their partners attention, and helped come to a resolution sooner. Some reported a single instance of aggression as effective because it changed the way the couple dealt with conflict from that point on and others found aggression to be appropriate when it was justifiable. This may also be applicable when studying the role of verbal aggression within the father/son dyad. There may be times in this relationship when verbally aggressive messages are seen and constructive versus destructive.

Across their lifespan, siblings perceive a decrease in verbally aggressive messages. Myers and Goodboy (2006) argue that as siblings age, their relationship

becomes more important to them and that younger siblings use verbal aggression to address the rivalry, envy, and jealousy present in their relationship with their older siblings. Moreover, they argue that perceived sibling use of verbal aggression is a by-product of the intensity of sibling. The general conclusion is that the use of verbal aggression makes a significant, detrimental impact on the communication exchanged between individuals and is likely to produce negative relational outcomes (Tevin, Martin, & Neupauer, 1998). Similar outcomes are likely present in the father-son dyad because it is also a family relationship that, like relationships between older and younger siblings, contains a difference in power.

Within family relationships, like those between siblings and child/parent, often times we display similar communication traits. Verbal aggression operates by a norm of reciprocity within conflict (Infante, Chandler, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990). Sutter and Martin (1998) found that in concordance with the reciprocal nature of verbal aggression, individuals were more likely to use verbal aggression when their partner also employed the use of such messages. Within family relationships, the propensity to justify ones' verbal aggression based on it being a response to their siblings' verbal aggression identifies another context in which reciprocity exists (Martin, Anderson, Burant, & Weber, 1997). Specifically within the parent and child relationship, the reciprocal nature of verbal aggression between perceived mother and father verbal aggression and verbally aggressive parents were more likely to have children who are also verbally aggressive (Roberto, et. al., 2009).

Verbal Aggression in Parent/Child Relationships

The parent child relationship is one of the most important relationships in child development and has also received the attention of verbal aggression scholars. Darling, Cohan, Burns, and Thompson (2008) found that parents who engage in positive conflict behaviors and fail to engage in negative conflict behaviors have children who behave similarly within their own romantic relationships. Furthermore, Martin and Anderson (1997) found a significant relationship between a mother's argumentativeness, assertiveness, and verbal aggression and the presence of such traits in her children. The authors attributed this trend to the argumentative skills deficiency model, stating that because the mothers lacked argumentative skills and displayed more verbal aggression to their children, that their children lacked the same skills and modeled their mothers' traits. However, no relationship between the fathers' use of these traits and his children's communicative aggression traits was found. This may be because the study did not account for the amount of time the children spent with each parent. It is very important, however, to study communication between fathers and sons because we know that parents of the same sex share more similarity and oftentines have more influence (Bandura, 1986; Palazzolo, Roberto, & Babin 2010).

In addition, Weber and Patterson (1997) reported that individuals who are subjected to high levels of maternal verbal aggression are more verbally aggressive and are in relationships with low levels of solidarity and emotional support. One explanation is when in romantic relationships these individuals use verbal aggression toward their partners, who respond in kind and enter into a cycle of reciprocity. The use of these messages leads to lower levels of relationship solidarity and emotional support. An

alternative explanation for these findings is that children of mothers who are high in verbal aggression seek relationships that lack emotional support and solidarity because that is what is modeled to them in their primary parental relationship.

Similar to the research done with married couples and children, Roberto, Carlyle, and McClure (2006), examined the relationship between parents' use of verbal and physical aggression. Consistent support was found linking perceived parent verbal aggression and all forms of corporal punishment at different levels of severity. Roberto, Carlyle, and Goodall (2007) conducted the same study using self report for parental verbal aggression. They found that children rated their parents higher in verbal aggression and corporal punishment than parents rated themselves. Further examination of the parent/child relationship and verbal aggression has emerged through the study of father and son verbal aggression.

Verbal Aggression in the Father/Son Relationship

Several studies have specifically examined the role verbal aggression plays within the father and son relationship. Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, and Rudd (1994) investigated men's perceptions of their fathers' verbal aggressiveness, sarcasm, and criticism is based on their fathers' verbal aggression. There was a large association between fathers' verbal aggression and sons' perception of their fathers' verbal aggression, a medium association between fathers' self reported verbal aggressiveness and sons' perception of the father's sarcasm, and a slightly less than medium association between father's self reported verbal aggression and the son's perception of their fathers' criticism. The association between fathers' self report verbal aggression and sons' perceptions provided validity evidence for the use of sons' reports. The results also provide evidence for the link between sons'

perception of fathers' verbal aggression as an intervening variable in men's social development. The findings of this study confirms that sons' perceptions of their fathers' communication habits suggest that men are conscious of their fathers' verbal behaviors and implies the presence of a link between verbal aggression and sarcasm.

Subsequent research identified a link between anger, frustration and verbal aggression within the father/son relationship. Trait verbal aggression was found to be more strongly related to anger as frustration increased (Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, and Dobos 1998). Fathers high in verbal aggressiveness are also more likely to construct plans that are less appropriate and less effective in dealing with oppositional sons. Fathers' lack of communicative competence was identified within the planning of their messages and fathers' ratings of appropriateness and effectiveness are more related to their trait verbal aggression than to the opposition of their sons.   (Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, & Dobos, 1997) In addition, a child's noncompliance may act as an intensifier for a parent's angry response, thus, noncompliance may trigger a frustration response which leads to anger in the parent (Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, and Dobos 1998).

Often times, there is a relationship between verbal aggression and humor, and the use of humor and the interpretation of humor can differ based upon an individual's trait verbal aggression. The use of teasing by individuals who are high in verbal aggression is an example of this because the use of these messages keeps the receiver questioning whether or not they intended the message as an attack and because individuals who are high trait verbal aggressive do not perceive verbally aggressive messages that they receive as being hurtful, and they may believe that others perceive the messages in a similar way (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992). Research suggests that this

relationship can have a positive or negative impact on the relationship (Martin et al., 1997). The current study seeks to investigate when humor effects the perception of verbal aggression and how humor orientation specifically impacts the individual's evaluation of that message as positive or negative.

Humor

Humor has been studied across disciplines and in a variety of contexts. Much of what we know in the study of humor comes out of psychology. This early work had foundations in several different theoretical backgrounds (Martin, 1998). Some of the early work in humor research originated with the work of Freud (1928), who developed three types of mirthful experiences through his work in psychoanalytic theory. Humor was defined by Freud (1928) as a situation which would normally elicit negative emotions but the presence of amusing or incongruous elements provides an altered perspective and helps the individual to avoid the negative emotions. Other theoretical foundations of humor within psychology include incongruity theories (Piddington, 1963; Eysenck, 1942; Koestler, 1964) and superiority/disparagement theories (Grunner 1997).

In communication, sense of humor and what individuals view as being funny has been studied in television shows and media (Lieberman, Neuendorf, Denny, Skalski, & Wang, 2009; Neuendorf, Skalski, & Powers, 2004). In addition, humor has also been studied as a coping strategy in health communication (Miczo, 2004; Booth-butterfield, Booth-Butterfield, & Wanzer, 2007). For the purpose of this paper, humor will be examined as an interpersonal communication trait from a humor orientation perspective.

Humor Orientation

Humor orientation is the ability for individuals to frequently and successfully enact the use of humor and individuals with a high humor orientation tend to use diverse humor strategies across a number of different contexts while those with a low humor orientation avoid the use of humor and do not try to interact by employing laughter (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991). Humor orientation has been studied within different relationship types such as friendships (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1996), health care (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 2005), student/teacher relationships (Booth-Butterfield, Booth-Butterfield, & Wanzer, 2007), and family and romantic relationships (Prasinos & Bennet, 1981; Honeycutt & Brown, 1998),

Past research within humor orientation has linked the concept to other communication concepts and traits. Humor orientation is significantly related communication adaptability, reward impression, and communication competence (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1995). The link between humor orientation and communication competence is central to this study because it links humor orientation to another widely studied communication construct. In continuation of the testing of the relationship humor orientation and other communication traits, several researchers have focused on the relationship between humor orientation and verbal aggression. Verbal aggression was negatively correlated with both advisee effect and source credibility, while a positive relationship between humor and student effect and advisor's humor orientation and source credibility emerged (Wrench & Punyanunt-Carter, 2005). In a study examining the relationship between humor orientation, trait

verbal aggression, and social attraction, no general relationship between humor orientation and verbal aggression within the same individual was found however several implications for the two concepts were identified. Individuals with a high humor orientation were found to be less lonely than those with a low humor orientation and the higher an individual's humor orientation score, the more others perceive that person as being funny (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1996). Additionally, humor orientation was perceived as an overall positive personality trait and has direct impact on relational development, while individuals that are highly verbally aggressive tended to not be as well liked and that acquaintances found them less socially attractive.

Overall, people with a high humor orientation show a higher awareness of emotion and allow their emotions to impact their communication across several different contexts. Feeling happy, ridiculous, and embarrassed may spur high humor oriented individuals to use humorous messages (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1995). Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, and Booth-Butterfield (2005) found that people with higher humor orientation were also more emotionally expressive and that higher humor oriented individuals may feel more accomplished and competent about using humor to deal with the stress of their jobs. Additional research supports the notion that the use of humor enactments and increase job satisfaction is consistent across age and profession and humor orientation was positively related to coping efficacy showing that the higher our humor orientation is, the better we are able to cope with stress and job difficulties. Booth-Butterfield, Booth-Butterfield, and Wanzer (2007) in a study regarding differences of sense of humor in marriage, laughing at jokes was a sign of affiliation and was used as a way to encourage more use of humor (Honeycutt & Brown, 1998).

Within the parent and child relationship a child's perception of their parent's humor orientation was positively correlated with their perception of their parent's communication competence and then child's perception of their parent's communication competency was also positively associated with relational satisfaction in the parent/child dyad (Harzold & Sparks, 2006). Contradictory to this, Prasinos and Tittler (1981) found that humor oriented adolescents reported less family cohesion than their peers. Specifically, boys in the group who were more successful in their use of humor, not only reported a more distant relationship with their fathers but also with the other member of their families as well and they reported higher family conflict and more distance in their relationship with their fathers. One factor within this study that was not considered was differences between genders and their use of humor. Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2005) found that men are more likely to tease in all men groups and are less likely to engage in that behavior in the presence of women. The social limitation on aggressive behavior toward women, attempts to retain symmetrical power, and the recognition that women view teasing as more negative are all possible factors. Inversely, women are more apt to use teasing in conversations with men than they are with women. These findings warrant a further examination teasing and aggressive humor within male relationships to explain why this is occurs.

Humorous Messages

The current study examines humor orientation and humorous messages. There are differences in the humorous messages individuals use, as well as differences between what individuals see as being funny. A typology of these senses of humor is as follows; superiority/disparagement, incongruity, high arousal, and social currency (Neuendorf &

14

Skalski, 2000). Disparagement, as a type of humor, refers to humor that puts down an individual or group. The second type is incongruity, which refers to humor that unexpectedly links two or more things that usually do not go together. This type of humor is high arousal or humor that relies on reactions to extreme or shocking things. The final type of humor is social currency, which refers to humor that creates a sense of connection through shared experiences or knowledge. The current study proposes to study these senses of humor as humorous message types, which interact with other variables such as trait verbal aggression, verbally aggressive messages, humor orientation, and relational satisfaction.

While the initial study investigating the relationship between trait verbal aggression and humor orientation (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1996) did not yield significant results, the current study is examining these concepts from a different context and therefore warrants further examination. The current study deals with an all male population and is framed within conflict. The current study is also focused on verbally aggressive messages for this analysis and their relationship to humor orientation as opposed to trait verbal aggression. Based on this review of the verbal aggression and humor literature, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ$_1$: Do individuals with a high humor orientation use different types of verbally aggressive messages than do individuals with low humor orientation?

RQ$_2$: What types of humorous messages are used during conflict within the father/son relationship?

Relational Satisfaction

Relational satisfaction has been studied within communication in a number of ways. Relational satisfaction has been studied in a variety of interpersonal relationships including friendship (Ramirez, 2002), supervisor/subordinate relationships (Daniels & Spiker, 1983), new acquaintances (Miczo, Segrin, & Allspatch, 2001), romantic relationships (Sargent, 2002; Emmers-Sommer, 2004), step-families (Schrodt, Soliz, & Braithwaite, 2008), and parent/child relationships (Beatty & Dobos, 1992, Caughlin & Malis, 2004; Forward, Sansom-Livolsi, & McGovern, 2008). The focus of this study is on the relational dyad of the father and son, and therefore the discussion of literature is limited to relational satisfaction family relationships.

The family context provides a number of relationships in which relational satisfaction can be examined. The parent/child relationship is a family relational dyad that is of interest in the relational satisfaction literature. Caughlin and Malis (2004) examined the relationship between demand /withdrawal communication and relational satisfaction between parents and adolescents. They found that as parent demand/withdrawal communication increased, adolescent satisfaction decreased, and visa versa. Parent satisfaction was negatively associated with both parent demand/adolescent withdrawal and adolescent demand/parent withdrawal communication. In a study regarding religiosity and family satisfaction among college students, Forward et al. (2008) found that religious belief among college students led to higher levels of family wellbeing and closeness and that high levels of religiosity were associated with high levels of openness, assurance, and dependency within families. The researchers reported that this increased level of assurance was related to higher levels of relational satisfaction.

The final relational satisfaction was regarding the student's relationship with an opposite sex parent. The level of dependency on the opposite sex parent contributes to increased family satisfaction.

Imperative to the current proposed study is the relationship between verbal aggression and relational satisfaction. Teven, Martin, and Nepauer (1998) indicated evidence to support the destructive nature of verbal aggression within interpersonal relationships. In their study of sibling relationships the researchers stated that the more verbally aggressive messages individuals receive from their siblings, the less satisfied they were in the relationship. These results contribute to the suggestion that verbal aggression leads to negative relational outcomes and that verbal aggression has a detrimental impact on the communication within family relationships. Within the parent child relationship, a strong negative relationship between perceived parental verbal aggression and relational satisfaction and closeness emerged (Roberto, et. al., 2009). Specifically, relational satisfaction between adult sons and their fathers has also been examined. Beatty and Dobos (1992) examined the relationship between adult sons' relational satisfaction with their fathers and their fathers' communication apprehension. A negative correlation between communication apprehension and relational satisfaction was established, suggesting that communication apprehension is a factor in the relational development, maintenance, and repair of father and son relationships as adult sons who reported the highest levels of relational dissatisfaction were the most likely to report higher levels of father communication apprehension.

Understanding the father/son relationship and the use of humor and verbal aggression in relation to relational satisfaction may provide insight into how males use

these two concepts to communicate in this relationship. Males use teasing and humor, in an aggressive manner, differently in their same-sex relationships than they do in the cross-sex relationships (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2005). Based on the review of literature on fathers and sons, verbal aggression, humor orientation, and relational satisfaction, the following hypotheses and research questions are proposed:

RQ3: What is the relationship between fathers' and sons' humor orientation and trait verbal aggression and its impact on fathers' relational satisfaction?

RQ4: What is the relationship between fathers' and sons' humor orientation and trait verbal aggression and its impact on sons' relational satisfaction?

H_1: Fathers' trait verbal aggression will be negatively correlated with sons' relational satisfaction.

H_2: Fathers' humor orientation will be positively correlated with sons' relational satisfaction.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

      Student participants' ages ranged from 18 to 59 ($M =$ 24.17, $SD =$ 6.66) and the

participants' fathers ages ranged from 37 to 82 ($M =$ 54.12, $sd =$ 9.00). Sons' highest

level of education was reported as follows: 4.9% some high school, 18.6% high school,

3.9% certificate from trade school, 47.1% some college, 7.8% associate's degree, 12.7%

bachelor's degree, 2.9% master's degree and 2% did not report highest level of education.

Fathers' highest level of education was reported as follows: 3.9% some high school,

15.7% high school, 10.8% certificate from trade school, 22.5% some college, 5.9%

associate's degree, 24.5% bachelor's degree, 12.7% master's degree and 3.9% did not

report highest level of education. Within the sample the racial distribution of sons was

reported as: 63.4% Caucasian, 22.8% percent African American, 7.9% identified

themselves as other, 3% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% did not report their race. The racial

distribution of fathers was reported as: 64.4% Caucasian, 21.8% percent African

American, and 6.9% identified themselves as other, 5% Hispanic, and 2% did not report

their race. Fathers and sons reported their currently living situation with 50.5% of fathers

and sons living together, 47.5 % not living together, and 2% did not report their living

situation. Sons reported their relationship types as follows: 86.1% biological sons, 6.9% step sons, 3% adopted sons, 1% foster sons, 2% reported their relationship as other and 1% did not report their relationship type. Fathers reported their relationship types as follows: 84.3% biological father, 7.8% step father, 3.9% adoptive father, 1% foster father, 1% reported their relationship as other and 2% did not report their relationship type.

Procedure

This study was performed using college students enrolled in various undergraduate communication courses at a mid-western university. Students were given two instruments, one for a father and one for a son. Female students were asked to find a father/son dyad to complete the survey instruments. Male students were asked to fill out the one instrument, and return their father's packet in a sealed envelope, which was provided. Fathers were required to provide a contact phone number on the outside of the envelope as means to verify their participation in the study. Each set of instruments was numbered so that they could be matched for analysis. The total sample consisted of 101 father and son pairs.

Instrument

Two survey instruments were used, one worded for fathers (see APPENDIX A) and the other worded for sons (see APPENDIX B). These instruments were identical other than the wording to make them appropriate for the role of the participant. There were six sections contained within the instrument, each of which will be described in greater detail below. The first section, section A, was the 17-item Humor Orientation

scale (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991). The second section, section B, was the 20-item Verbal Aggression Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986). The third section, section C, was designed to measure how frequently the ten types of verbally aggressive message occur within conflict. The fourth section, section D, was designed to measure how frequently the four types of humorous messages occur within conflict. An open ended question in this section asked the participants to describe a time in conflict when the other person said something that was intended to be funny but was not received in that way. The fifth section, section E, measured relational satisfaction using the 9-item Quality Marriage Index (Norton, 1983). The final section, section F, contained the demographic questions. The demographic questions asked for highest level of education, age, race, living situation, type of relationship, and an overall rating of relational satisfaction.

Humor Orientation Scale

The first section of the instrument is the 17 item Humor Orientation Scale (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991). Responses are on a 1-5 five-point Likert-type response scale. Previous studies have reported high reliability with the reliability in the seminal piece being reported as Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$ (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991). The present study found the internal consistency reliability of the humor orientation scale items to be $\alpha = .93$ for fathers (see APPENDIX C) and $\alpha = .91$ for sons (see APPENDIX D). The scale was constructed using straight addition.

Verbal Aggression Scale

The second section of the survey instrument is the Verbal Aggression Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986). This scale contains 20 items which participants are asked to

answer using a provided five-point Likert response scale. The response scale is: 1-
Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Disagree, and 5- Strongly Disagree. The
reliability of this scale, reported by Infante and Wigley (1986), was α = .86. The present
study found the internal consistency reliability of the verbal aggression scale to be α = .89
for fathers (see APPENDIX E) and α = .80 for sons (see APPENDIX F). The scale was
constructed using straight addition.

Relational Satisfaction

Relational Satisfaction was measured using a modified version of the 9-item
Quality Marriage Index (Norton, 1983). The words marriage and partner were replaced
with relationship and father as was done in past research (Roberto et al., 2009).
Questions regarding intentions to terminate the relationship and conversations regarding
termination of the relationship were not included, resulting in a seven items included in
the questionnaire. Previous reliability using revised versions of this scale have been
reported to be high: α = .95 (Roberto, Carlyle, Goodall, & Castle, 2009) and α = .96
(Weber & Patterson, 1997). For the current study, there were problems with the two
negatively worded questions as they did not match the responses offered in the scale.
The first omitted question asked how often the participant wished he was not related to
his father or son. The second omitted question asked how many problems were present in
the relationship. These two questions were omitted from the scale for this study. The
present study found the internal reliability of the revised 5-item factor created relational
satisfaction scale to be α = .71 for fathers (see APPENDIX G) and α = .91 for sons (see
APPENDIX H).

Verbally Aggressive Messages

The use of verbally aggressive messages was measured using a scale created for this study that was modeled after a similar study using verbally aggressive messages (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992). Participants were given a list of ten verbally aggressive message types with their definition. The first verbally aggressive message was *character attack*, which was defined for the participant as saying unfavorable things about the person's character. The second verbally aggressive message type was *competence attack*, which was defined as negative comments about the person's competence. The third verbally aggressive message type was *background attack*, which was defined as attacking the person's background. The fourth verbally aggressive message type was *physical appearance attack*, which was defined as expressing dissatisfaction with the person's physical appearance. The fifth verbally aggressive message type was *malediction*, which was defined as saying you hope something bad will happen to the other person. The sixth verbally aggressive message type was *teasing*. The seventh verbally aggressive message type was *ridicule*, which was defined as ridiculing the person's short comings. The eighth verbally aggressive message type was *threatening*, which was defined as threatening to punish the person. The ninth verbally aggressive message type was *swearing*, which was defined as swearing at the person, using obscene language, or name calling. The tenth verbally aggressive message type was *non-verbal emblems*, which was defined as using facial expressions, gestures, eye behaviors, which attack the other person's self concept. Participants were asked to indicate how often they use these messages as well as how often they receive these messages within the father/son relationship using the provided scale. The scale ran from

1-10 with 1 meaning they never use/receive these messages and 10 being that they always use/receive these messages.

Humorous Messages

The use of humorous messages was measured using a scale created for this study that was designed in the same way as the verbally aggressive message scale above. Participants were given a list of four humorous message types with their definitions. The first humorous message type was *superiority*, which was defined as a message that disparages or puts down an individual or group. The second humorous message type was *incongruity*, which was defined as a message that unexpectedly links two or more things that do not usually go together. The third humorous message type was *arousal*, which was defined as a message that relies on reactions to extreme or shocking things. The fourth humorous message type was *social currency*, which was defined as a message that creates a sense of connection among people often shared through knowledge or experience. Participants were asked to indicate how often they use these messages as well as how often they receive these messages within the father/son relationship using the provided scale. The scale ran from 1-10 with 1 meaning they never use/receive these messages and 10 being that they always use/receive these messages.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The first research question asked:

RQ$_1$: Do individuals use different types of verbally aggressive based on their

humor orientation?

A Pearson's correlation was used to test the relationship between one's humor orientation

and their use of verbally aggressive messages, pooling sons and fathers (i.e., 101 son/father

pairs). There was only one significant correlation--that between teasing and humor

orientation. A significant negative relationship was revealed r (200) = -.215, p = .002. Results

indicate that the higher a person's humor orientation the less likely they are to use teasing

(see Table I). No other significant results were found.

Table I

Correlations between Verbally Aggressive Messages and Humor Orientation

		Humor Orientation
Character Attack	Pearson Correlation	.039
	Sig (2-tailed)	.586
	N	201
Competence Attack	Pearson Correlation	-.056
	Sig (2-tailed)	.427
	N	201
Background Attack	Pearson Correlation	.021
	Sig (2-tailed)	.769
	N	201
Physical Appearance attack	Pearson Correlation	.058
	Sig (2-tailed)	.417
	N	200
Malediction	Pearson Correlation	.008
	Sig (2-tailed)	.908
	N	200
Teasing	Pearson Correlation	-.215*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.002
	N	200
Ridicule	Pearson Correlation	.005
	Sig (2-tailed)	.949
	N	199
Threatening	Pearson Correlation	.039
	Sig (2-tailed)	.585
	N	200
Swearing	Pearson Correlation	-.128
	Sig (2-tailed)	.072
	N	199
Nonverbal Emblems	Pearson Correlation	-.114
	Sig (2-tailed)	.108
	N	200

*$p< 0.05$

The second research question asked:

RQ$_2$: What types of humorous messages are used during conflict within the

father/son relationship?

An examination of the means determined which types of messages are most used during conflict within the father/son relationship. Social currency was the message most frequently used for both self reported (*M*=4.91, *SD*=2.767) and reported to be used by the other person (*M*=4.88, *SD*= 2.822). Arousal was the next most frequently used message for self reported (*M*=3.69, *SD*=2.487) and reported to be used by the other person (*M*=3.63, *SD*= 2.486). Incongruity was the third most used message by self report (*M*=3.31, *SD*=2.349) and reported to be used by the other person (*M*=3.22, *SD*=2.403). Superiority was the type of message least reported to be used by self (*M*=2.86, *SD*=2.377) and by the other person (*M*=2.76, *SD*=2.315).

The third research question asked:

RQ$_3$: What is the relationship between fathers' and sons' humor orientation and trait verbal aggression and their impact on fathers' relational satisfaction?

To answer this question, a series of four multiple regressions was run. In support of these regressions, Pearson correlations were run among all the various independent and dependent variables. The results are displayed in Appendix I.Each RQ3 multiple regression contained either fathers' or sons' humor orientation, fathers' or sons' verbal aggression, and the interaction between the two specific variables as the independent variables and fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable. The first multiple regression was run using fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression as the main effects, including also in the model a multiplicative term representing the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression. The overall model showed a significant prediction of fathers' relational satisfaction with 12.2% of the variance explained by the independent variables. Examination of the tolerances revealed no multicollinearity problems. Both main effects and the interaction effect were significant.

27

Fathers' humor orientation provides a significant unique prediction for fathers' relational satisfaction (β=1.004) but is not significantly correlated (r = -.005; p = .481) with the dependent variable. Fathers' verbal aggression significantly predicts fathers' relational satisfaction (β=.727) and is significantly negatively correlated with the dependent variable (r = -.247, p = .008). Finally, the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression also significantly predicts father's relational satisfaction (β=-1.483) (see Table II). A graph was used to investigate the nature of the significant interaction, splitting fathers into quintiles based on their level of humor orientation. Fathers' verbal aggression was also split into quintiles for demonstration purposes. Based on the graph, fathers with the lowest humor orientation had higher relational satisfaction with higher trait verbal aggression while all of the other groups of fathers with higher humor orientation showed a decrease in relational satisfaction with an increase in verbal aggression (see Figure I).

Table II

Multiple Regression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction from Fathers' Humor Orientation and Fathers' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Fathers' Humor Orientation	-.005	.481	1.004	3.020	.003
Fathers' Verbal Aggression	-.247	.008	.727	2.203	.030
Interaction (Fathers' Humor Orientation X Fathers' Verbal Aggression)	-.226	.014	-1.483	-3.094	.003
Total Equation: R sq. = .150, Adj. R sq. = .122 F(3,92) = 5.413, p = .002					

Figure I

Graph of Significant InteractionBetween Fathers' Humor Orientation and Fathers' Verbal

Aggression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction.

The second multiple regression was run using fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable and fathers' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression as the main effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression. The overall model is not significant, so an examination of the main effects and the interaction effect is not warranted (see Table III).

Table III

Multiple Regression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction from Fathers' Humor Orientation and Sons' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Fathers' Humor Orientation	-.005	.481	.838	1.520	.132
Sons' Verbal Aggression	-.113	.137	.444	1.170	.245
Interaction (Fathers' Humor Orientation X Sons' Verbal Aggression)	-.085	.204	-1.070	-1.528	.130
Total Equation: R sq. = .037, Adj. R sq. = .006 F(3,92) = 1.187, p = .319					

The third multiple regression was run using fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable and sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression as the main effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression. The overall model shows a significant prediction of fathers' relational satisfaction with 18.1% of the variance explained by the independent variables. However, neither main effects nor the interaction effect are significant (see Table IV).

Table IV

Multiple Regression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction from Sons' Humor Orientation and Fathers' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Sons' Humor Orientation	-.365	<.001	-.127	-.309	.758
Fathers' Verbal Aggression	-.247	.008	-.015	-.040	.968
Interaction (Sons' Humor Orientation X Fathers' Verbal Aggression)	-.419	<.001	-.312	-.542	.589
Total Equation: R sq. = .181, Adj. R sq. = .154 F(3,92) = 6.761, p< .001					

The fourth multiple regression was run using fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable and sons' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression as main

effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between sons' humor

orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression. The overall model shows a significant

prediction of fathers' relational satisfaction with 14.3% of the variance explained by the

independent variables. However, neither main effects nor the interaction effect are significant
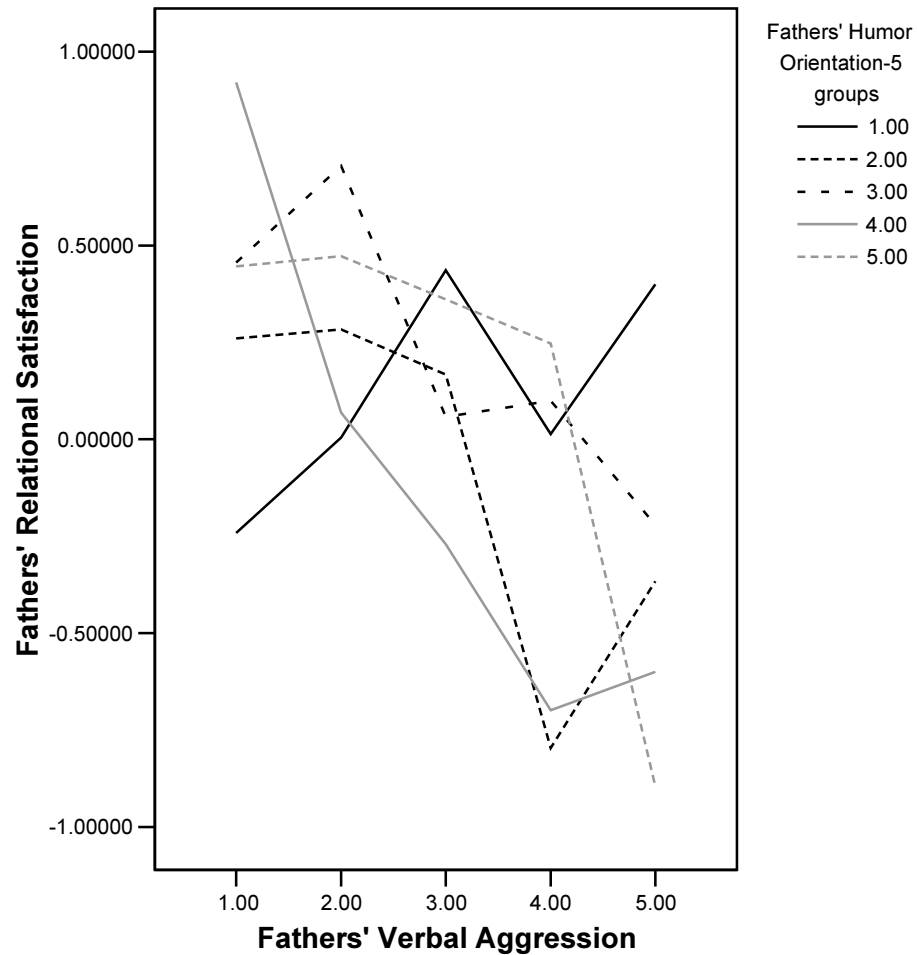
(see Table V).

Table V

Multiple Regression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction from Sons' Humor

Orientation and Sons' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Sons' Humor Orientation	-.365	< .001	-.555	-1.015	.313
Sons' Verbal Aggression	-.113	.137	-.204	-.618	.538
Interaction (Sons' Humor Orientation X Sons' Verbal Aggression)	-.353	< .001	.235	.363	.717
Total Equation: R sq. = .143, Adj. R sq. = .115 F(3,92) = 5.100, p = .003					

The fourth research question asked:

> RQ$_4$: What is the relationship between fathers' and sons' humor orientation and
>
> trait verbal aggression and their impact on sons' relational satisfaction?

To answer this question, a series of four multiple regressions were run. Again,

supporting Pearson correlation coefficients are displayed in Appendix I.Each multiple

regression contained either fathers' or sons' humor orientation, fathers' or sons' verbal

aggression, and the interaction between the two specific variables as the independent

variables and sons' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable. The first multiple

regression was run using fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression as the

main effects, and including a multiplicative term representing the interaction between fathers'

humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression. The overall model showed a

significant prediction of sons' relational satisfaction with 11.5% of the variance explained by

the independent variables. Examination of the tolerances revealed no multicollinearity

problems. Both main effects and the interaction effect are significant. Fathers' humor

orientation significantly and uniquely predicts sons' relational satisfaction ($\beta=1.113$) but is

not significantly correlated with the dependent variable. Fathers' verbal aggression

significantly uniquely predicts sons' relational satisfaction ($\beta=.919$) and is not

significantly correlated with the dependent variable. Finally, the interaction between

fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression also significantly predicts

sons' relational satisfaction ($\beta=-1.560$) (see Table VI). A graph was used to investigate

the nature of the significant interaction, once again splitting the sample into quintiles

based on fathers' level of humor orientation, and using quintiles on fathers' trail verbal

aggression as well. Based on the graph relational satisfaction generally decreased as

verbal aggression increased in all of the humor orientation groups except for those whose

fathers were low in humor orientation. The sons whose fathers were in the lowest humor

orientation group were the only group whose relational satisfaction seemed to increase as

their fathers' verbal aggression increased (see Figure II).

Table VI

Multiple Regression Predicting Sons' Relational Satisfaction from Fathers' Humor

Orientation and Fathers' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Fathers' Humor Orientation	.063	.269	1.113	3.332	.001
Fathers' Verbal Aggression	-.108	.144	.919	2.770	.007
Interaction (Fathers' Humor Orientation X Fathers' Verbal Aggression)	-.093	.181	-1.560	-3.255	.002
Total Equation: R sq. = .115, Adj. R sq. = .088 F(3,95) = 4.134, p = .008					

Figure II

Graph of Significant InteractionBetween Fathers' Humor Orientation and Fathers'
Verbal Aggression Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction.

The second multiple regression was run using sons' relational satisfaction as the

dependent variable and fathers' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression as main

effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between fathers' humor

orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression. The overall model is not significant. Thus, an

examination of the main effects and the interaction effect is not warranted (see Table VII).

Table VII

Multiple Regression Predicting Sons' Relational Satisfaction from Fathers' Humor

Orientation and Sons' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Fathers' Humor Orientation	.063	.269	.745	1.375	.172
Sons' Verbal Aggression	-.036	.362	.421	1.112	.269
Interaction (Fathers' Humor Orientation X Sons' Verbal Aggression)	.010	.459	-.872	-1.273	.206
Total Equation: R sq. = .022, Adj. R sq. = -.008 F(3,95) = .728, p = .538					

The third multiple regression was run using sons' relational satisfaction as the

dependent variable and sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression as main

effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between sons' humor

orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression. The overall model is not significant, making

an inspection of the main effects and the interaction effect unwarranted (see Table VIII).

Table VIII

Multiple Regression Predicting Sons' Relational Satisfaction from Sons' Humor

Orientation and Fathers' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Sons' Humor Orientation	-.163	.053	.009	.022	.983
Fathers' Verbal Aggression	-.108	.144	.057	.141	.888
Interaction (Sons' Humor Orientation X Fathers' Verbal Aggression)	-.187	.032	-.235	-.380	.705
Total Equation: R sq. = .036, Adj. R sq. = .006 F(3,95) = 1.192, p = .317					

The fourth multiple regression was run using sons' relational satisfaction as the

dependent variable and sons' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression as main

effects, with a multiplicative term representing the interaction between sons' humor

orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression. The overall model is not significant. Thus, an

inspection of main effects and the interaction effect is not warranted (see Table IX).
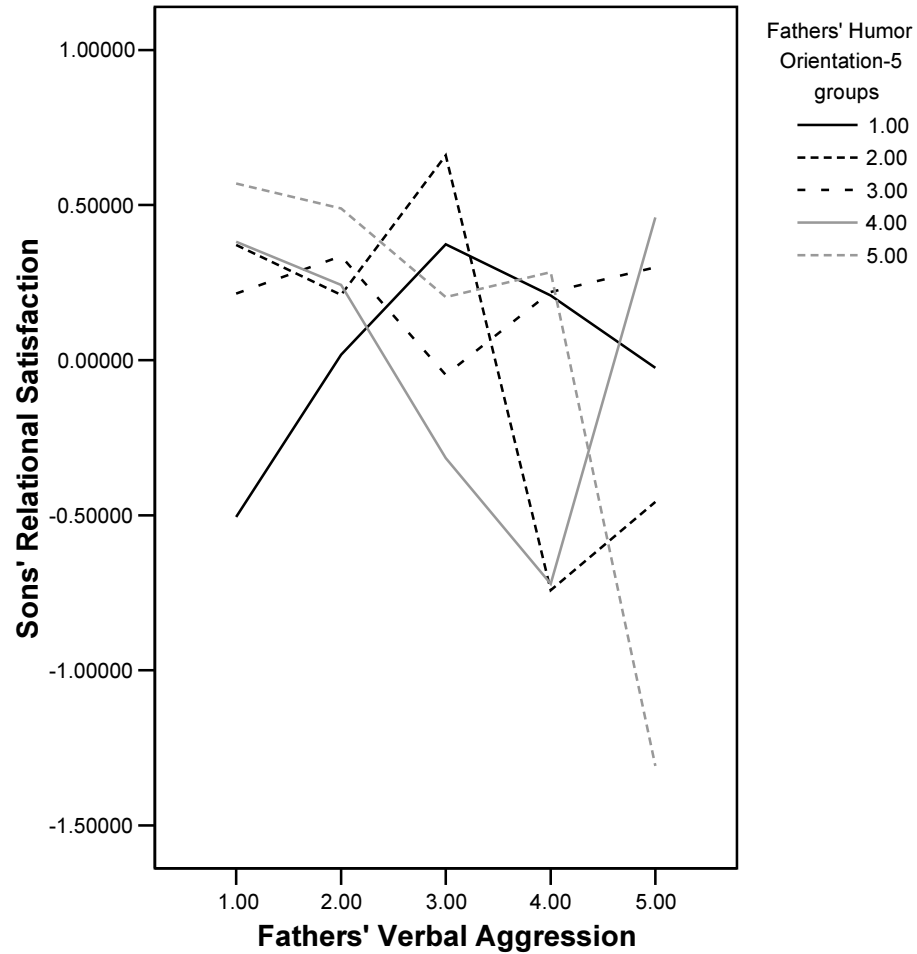
Table IX

Multiple Regression Predicting Sons' Relational Satisfaction from Sons' Humor

Orientation and Sons' Verbal Aggression.

Independent Variable	r	Sig. of r	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Sons' Humor Orientation	-.163	.053	-.640	-1.118	.266
Sons' Verbal Aggression	-.036	.362	-.307	-.883	.380
Interaction (Sons' Humor Orientation X Sons' Verbal Aggression)	-.139	.084	.580	.850	.398
Total Equation: R sq. = .035, Adj. R sq. = .004 F(3,95) = 1.132, *p* = .340					

The first hypothesis stated:

> H_1: Fathers' trait verbal aggression will be negatively correlated with sons'
>
> relational satisfaction.

A Pearson's correlation was used to test the relationship between fathers' trait verbal

aggression and sons' relational satisfaction. There was no significant correlation. A non-

significant negative relationship was revealed r (99) = -.108, p = .288 (see Table X).

Table X

Correlation between Fathers' Verbal Aggression and Sons' Relational Satisfaction

		Sons' relational satisfaction
Fathers' Trait Verbal Aggression	Pearson Correlation	-.108
	Sig (2-tailed)	.288
	N	99

The second hypothesis stated:

> H_2: Fathers' humor orientation will be positively correlated with sons' relational
>
> satisfaction.

A Pearson's correlation was used to test the relationship between fathers' humor orientation and sons' relational satisfaction. There was no significant correlation. A non-significant positive relationship was revealed *r* (99) = .063, *p* = .538 (see Table XI).

Table XI

Correlation between Fathers' Humor Orientation and Sons' Relational Satisfaction

		Sons' relational satisfaction
Fathers' Humor Orientation	Pearson Correlation	.063
	Sig (2-tailed)	.538
	N	99

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The father-son dyad might be the most socially significant male-male relationship in the life course, yet its negative qualities have been the sole focus in most research on the relationship (Floyd & Mormon, 2003). Research has also indicated that humor can also be seen as a form of aggression and may serve as a form of disengagement. This study examines the role of humor orientation and verbal aggression in father and son conflicts and how these variables impact relational satisfaction. Ten research questions and two hypotheses were posed. The following is a discussion of these results.

Research Question One

The first research question examined the relationship between humor orientation and an individual's use of the ten types of verbally aggressive messages; character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and nonverbal emblems (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992; Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990). The results revealed that teasing was significantly negatively related to a person's humor orientation. None of the other verbally aggressive messages were significantly related to humor orientation.

There are several possible reasons for the negative relationship between teasing and humor orientation. Humor orientation is a communication trait that relates to the ability to frequently and successfully utilize humor. We know that teasing is a message that can be seen as having multiple meanings. When teasing is used, it can leave the recipient questioning whether an attack was intended or whether the message was truly intended as humorous or as aggressive (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992). In the current study, teasing was negatively related to humor orientation suggesting that the more likely a person is to use humorous messages, the less likely they are to use teasing. A simple possible explanation for this is that someone who is inclined to use humor, does not see teasing as a humorous message but solely as an aggressive tactic.

It is also worth noting that the relationship between swearing and humor orientation was negative and approaching significant. Swearing is typically viewed as a negative form of communication that is often used when one is angry and therefore not viewed as humor. Another possible explanation might be that the type of swear words used where not intensely offensive, thus it may be the severity of the swear word that must be considered. Further research is needed. It is also somewhat suprising that humor orientation was not related to maladictions, which are messages that directly state the hope that something negative happen to the other person. For example, a father may say to a son "I hope you fall on your face with your new job or a son may say to his father "I hope you rot in hell' One would expect this type of message to be negatively related to humor. Further investigation related to verbal aggressive messages and humor could provide a better understanding of humor orientation in conflict situations within the father-son relationship.

Research Question Two

The second question examined the types of humorous messages used in conflict between fathers and sons**.** The four types of humorous messages are arousal, incongruity, superiority, and social currency. Social currency, a humorous message that creates a sense of connection among people often shared through knowledge or experience, was the most frequently used message type. One possible explanation for this is that there are idiosyncrasies that develop between individuals within close personal relationships. Arousal, a humorous message that relies on reactions to extreme or shocking things, was the next most frequently used humorous message. This is not a surprising finding. Arousal humor, which elicits a strong response, can be compared to the competitive talk and banter that occurs between men as a way of connecting with each other. Incongruity was the third most used message while superiority was the humorous message that was least used. During conflict situations it is not likely to one would use incongruity because it would likely escalate the conflict. Superiority was likely the least used because of the population and relationship.

Differences between fathers' use of humorous messages and sons' use of humor messages were also identified. Sons' were significantly more likely to report using incongruity and arousal than fathers and were also more likely to report their fathers as using superiority humor in conflict. This finding could be interpreted in a couple possible ways. The first possibility is the difference in age between the fathers' group and the sons' group. There was a thirty year difference in the mean age of the two populations. This difference in age could offer an explanation for why one group would use one type of humor more often than the other group. Another possible explanation is the role one

has in the relationship. Sons are in a subordinate role within this relationship, as a result that could influence them to use a different humorous message within conflict. Eliciting an arousal response or by using incongruity could be a tactic in leveling the differences of status between them and their fathers. Additionally, sons' may see their fathers' use of superiority humor as a tactic for fathers' to keep their dominant role in the relationship. It is not surprising that sons would report their fathers as using more superiority humor based on the nature of their relationship. It is interesting to note that the participants in this study are adult sons. Perhaps these findings suggest that power differences, at least in terms of the use of humor in conflict, remains intact from childhood.

Research Question Three

Research question three investigated the relationship of fathers' and sons' humor orientation, fathers' and sons' trait verbal aggression, and the interaction between humor orientation and verbal aggression with fathers' relational satisfaction. The question was examined using four multiple regressions to examine the main effects and the interactions. The first multiple regression examined fathers' humor orientation, fathers' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with fathers' relational satisfaction. The main effects and interactions were significant predictors of relational satisfaction. Fathers with high verbal aggression and high humor orientation predicted the lowest relational satisfaction. Based on this finding it is clear that there is a dark side to humor when combined with verbal aggression and that this combination is harmful in the father and son relationship during conflict. Fathers' may have difficulty competently communicating when they have both a high humor orientation and high trait verbal

aggression because they may intend an aggressive message as humorous and they assume that their sons' will interpret it in the same way which is consistent with the findings of Infante, Riddle, Horvath, and Tumlin (1992). fathers with low trait verbal aggression and moderate to high humor orientation result in the highest relational satisfaction for fathers.

The second multiple regression examined fathers' humor orientation, sons' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with fathers' relational satisfaction. This combination of traits from both the fathers and sons are less clear than the analysis which contained traits from the same individual. These variables, in this combination, are not a predictor of fathers' relational satisfaction and further research is needed to investigate their impact.

The third multiple regression examined sons' humor orientation, fathers' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with fathers' relational satisfaction. This combination of traits, like the last set, contains traits from both the fathers and sons and is less clear looking at traits from the same individual. The relationship between these variables and fathers' relational satisfaction did produce a significant total equation. Past research has found that verbal aggression is related to relational satisfaction, perhaps the combination with humor orientation contributed to the non-significance of the main effects and interaction.

The final multiple regression for this question examined sons' humor orientation, sons' trait verbal aggression and the interaction between sons' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with fathers' relational satisfaction. This

combination was significant for the overall model, indicating that fathers' relational satisfaction is impacted in some way by sons' trait verbal aggression and sons' humor orientation even though the main effects and interaction were not significant individually. The combination of these variables seem to be working together to produce and effect, but exactly how they are working is unclear and further research is needed.

Research Question Four

Research question four investigated the relationship of fathers' and sons' humor orientation, fathers' and sons' trait verbal aggression, and the interaction between humor orientation and verbal aggression with sons' relational satisfaction. The question was examined using four multiple regressions to examine the main effects and the interactions. The first multiple regression examined fathers' humor orientation, fathers' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with sons' relational satisfaction. The main effects and interactions were significant predictors of relational satisfaction. A possible explanation for this combination to have a negative impact on sons' relational satisfaction is that sons' may have a hard time differentiating humor from aggression because they cannot determine messages intent. In past research within the father/son relationship, trait verbal aggressiveness was found to be more strongly related to anger under highly frustrating conditions (Rudd, Beatty, Vogl-Bauer, & Dobos, 1998). This could also be applied to the current study assuming that the messages being delivered from a father high in both trait verbal aggression and humor orientation are being seen as incompetent by sons. These messages would result in frustration because of their possible mixed interpretations and could be negatively impacting satisfaction. In opposition to this,

fathers with moderate trait verbal aggression and low to moderate humor orientation resulted in the highest relational satisfaction for sons.

The second multiple regression examined fathers' humor orientation, sons' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between fathers' humor orientation and sons' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with sons' relational satisfaction. The third multiple regression examined sons' humor orientation, fathers' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with sons' relational satisfaction. The combination of traits from both the fathers and sons are less clear than the questions which contained traits from the same individual. Neither of these analyses produced significant results. These variables, in these combinations, are not a predictor of sons' relational satisfaction and further research is needed to investigate their impact.

The fourth multiple regression examined sons' humor orientation, fathers' trait verbal aggression, the interaction between sons' humor orientation and fathers' trait verbal aggression and its relationship with sons' relational satisfaction and also found no significant results despite the impact these variables had on fathers' relational satisfaction. This indicates that while fathers' relational satisfaction is impacted by their sons' trait verbal aggression and humor orientation, sons' relational satisfaction is impacted by other factors within conflict.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis posited that fathers' self reported trait verbal aggression will be negatively correlated with sons' relational satisfaction. The results for this hypothesis were negative, however they were not significant. This finding was very surprising given

that previous research has identified a negative relationship between fathers' trait verbal aggression and sons' relational satisfaction (Beatty & Dobos, 1992). One difference between this was that the current study used self report measures of fathers' trait verbal aggression while other study used sons' perceptions of their fathers' trait verbal aggression. We also know, based on previous research, that sons' perceptions of their fathers sarcasm and criticism are consequences of their fathers' verbal aggressiveness (Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994). There are a few differences in the current study that can possibly explain these findings. These past studies relied on sons' reported perceptions of their fathers' verbal aggressiveness, while the present study relied on fathers' self reported verbal aggression. Findings can vary greatly on depending on whether data is self reported or if it is other reported perceptions, and effort should be made to collect data from children themselves. Regardless, collecting both perceived and self-report data may aid researchers in reconciling discrepant findings (Palazzolo, Roberto, & Babin, 2010). It is possible, that fathers who are high in verbal aggression do not see their messages as verbally aggressive and that sons perceptions are higher than the fathers self report. Additional research is required to investigate this relationship.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis posited that Fathers' self reported humor orientation will be positively correlated with sons' relational satisfaction. As predicted, fathers' humor orientation was positively correlated with sons' relational satisfaction, however the relationship was not significant. This hypothesis was expected to be significant since in past research humor orientation was perceived as an overall positive personality trait and has direct impact on relational development (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-

44

Butterfield, 1996). A possible explanation for this again is the use of only self report data. It is very possible that sons' do not perceive their fathers as humorous even though their fathers may be high in humor orientation. Additional research is required to investigate this relationship.

Limitations

The present study had several limitations. First, the data was limited to conflict situations within the father and adult son relationship. As a result of this, the results may not represent the relationship as a whole. Conflict situation in this study was a general, umbrella term that did not refer to any specific type of conflict situation nor did it require participants to define or describe the conflict situation. Verbal aggression and humor orientation, being communication traits, may not always be activated in every situation. Knowing the type of conflict would help us to better determine which traits pertained to those specific situations.

Another limitation of the present study is the use of only self-report measures for communication traits. Using only self-report measures could have resulted in a social desirability bias. Similar problems have occurred in the past using the humor orientation scale as self-report only as well (Booth-Butterfield, Booth-Butterfield, & Wanzer, 2007.) Perhaps it would have been better to include both self report as well as a section for perceived traits for both humor orientation and trait verbal aggression similar to the format that was used for the verbally aggressive messages and humorous messages.

Additionally, the humor orientation had high reliability with $\alpha=.93$ for fathers and $\alpha=.91$ for sons. This could mean that the instrument contains too many similar questions and the redundancy of the questions is resulting in a high reliability. The humor

45

orientation scale has also been called into question because it limits humor to joking and storytelling. The humor orientation scale also does not provide other means of delivering humorous messages, such as nonverbal communication (Wrench & Richmond, 2004.)

Finally, the sample consisted of college age sons enrolled in undergraduate courses at a mid-western university. A random sample was not generated and therefore we are not able to generalize the results to the entire population. However, using this population the study sought to collect data from both fathers and sons in pairs so that self report measure could also be used. Previous similar research relied on perceptions of fathers communication traits (Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994.)

Directions for Future Study

As mentioned above, future studies should consider using communication trait assessments not only for self report but also for perception of the other group. Being able to compare these two measures would help identify the presence of social desirability bias. Collecting both measure would also help to see if fathers or sons perception of the other party is influenced by their own communication traits and to see if they are perceiving the other person accurately. Relying solely on self report measures makes it difficult to know whether or not the other party is perceiving these traits accurately or if their own traits are influencing their perceptions.

Collecting data on the types of conflicts that are occurring and how the messages and traits are being utilized across different conflicts would also be beneficial. The current study did not collect any data regarding the actual conflict type. The intensity and topic of the conflict could clarify when and which messages are used and why.

Finally, expanding the humor data would be beneficial as well. Selecting a different measure of humor could tap into different messages and deliveries which could impact the results. The humor orientation scale was very limited and included messages only related to jokes and storytelling. The humorous messages, however, included different types of humor that do not fit into those categories. Using an expanded instrument, or creating an instrument that touched on the other types of humor could impact whether someone is truly inclined to use humor, but are not limited to the delivery types within the humor orientation scale.

There are several directions that future research can focus on with the data from the current study. The typology created from the senses of humor research should be examined in more depth to see how it relates to the other variables including humor orientation. Knowing how an individuals' humor orientation effects their message choice would be beneficial. In addition, the current study did not examine any of the message types (humorous messages or verbally aggressive messages) in relation to relational satisfaction. Finally, the hypotheses focused on the effect of fathers' self reported trait measures on sons' relational satisfaction but did not examine the relationship between sons' self reported traits on fathers relational satisfaction.

REFERENCES

Averback, J. M., & Hample, D. (2008). Ironic message production: How and why we
produce ironic messages. *Communication Monographs, 75,* 396-410.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and actions: A social cognitive.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Beatty M. J., Zelley J. R., Dobos J. A. & Rudd, J. E. (1994). Fathers' trait verbal
aggressiveness and argumentativeness as predictors of adult sons' perceptions of
fathers' sarcasm, criticism, and verbal aggressiveness. *Communication Quarterly*,
42, 407-415.

Beatty, M. J., Burant, P. A., Dobos, J. A., & Rudd, J. E. (1996). Trait verbal
aggressiveness and the appropriateness and effectiveness of fathers' interaction
plans. *Communication Quarterly, 44*, 1-15.

Beatty, M. J., & Dobos, J. A. (1992). Adult sons' satisfaction with their relationships with
fathers and person-group (father) communication apprehension. *Communication
Quarterly, 40*, 162-176.

Booth-Butterfield, S., & Booth-Butterfield, M. (1991). Individual differences in the
communication of humorous messages. *Southern Communication Journal, 56*,
32-40.

Booth-Butterfield, M., Booth-Butterfield, S., & Wanzer, M. (2007). Funny students cope
better: Patterns of humor enactment and coping effectiveness. *Communication
Quarterly*, *55*, 299-315.

Caughlin, J. P., Malis, R. S. (2004). Demand/withdrawal communication between parents

and adolescents as a correlate of relational satisfaction. *Communication Reports*,

17, 60-71.

Daniels, T., & Spiker, B. (1983). Social exchange and the relationship between

information adequacy and relational satisfaction. *Western Journal of Speech

Communication: WJSC*, *47*, 118-137.

Darling, N., Cohan, C. L., Burns, A., & Thompson, L. (2008). Within-family conflict

behaviors as predictors of conflict in adolescent romantic relations. *Journal of

Adolescence, 31*, 671-690.

Emmers-Sommer, T.M. (2004). The effect of communication quality and quantity

indicators on intimacy and relational satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal

Relationships, 21*, 399-411.

Eysenck, H. (1942). The appreciation of humor: An experimental and theoretical study.

British Journal of Psychology, 32, 295-309.

Floyd, K. (2001). Human affection exchange: I. reproductive probability as a predictor of

men's affection with their sons. *Journal Of Men's Studies*, 10(1), 39-50.

Floyd, K., & Morman, M. T. (2003). Human effection exchange: II. Affectionate

communication in father-son relationships. *The Journal of Social Psychology,

143*, 599-612.

Floyd, K., & Morman, M. T. (2005). Fathers' and sons' reports of fathers' affectionate

communication: Implications of a naïve theory of affection. *Journal Of Social &

Personal Relationships*, 22(1), 99-109.

Forward, G. L., Sansom-Livolsi, A., & McGovern, J. (2008). College student communication, religiosity, and family satisfaction: The importance of opposite sex parent relationships. *Journal of Communication and Religion, 31*, 245-271.

Freud, S. (1928). Humor. *International Journal of Psychologists, 9,* 1-6.

Grando, R., & Ginsberg, B. G. (1976). Communication in the father-son relationship: The parent-adolescent relationship development program. *Family Coordinator*, 25(4), 465.

Gruner, C. R. (1997). The game of humor: A comprehensive theory of why we laugh. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Harzold, E., & Sparks, L. (2006). When the parent has cancer: Adult child perceptions of communication competency, humor orientation, and relational satisfaction in the older adult parent-adult child relationship. *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 1-29.

Honeycutt, J. M., & Brown, R. (1998). Did you hear the one about?: Typology and spousal differences in the planning of jokes and sense of humor in marriage. *Communication Quarterly, 46*, 342-352.

Infante, D. A., Anderson, C. M., Herington, A. D., & JungKee, K. (1993). Subordinates' satisfaction and perceptions of superiors; compliance-gaining tactics, argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and style. *Management Communication Quarterly. 6*, 307-326.

Infante, D. A., Chandler, T. A. & Rudd, J. E. (1989). Test of an argumentative skill deficiency model of interspousal violence. *Communication Monographs, 56*, 163-167.

Infante, D. A., & Gordon, W. I. (1991). How employees see the boss: Test of an

    argument and affirming model of supervisors' communicative behavior. *Western*

    Journal of Communication. 55, 294-304.

Infante, D. A., Myers, S. A., & Buerkel, R. A. (1994). Argument and verbal aggression in

    constructive and destructive family and organizational disagreements. *Western*

    Journal of Communication, 58, 73-84.

Infante, D. A., Riddle, B. L., Horvath, C. L., Tumlin, S. A. (1992). Verbal

    aggressiveness: Messages and reasons. *Communication Quaterly. 40*, 116-126.

Infante, D. A., Sabourin, T. A., Rudd, J. E. & Shannon, E. A. (1990). Verbal aggression

    in violent and nonviolent marital disputes. *Communication Quarterly, 38*, 361-

    371.

Infante, D. A., & Wigley, C. J. (1986). Verbal aggressiveness: An interpersonal model

    and measure. *Communication Monographs. 53*, 61-69.

Koestler, A. (1964). *The act of creation*. London: Hutchinson.

Lampert, M. D., & Ervin-Tripp, S. M. (2005). Risky Laughter: Teasing and self directed

    joking among male and female friends. *Journal of Pragmatics. 38*, 51-72.

Lieberman, E. A., Neuendorf, K. A., Denny, J., Skalski, P. D., & Wang, J. (2009). The

    language of laughter: A quantitative/qualitative fusion examining television

    narrative and humor. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *53*, 497-524.

Madlock, P. E., & Kennedy-Lightsey, C. (2010). The effects of supervisors' verbal

    aggressiveness and mentoring on their subordinates. *Journal Of Business*

    Communication, *47*(1), 42-62.

Martin, M. M., & Anderson, C. M. (1997). Aggressive communication traits: How

> similar are young adults and their parents in argumentativeness, assertiveness, and

> verbal aggressiveness. *Western Journal of CommunicationI. 61*, 299-314.

Martin M. M., Anderson, C. M., Burant, P. A., & Weber, K. (1997). Verbal aggression in

> sibling relationships. *Communication Quarterly, 45*, 304-317.

McClure, L., Carlyle, K., & Roberto, A. (2005). The relationship between parents' use of

> verbal and physical aggression and children's relational satisfaction and closeness

> with their parents. Paper presented to the International Communication

> Assosication.

Meyer, M. E. (2005). "I don't want to become my father": Representations and

> interpretations of father-son dyads on smallville.". Conference Papers --

> International Communication Association, 1-33.

Miczo, N. (2004). Humor ability, unwillingness to communicate, loneliness, and

> perceived stress: Testing a security theory. *Communication Studies, 55*, 209-226.

Miczo, N., Averback, J. A., & Mariani, T. (2009). Affiliative and aggressive humor,

> attachment dimensions, and interaction goals. Communication Studies, *60*, 443-
> 459.

Morman, M. T., & Floyd, K. (1999). Affectionate communication between fathers and

> young adults sons: individual and relational level correlates. *Communication
> Studies*, *50*(4), 294.

Morman, M. T. & Floyd, K. (2002). A 'changing culture of fatherhood': effects on

> affectionate communication, closeness, and satisfaction in men's relationships

> with their fathers and their sons. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66(4), 395.

Morr-Serewicz, M. C. (2008). Toward a triangular theory of the communication and

  relationships of the in-laws: Theoretical proposal and social relations analysis of

  the relational satisfaction and private discourse in in-law triads. *Journal of Family*

  Communication, 8, 264-292.

Myers, S. A., & Bryant, L. E. (2008). Emerging adult siblings' use of verbally

  aggressive messages as hurtful messages. *Communication Quarterly.* 56, 268-

  283.

Myers, S. A., & Goodboy, A. K. (2006). Perceived sibling use of verbally aggressive

  messages across the lifespan. *Communication Research Reports. 23,* 1-11*.*

Myers, S. A., & Rocca, K. A. (2001). Perceived instructor argumentativeness and verbal

  aggressiveness in the college classroom: effects on student perceptions of climate,

  apprehension, and state motivation. *Western Journal of Communication. 65*, 113-

  137.

Neuendof, K. A., & Skalski, P., (2000, June). Senses of humor: The development of a

  multi-factor scale in relationship to moving image utility. Paper presented to the

  Mass Communication Division at the annual conference of the International

  Communication Association, Acapulco, Mexico.

Neuendorf, K., Skalski, P., & Powers, J. (2004, May). Senses of humor: Validation of a

  multi-factor scale. Paper presented to the *Mass Communication Division* of the

  International Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.

Norton, R. (1983). Measuring marital quality: A critical look at the dependent variable.

  Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45, 141-152.

Olson, L. N. (2002) "As ugly and painful as it was, it was effective:" Individuals' unique assessment of communication competence during aggressive conflict episodes. *Communication Studies, 53*, 171-188.

Piddington, R. (1963). The psychology of laughter: A study in social adaptation. New York: Gamut Press.

Palazzolo, K. E., Roberto, A. J., & Babin, E. A. (2010). The relationship between parents' verbal aggression and young adult children's intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration. *Health Communication,* 25, 357-364.

Prasinos, S., & Tittler, B. I. (1981). The family relationships of humor-oriented adolescents. *Journal of Personality*, *49*, 295-305.

Ramirez, A. (2002). The role of overall communication quality in the association between partner's perceived decision making style and relational satisfaction in heterosexual same-sex and cross-sex friendships. *Communication Research Reports*, *19*, 107-117.

Rill, L., Baiocchi, E., Hopper, M., Denker, K., & Olson, L. N. (2009). Exploration of the relationship between self-esteem, commitment, and verbal aggressiveness in romantic dating relationships. *Communication Reports, 22*, 102-113.

Roberto, A. J., Carlyle, K. E., & Goodall, C. E. (2007). Communication and corporal punishment: The relationship between self-report parent verbal and physical aggression. *Communication Research Reports, 24*, 103-111.

Roberto, A. J., Carlyle, K. E., Goodall, C. E., & Castle, J. D. (2009). The relationship

    between parents' verbal aggressiveness and responsiveness and young adult

    children's attachment style and relational satisfaction with parents. *Journal of*

    Family Communication.

Roberto, A. J., Carlyle, K. E., & McClure, L. (2006). Communication and corporal

    punishment: The relationship between parents' use of verbal and physical

    aggression. *Communication Research Reports, 23*, 27-33.

Rudd, J. E., Beatty, M. J., Vogl-Bauer, S., & Dobos, J. A. (1997). Trait verbal

    aggressiveness and the appropriateness and effectiveness of fathers' interaction

    plans II: Fathers' self-assessments. *Communication Quarterly, 45*, 379-392.

Sargent, J. (2002). Topic avoidance: Is this the way to a more satisfying relationship?

    Communication Research Reports, 19, 175-182.

Schrodt, P., Soliz, J., & Braithwaite, D. O. (2008). A social relations model of everyday

    talk and relational satisfaction in stepfamilies. *Communication Monographs, 75*,

    190-217.

Strasser, D., & Lambert, A. (2009). Affectionate communication, satisfaction, and

    solidarity in father adult-son relationships. Conference Papers -- National

    Communication Association, 1.

Sutter, D. L., & Martin, M .M. (1997). Verbal aggression during disengagement of

    dating relationships. *Communication Research Reports, 15*, 318-326.

Tevin, J., Martin, M., & Neupauer, N. (1998). Sibling relationships: verbally aggressive

    messages and their effect on relational satisfaction. *Communication Reports*, *11*,

    179-186.

Vissing, Y., & Baily, W. (1996). Parent-to-child verbal aggression. In D.D. Cahn & S.A.

    Lloyd (Eds.), Family violence from a communication perspective (pp. 85-107).

    Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.

Wanzer, M., Booth-Butterfield, M., & Booth Butterfield, S. (2005). "If we didn't use

    humor we'd cry": Humorous coping communication in heath care settings.

    Journal of Health Communication. 10, 105-125.

Wanzer, M., Booth-Butterfield, M., & Booth Butterfield, S. (1995). The funny people: A

    source-orientation to the communication of humor. *42*, 142-154.

Wanzer, M., Booth-Butterfield, M., & Booth Butterfield, S. (1996). Are funny people

    popular? An examination of humor orientation, loneliness, and social attraction.

    Communication Quarterly. 44, 42-52.

Weber, K., & Patterson, B. R. (1997). The effects of maternal verbal aggression on the

    adult child's future romantic relationships. *Communication Research Reports, 14*,

    221-230.

Wrench, J., & Punyanunt-Carter, N. (2005). Advisor–advisee communication two: The

    influence of verbal aggression and humor assessment on advisee perceptions of

    advisor credibility and affective learning. *Communication Research Reports*, *22*,

    303-313.

APPENDIX

Father's Survey

Section A:

The following questions are concerned with your use of humor. Using the scale provided, indicate how strongly you agree with each statement by placing the appropriate number in the blank to the left of the statement.

1- Strongly Agree
2- Agree
3- Neutral
4- Disagree
5- Strongly Disagree

_____ 1. I regularly tell jokes and funny stories when I am with a group.

_____ 2. People usually laugh when I tell a joke or story.

_____ 3. I have no memory for jokes or funny stories.

_____ 4. I can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.

_____ 5. Being funny is a natural communication style with me.

_____ 6. I cannot tell a joke well.

_____ 7. People seldom ask me to tell stories.

_____ 8. My friends would say that I am a funny person.

_____ 9. People don't seem to pay close attention when I tell a joke.

_____ 10. Even funny jokes seem flat when I tell them.

_____ 11. I can easily remember jokes and stories.

_____ 12. People often ask me to tell jokes or stories.

_____ 13. My friends would not say that I am a funny person.

_____ 14. I don't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.

_____ 15. I tell stories and jokes very well.

_____ 16. Of all the people I know, I'm one of the funniest.

_____ 17. I use humor to communicate in a variety of situations.

Section B:

Using the scale below, indicate how often each statement is true for you by placing the appropriate number in the blank to the left of the statement:

1- Almost never true
2- Rarely true
3- Occasionally true
4- Often true
5- Almost always true

_____ 1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.

_____ 2. When individuals' are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.

_____ 3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.

_____ 4. When people refuse to do a task that I know is important, without good reason, I tell them that they are unreasonable.

_____ 5. When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be extremely gentle with them.

_____ 6. If Individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.

_____ 7. When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.

_____ 8. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.

_____ 9. When people will not budge on an issue of importance, I loose my temper and say rather strong things to them.

_____10. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.

_____11. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.

_____12. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try to not show it in what I say or how I say it.

_____13. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate   their intelligence.

_____14. When I attack persons' ideas, I try not to damage their self concepts.

_____15. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.

_____16. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.

_____17. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.

_____18. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.

_____19. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.

_____20. When an argument moves to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.

Section C: The following list contains ten types of messages which commonly occur in disagreement situations. Consider the most recent disagreement between you and your son in responding to the questions below. Please indicate the frequency in which you used each type of message using a 1-10 scale with (1) being never and (10) being always. Also report the frequency with which your son used each of these messages using the same scale. Make sure to answer, with the 1-10 scale, for **both** you and your son.

You	Your Son	
(1-10)	(1-10)	
_____	_____	1. Saying unfavorable things about the person's character
_____	_____	2. Negative comments about the person's competence
_____	_____	3. Attacking the person's background
_____	_____	4. Expressing dissatisfaction with the person's physical appearance
_____	_____	5. Saying you hope something bad will happen to him

_____ _____ 6. Teasing

_____ _____ 7. Ridiculing the person's short comings

_____ _____ 8. Threatening to punish the person

_____ _____ 9. Swearing at the person, using obscene language, name calling

_____ _____ 10. Using facial expressions, gestures, eye behaviors, which attack the other person's self concept

Section D: There are four different types of sense of humor. Consider the most recent disagreement between you and your son in responding to the questions below. Please indicate the frequency in which you used each type of message using a 1-10 scale with (1) being never and (10) being always. Also report the frequency in which your son used each of these messages using the same scale. Make sure to answer, with the 1-10 scale, for **both** you and your son.

You   Your Son

_____ _____ 1. Humorous messages that rely on a sense of superiority- by disparaging or putting down an individual or group.

_____ _____ 2. Humorous messages that are based on incongruity- the unexpected linking of two or more things that usually do not go together.

_____ _____ 3. Humorous messages that rely on general arousal, or reactions to extreme and shocking things.

_____ _____ 4. Humorous messages that rely on familiarity and social currency, messages that create a sense of connection among people, often shared through knowledge or experience.

5. Are there times when your son says something that is meant to be funny, but you do not find it to be funny, or visa-versa? Please describe a situation where this has happened while in conflict, or that lead to conflict between you and your son.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section E: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with your Son in regards to the questions below. Please rate each question using a scale from 1 to 5, where (1) indicates low satisfaction and (5) indicates high satisfaction. **CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH ITEM!**

1. How well does your son meet your needs?

    1   2   3   4   5

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

    1   2   3   4   5

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

    1   2   3   4   5

4. How often so you wish you were not related to your son?

    1   2   3   4   5

5. To what extent does your relationship meet your original expectations?

    1   2   3   4   5

6. How much do you love your son?

    1   2   3   4   5

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

    1   2   3   4   5

Section F:
Please answer the following questions.

1. Circle your highest level of education

       a. Some high school
       b. High school
       c. Certificate from trade school
       d. Some college
       e. Associate's degree
       f. Bachelor's degree
       g. Master's degree

2. What is your age?

3. What is your race?

       a. African-American
       b. Hispanic
       c. Asian
       d. Caucasian
       e. Other

4. Are you currently living with your son?

       a. Yes
       b. No

5. Which best describes your relation to your son?

       a. Biological Father
       b. Step Father
       c. Adoptive Father
       d. Foster Father
       e. Other, please specify

       _____

6. Please rate the level of satisfaction you have in the relationship with your son:

   a. Strongly Unsatisfactory
   b. Unsatisfactory
   c. Somewhat Unsatisfactory
   d. Neither unsatisfactory or satisfactory
   e. Somewhat Satisfactory
   f. Satisfactory
   g. Strongly Satisfactory
   h. Other

Thank you for your participation.

Son's Survey

<u>Section A:</u>
The following questions are concerned with your use of humor. Using the scale provided, indicate how strongly you agree with each statement by placing the appropriate number in the blank to the left of the statement.

6- Strongly Agree
7- Agree
8- Neutral
9- Disagree
10- Strongly Disagree

_____ 1. I regularly tell jokes and funny stories when I am with a group.

_____ 2. People usually laugh when I tell a joke or story.

_____ 3. I have no memory for jokes or funny stories.

_____ 4. I can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.

_____ 5. Being funny is a natural communication style with me.

_____ 6. I cannot tell a joke well.

_____ 7. People seldom ask me to tell stories.

_____ 8. My friends would say that I am a funny person.

_____ 9. People don't seem to pay close attention when I tell a joke.

_____ 10. Even funny jokes seem flat when I tell them.

_____ 11. I can easily remember jokes and stories.

_____ 12. People often ask me to tell jokes or stories.

_____ 13. My friends would not say that I am a funny person.

_____ 14. I don't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.

_____ 15. I tell stories and jokes very well.

_____ 16. Of all the people I know, I'm one of the funniest.

_____ 17. I use humor to communicate in a variety of situations.

Section B:
Using the scale below, indicate how often each statement is true for you by placing the appropriate number in the blank to the left of the statement:

6- Almost never true
7- Rarely true
8- Occasionally true
9- Often true
10- Almost always true

_____ 1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their   ideas.

_____ 2. When individuals' are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.

_____ 3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.

_____ 4. When people refuse to do a task that I know is important, without good reason, I tell them that they are unreasonable.

_____ 5. When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be extremely gentle with them.

_____ 6. If Individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.

_____ 7. When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.

_____ 8. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.

_____ 9. When people will not budge on an issue of importance, I loose my temper and say rather strong things to them.

_____10. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.

_____11. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.

_____12. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try to not show it in what I say or how I say it.

_____13. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate   their intelligence.

_____14. When I attack persons' ideas, I try not to damage their self concepts.

____15. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.

____16. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.

____17. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.

____18. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.

____19. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.

____20. When an argument moves to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.

Section C: The following list contains ten types of messages which commonly occur in disagreement situations. Consider the most recent disagreement between you and your father in responding to the questions below. Please indicate the frequency in which you used each type of message using a 1-10 scale with (1) being never and (10) being always. Also report the frequency with which your father used each of these messages using the same scale. Make sure to answer, with the 1-10 scale, for **both** you and your father.

You	Your father	
(1-10)	(1-10)	
_____	_____	1. Saying unfavorable things about the person's character
_____	_____	2. Negative comments about the person's competence
_____	_____	3. Attacking the person's background
_____	_____	4. Expressing dissatisfaction with the person's physical appearance
_____	_____	5. Saying you hope something bad will happen to him
_____	_____	6. Teasing
_____	_____	7. Ridiculing the person's short comings
_____	_____	8. Threatening to punish the person

_____ _____

_____ _____ 9. Swearing at the person, using obscene language, name
calling

_____ _____ 10. Using facial expressions, gestures, eye behaviors, which
attack the other person's self concept

Section D: There are four different types of sense of humor. Consider the most recent
disagreement between you and your father in responding to the questions below. Please
indicate the frequency in which you used each type of message using a 1-10 scale with
(1) being never and (10) being always. Also report the frequency in which your father
used each of these messages using the same scale. Make sure to answer, with the 1-10
scale, for **both** you and your father.

<u>You</u>   <u>Your
Father</u>

_____ _____ 1. Humorous messages that rely on a sense of superiority- by
disparaging or putting down an individual or group.

_____ _____ 2. Humorous messages that are based on incongruity- the
unexpected linking of two or more things that usually do not go
together.

_____ _____ 3. Humorous messages that rely on general arousal, or
reactions to extreme and shocking things.

_____ _____ 4. Humorous messages that rely on familiarity and social
currency, that create a sense of connection among people, often
shared through knowledge or experience.

5. Are there times when your father says something that is meant to be funny, but you do
not find it to be funny, or visa-versa? Please describe a situation where this has happened
while in conflict, or that lead to conflict between you and your father.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section E: Please indicate your level of satisfaction with your father in regards to the questions below. Please rate each question using a scale from 1 to 5, where (1) indicates low satisfaction and (5) indicates high satisfaction. **CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH ITEM!**

8. How well does your father meet your needs?

    1   2   3   4   5

9. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

    1   2   3   4   5

10. How good is your relationship compared to most?

    1   2   3   4   5

11. How often do you wish you were not related to your father?

    1   2   3   4   5

12. To what extent does your relationship meet your original expectations?

    1   2   3   4   5

13. How much do you love your father?

    1   2   3   4   5

14. How many problems are there in your relationship?

    1   2   3   4   5

Section F:
Please answer the following questions.

1. Circle your highest level of education

    i. Some high school
    j. High school
    k. Certificate from trade school
    l. Some college
    m. Associate's degree
    n. Bachelor's degree
    o. Master's degree

2. What is your age?

3. What is your race?

    a. African-American
    b. Hispanic
    c. Asian
    d. Caucasian
    e. Other

4. Are you currently living with your father?

    a. Yes
    b. No

5. Which best describes your relation to your father?

    a. Biological Son
    b. Step Son
    c. Adoptive Son
    d. Foster Son
    e. Other, please specify

       _____

6. Please rate the level of satisfaction you have in the relationship with your father:

       a. Strongly Unsatisfactory
       b. Unsatisfactory
       c. Somewhat Unsatisfactory
       d. Neither unsatisfactory or satisfactory
       e. Somewhat Satisfactory
       f. Satisfactory
       g. Strongly Satisfactory

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR FATHERS' HUMOR

ORIENTATION SCALE

	M	SD
1. I regularly tell jokes and funny stories when I am with a group.	2.24	1.09
2. People usually laugh when I tell a joke or story.	2.02	.75
3. I have no memory for jokes or funny stories.	3.72	1.18
4. I can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.	1.84	.69
5. Being funny is a natural communication style with me.	2.22	1.02
6. I cannot tell a joke well.	3.75	1.01
7. People seldom ask me to tell stories.	3.26	1.02
8. My friends would say that I am a funny person.	2.25	.91
9. People don't seem to pay close attention when I tell a joke.	3.78	.90
10. Even funny jokes seem flat when I tell them.	3.78	.98
11. I can easily remember jokes and stories.	2.38	.92
12. People often ask me to tell jokes or stories.	2.77	1.05
13. My friends would not say that I am a funny person.	3.48	1.05
14. I don't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.	3.77	.97
15. I tell stories and jokes very well.	2.39	.89
16. Of all the people I know, I'm one of the funniest.	2.95	1.03
17. I use humor to communicate in a variety of situations.	2.17	1.01
Total Additive Fathers' Humor Orientation	39.67	11.12

*Internal reliability of the additive fathers' humor orientation scale to be $\alpha = .93$

APPENDIX D: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SONS' HUMOR ORIENTATION

SCALE

	M	SD
1. I regularly tell jokes and funny stories when I am with a group.	1.93	1.08
2. People usually laugh when I tell a joke or story.	1.92	.86
3. I have no memory for jokes or funny stories.	4.00	1.04
4. I can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.	1.83	.97
5. Being funny is a natural communication style with me.	2.08	1.03
6. I cannot tell a joke well	3.96	1.02
7. People seldom ask me to tell stories.	3.38	1.08
8. My friends would say that I am a funny person.	1.93	.89
9. People don't seem to pay close attention when I tell a joke.	3.99	.89
10. Even funny jokes seem flat when I tell them.	4.02	.96
11. I can easily remember jokes and stories.	2.16	.90
12. People often ask me to tell jokes or stories.	2.50	1.01
13. My friends would not say that I am a funny person.	3.93	1.12
14. I don't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.	4.06	.90
15. I tell stories and jokes very well.	2.20	.89
16. Of all the people I know, I'm one of the funniest.	2.75	.99
17. I use humor to communicate in a variety of situations.	2.04	.97
Total Additive Sons' Humor Orientation	36.00	10.55

*Internal reliability of the additive sons' humor orientation scale to be α = .91

APPENDIX E: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR FATHERS VEBAL AGGRESSION

SCALE

	M	SD
1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.	3.75	1.12
2. When individuals' are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.	2.16	1.17
3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.	3.87	1.13
4. When people refuse to do a task that I know is important, without good reason, I tell them that they are unreasonable.	2.72	1.21
5. When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be gentle with them.	3.27	1.08
6. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.	1.88	1.07
7. When people behave in ways that are in poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.	2.01	1.11
8. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.	3.45	1.09
9. When people will not budge on an issue of importance, I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.	2.11	1.14
10. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.	3.63	1.08
11. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.	2.10	1.12
12. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try not to show it in what I say or how I say it.	3.49	1.25

13. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.　　1.93　　1.16

14. When I attack a person's ideas, I try not to damage their self concept.　　3.62　　1.26

15. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.　　3.76　　1.18

16. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.　　2.14　　1.06

17. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.　　3.40　　1.21

18. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.　　2.11　　1.26

19. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.　　1.83　　1.01

20. When an argument moves to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.　　3.40　　1.21

| Total Fathers' Additive Verbal Aggression | 45.35 | 12.99 |

*Internal reliability of the additive fathers' verbal aggression scale to be $\alpha = .89$

APPENDIX F: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SONS' VERBAL AGGRESSION

SCALE

	M	SD
1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.	3.49	1.12
2. When individuals' are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.	2.50	1.09
3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.	3.79	1.00
4. When people refuse to do a task that I know is important, without good reason, I tell them that they are unreasonable.	3.15	1.07
5. When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be gentle with them.	3.02	1.10
6. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.	2.32	1.08
7. When people behave in ways that are in poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.	2.45	1.07
8. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.	3.18	.91
9. When people will not budge on an issue of importance, I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.	2.35	.99
10. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.	3.04	1.14
11. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.	2.59	1.12
12. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try not to show it in what I say or how I say it.	3.21	1.06
13. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate their	2.75	1.14

intelligence.

14. When I attack a person's ideas, I try not to damage their self concept.	3.53	1.17
15. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.	3.51	1.12
16. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.	2.64	1.04
17. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.	3.00	1.14
18. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.	2.10	1.01
19. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.	2.39	1.05
20. When an argument moves to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.	3.04	1.10
Total Sons' Verbal Aggression (additive)	52.47	9.84

*Internal reliability of the additive sons' verbal aggression scale to be α = .80

APPENDIX G: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR FATHERS' RELATIONAL

SATISFACTION

	M	SD
1. How well does your son meet your needs?	4.10	.96
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	4.44	.81
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?	4.10	.96
5.. To what extent does your relationship meet your original expectations?	4.33	.85
6. How much do you love your son?	1.49	1.16
Total Fathers' Relational Satisfaction (factor created)		

*Internal reliability of the revised 5-item factor created fathers' relational satisfaction

scale to be $\alpha = $ .71

APPENDIX H: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SONS' RELATIONAL

SATISFACTION

	M	SD
1. How well does your father meet your needs?	4.39	.85
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	4.28	.88
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?	4.22	1.09
5.. To what extent does your relationship meet your original expectations?	4.24	.92
6. How much do you love your father?	4.70	.71

*Internal reliability of the revised 5-item factor created sons' relational satisfaction scale

to be $\alpha = .91$

APPENDIX I: CORRELATION BETWEEN FATHERS' AND SONS' HUMOR

ORIENTATION, RELATIONAL SATISFACTION, AND VERBAL AGGRESSION

		Fathers' HO	Sons' HO	Sons' RS	Fathers' RS	Sons' VA	Fathers' VA
Fathers' Humor Orientation	Correlation	1	.080	.063	-.005	.092	.084
	Sig (2-tailed)	-	.427	.538	.963	.359	.406
	N	101	101	99	96	101	101
Sons' Humor Orientation	Correlation	.080	1	-.163	-.365*	.049	.104
	Sig (2-tailed)	.427	-	.107	<.001	.627	.301
	N	101	101	99	96	101	101
Sons' Relational Satisfaction	Correlation	.063	-.163	1	.619*	-.036	-.108
	Sig (2-tailed)	.538	.107	-	<.001	.724	.288
	N	99	99	99	95	99	99
Fathers' Relational Satisfaction	Correlation	-.005	-.365*	.619*	1	-.113	-.247*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.963	<.001	<.001	-	.274	.015
	N	96	96	95		96	96
Sons' Verbal Aggression	Correlation	.092	.049	-.036	-.113	1	.218*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.359	.627	.724	.274	-	.028
	N	101	101	99	96		101
Fathers' Verbal Aggression	Correlation	.084	.104	-.108	-.247*	.218*	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.406	.301	.288	.015	.028	-
	N	101	101	99	96	101	