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MOTHER-IN-LAW ADJUSTMENT  
OF YOUNG MARRIEDS

by

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APPROVAL SHEET

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The purpose of the study was to investigate the adjustment of young married high school graduates to their mothers-in-law. Data were gathered from a schedule consisting of an information sheet and four tests, which were as follows: The Stryker Adjustment Checklist, The Stryker Dependency Checklist (one for father and one for mother), and The Locke-Wallace short form of the "Marital Adjustment Test." The sample consisted of 102 subjects, forty-five males and fifty-seven females. All were residents of Guilford County, North Carolina and were twenty-five years of age or younger. The respondents had been married three years or less and each had a mother-in-law living within fifty miles of their residence. Each respondent was a high school graduate, but had completed no more than two years of college or trade school, and were not four-year college bound.

Twenty null hypotheses were tested for interrelationships between the variables of age, length of marriage, mother-in-law adjustment, mother dependency, father dependency, and marital adjustment.

Results of the study yielded seven findings which were significant at the .05 level. These were: (1) a negative correlation between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of young married men

( $\underline{r} = -.39$ ); (2) a negative correlation between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of young married men ( $\underline{r} = -.33$ ); (3) a correlation between marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of young married men ( $\underline{r} = .48$ ); (4) a correlation between dependence on father scores and dependence on mother scores of young married men ( $\underline{r} = .46$ ); (5) a correlation between male marital adjustment and female marital adjustment ( $\underline{r} = .71$ ); (6) a negative correlation between marital adjustment and length of marriage for females ( $\underline{r} = -.28$ ); and (7) a correlation between female marital adjustment and male mother-in-law adjustment ( $\underline{r} = .36$ ).

Further research is needed in the area of dependency and age relationships as related to mother-in-law problems. In addition, it is believed that a longitudinal study might be helpful to attempt to determine a possible critical period when mother-in-law problems seem to be more vulnerable. Replicating the study in other sections of the country and on subjects of different educational levels, different ages, and from different ethnic groups might prove helpful in drawing more general conclusions relating to young married respondents' adjustment to their mothers-in-law.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

In-law relationships are a source of great difficulty in many twentieth century marriages. The cultural change from the patriarchal family system to a more democratic and more independent family system finds many young married couples in conflict with older generation in-laws. Under the patriarchal system young married couples moved into the homes of the husbands' parents and accepted roles subordinate to in-laws (Mace, 1958). If the tensions of everyday living produced many in-law problems in the extended family they were not well documented. In three volumes of A Social History of the American Family from Colonial Times to the Present, Calhoun (1927) made only one reference to in-laws, and that one was favorable.

In the present nuclear family, with its stress on independence and individualism, many young marrieds perceive in-laws as a great threat to their freedom (Mace, 1958). Although Mead (1955) stated that the American wife no longer has the problem of fitting into the relentless domination of a mother-in-law, Stroup (1966) emphasized that the cultural conflict between generations has continued to be an important source of tension. For one thing, the nuclear family is not always the isolated, independently functioning unit

it might appear to be. According to Sussman and Burchinal (1962), the family has reorganized itself in the urban, industrial society into a "modified extended family" with a great deal of interaction among relatives.

A characteristic of the contemporary extended family is a period of adjustment in which young married individuals are striving for independence, but are still somewhat dependent on parents and in-laws. In such a family, parents on either side may be unifying, disruptive, or indifferent (Burgess and Locke, 1953). In the attempt of young marrieds to achieve independence and at the same time be accepted by their parents and in-laws, a conflict may develop. When married couples live close enough, the wife and mother role of the young wife may be observed and constantly evaluated by her mother and mother-in-law (Bell and Buerkle, 1963).

The induction of a newly married into an established family is frequently a painful process, for one does not marry an individual alone, but marries into a family with values, mores, and folkways that may be different from those of his own family (Stroup, 1966). When a couple marries, families lose control over one member and gain a new member who is to some extent unfamiliar with the family's mores and customs (Waller, 1938). More recently Stroup (1966) has observed that attempts to change a spouse or remake him so he will be more acceptable to one's own side of the family may bring out feelings of hostility and rebellion against the new family members.

In a study conducted by Duvall (1954), approximately 75 per cent of the subjects reported some kind of in-law difficulty, with 50 per cent claiming short-lived problems to which they had learned to accommodate and 25 per cent admitting unsolved, long-lived in-law problems. However, 25 per cent of the subjects reported no such problems and the case histories of these subjects indicated that the rewards of satisfactory in-law adjustment contributed to their marital happiness.

Because of the small amount of research devoted to in-law relationships, family life specialists have been forced to rely heavily on only a few studies, most of which were done in the early 1950's. Only three studies (Duvall, 1954; Wallin, 1954; and Marcus, 1951) were found which were devoted exclusively to in-law problems.

Studies by Bell and Buerkle (1963), Blood and Wolfe (1960), Glick (1957), Johannis (1956), Komarovsky (1964), Landis (1946), Rockwood and Ford (1945), Schlien (1966), Stryker (1955), Sussman (1962), and Thomas (1953), report research findings quoted frequently regarding in-law relations, although these findings were by-products of greater research findings. Many family relations writers have included discussions of in-law relationships in their books, however, the fact that such meager data were available to them seemed to indicate a need for research in the area.

## The Problem

The purpose of the present study was to investigate young married individuals' adjustment to their mothers-in-law. Specifically, it was to determine the empirical relationships between: (1) adjustment to mothers-in-law, (2) dependence on their own parents, (3) their own marital adjustment, (4) their own age, (5) sex, and (6) the length of their marriage.

## Basic Assumptions

Basic assumptions made in relation to the study were (1) that mother-in-law adjustment is a problem for young married individuals, (2) that mother-in-law adjustment, dependence on parents, and marital adjustment can be measured, (3) that mother-in-law problems are more likely to occur in the early years of marriage, and (4) that in-law problems usually have a feminine factor, that is, a female is usually involved.

## Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the study are stated as follows:

### Hypothesis I

There is no association\* between dependence on mother scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

\* For simplicity the hypotheses have been written in overly abbreviated statements of the Null form. The phrase "no association" may be read to mean that there will be no difference between the obtained correlation coefficient and a coefficient of zero.

### Hypothesis II

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

### Hypothesis III

There is no association between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

### Hypothesis IV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

### Hypothesis V

There is no difference between the mean scores of mother-in-law adjustment of male subjects and female subjects.

### Hypothesis VI

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

### Hypothesis VII

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis VIII

There is no association between mother-in-law adjustment scores and the age of male subjects.

Hypothesis IX

There is no association between mother-in-law adjustment scores and the age of female subjects.

Hypothesis X

There is no association between the length of marriage of male subjects and mother-in-law adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XI

There is no association between the length of marriage of female subjects and mother-in-law adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XII

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and marital adjustment scores of male subjects.

Hypothesis XIII

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and marital adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis XIV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of male subjects.

Hypothesis XV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis XVI

There is no association between the age of female subjects and marital adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XVII

There is no association between the age of male subjects and marital adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XVIII

The mean marital adjustment scores of male subjects and female subjects do not differ.

Hypothesis XIX

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores of the male subjects and female subjects who constitute couples in the sample.

Hypothesis XX

There is no association between the mother-in-law adjustment scores of the male subjects and female subjects who constitute couples in the sample.

Limitations

The study was limited to a specific geographic area, in the requirements for the selection of the subjects, and a



specified period of time for interviewing the subjects. The sample consisted of a selected group of young married subjects, twenty-five years of age or younger and who were married three years or less. In addition to qualify for the study, the subjects had to reside in Guilford County, North Carolina, and to have a mother-in-law living within fifty miles of their residence and with whom they were acquainted.

Subjects were further limited to those who had graduated from high school but had no more than two years college or trade school education, and who stated that they were not planning to graduate from a four-year college.

All subjects were interviewed between July 3, and August 3, 1969.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of the literature revealed the difficulty of placing in-law studies in any one theoretical framework. Because the study of in-laws crosses many disciplinary lines, social and behavioral scientists of many differing orientations have contributed to the meager store of knowledge.

Schvaneveldt (1966) discussed the interactional framework of family study as a system for viewing relationships between family members. Proceeding from the definition of the family as a "unity of interacting personalities" (Burgess, 1926), the interactional framework views the family as dynamic. Role expectations and behaviors are constantly affected by contacts with other family members (Schvaneveldt, 1966). Although Schvaneveldt used the interactional approach in his study of the family, the psychoanalytic approach was also included. Bayer (1966) placed in-law difficulties within the psychoanalytic frame of reference, and the dependency factor was viewed as a psychological problem.

Duvall (1954) summarized scattered research findings into four points: (1) in-laws were sometimes a source of trouble; (2) American couples wanted to be independent; (3) relatives had a contribution to make to family living;

and (4) in-law relationships have been a neglected area in research. Lantz and Snyder (1966) identified characteristic patterned in-law relationships emerging as an outgrowth of (1) dependence needs between mother and child, (2) the quality of parental relations, and (3) emotional maturity of parents. Landis and Landis (1963) listed the establishment of in-law relationships as one of the growth tasks of a new marriage. Stroup (1966) found that the many and varied causes of in-law problems seemed to fit into two categories, socio-cultural and psychological. The in-law stereotypes and jokes reflected cultural conflict between generations while overattachment or emotional dependence between adult children and their parents reflected a lack of maturity.

Landis (1960) indicated that the in-law conflict in the modern family was unpredictable because it was a matter of interpersonal relationships rather than institutionalized arrangements. The nuclear family places a high value on independence and insists on separate dwellings, but has not yet worked out well-defined behavior patterns necessary for family members to function smoothly within the system. For example it has been noted that the English language does not provide sufficient kinship terminology for in-laws, and every individual is faced with the problem of working out a term of address for his mother-in-law which is satisfactory to all concerned (Schlien, 1966).

In In-Laws Pro and Con, Duvall (1954) reported a study in which 1,337 persons named the one in-law with whom there were strained relationships. No in-law difficulty was reported by 345, or 25.8 per cent of the respondents, and those individuals furnished many testimonies to support the theory that satisfactory in-law adjustments could serve a double purpose. An important source of friction in marriage and family relationships was eliminated and the lives of family members were enriched when new friendships and love relationships were established with in-laws.

When in-law problems did exist, the mother-in-law was listed most often as the cause of difficulty found most troublesome. Of the 74.2 per cent of individuals who named a most difficult in-law, 491, or 36.8 per cent named the mother-in-law. Sister-in-law was named most difficult by 272, or 20.3 per cent of the respondents, thus leaving only 17.1 per cent who named all other in-laws combined as most difficult. Brother-in-law was named by 72 persons, father-in-law by 67, daughter-in-law by 37, other female in-laws by 22, "all in-laws" by 20, son-in-law by 10, and other male in-laws by one person.

Duvall observed that of the 1,337 persons, 491 named their mother-in-law while only 37 named their daughter-in-law as most difficult. This led to conjecture that such factors as degree of maturity and secretly-harbored ill feelings entered into mother-in-law-daughter-in-law

relationships. Also, it was noted that the father-in-law was named in only 5 per cent of the cases, even less than the brother-in-law, who was named by 5.4 per cent of the sample.

In Duvall's study (1954), the complaints named against mothers-in-law were the same rank order as those made against sisters-in-law. For mothers-in-law the three most frequently named complaints were interference, possessiveness, and criticalness, whereas for sisters-in-law the complaints were interference, indifference, and thoughtlessness. Other complaints were immaturity, uncongeniality, partiality, intruding, self-righteousness, talkativeness, misrepresentation, rivalrousness, incompetency, and unconventionality (Duvall, 1954).

Feelings about mothers-in-law were expressed in eight predominant themes. Mothers-in-law talked too much, knew all the answers--the wrong ones, were meddlesome trouble makers, were ego-deflating, were mean, were loathsome objects of aggression, came too often and stayed too long, and were to be avoided (Duvall, 1954).

Throughout her book, Duvall stressed that in-law relationships could be constructive and that the rewards inherent in pleasant in-law relationships were well worth the effort necessary to achieve them. Duvall observed that the best mothers-in-law were those mothers who used a developmental approach to child rearing and attempted to

develop individuals who would be autonomous rather than dependent adults.

Marcus (1951) studied seventy-nine marriages and found nine factors significantly related to good in-law adjustment for both husbands and wives. These factors were: (1) approval of the couple's marriage by parents; (2) meeting the prospective partner's family before marriage; (3) friendliness of parental families toward each other when they met; (4) a separate household for each couple and their children, free from the presence of other relatives; (5) happy marriage of both sets of parents of the couple; (6) marriage between persons of the same religions; (7) wife's formal education for marriage; (8) happy relationships between parents and grandchildren; and (9) similarity in the pattern of social activity.

Komarovsky (1950) investigated sex roles as related to the adjustment of husbands and wives in urban American middle-class marriages. Komarovsky developed two hypotheses concerning dependence upon the family of orientation and its effect on the family of procreation. The first hypothesis was that a girl's family experience offered her a more sheltered life than a boy's, with the result that she was more dependent on her parental family than a boy. Komarovsky explored the first hypothesis and inferred that parent-in-law problems more frequently involved the wife's than the husband's parents.

Wallin (1954) tested Komarovsky's alternate hypothesis that the female's assumed greater dependence upon her family of orientation would not harm her marriage, but would lead her to accept the wife-role in the modern family with its many patriarchal features. Findings from Wallin's study of 604 couples were compatible with this assumption.

Bell and Buerkle (1963), in a study of mothers and mothers-in-law as role models among Jewish and Protestant women, found that Jewish wives tended to be closely identified with their mothers. However, there was significant difference between relationships with their mothers and their mothers-in-law. By contrast, Protestant wives were less close to their own mothers, but indicated very little difference between their relationships with their mothers and mothers-in-law.

Stryker (1955) found that the more dependent a woman was on her mother, the more trouble her husband had adjusting to his mother-in-law; but the more dependent a wife was on her father, the more likely her husband would achieve a satisfactory relationship with his father-in-law. Bayer (1966) observed that husband-wife relationships were viewed from the psychoanalytic point of view as a function of love or hate transferred from parent to spouse, a result of children unconsciously identifying with the parent of the opposite sex. In-law difficulties, then, may have arisen because original, unresolved, infantile, parental

attachments were transferred into marriage relationships. Dependency on parents prevented healthy interaction with the spouse, and hostility or affection could be transferred into in-law relationships.

Komarovsky (1956) hypothesized that difficulties with in-laws were likely to arise when a spouse was very dependent upon his or her own parents. In a later study (1963), Komarovsky found evidence that in working-class families in which wives were high school graduates, one-third of the wives reported unsatisfactory in-law relationships, while their husbands reported relatively satisfactory in-law relationships. However, among those who were not high school graduates, 33 per cent of the men and 32 per cent of the women reported in-law relations strained. Four major factors were found to correlate with in-law difficulty: (1) wife having more education than the husband; (2) antagonisms of the wife to her mother; (3) wife's emotional dependence on her mother; and (4) economic and social interdependence, including joint households. Komarovsky found a comparatively excessive amount of in-law trouble among the subjects with a lower educational level, identified as lesser educated people. Special situational factors, most often of an economic nature, frequently required that men be dependent on in-laws with no way to escape involvement in the situations.



The subject of age at the time of marriage as related to marital adjustment has been studied by sociologists. This writer found no studies that favored early age marriages. In several studies, however, researchers inferred that the older the individuals are at time of marriage, the better their chances for marital success (Udry, 1966; Johannis, 1956; Landis, 1946; Leslie, 1967; and Monsham, 1953).

In summary, several writers have commented on problems often inherent in in-law relationships. The comments reflected differing theoretical points of view. There was a consensus that the mother-in-law was most often the source of difficulty. Other problems studied have been related to the desire of young people to be independent, the emotional dependence on parents, the specific areas of in-law difficulty, the factors associated with successful in-law relations, which mother-in-law was the source of more difficulty, and the ages of the couple.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

In the present study, data gathered from test scores were analyzed and intercorrelations of several variables were computed. A sample of 102 individuals was obtained and all subjects who met the requirements for eligibility were used. The subjects completed an information sheet (see Appendix A) and four tests (see Appendixes B, C, D, and E) and these data were carefully analyzed.

#### Selection of Variables

Certain paragraphs from Chapter II are abstracted below, in order to indicate the relationships between existing knowledge and the reason for selecting the specific variables for this study. Prior research has isolated certain factors which provided a point of departure for the study.

#### Mother-In-Law Adjustment

There was consensus among family sociologists that the in-law most often named as causing trouble was the mother-in-law (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Paul Landis, 1960; Mace, 1958; Judson Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966; Sussman, 1968; Duvall, 1954; Glick, 1957; Komarovsky, 1964). Therefore, the present study was confined to mother-in-law adjustment rather than to in-law adjustments.

### Length of Marriage

A few research studies have indicated that the crucial period for in-law problems is the very early years of marriage, especially the first year (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Johannis, 1956; Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966; Stroup, 1966; Thomas, 1953). Therefore, the following research study was confined to the first three years of marriage.

### Dependence on Parents

The reason for including dependence on parents was the frequency with which it was mentioned in the literature as preventing young marrieds from relating satisfactorily to in-laws, as well as to each other (Bell and Buerkle, 1963; Komarovsky, 1956; Paul Landis, 1960; Lantz and Snyder, 1966; Stroup, 1966; Stryker, 1955; Wallin, 1954).

### Sex of the Subjects

There was some disagreement in the literature as to which mother-in-law caused more problems. Examples of these are Komarovsky's (1956, 1964) studies which concluded that the wife's mother was the greatest source of trouble and Wallin's (1954) study which found that the mother-daughter-in-law relationship to be the most difficult of the in-law relationships. The portion of the present study which investigated sex and the mother-in-law adjustment was intended to further explore the possibility that mother-in-law adjustment is more difficult for one sex than for the other.

### Marital Adjustment

There was some evidence in the literature that satisfactory in-law adjustment was related to satisfactory marital adjustment (Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966). This study investigated the relationship between marital adjustment of a couple and their mother-in-law adjustment.

### Subjects

Very young age at marriage correlated highly with marital discord and dissolution in previous studies. More than a dozen important studies showed that marital adjustment scores were lower when the man is under twenty and the woman is under eighteen (Udry, 1966). The study, therefore, was designed to provide additional information concerning relationships between the young age of the subjects and the mother-in-law adjustment, and the young age of the subjects and the marital adjustment.

The sample consisted of forty-five men and fifty-seven women who met the following criteria:

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Age                | 25 years old or younger  |
| 2. Marital Status     | Married  |
| 3. Length of Marriage | Three years or less  |
| 4. Residence          | Lived in Guilford County,<br>North Carolina                        |
| 5. Mother-in-law      | Living   |
| 6. Proximity          | Living within 50 miles of<br>the residence of the<br>mother-in-law |

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 7. Interaction        | Were acquainted with the mother-in-law  |
| 8. Education, minimum | High school graduate  |
| 9. Education, maximum | Not more than two years college or trade school, with no present plans for entering a four-year college program |

Subjects were obtained from five sources:

1. Guilford County Technical Institute	12
2. Guilford College list of persons who had passed the high school equivalency examination in 1969	25
3. Students of UNC-G Teen-age project	12
4. Croft Business College	24
5. Miscellaneous contacts through friends and colleagues	29
Total	102

Each subject was asked to name other people who might be eligible for the study, and each suggestion was investigated. The most productive sources of new names were the subjects who were permanent residents of the county.

#### Procedure

The data were collected between July 3, and August 3, 1969. Prospective subjects were contacted by phone whenever possible and appointments were made for interviews in their homes. The interview schedule, consisting of an information sheet and four tests could be self-administered in most cases. The interviewer assured each subject complete

anonymity in treatment of the completed tests, and stressed the importance of privacy while taking the tests. This seemed necessary especially when only one member of a couple could be included in the study. The interviewer was present while the tests were completed to prevent couples from questioning each other and to make any necessary explanations.

#### Test Material

Tests were required to obtain desired information related to four variables: (1) mother-in-law adjustment; (2) dependence on mother; (3) dependence on father; and (4) marital adjustment. Age, sex, and length of marriage were determined from responses to questions on the information sheet.

To determine mother-in-law adjustment, each subject took the Stryker Adjustment Checklist test. The test consisted of forty items subsumable under four categories: affection, intimacy, tension, and sympathy. The respondent had the opportunity either to accept or to reject statements which applied to his or her relationship with a mother-in-law. Twenty of the statements referred to rejection and were treated as negative for scoring purposes; twenty referred to acceptance and were treated as positive for scoring purposes. Scoring consisted of adding the sum of the positive items marked "true" to the sum of the negative items marked "false," thus giving a fixed possible score

range of 0 (low adjustment) to 40 (high adjustment). The formula for scoring was  $2 \text{ pos}(T) + 2 \text{ neg}(F)$ .

Stryker (1955) determined reliability of the adjustment checklist by two methods. An odd-even reliability coefficient of correlation was computed for responses of sixty-eight subjects with reference to their mothers-in-law. The resulting  $r$  was .98. In another test for reliability two methods of response were used by the same subjects, a simple checking and true-false. The test produced an  $r$  of .87.

Stryker also established test validity. As a test of validity, the subjects were asked to indicate how well they "got along" with each of their parents. (Subjects were asked to rate their relationship with their parents on a four-point continuum: very well, fairly well, not too well, and very badly.) Subjects were dichotomized into those who had checked "very well" and those who had checked any other answer. Subjects were then divided into those with positive scores on the checklist and those with negative scores. Chi-square tables were constructed to test the relationships between self-ratings and checklist scores. The ratings and the checklist scores were related  $P < .001$  for both male and female responses (Stryker, 1955).

A further indication that the checklist was a valid instrument was provided by checking results of the test with assumptions that adjustment to one's own parents was better

than adjustment to in-laws, and that a subject's adjustment to his father-in-law was better than was his adjustment to his mother-in-law. The mean adjustment scores for both men and women followed the expected direction (Stryker, 1955).

In a telephone conversation, Stryker confirmed that further study has provided proof of the validity of the instruments and that the instruments have repeatedly produced consistent results.

Respondents also took the Stryker Dependency Checklist for each living parent. The test consisted of ten items dealing with subordination of respondent to parent and superordination of respondent over parent. In the present study tests were scored by adding the sum of the subordination items marked "true" to the sum of the superordination items marked "false," giving a fixed possible score range of 0 (low dependence) to 10 (high dependence). The formula was  $\sum \text{sub}(T) + \sum \text{sur}(F)$ .

Since the dependency checklist consisted of only ten items dealing with two different directions, it was considered to have an insufficient number of items for the split-half test. It was included, however, in the adjustment checklist test using two methods of scoring. The test produced an  $r$  of .87 (Stryker, 1955).

Indication that the dependency checklist was a valid instrument was based on the fact that scores of subjects followed the expected directions. These directions were



dictated by the assumptions that females were more dependent upon their parents than males, that young married men and women were less dependent on their in-laws than on their own parents, and that women were more dependent on their own parents than were men. These findings were consistent with other research by Stryker (1955).

Marital adjustment was measured through administration of the Locke-Wallace short form of the "Marital Adjustment Test." Each answer in the 15-item test had an assigned score, giving it a fixed possible score range of 2 (low adjustment) to 158 (high adjustment). Points for all answers were added for a total test score (Wallace, 1959).

A split-half reliability coefficient of correlation was computed for the instrument, using 236 subjects. Corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula,  $r$  was .90. Further evidence of reliability of the test was the fact that it produced consistent results in repeated use (Wallace, 1959).

To test validity of the instrument, forty-eight subjects known to be maladjusted in marriage and forty-eight subjects known to be well-adjusted in marriage were tested and their scores compared. The mean adjustment score for the well-adjusted group was 135.9, and for the maladjusted group, 71.7 (Wallace, 1959).

### Statistical Analyses

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed for pairs of variables where hypotheses were concerned with association. In cases where the hypotheses implied a difference between mean scores of variables for two groups, such as males and females, t-tests were used. Hypotheses were rejected when the probability level obtained was at, or below, .05.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

Data were gathered from the four tests and the information sheet. The results were analyzed and reported in tabular form. All of the significant findings were included in three correlation tables: (1) a table of the six variables for the 45 male subjects (see Table 1); (2) a table of the six variables for the 57 female subjects (see Table 2), and a table of the four variables, two for males and two for females, of the 39 couples of the study (see Table 3).

Mean scores of mother-in-law adjustment for males and females (see Table 4), and mean scores of marital adjustment for males and females (see Table 5) were tested for difference. The two t-tests yielded non-significant results.

Raw score data for males were reported and presented in tabular form in Appendix F, including the identification number and the six variables of age, number of months married, mother-in-law adjustment test score, dependence on mother test score, dependence on father test score, and marital adjustment test score. Identification numbers of the males whose wives participated in the study were underlined for identification. Raw score data for the 57 female subjects reporting the same information as described above for males were placed in the appendix (see Appendix G).

Table 1  
Correlations Between Six Variables for Males

N = 45

1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	Length of Marriage in Months	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependency	Father Dependency	Marital Adjustment
1.					
2.	0.25				
3.	0.27	0.04			
4.	-0.21	0.14	-0.07		
5.	-0.14	0.12	-0.39*	0.46*	
6.	-0.02	-0.13	0.48*	-0.22	-0.33*

\* .05 level of sig.

Table 2

## Correlations Between Six Variables for Females

N = 57

1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	Length of Marriage in Months	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependency	Father Dependency	Marital Adjustment
1.					
2.	0.39				
3.	0.21	-0.01			
4.	0.06	0.21	0.11		
5.	-0.04	0.16	0.02	0.14	
6.	-0.07	-0.28*	0.15	0.04	0.15

\* .05 level of sig.

Table 3

Correlations Between Two Variables  
for Males and Females of Couples

N = 39 Males

N = 39 Females

---

	1 Males Mother-in-law Adjustment	2 Males Marital Adjustment	3 Females Mother-in-law Adjustment	4 Female Marital Adjustment
1.				
2.	0.46*			
3.	0.21	0.22		
4.	0.36*	0.71*	0.21	

---

\* .05 level of sig.

Table 4

t-Test of Mean Scores of Mother-in-Law  
Adjustment for Males and Females

N = 45 Males

N = 57 Females

DF	Mean Score for Males	Standard Deviation for Males	Mean Score for Females	Standard Deviation for Females	Critical Ratio
100	21.49	9.61	20.88	10.09	.98

Table 5

t-Test of Mean Scores of Marital Adjustment  
for Males and Females

N = 45 Males

N = 57 Females

DF	Mean Score for Males	Standard Deviation for Males	Mean Score for Females	Standard Deviation for Females	Critical Ratio
100	124.00	21.94	122.26	19.80	1.90

Means and standard deviations of the data are also in tables in the appendixes. These include: (1) a table of means and standard deviations for six variables for male subjects (see Appendix H); (2) a table of means and standard deviations for six variables for female subjects (see Appendix I); and (3) a table of means and standard deviations for two variables for male subjects and female subjects of couples (see Appendix J).

Four hypotheses yielded significant results; that is, the hypotheses were rejected at probability level less than .05. The four hypotheses are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Hypothesis III predicted no association between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores for male subjects. Analysis yielded a negative correlation ( $\underline{r} = -.39$ ,  $P < .01$ , Table 1).

Hypothesis VI predicted no association between marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects. Analysis yielded a positive correlation ( $\underline{r} = .48$ ,  $P < .01$ , Table 1).

Hypothesis XIV predicted no association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of male subjects. Analysis yielded a negative correlation ( $\underline{r} = -.33$ ,  $P < .02$ , Table 1).

Hypothesis XIX predicted no association between marital adjustment scores of the male subjects and female



subjects who constituted couples in the sample. Analysis yielded a positive correlation ( $\underline{r} = .71, P < .001$ , Table 3).

Sixteen hypotheses were non-significant, that is, they were not rejected below the .05 level. The hypotheses were as follows: I, II, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, and XX. The correlations for each of the sixteen hypotheses are presented in the data shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 on Pages 27, 28, and 29.

Three intercorrelations on the matrices (see Tables 1, 2, and 3) were significant at either the .01 or .05 level.

1. There was an association between dependence on father scores and dependence on mother scores of male subjects. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient of  $+ .46$  was significant ( $P < .01$ ).

2. There was a negative correlation between marital adjustment scores and length of marriage for female subjects. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient of  $- .28$  was significant ( $P < .05$ ).

3. There was an association between female marital adjustment and male mother-in-law adjustment for the couples in the study. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient of  $.36$  was significant ( $P < .05$ ).

It should be noted that the findings in this study, though statistically significant, were not striking in terms of their predictive power. If one squared the obtained

correlation coefficients in order to assess the amounts of variance predictable from one variable to another, the range of the resulting figures would not be large (this would range from about 9% to about 25%). The one exception was the correlation between the couple's marital adjustment scores. In this case the correlation of .71 would imply about 49 per cent of variance being predictable.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Six variables were examined in this study. They were age, length of marriage, mother-in-law adjustment, mother dependency, father dependency, and marital adjustment.

Significant findings are presented in three correlation tables: (1) a correlation table for the six variables for all male subjects; (2) a correlation table for the six variables for all female subjects; and (3) a correlation table for tests conducted on the thirty-nine couples in the study with the four variables of male marital adjustment, male mother-in-law adjustment, female marital adjustment and female mother-in-law adjustment.

Correlation matrices of the six variables in the study and the four variables for couples produced seven significant correlations, four for males, one for females, and two for couples. These were: (1) for males, a negative correlation between father dependency and marital adjustment; (2) for males, a negative correlation between father dependency and mother-in-law adjustment; (3) for males, a positive correlation between father dependency and mother dependency; and (4) for males, a positive correlation between marital adjustment and mother-in-law adjustment; (5) for females, a negative correlation between marital adjustment and length

of marriage; (6) for couples, a high positive correlation between the marital adjustment scores of males and those of females; and (7) for couples, a positive correlation between female marital adjustment and male mother-in-law adjustment.

#### Male Father Dependency and Marital Adjustment

One finding which differed from those indicated by the previous studies included in the review of literature pertained to the negative correlations between male father dependency and adjustments to the marital situations. Strangely enough, two of the findings were concerned with the apparent negative effects of father dependency. The first of these dealt with marital adjustment. Results of this study suggested that father-dependent young men were even less capable of making satisfactory adjustments in marriage than those who are mother dependent ( $r = .33$ ,  $P < .02$ ).

For the past thirty years family relations writers and researchers appear to have been so concerned with the concept of "momism" (Wylie, 1955) or the "apron strings" syndrome (Stecker, 1951) that they may have neglected complete exploration of the possibility that father dependency is important and may be related to marital adjustment.

A man's failure to achieve psychological independence, if he does marry, may complicate his relationship with his wife. There is some question as to whether role expectations for adult females demand as much independence as

role expectations for adult males. Winch stated in 1963 that while dependency may be sanctioned for women, it is not considered a desirable characteristic for men.

#### Male Father Dependency and Mother-in-law Adjustment

There was a significant negative correlation between father dependency and mother-in-law adjustment for young married men ( $r = -.39, P < .01$ ). The study suggested that young men who were dependent on their fathers had difficulty adjusting to their mothers-in-law. This was consistent with a generalization made by Komarovsky (1956) indicating that difficulties with in-laws were more likely to arise when a spouse was very dependent upon his or her parents.

Lantz and Snyder (1961) stated that the precarious balance between emotional dependence and independence can be uncomfortable for parents and adult children to the point that it is frequently masked. This masking may cause individuals to act on the basis of one motivation and repress the other. For example, a young man may temporarily repress his need to be independent in order to ask for financial assistance, then compensate for the compromise by reacting with resentment to parental advice.

It seemed reasonable to speculate that some of the characteristics found in dependent personalities may cause difficulties in forming the new relationships required in

marriages. The married male in this society needs a well-developed sense of responsibility if he is to fulfill his role successfully. Parental dependency might inhibit his freedom to assume responsibility and to reach out to form new kin relationships.

#### Male Father Dependency and Male Mother Dependency

The high positive correlation for males between mother dependency and father dependency ( $r = .46$ ,  $P < .01$ ) was not expected by this investigator. This finding indicated that young men who were dependent on their mothers were also dependent on their fathers.

Stroup's (1966) discussion of parental overattachment and mutual dependency of parents and their adult children was typical of the many references found in the literature concerning the nature and effects of mother dependency. Stroup used terms such as "apron strings" and "runs home to mother" and described the middle class mother as one who faces a bleak, uninteresting, unneeded existence. Stroup discussed the mother who receives no emotional support from her husband and is not ready to accept the married status of her child.

The literature made little specific mention of the father in connection with dependency or overattachment. At best the father was included by implication when the term

parental attachment was used. It could be that those dependencies are related to the extended period of economic dependence experienced by men who stay in school longer and enter the labor market later, but have not postponed marriage. Many ambivalent feelings could result from family relationships in which independence is declared as a value of high priority, but actually dependence exists.

#### Male Marital Adjustment and Male

#### Mother-in-law Adjustment

Data reported in Chapter IV indicated a high positive correlation for males between marital adjustment and mother-in-law adjustment ( $r = .48$ ,  $P < .01$ ). This finding suggested that young men who can form satisfactory relationships with their wives can also form satisfactory relationships with their mothers-in-law. Other studies have reported similar findings (Landis and Landis, 1963; Duvall, 1954; Marcus, 1951).

Landis and Landis (1963) stated that the type of person who is able to create and maintain pleasant and peaceful relationships with in-laws seems to have the ability to accomplish the many other growth tasks necessary for achieving happiness in marriage. It would appear that adjustive ability is a characteristic found in mentally healthy, emotionally emancipated individuals and that this adjustive ability is carried over from one situation to another.

## Female Marital Adjustment and Length of Marriage

The significant finding concerning females suggested that the longer they are married the less well adjusted young married women rate themselves, at least for the first three years of marriage ( $\underline{r} = -.28, P < .05$ ).

For many of these marriages the honeymoon period may be ending and more responsible and mature marital adjustments have not yet been made. Problems, such as children, inadequate living quarters, numerous installment payments, and limited income are common in this stage of the family life cycle.

It is interesting to note that data from the study yielded a very low negative correlation between marital adjustment and length of marriage for young married men. The difference between the mean scores of the men and women is worthy of comment, and there are several possible factors which might explain the difference. One possibility is that males and females may have different expectations from marriage. Young women may view the romantic aspects of marriage as more important, and be more disappointed when the honeymoon period comes to an end. A second possibility is that women frequently feel trapped into the mother-housewife role, while men spend much of their time away from home doing "more interesting things." A third possibility is that men, knowing they are wage-earners, have been more



realistic in their appraisal of the economic aspects of marriage and are not as disappointed as women when faced with money shortages.

#### Female Marital Adjustment and Male Mother-in-law Adjustment

From the significant positive correlation between female marital adjustment and male mother-in-law adjustment for the couples in the study ( $\underline{r} = .36, P < .05$ ), it could be conjectured that when young married women are happy in the marital situation, their husbands tend to make satisfactory adjustments to their mothers-in-law.

The relationships between marital happiness and satisfactory mother-in-law adjustments is well documented (Mace, 1958; Mead, 1955; Burgess and Locke, 1953; Duvall, 1954; Landis and Landis, 1953). For this study the correlation between male marital adjustment and female mother-in-law adjustment was low ( $\underline{r} = .22, P < .05$ ).

Possibly young men react to the total marital situation by perceiving all relationships as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory while women are more capable of separating the marriage itself from other relationships.

#### Male Marital Adjustment and Female Marital Adjustment

There was a very high positive correlation between male marital adjustment and female marital adjustment for the couples in the study ( $\underline{r} = .71, P < .001$ ).

The mean score of 122.31 (S.D. = 21.95) for male marital adjustment and the mean score of 124.72 (S.D. = 16.64) for female marital adjustment are presented in the table shown in Appendix J. These scores were similar to the Locke-Wallace test with the score range of 2 - 158.

Marital adjustment has been defined as accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time (Locke and Wallace, 1959). It is not always accorded the same meaning as marital happiness or marital satisfaction, but is determined by consensus of spouses on values and on the content of marital roles (Burgess and Locke, 1953).

Results of this study would indicate that young married couples were in high accord in their perceptions of their own marital adjustments.

#### Additional Findings Which May

#### Warrant Further Study

In addition to the seven significant findings there were six findings in the study which did not reach the .05 level of significance but would have been rejected at the .10 level of significance. These were: (1) a positive correlation for males between age and mother-in-law adjustment; (2) a positive correlation for females between age and mother-in-law adjustment; (3) a positive correlation for females between length of marriage and mother dependency; (4) a negative correlation for males between mother

dependency and marital adjustment; (5) an association between mother-in-law adjustment scores of males and females who constituted couples in the study; and (6) a similarity between mean marital adjustment scores of males and females. These relationships might be worthy of further research investigation.

Two unexpected observations were derived from the data concerning mother dependency on males as related to marital adjustments: (1) that the correlation was not higher and (2) that male father dependency seems to be more strongly related to marital adjustment than does male mother dependency.

There is a generally accepted belief that mother dependency has a negative effect on a man's adjustments in marriage relations. The development of some mutual mother-child dependency is seen as inevitable, and the necessity for adult children to achieve the emancipation necessary for emotional independence is frequently hindered by the mother's own immaturity and unmet emotional needs. If she has not achieved self-fulfillment and developed interests of her own, she may be reluctant to let a son go, and view his wife as a rival.

Young marrieds put a high value on independence and when a wife perceives her mother-in-law as a barrier to her husband's independence, she might also view her as a threat to the marriage.

Mother-in-law Adjustment Scores of  
Males and Females of Couples

Separate tests conducted on the thirty-nine couples in the study indicated a trend for the mother-in-law adjustment scores of males and females to be similar ( $r = .21$ ,  $P < .10$ ). The study indicated a trend for young married men and young married women to achieve similar levels of adjustment to their mothers-in-law.

This finding was somewhat unexpected. One assumption on which the study was based was that there is a feminine factor in mother-in-law problems, meaning that they usually involve the women of the family. Results of the present study, however, indicated that females scored slightly higher on the mother-in-law adjustment test than did their husbands. The mean score for male mother-in-law adjustment was 19.79 (S.D. = 9.61) while the mean score for female mother-in-law adjustment was 20.85 (S.D. = 10.49).

Marital Adjustment Scores of  
Males and Females

The  $t$ -test computed for mean marital adjustment scores for male and female subjects yielded a critical ratio of 1.90 ( $P < .10$ ). Although this finding did not reach significance, it did indicate an interesting trend.

The definition of marital adjustment was discussed on page 38. From that definition it appeared that male and

female subjects in this study had similar perceptions of their own marital adjustments.

#### Implications for Further Research

The study indicated that further research would be revealing in the areas of father dependency, mother dependency, overall adjustment ability, and maturity. It would also be valuable to conduct a longitudinal study and retest the subjects at a later date to determine whether or not and at what time changes take place in such dependent variables as parental dependency, marital adjustment, and mother-in-law adjustment. Researchers are in agreement that in-law problems occur or begin during the early years of marriage. If the onset of difficulties could be further pinpointed it would be of great value to family life educators and counselors.

The factor of emotional maturity has been suggested as a possible explanation for significant findings in the study. Maturity is generally accepted as a necessary ingredient in achieving satisfactory marital adjustments and it would be of value to test the subjects of this study to determine whether or not maturity is related to dependence and adjustment factors in family relations.

In view of the findings regarding father dependency as measured in this study, it would appear that additional testing with other instruments to measure dependency would

be desirable. If similar results were produced in further testing with different instruments, the entire area of father dependency could assume additional importance in the field of family relations.

Since the study was limited to high school graduates who were not four-year college bound, it would be revealing to conduct a similar study using subjects from other educational levels.

Replication of the present study in other counties in North Carolina or in comparable counties in the other 49 states would be helpful in establishing reliability for any or all of these findings.

## CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY

The in-law problem was described as extensive. Previous studies have indicated that approximately 75 per cent of married people experience in-law difficulties at some time (Duvall, 1954). It is well documented that those people who never have in-law difficulties or who solve these difficulties early in marriage are more free to make the necessary adjustment to their marriage partners and they frequently form deep and loving relationships with in-laws (Duvall, 1954; Landis and Landis, 1953; Komarovsky, 1964).

In spite of the extensive and pervasive nature of in-law problems very little research has been done in this area. Only three studies were found which had been devoted exclusively to in-law problems and those studies were done more than fifteen years ago (Duvall, 1954; Marcus, 1951; Wallin, 1954). Most family relations authors and teachers attempt to deal with in-law problems, but they are forced to glean fragments of research from these three studies and from incidental findings regarding in-laws found in other research projects. Because researchers must rely on a few empirical studies and because questions on in-law relationships still persist, there seemed to be a real need for research in the area.

The purpose of the study was to investigate relationships between the adjustments of young married individuals to their mothers-in-law, their dependence on their own parents, marital adjustment, age, sex, and length of marriage.

Based on available research the six variables selected to study were:

1. Mother-in-law adjustment. Existing research studies showed that most in-law difficulties involve a mother-in-law (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Paul Landis, 1960; Mace, 1968; Judson Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966; Sussman, 1958; Duvall, 1954; Glick, 1957; Komarovsky, 1964).

2. Dependence on parents. Many difficulties in making adjustments to the marriage situation are recognized as stemming from residual dependencies on parents, particularly the mother (Bell and Buerkle, 1963; Komarovsky, 1956; Paul Landis, 1960; Lantz and Snyder, 1966; Stroup, 1966; Stryker, 1955; Wallin, 1954).

3. Marital adjustment. Previous research has shown that good in-law relationships are considered important to marital adjustment (Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966).

4. Length of marriage. Existing research studies showed that most of the in-law problems occur or begin in the very early years of marriage (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Johannis, 1956; Landis, 1946; Schlien, 1966; Thomas, 1953). One of the purposes of this study was to attempt to isolate



within the first three years of marriage, a critical period for the onset of in-law difficulties.

5. Age. Existing research studies showed that age is a factor in adjustments to the marriage situation (see Udry, 1966).

6. Sex. Previous research studies have shown that there are differences in the way males and females adjust to in-laws (Komarovsky, 1964; Wallin, 1954).

The study was based on the assumptions that (1) mother-in-law adjustment is a problem for young married individuals; (2) mother-in-law adjustment, dependence on parents, and marital adjustment can be measured; (3) mother-in-law problems are more likely to occur in the early years of marriage; and (4) in-law problems usually have a feminine factor (a female is usually involved).

The subject was delimited to include married men and married women, twenty-five years of age or younger, who (1) were married not less than one month and not more than three years; (2) were acquainted with a mother-in-law who lived within fifty miles of their residence; (3) were residents of Guilford County, North Carolina; (4) were high school graduates with not more than two years of college or trade school; and (5) were not four-year college bound.

## Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the study were stated as follows:

### Hypothesis I

There is no association\* between dependence on mother scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

### Hypothesis II

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

### Hypothesis III

There is no association between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

### Hypothesis IV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

### Hypothesis V

There is no difference between the mean scores of mother-in-law adjustment of male subjects and female subjects.

\*For simplicity the hypotheses have been written in overly abbreviated statements of the Null form. The phrase "no association" may be read to mean that there will be no difference between the obtained correlation coefficient and a coefficient of zero.

Hypothesis VI

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of male subjects.

Hypothesis VII

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis VIII

There is no association between mother-in-law adjustment scores and the age of male subjects.

Hypothesis IX

There is no association between mother-in-law adjustment scores and the age of female subjects.

Hypothesis X

There is no association between the length of marriage of male subjects and mother-in-law adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XI

There is no association between the length of marriage of female subjects and mother-in-law adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XII

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and marital adjustment scores of male subjects.

Hypothesis XIII

There is no association between dependence on mother scores and marital adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis XIV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of male subjects.

Hypothesis XV

There is no association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores of female subjects.

Hypothesis XVI

There is no association between the age of female subjects and marital adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XVII

There is no association between the age of male subjects and marital adjustment scores.

Hypothesis XVIII

The mean marital adjustment scores of male subjects and female subjects do not differ.

Hypothesis XIX

There is no association between the marital adjustment scores of the male subjects and female subjects who constitute couples in the sample.

### Hypothesis XX

There is no association between the mother-in-law adjustment scores of the male subjects and female subjects who constitute couples in the sample.

To measure mother-in-law adjustment the Stryker Adjustment Checklist was used. The checklist consisted of forty items, twenty of which referred to rejection and twenty to acceptance. The score range was 0 - 40.

To measure dependence on parents the Stryker Dependency Checklist was used. The checklist consisted of ten items, five of which referred to subordination and five to superordination. The score range was 0 to 10. The checklist used to measure mother dependency was identical to the one used to measure dependence on father.

To measure marital adjustment the Locke-Wallace short form of "The Marital Adjustment Test" was used. The test consisted of fifteen items which referred to happiness and compatibility. The score range was 2 - 158.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed for pairs of variables where hypotheses were concerned with association. In cases where the hypotheses implied a difference between mean scores of variables for two groups, such as males and females, t-tests were used.

Tests of the twenty hypotheses yielded four findings significant at the .05 level of confidence: (1) a negative association between dependence on father scores and

mother-in-law adjustment scores for males; (2) a positive association between marital adjustment scores and mother-in-law adjustment scores for males; (3) a negative association between dependence on father scores and marital adjustment scores for males; and (4) a positive association between the marital adjustment scores of males and females of couples.

In addition to the results found to be significant from testing hypotheses, three other significant correlations were generated from the correlation matrices: (1) a positive association between dependence on father scores and dependence on mother scores for males; (2) a negative correlation between marital adjustment scores and length of marriage for females; and (3) a positive association between female marital adjustment and male mother-in-law adjustment for couples.

Within the limitations of this study the following conclusions were formulated:

1. Men who are dependent on their fathers are not well adjusted to their mothers-in-law.

2. Men who are not well adjusted in marriage are not well adjusted to their mothers-in-law.

3. Men who are dependent on their fathers are not well adjusted in marriage.

4. Males and females as married couples make similar marital adjustments.

5. Males who are dependent on their mothers are also dependent on their fathers.

6. During the first three years, the longer women are married the less well adjusted they are in marriage.

7. When women are well adjusted in marriage their husbands are well adjusted to their mothers-in-law.

The present study indicates that further research is warranted to expand and verify the findings. The following recommendations are made for future study:

1. This study should be expanded into a longitudinal study. The subjects could be retested at future dates in an attempt to determine critical periods for mother-in-law adjustment problems.

2. Further study should be made of the maturity factor for young marrieds and the possible relationship of maturity to mother-in-law adjustment.

3. The study might be replicated using subjects of a different educational level in an effort to determine whether or not education is a factor in mother-in-law adjustment.

4. Additional research using different instruments to measure dependency would appear valuable to clarify the rather surprising findings concerning male father dependency.

5. The study could be replicated in a different section of the United States in an effort to determine whether or not the findings of this study are specific to Guilford County, North Carolina.

6. Non-significant relationships between three of the variables in the study warrant further investigation.

These variables are:

- a. Age and mother-in-law adjustment,
- b. Female mother dependency and length of marriage,
- c. Male mother dependency and marital adjustment.



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**APPENDIXES**

APPENDIX A  
INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX A  
INFORMATION SHEET

Mother-in-Law Adjustment of Young Marrieds

Please fill in the blanks

1. Your age at your last birthday \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of years and months married    Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Mos. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex - write M for male and F for female \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer "yes" or "no"

4. Is your mother living? \_\_\_\_\_  
If your mother is not living, please write your age at the time of her death \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is your father living? \_\_\_\_\_  
If your father is not living, please write your age at the time of his death \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you live in Guilford County, N. C.? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you have a living mother-in-law? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you acquainted with your mother-in-law? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you live within 50 miles of your mother-in-law? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did you graduate from high school? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you intend to graduate from a 4-year college? \_\_\_\_\_

If you would be willing to participate in a longitudinal study concerning in-law relationships, that is, if you are willing to fill out this questionnaire again in about three years, please fill in the following blanks:



## APPENDIX A (continued)

## INFORMATION SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Since young married couples move frequently, please give the name and address of a permanently settled person who would know how to reach you if you moved.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
STRYKER ADJUSTMENT CHECKLIST

## APPENDIX B

## STRYKER ADJUSTMENT CHECKLIST

Directions: Place a + (for True) in the space before those items which describe your relationship with your mother-in-law. Place an O (for False) before those items which do not describe that relationship. Please mark all items + or O.

1. \_\_\_ I love her very much
2. \_\_\_ I rarely call on her for help
3. \_\_\_ I find myself imitating her often
4. \_\_\_ She often nags me
5. \_\_\_ No love lost between us
6. \_\_\_ Confide in her often
7. \_\_\_ She does many things I would not do
8. \_\_\_ Never any tension between us
9. \_\_\_ Very fond of her
10. \_\_\_ Seems to be a wall between us
11. \_\_\_ I understand her moods
12. \_\_\_ She criticizes me when I don't deserve it
13. \_\_\_ Don't have the warm feeling for her that I do for others
14. \_\_\_ Can always turn to her when I have a problem
15. \_\_\_ Wouldn't care to be like her
16. \_\_\_ We rarely argue or fight
17. \_\_\_ Have strong feelings of affection for her
18. \_\_\_ We go our own ways
19. \_\_\_ Believe in her completely

## APPENDIX B (continued)

## STRYKER ADJUSTMENT CHECKLIST

20. \_\_\_ Sometimes I get angry with her
21. \_\_\_ Can't really say I'm overly fond of her
22. \_\_\_ Keep no secrets from her
23. \_\_\_ We don't think alike
24. \_\_\_ Never annoys me by what she says
25. \_\_\_ Being with her gives me a warm feeling
26. \_\_\_ Have grown away from her
27. \_\_\_ Would like to be more like her if I could
28. \_\_\_ Often upset after I'm with her
29. \_\_\_ Love is too strong a word for our relationship
30. \_\_\_ We're as close as any pair can be
31. \_\_\_ I often disapprove of what she does
32. \_\_\_ She never nags me
33. \_\_\_ Can't help feeling sentimental about her
34. \_\_\_ Can't always tell her what I think
35. \_\_\_ She serves as a model for me
36. \_\_\_ She's too curious about what I do
37. \_\_\_ Have little feeling for her, one way or the other
38. \_\_\_ Never have to worry about what I say to her
39. \_\_\_ We have little in common
40. \_\_\_ She rarely finds fault with what I do

APPENDIX C  
STRYKER DEPENDENCY CHECKLIST

## APPENDIX C

## STRYKER DEPENDENCY CHECKLIST

Directions: Place a + (for True) in the space before those items which describe your relationship with your mother. Place an O (for False) before those items which do not describe that relationship. Please mark all items + or O.

1. \_\_\_ I win our arguments most of the time
2. \_\_\_ I always do as she says
3. \_\_\_ She's pretty much of a follower, rather than a leader
4. \_\_\_ I rely on her a lot
5. \_\_\_ Asks my advice more than I ask hers
6. \_\_\_ I think of her as a leader
7. \_\_\_ If we differ, I can generally convince her that I'm right
8. \_\_\_ She makes the decisions in things we're both involved in
9. \_\_\_ She relies on me more than I do on her
10. \_\_\_ I find I often call on her to help me make my decisions

APPENDIX D  
STRYKER DEPENDENCY CHECKLIST

## APPENDIX D

## STRYKER DEPENDENCY CHECKLIST

Directions: Place a + (for True) in the space before those items which describe your relationship with your father. Place an 0 (for False) before those items which do not describe that relationship. Please mark all items + or 0.

1. \_\_\_ I win our arguments most of the time
2. \_\_\_ I always do as he says
3. \_\_\_ He's pretty much of a follower, rather than a leader
4. \_\_\_ I rely on him a lot
5. \_\_\_ Asks my advice more than I ask his
6. \_\_\_ I think of him as a leader
7. \_\_\_ If we differ, I can generally convince him that I'm  
right
8. \_\_\_ He makes the decisions in things we're both involved  
in
9. \_\_\_ He relies on me more than I do on him
10. \_\_\_ I find I often call on him to help me make my  
decisions



APPENDIX E  
MARITAL-ADJUSTMENT TEST

APPENDIX E

MARITAL-ADJUSTMENT TEST

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

. . . . .

Very Unhappy	Happy	Perfectly Happy
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State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
2. Handling family finances						
3. Matters of recreation						
4. Demonstrations of affection						
5. Friends						
6. Sex relations						
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct)						
8. Philosophy of life						
9. Ways of dealing with in-laws						

APPENDIX E (continued)

MARITAL-ADJUSTMENT TEST

10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in: Husband giving in , wife giving in , agreement by mutual give and take .
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? All of them , some of them , very few of them , none of them .
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer: to be "on the go"\_\_\_\_, to stay at home\_\_\_\_? Does your mate generally prefer: to be "on the go"\_\_\_\_, to stay at home\_\_\_\_?
13. Do you ever wish you had not married? Frequently , occasionally , rarely , never .
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would: marry the same person , marry a different person , not marry at all ?
15. Do you confide in your mate: almost never , rarely , in most things , in everything ?

APPENDIX F  
RAW SCORE DATA FOR MALES

APPENDIX F

Raw Score Data for Males

N = 45

ID	Age	Months Married	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependence	Father Dependence	Marital Adjustment
2	25	10	33	0	0	152
4	22	17	38	5	1	147
5	25	33	22	2	8	135
7	21	8	21	3	4	116
9	21	14	11	8	7	123
13	22	1	27	0	1	132
14	20	12	10	5	9	135
16	21	26	21	4	6	106
20	21	13	36	5	2	152
23	21	20	14	6	7	138
25	24	36	13	9	8	73
28	21	8	2	1	0	134
30	19	30	15	5	5	133
31	21	15	33	10	10	143
34	22	12	26	7	6	96
36	25	25	24	4	8	143
38	24	17	21	3	0	137
39	21	25	24	1	4	142
43	23	6	31	9	6	139
46	23	17	30	0	0	149
48	20	8	19	2	0	150
52	18	9	5	4	9	110
53	21	11	12	5	5	108
55	20	16	24	5	5	105
58	21	33	23	4	0	144

APPENDIX F (continued)

Raw Score Data for Males

ID	Age	Months Married	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependence	Father Dependence	Marital Adjustment
<u>59</u>	20	35	15	5	5	88
<u>61</u>	19	10	20	5	9	147
<u>63</u>	21	14	16	6	8	120
<u>66</u>	21	11	35	0	2	129
<u>70</u>	20	30	30	4	0	124
<u>72</u>	21	36	27	6	8	135
<u>73</u>	20	6	27	5	5	128
<u>78</u>	22	22	32	6	6	115
<u>79</u>	23	20	31	6	6	127
<u>80</u>	24	22	6	2	8	109
<u>83</u>	19	13	6	9	9	91
<u>84</u>	21	34	26	4	7	140
<u>87</u>	23	24	28	8	0	126
89	24	20	11	4	7	60
92	22	11	17	1	7	119
<u>94</u>	25	35	32	4	6	108
<u>96</u>	20	10	20	5	8	145
100	25	9	30	2	5	101
101	20	10	11	5	8	92
<u>104</u>	21	22	11	2	7	110

The underlined ID's indicate subjects who had partners in the study and were used in the study on couples.

APPENDIX G  
RAW SCORE DATA FOR FEMALES

APPENDIX G

Raw Score Data for Females

ID	Age	Months Married	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependence	Father Dependence	Marital Adjustment
1	19	16	37	7	10	110
3	20	16	14	4	8	127
6	19	34	6	4	8	134
8	18	8	37	6	7	129
10	21	14	20	7	6	115
11	18	10	5	6	5	145
12	19	1	10	7	8	145
15	20	12	3	4	8	139
17	21	25	7	7	10	88
18	17	8	20	7	0	103
19	21	36	23	7	8	101
21	21	35	27	8	9	147
22	20	20	31	7	0	139
24	20	7	20	4	6	132
26	20	36	22	5	5	79
27	18	8	5	1	9	144
29	19	30	15	5	5	133
32	21	15	35	7	8	149
33	21	13	5	8	8	130
35	21	25	27	6	6	126
37	20	17	26	7	9	140
40	22	25	17	7	7	128
41	22	15	20	1	5	112
42	20	6	29	5	8	118
44	20	11	27	4	0	101



APPENDIX G (continued)

Raw Score Data for Females

ID	Age	Months Married	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependence	Father Dependence	Marital Adjustment
45	22	10	2	6	7	115
47	19	8	23	8	9	141
49	20	18	12	8	9	94
50	22	1	19	7	0	134
51	18	9	16	2	10	117
54	20	11	20	7	0	131
56	19	16	23	5	4	127
57	23	34	39	9	7	144
60	22	36	6	7	5	125
62	18	10	28	6	8	120
64	20	13	35	8	9	125
65	22	1	21	1	0	145
68	23	36	14	4	0	41
69	22	30	18	8	8	129
71	21	36	25	8	7	125
74	20	6	33	5	7	129
76	21	20	34	8	8	116
77	20	22	31	9	8	122
81	23	22	33	7	0	121
82	18	13	13	3	0	106
85	19	34	7	8	8	123
86	24	16	24	6	7	116
88	23	23	26	4	9	131
90	22	19	22	6	9	95
91	21	12	34	5	9	132

APPENDIX G (continued)  
Raw Score Data for Females

ID	Age	Months Married	Mother-in-law Adjustment	Mother Dependence	Father Dependence	Marital Adjustment
<u>95</u>	24	35	25	7	10	120
<u>97</u>	18	9	27	4	7	150
<u>98</u>	23	31	33	1	10	129
99	21	15	23	9	8	136
<u>102</u>	18	10	6	7	7	92
<u>103</u>	19	22	14	8	8	96
<u>105</u>	24	12	27	4	2	128

The underlined ID's indicate subjects who had partners in the study and were used in the study on couples.

APPENDIX H  
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR  
SIX VARIABLES FOR MALES

## APPENDIX H

Mean and Standard Deviation for  
Six Variables for Males

N = 45

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Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	21.73	1.89
Months Married	18.13	9.64
Mother-in-law Adjustment	21.49	9.61
Mother Dependence	4.36	2.57
Father Dependence	5.20	3.18
Marital Adjustment	124.00	21.94

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APPENDIX I  
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR  
SIX VARIABLES FOR FEMALES

## APPENDIX I

Mean and Standard Deviation for  
Six Variables for Females

N = 57

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Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	20.47	1.75
Months Married	18.28	10.43
Mother-in-law Adjustment	20.88	10.09
Mother Dependence	5.95	2.02
Father Dependence	6.33	3.19
Marital Adjustment	122.26	19.80

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APPENDIX J  
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR TWO  
VARIABLES FOR MALES AND FEMALES  
MATCHED BY COUPLES

## APPENDIX J

Mean and Standard Deviation for Two  
Variables for Males and Females  
Matched by CouplesN = 39

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Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male Mother-in-law Adjustment	19.79	9.16
Male Marital Adjustment	122.31	21.95
Female Mother-in-law Adjustment	20.85	10.49
Female Marital Adjustment	124.72	16.64

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