

MAKING DAD PROUD: DAUGHTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPRESSION  
MANAGEMENT AND BREADTH AND DEPTH IN COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR  
FATHERS

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Communication.

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## DEDICATION

To Dr. Deborah Ballard-Reisch, who pushed me to my limits with this project and many others during my time as your advisee. I have become a better writer, researcher and person because of your dedication to your students. Without your guidance, I wouldn't be the woman I am today and my resume would be much shorter. You have been a true inspiration to me.

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## ABSTRACT

Father-daughter communication is an understudied area of interpersonal communication research. Communication in this dyad is also reported significantly less by daughters than communication in mother-daughter relationships. However, prior research has established the importance of positive father-daughter communication on daughters' perceptions of relationship satisfaction as well as on daughters' overall social and mental health. There were many barriers for the father-daughter dyad that contributed to its typically limited communication, including the "daddy's little girl" image and perceived gender differences. Using a thematic analysis methodology following semi-structured interviews, this project was designed to discover daughters' perceptions of the breadth and depth of their communication with their fathers as well as the role that the desire to manage how their fathers see them impacted their communication. Impression Management Theory and Social Penetration Theory were used as lenses to analyze interview data to draw insights into the dynamics of father-daughter communication for the participants in this study. The daughters in this study unanimously reported that making their fathers proud was their ultimate goal in this relationship. They utilized impression management strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication and intimidation) to promote and maintain an image consistent with this goal when communicating with their fathers. While all daughters in this study felt that their relationships with their fathers were close and their communication was open, data analysis revealed that ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification and supplication strategies were used to both promote and limit breadth and depth in communication and openness and intimacy in their father-daughter relationships.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau found that in 2014, approximately 17.4 million children lived in homes without a father, and an additional 2.8 million children lived without either parent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The National Fatherhood Initiative claimed that there was a “Father Factor” in almost all the world’s problems including poverty, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, emotional and behavioral problems and crime (2017). In addition, decreased father-child interaction was linked to lower socio-economic and academic functioning (Howard, Burke Lefever, Borkowski, & Whitman, 2006). Drug and alcohol abuse also became more likely for children who did not live with both parents (Hoffmann, 2002). Without a father in the home, children were more than twice as likely to be involved with drugs or carry a firearm (Allen & Lo, 2012). Furthermore, female teens without a father in the home were more likely to engage in sexual activity and to get pregnant at an earlier age than teens with a father in the home (Ellis, Bates, Dodge, Ferguson, Horwood, Pettit & Woodward, 2003).

Prior research has established the importance of positive father-daughter communication on daughters’ perceptions of satisfaction within that relationship as well as on the daughters’ social and mental health. The current study sought insight into communication in father-daughter relationships with daughters who identified as having had positive relationships with their fathers during their adolescence and young adulthood. The research emphasis was father-daughter communication rather than other family dyads because of the limited research done on this interpersonal relationship. More research focus has been placed on mother-child, mother-daughter and father-son dyads.

Using a thematic analysis methodology following semi-structured interviews, this project sought to discover how daughters' desires to have their fathers perceive them in certain ways impacted their communication, particularly the breadth and depth of their communication and their openness and intimacy. Impression Management Theory and Social Penetration Theory were used as lenses to analyze data to draw out insights into the dynamics of father-daughter communication for the women in this study.

Daughters in this study unanimously reported that making their fathers proud was the goal of the image they wished to uphold. Consequently, when communicating with their fathers, these women utilized the impression management strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication and intimidation) to advance this objective. Daughters reported using these strategies to both promote and limit the breadth and depth of their communication, which led to both positive and negative impacts on openness and intimacy in their father-daughter relationships.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Mothers versus fathers as communicators**

Mothers were viewed as the primary communicators and parental educators of sons and daughters (Fisher & Miller-Day, 2006). While sons communicated with fathers more than daughters, both sons and daughters had more communication with their mothers. Fisher and Miller-Day (2006) suggested that mothers continued as the primary communicators with their children because it remained culturally acceptable for women to be the caregivers and men to be the providers within the family context. Collins, Angera and Latty (2008) reported that many studies showed that both fathers and daughters still viewed mothers as having that caregiving responsibility, which reinforced gender roles in family dynamics.

Only five percent of daughters in a study by Nielsen (2007) reported that they spent more time with their fathers than their mothers during their childhood and college years. A full eighty percent of daughters in this study said that they were with their mothers and communicated with their mothers much more than with their fathers during that time. In addition, Arnold, O'Neal and Futris (2013) concluded that 83 percent of daughters who participated in their study reported conversations with mothers about relationships compared to 39 percent who reported these conversations with their fathers.

A 15-year study found that even though daughters felt their relationships with their fathers were positive, they felt more emotionally intimate and comfortable with their mothers as well as more communicative (Nielsen, 2007). Mothers and daughters tended to be more involved in one another's lives than were fathers and daughters (Nielsen, 2007). However, while

daughters discussed twice the number of topics and spent more time with their mothers, they considered conversations with both parents as influential and satisfying (Arnold et al., 2013).

Nielsen (2007) reported that fathers spent more time daily with their children than fathers from previous generations. Nevertheless, when comparing married, employed fathers to married, employed mothers, mothers still spent more time with their children each day than fathers (Nielsen, 2007). Daughters were more likely to feel a closer connection and communicate more easily with the parent with whom they spent the most time (Nielsen, 2007). Nielsen (2007) also claimed that daughters of divorced parents were even more distant and often had a more strained relationship with their fathers than daughters of married parents.

### **Family communication styles and father-daughter interaction**

Family communication styles played a significant role in whether the parent-adolescent relationship was perceived with satisfaction (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Conversation oriented patterns of family communication put more focus on consensual and pluralistic discussions whereas conformity oriented patterns emphasized shaping the child's views to match the views of the parents (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Conversation oriented communication was more inclusive and allowed for greater discussion of ideas and feelings than conformity oriented communication (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Father-daughter relationships whose communication styles were more conversation based, rather than conformity based, were characterized by more mutual understanding and reciprocity of communication and led to more positive and satisfying relationships (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Additionally, father-daughter relationships were characterized by higher satisfaction when the family's communication patterns were more open and conversational (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008).

Academic success and vocational achievements have been closely related to daughters' relationships with their fathers, more so than with their mothers (Lamb, 2010; Perkins, 2001). Fathers tended to put more focus on financial stability and education when communicating with their daughters than did mothers (Perkins, 2001). Therefore, Lamb (2010) concluded that the higher the quality of the relationship between fathers and daughters, the more academic success those daughters would achieve because more positive communication within that dyad was occurring. Fathers also seemed to have a greater impact on the academic successes of their daughters than their sons because daughters were more likely to seek out their fathers' advice when making these types of decisions (Lamb, 2010).

Positive father-daughter relationships were linked to daughters being more successful athletes. Many college and professional female athletes credited their fathers with encouraging them to work harder to achieve athletic success (Lobo, 2010). This was especially true for daughters in only-child families and families with no male children. However, daughters also cited fears that their fathers would no longer love them if they weren't successful with sports (Lobo, 2010). These fears of rejection illustrated the importance of emphasizing positive father-daughter communication.

Daughters who experienced more open and conversation oriented communication with their fathers developed a more trusting and positive relationship overall, which led to feelings of support within that dyad (Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). Fathers also emphasized goal setting and provided more discipline than mothers (Wilson et al., 2010). Daughters who were satisfied with their relationships with their fathers were also more likely to engage in sex communication with them which led to safer sex practices, such as using condoms and limiting sexual partners (Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). Daughters did not fear negative responses from fathers when

sharing thoughts and feelings because of the open communication that existed in their dyads (Hutchinson & Ceberbaum, 2011). The importance of having an open sexual dialogue between fathers and daughters is discussed later in this literature review.

Fathers tended to have more impact on daughters' perceptions of other men than mothers (Erickson, 1998; Flouri, 2005; Nielsen, 2001). Daughters with positive father-daughter relationships felt more secure and less anxious in romantic relationships with men than daughters who did not have positive relationships with their fathers (Arnold et al., 2013; Dunleavy, Wanzer, Krezmien & Ruppel, 2011; Last, 2009; Nielsen, 2014). Additionally, satisfying communication with their fathers led to daughters having good peer relationships, positive romantic relationships and to making better life decisions overall (Arnold, O' Neal & Futris, 2013; Punyanunt, 2008).

While father-daughter communication has been shown to be important, not all communication in this dyad has proven to be beneficial for daughters. Research has also found that father-daughter communication led to negative effects on daughters' relationships with other men. In Brown, Rosnick, Webb-Bradley and Kirner's 2014 study, interviews with women identified six emergent themes concerning conversations with fathers about sex. These themes included agency, men are bad, protection, self-respect, wait for marriage and no occurrence of sex communication. Some of these themes were positive such as agency, where women felt empowered after conversations with their fathers and were told that their bodies were their own. However, the "men are bad" theme for these women implied that men only wanted sex from women. In addition, fathers discussed the importance of having self-respect, but the resulting message was that daughters needed to behave in a certain manner for men to respect them. It was implied that if women were promiscuous they would not be respected by men. Yet, men were not

held to the same standard. Another negative theme that these daughters expressed was in the “wait for marriage” theme where fathers expressed that being a virgin was more important for women than for men and that chastity was linked to men having respect for women.

Not only were daughters’ future relationships reportedly impacted by a negative father-daughter relationship, but so was their mental health. Young women diagnosed with depression in the prior 12 months were found to be more likely to have experienced more paternal rejection and neglect, felt less close with their fathers, and perceived a much colder relationship than young women who were not diagnosed with depression (Demidenko, Manion & Lee, 2015; Last, 2009; Leidy, Schofield, Miller, Parke, Coltrane, Beaver et al., 2011). A review of literature illustrated that depression in daughters correlated more closely to relationships with fathers than with mothers (Videon, 2005). Sanftner, Ryan and Pierce (2009) concluded that daughters with positive father-daughter relationships also had more body positivity and were more comfortable with their appearance and weight. Neglectful father-daughter relationships led to eating disorders, which were more common in daughters who had already experienced depression (Agras, 2007).

Leidy et al. (2011) suggested that adolescent anxiety symptoms were closely linked to fathers’ rejection. Additionally, daughters who had negative relationships with their fathers felt less secure in coming to their fathers to alleviate stress (Punyanunt-Carter, 2007). This supported the conclusion that daughters who experienced more accepting father-daughter relationships reported less depression and anxiety because they felt more comfortable coming to their fathers to discuss upsetting situations or problems. In contrast, daughters who experienced rejection from their fathers were less comfortable communicating with their fathers about what was troubling them.

## **What daughters wanted from fathers**

Most daughters ranked their communication quality in mother-daughter dyads (75 percent) much higher than communication in father-daughter dyads (Nielsen, 2007). While daughters often viewed their overall relationship with their fathers as “good” or “excellent,” they perceived their communication with their fathers as “poor” or “alright,” and only 10 percent of daughters in this study thought their fathers were better communicators than their mothers (Nielsen, 2007). Nielsen (2007) concluded that daughters were four times more likely to give a negative relationship rating to their fathers than to their mothers.

Dunleavy et al. (2011) presented a connection between the reported communication skills of daughters and the perceived communication skills of their fathers with relationship satisfaction. Daughters who self-reported high communication skills that were similar to the perceived communication skills of their fathers reported higher satisfaction levels in that dyad as well as a greater frequency of communication with their fathers (Dunleavy et al., 2011). Comparatively, daughters who reported low communication competence on their part and the part of their fathers were more likely to report less communication within the dyad. Also, the more daughters reported arguments with their fathers the less likely they were to report high levels of relationship satisfaction. Daughters who were more competent communicators tended to have more relationship satisfaction, communicate more frequently and were more likely to have positive conversations with their fathers (Dunleavy et al., 2011).

Nielsen, Latty and Angera (2013) interviewed women on their perception of whether their fathers were good or poor sexuality educators. The fathers considered good parental educators were emotionally close with their daughters, maintained a higher comfort level in a

relaxed environment, displayed strong feelings about the importance of these conversations, used humor effectively, skillfully monitored daughters' sexual behavior, and did not consider sexual communication to be solely for the mother to discuss. Poor parental educators communicated contrary to these traits.

Despite father-daughter communication occurring less than mother-daughter communication, daughters reported a desire to talk with their fathers about more topics. Hutchinson and Cederbaum (2011) found that more than 80 percent of women believed their fathers could have made contributions in at least one area of sexuality, dating or sexual health, and wished that their fathers had tried to discuss these topics with them. Some topics daughters wished to discuss with their fathers included understanding men, dealing with the pressure to have sex, sharing their own experiences with sex and dating, communicating their values and expectations, sexual risk topics, and being more open and comfortable when talking with daughters about personal matters (Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011; Nielsen, 2007).

Daughters often felt reluctant or uncomfortable initiating discussions of these topics (Nielsen, 2001; Nielsen, 2007). In some instances, daughters did not give their fathers the chance to have an open dialogue with them (Nielsen, 2007). More than half of women that took the "Equal Opportunity Daughter" quiz scored below 17 out of 30, meaning that daughters behaved in ways that pushed their fathers away from having a more personal and comfortable relationship, which those women claimed to want (Nielsen, 2007).

However, daughters that did breach the barriers and communicated with their fathers about their emotions and feelings were surprised to find that their fathers responded positively and the conversations initiated an improvement in their relationships (Nielsen, 2001). Daughters reported seeking out their fathers with the motive of getting affection, relaxation, pleasurable

conversations and inclusion while fathers reported seeking out daughters for pleasurable conversations, affection and relaxation (Punyanunt-Carter, 2005). Daughters desired changes in communicating, giving advice and discussing finances and personal decisions, and they wanted to be able to communicate more comfortably, honestly and personally with fathers to get to know them better (Nielsen, 2007).

### **Sexual socialization and fathers**

Sexual socialization refers to the amount of sex communication a person has received (Clawson & Reese-Weber, 2003). The more topics covered and the higher the frequency of conversations about sex-related topics, the higher the sexual socialization. With adequate sexual socialization, adolescents were less likely to participate in risky sexual behaviors like having multiple sexual partners or not using condoms or other forms of contraception every time they engaged in sexual activities (Brown et al., 2014; Ellis et al., 2003; Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). More sex communication between adolescent women and their parents reduced the likelihood of their engagement in sexual intercourse at an early age (Brown et al., 2014; Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). Higher rates of overall sex communication have also been linked to higher sexual body esteem and pleasure self-efficacy (Mastro & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2015). Clawson and Reese-Weber (2003) found that there was a positive correlation in sex communication with the mother and with the father, meaning that the more daughters reported talking to their mothers about sex related topics the more they reported discussing sex related topics with their fathers. Daughters also reported receiving more overall sex communication from parents than sons reported (de Looze, Constantine, Jerman, Vermeulen-Smith, & ter Bogt, 2015).

Perceptions of fathers' sex communication, sexual socialization and influence on daughters varied widely as well as daughters' perceptions of the adequacy of sex communication they received from their fathers (Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). In a study by Hutchinson and Cederbaum (2011), only 10 percent of daughters felt well-prepared by their fathers for dating and sexuality. Daughters also felt that sex communication with their fathers was primarily philosophical or supportive rather than informative. Being supportive was defined as being open or nonjudgmental with daughters. Twenty-one percent of daughters in this study claimed that their fathers were most supportive when communicating about topics such as dating, relationships and sexuality.

Daughters often viewed their fathers as abandoning communication with them about sexuality to their mothers (Collins et al., 2008). Fathers either relied on mothers to provide sex communication or verbally commented about that communication topic being the mother's role rather than their own (Collins et al., 2008). However, Wilson and Koo (2010) suggested that fathers recognized that their input in the sexual socialization of their daughters was important, yet the authors recommended that fathers seek out additional help with sex communication due to such low reported levels of overall communication.

Because of the perception that mothers should be the primary sex communicator for daughters, there was an unequal distribution of sex communication with mothers and fathers which could have been problematic in households where there was not a mother present. Granted, fathers may have been better suited to discuss specific topics, such as explaining puberty to their sons and providing an understanding of how boys and men think for their daughters (Wilson, Dalberth, & Koo, 2010). Mothers may have also been better suited to discussing puberty with their daughters and how girls and women think to their sons (Wilson et

al., 2010). This conclusion made sense when considering that it was easier to explain these topics when personal experience was available. However, there were many topics that were not necessarily gender specific such as condom use, STDs and love and marriage that either parent could start a conversation about with their children.

Daughters often cited their menstrual cycle as being the turning point in their communication with their fathers because it generally prompted discomfort (Collins et al., 2008). Daughters sometimes perceived their fathers as failing when issues of sexuality occurred (Collins et al., 2008). Conversations regarding sexuality were reported as vague and infrequent as fathers often failed at explaining that sexuality was an ongoing process throughout women's lives, not just puberty (Collins et al., 2008). Collins et al. (2008) suggested that because prior discussions had not taken place, conversations about menstruation and sexuality at the onset of the daughter's menstrual cycle were uncomfortable, which led to the perception that all future communication concerning these topics would be uncomfortable as well.

### **Barriers to father-daughter communication**

Hutchinson and Cederbaum (2011) found that the most common barriers to father-daughter communication reported by daughters were the perceived lack of a father-daughter relationship, the "daddy's little girl" image and the father's own inhibitions because of gender differences. In Freeman and Almond (2011), daughters claimed that they feared their fathers would be more disapproving than their mothers, which led to daughters avoiding discussing personal topics, like relationships and sex, with their fathers. The daughters in this study also said that arguments with their fathers were more difficult to get over than arguments with their mothers due to the fear of disappointing their fathers.

The participants in Hutchinson and Cederbaum's (2011) study claimed that the "daddy's little girl" image was a large factor in limited sex communication between fathers and daughters because fathers were uncomfortable talking about sex with their "little girls." Because of the "daddy's little girl" image, many fathers were more protective of their daughters than their sons and still more protective of their daughters than their mothers were (Wilson et al., 2010). Fathers' perceptions of what role they should have in raising their daughters was another barrier frequently mentioned in literature. Nielsen (2007) found that fathers felt they were not as influential or important to their daughters as they were to their sons. Fathers reported spending more time with sons, shared and talked more and gave more advice than they did with their daughters (Nielsen, 2007).

Gender differences also created barriers within the father-daughter dyad. Because of societal expectations that mothers would be the primary communicators with their children, fathers faced gender-based barriers when trying to assume that role (Fisher & Miller-Day, 2006). Men were not portrayed as emotional like women and, therefore, daughters did not typically seek out their fathers for emotional conversations (Dunleavy et al., 2011). Similarly, fathers did not typically seek out emotional conversations with daughters because discussions about relationships, feelings and sensitive topics were usually communicated between mothers and daughters (Nielsen et al., 2013). Nielsen et al. (2013) also suggested that fathers avoided sex communication with daughters because it led them to the often-uncomfortable realization that their daughters were sexual beings. This conclusion linked back to the "daddy's little girl" image fathers held of their daughters.

## **Summation of literature review**

This review of literature established the importance of positive father-daughter communication on daughters' perceptions of satisfaction within that relationship as well as on the daughters' social and mental health. Many of the daughters in the studies previously reviewed desired more meaningful communication with their fathers, but the overall communication between fathers and daughters still occurred less than the communication between mothers and daughters. There were many barriers for the father-daughter dyad that contributed to this communication inconsistency including the "daddy's little girl" image and perceived gender differences. To gain more insight into communication in father-daughter relationships, this exploratory study involved semi-structured interviews with ten women who identified positive relationships with their fathers during their adolescence and early adulthood. This study sought to explore impression management strategies and the breadth and depth of communication that existed in those father-daughter dyads using a thematic analysis methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

This study uses two theories to deductively analyze data from the ten semi-structured interviews with daughters participating in this study. The primary theory used is the Impression Management Theory. This theory is used to examine how its five strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication and intimidation) influence openness and intimacy with the father-daughter relationships reported on for this study. The Social Penetration Theory is used to examine the breadth and depth of intimacy in the communication of these dyads as well as to establish where those relationships fit within the five stages of intimacy (the orientation stage, the exploratory affective stage, the affective stage, the stable stage and depenetration). Both theories are explained in further detail in this chapter.

#### **Impression Management Theory**

The Impression Management Theory (IM), or self-presentation theory, explains how a person adapts their behavior or communication methods with the purpose of controlling how others perceive them or make inferences about their characters (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). IM is essentially a theory that focuses on how a person presents herself to create a desired image. There are two major motives in IM. The first is to present an image in accordance with a person's self-image, the second is to present herself in accordance with the audience's expectations and preferences (Goffman, 1959).

Ernest Goffman (1959) paralleled a theatrical play with interpersonal interactions to illustrate the mechanisms of IM. The person communicating is the performer while the other person in the interaction is the audience. The entire interaction is deemed a performance in which

each person has a role to play. Any time she is communicating with another person, whether in person or through other mediums like telephone or video chat, she is playing a part in a play. The roles of performer and audience may be assumed simultaneously by each player in the interaction as interpersonal interactions are mutually reciprocal.

IM is a fundamental interpersonal process (Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Metts, 2009). Metts (2009, p. 506) explains the reasoning behind IM:

As individuals, we are constituted of countless idiosyncrasies – habits, mannerisms, beliefs, attitudes, values, abilities, needs, interests, family history, and so forth. When interacting with others, we cannot display all aspects of our private self. We therefore select characteristics from our psychological and behavioral matrix that we believe will present the person (the self) we should be during that occasion.

The image she presents depends on the setting she finds herself in as well as the people she is with at that time. When with a parent, a daughter might present herself as responsible and successful to appear more competent or worthy. When with a friend, she might present herself as spontaneous and fun to appear more likeable. Other examples of IM may be name-dropping important people to impress a boss or potential client or posting photos on social media that are always with her significant other to show that she is in a relationship with that person. IM plays an important role in all interpersonal relationships (Goffman, 1959).

“Sometimes the traditions on an individual’s role will lead him to give a well-designed impression of a particular kind and yet he may be neither consciously nor unconsciously disposed to create such an impression” (Goffman, 1959, p. 6). IM occurs in all interpersonal interactions at all times (Goffman, 1959). A person will both consciously and subconsciously share information that will benefit her most in interpersonal interactions (Metts, 2009). For example, a person may purposely engage in IM during a job interview to appear to be the best

candidate. She may also engage in IM with a close friend without realizing it because of the comfort level and familiarity associated with that person.

A five-factor model, IM-5, was created by Jones and Pittman (1982) to describe the behaviors of IM is used in this study to examine father-daughter communication strategies (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). The five factors, or strategies, include *ingratiation* (the desire to appear likeable or friendly), *self-promotion* (the desire to appear competent), *exemplification* (the desire to appear worthy through actions), *supplication* (the desire to appear helpless or inexperienced) and *intimidation* (the desire to appear powerful). These strategies of IM while diverse, all work toward the same goal, consciously or subconsciously influencing other's perceptions (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

### **Ingratiation**

This IM-5 strategy is defined as a deliberate effort to be in another's favor. Ingratiation involves displaying positive emotions, engaging in self-deprecating humor and doing favors or offering compliments in order to appear likeable and friendly (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). To impress a colleague, she may offer a compliment or offer to grab coffee on the way to work. This IM-5 strategy is common when meeting new or important people, for example, a romantic partner's family members or a new supervisor at work. Self-deprecating humor may be used among new friends to make one appear more likeable.

Goffman (1959) claims that a person is tied to her ideal standards, meaning that she must hide certain characteristics that may tarnish that image. Ingratiation may also be achieved through opinion conformity in which she agrees or portrays opinions as matching those of the other person to promote likeability (Jones & Pittman, 1982). In this IM-5 strategy, she may also

perform self-enhancement through selective self-presentation. For example, she may talk cautiously about topics that could potentially detract from her desired image with an audience.

### **Self-promotion**

This IM-5 strategy involves talking or bragging about achievements, good deeds or accomplishments (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). Self-promotion may also include boasting. Focus is put on highlighting her accomplishments with a goal of appearing competent and impressive to her audience. Erving Goffman (1959) describes information control as one of the largest problems that IM “performances” harbor. She may try to over-communicate some facts while downplaying deficits to garner the image she hopes to achieve. She may also brag about getting a promotion, but not communicate how much more time the promotion will take time away from her personal life.

### **Exemplification**

This IM-5 strategy involves demonstrating rather than telling her abilities with the goal of seeming more competent, having integrity and demonstrating values similar to her audience (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). The exemplification strategy involves showing competence and worthiness through behavior. Through use of this IM-5 strategy, she might engage in self-sacrifice or go above and beyond what is expected in order to be seen as worthy and dedicated (Jones & Pittman, 1982). For example, a person may use this strategy, arrive early for work each day or would turn in impeccably neat reports in order to demonstrate commitment to her supervisor.

Exemplification is different from the other IM strategies because it primarily involves actions rather than verbal communication. A person exhibits this type of IM behavior when wanting to be perceived as worthy and dedicated (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). She is

also tied to her ideal standards, meaning that she must hide any characteristic that is not aligned with the front she presents (Goffman, 1959). As with ingratiation, behavioral matching may also occur in this IM-5 strategy as a person models her behavior or values after the audience's behavior or values (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). For instance, if the audience, perhaps a boss, is soft spoken and calm, she would attempt to be soft spoken and calm in the boss's presence.

### **Supplication**

This IM-5 strategy involves appearing to be unknowledgeable, weak or helpless (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). A person utilizing supplication generally wants to advertise or pretend she lacks knowledge and/or experience to avoid doing something or to try gain sympathy and support (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). "While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure" (Goffman, 1959, p. 30). A person who does not like loading the dishwasher may purposely load it incorrectly or put too much soap in the machine to appear unknowledgeable to avoid being asked to load the machine again. She might cry when she is pulled over for speeding in hopes of receiving sympathy rather than a ticket.

### **Intimidation**

This IM-5 strategy involves appearing angry or eager to punish others, and is often exhibited by a person who wants to be seen as in control to her audience (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). She may yell or threaten others to assert dominance. A person using intimidation may have status over the other person, such as a supervisor communicating to an employee or a parent to a child. In other instances, a child or lower status partner may use intimidation strategy

to gain control or appear more dominant. By inducing fear or caution, a person may be able to better assert herself as more powerful.

These IM-5 strategies are also used by a person when constructing and maintaining face with the audience (Goffman, 1959; Cupach & Metts, 1994). Goffman (1959) terms this facework. There are two strategies used by a person to maintain face or uphold a desired image. *Avoidant or preventive facework* prepares for the potential loss of face, or a potential threat to her desired image, like situations that could discredit or damage her desired image (Cupach & Metts, 1994). *Corrective facework* is used to restore face in a situation when it has been lost, for example, to overcome embarrassment or poor performance (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Understanding these facework strategies is beneficial when studying IM because they allow for more understanding of potential motivations involved in using the IM-5 strategies in interpersonal interactions.

### **Social Penetration Theory**

Social Penetration Theory (SPT) explains how a person builds relationships and become more psychologically close over time with another person (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). SPT is characterized by breadth and depth in communication (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). Breadth is the variety and number of topics she is willing to discuss, and depth involves how intimately she is willing to discuss a topic or to reveal personal feelings (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). When exploring daughters' reported communication with their fathers in this study, the breadth of conversation topics discussed as well as the depth in which thoughts and feelings are communicated were examined.

Self-disclosure, revealing information about herself to another person, is a significant aspect in the development of intimacy in a relationship. Self-disclosure allows for the

relationship between two people to progress and deepen as more reciprocal self-disclosure occurs (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). In reciprocal self-disclosure, as she increases the breadth and depth of shared information with another, that person also increases the breadth and depth of information shared, resulting in increased intimacy. If no self-disclosure occurs between people, or it occurs disproportionately, the relationship will not progress. The process of self-disclosure is explained through five stages of intimacy: the *orientation stage*, the *exploratory affective stage*, the *affective stage*, the *stable stage* and *depenetration*. The process of self-disclosure in interactions may occur verbally, nonverbally, para-verbally or through environmentally-oriented behaviors (Altman, Vinsel & Brown, 1981).

### **Orientation stage**

This stage is the first impression stage. In this instance, only surface level information, or small talk, is disclosed. She may engage someone at the grocery store and begin having a conversation while waiting in the checkout line. Comments about the weather or other small talk would likely be exchanged. At this stage, communication is superficial; there is no depth in communication. Many interactions at the orientation stage end and proceed directly to depenetration.

### **Exploratory affective stage**

The second stage of intimacy involves sharing opinions about superficial subjects such as favorite sports teams or impersonal information. Depth increases slightly at this stage as mutual self-disclosure increases, but interactants avoid disclosing personal or private information. Many casual relationships remain at this stage. Relationships at this stage might include work friendships or friendly neighbors.

### **Affective stage**

This third stage of intimacy is where personal and private information begin to be shared. Breadth and depth of communication increases, as does reciprocal self-disclosure. Interactants may be critical of each other and may argue at this stage while still feeling comfortable enough to know arguments will not damage the relationship. They are also able to recognize each other's nonverbal quirks or cues, for example, accurately interpreting facial expressions. Also, touching such as hugging, kissing and handholding occur at this stage where friendships and romantic relationships may remain.

### **Stable stage**

The fourth stage of intimacy is where communication is at its most open and comfortable. Breadth and depth of communication are the norm at this stage. Communication partners are able to be vulnerable with one another, and secrets and the withholding of information are kept to a minimum. Those at this stage are able predict each other's reactions and responses to information. Spouses, best friends and close family members are typically at this stage.

### **Depenetration**

The fifth stage of intimacy involves withdrawal from self-disclosure and the termination of the relationship. A relationship does not have to progress through each of the prior stages of intimacy to get to the depenetration stage, and depenetration does not have to occur in any given relationship. In addition, depenetration can occur following any of the prior stages (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Altman and Taylor (1973) describe three factors that affect self-disclosure. The first is the person's *personal characteristics* (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). This would be whether the person is an open, gregarious communicator, or a reticent one. The second factor

is their perception of *reward versus cost* when considering the implications of disclosing information to the other person (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). Perhaps the information in question would hurt the other's feelings or impact one's face. The third factor is *situational context* (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013); the same type of communication is not appropriate in all situations. For example, when she is communicating with a supervisor in a professional setting, she would not typically self-disclose personal or intimate information.

This outline of the processes of self-disclosure as well as the breadth and depth of communication may also be described using the onion analogy, where the more self-disclosure occurs the more layers are peeled from the onion until the very center of the onion, the most intimate parts of a person are revealed (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Cseh, 2011; Tang & Wang, in print). The outer layer is visible to everyone and includes age, sex and physical appearance. The inner most layer, formerly referred to as her "true self" by Altman and Taylor (1973), includes values, personal dreams and fears. The more self-disclosure in any given relationship, the more intimate the communication could become.

### **Study rationale**

The purpose of this study is to take a qualitative, in-depth look, through application of the Impression Management Theory and the Social Penetration Theory, to gain insight into communication in father-daughter relationships using interviews with women who identified positive relationships with their fathers during their adolescence and early adulthood.

Specifically, this research study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: How do daughters use impression management strategies to influence breadth and depth of communication with their fathers?

RQ2: How did daughters' communication with fathers reflect usage of impression management strategies?

These research questions were investigated using a thematic analysis methodology to deductively analyze data from ten semi-structured interviews to gain insight into father-daughter communication strategies.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Sample**

A convenience sample of female undergraduate and graduate students aged 18 to 25 years old attending a Midwestern university during the 2016 – 2017 academic calendar year was recruited for this study. A self-selected sample of 10 female participants, who identified themselves as communicating frequently and having a positive relationship with their fathers during adolescence and early adulthood were interviewed for this study.

Participants were recruited from the COMM 111 Basic Public Speaking course in the communication department that is a required course for all students. Participants were not offered incentives for participation by the researcher, however, some instructors offered research participation or extra credit to their students who participated. Specifically, emails were sent to all instructors who taught this course (see [APPENDIX A](#) for copy of email). The email requested that instructors invite students who met the previously listed criteria to contact the researcher through the university email. Upon receiving an email requesting participation in this study, the researcher verified that the student met the criteria and then proceeded to schedule an interview via email that was convenient for both parties.

The resulting sample of ten female participants was largely homogeneous. The reported levels of education were freshman ( $n = 5$ ), sophomore ( $n = 1$ ), senior ( $n = 3$ ) and graduate ( $n = 1$ ). The majority of participants were Caucasian ( $n = 9$ ) with one African American participant. The religious backgrounds for participants were Christian ( $n = 8$ ), Mennonite ( $n = 1$ ) and Atheist ( $n = 1$ ). All participants interviewed discussed their communication with their biological fathers.

## **Procedures**

### **Semi-structured interviews**

Following IRB approval #3869 on March 20, 2017, ten semi-structured interviews were held over the course of a five-day period from March 27, 2017 to March 31, 2017 by one female interviewer. All interviews were held in person in a public location agreed upon by the interviewer and interviewee. Appointments with participants were made through email with the interviewer and were scheduled in one-hour time blocks. The interviews ranged from 9:18 to 22:55 minutes in length with a total time of 2:42:32 hours and an average time of 16:15 minutes.

During each interview appointment, participants were verbally briefed on the content of the interview questions, informed the interview would be audio recorded, and were asked to carefully read and sign an informed consent form (see [APPENDIX B](#) for copy of consent form). The consent forms were locked in a file cabinet in a private office to ensure confidentiality. All email correspondence between the researcher and participants regarding the scheduling of appointments were deleted following the interview so the consent forms were the only place where the participant's names could be found. The names of the participants and any names given during the interviews were changed to protect the identity of all parties referred to in this study during the transcription process. Participants were not asked to give their names while being interviewed. Interviews were audio recorded with written consent of each participant using the researcher's personal audio recorder.

Interview questions included questions about the participants' relationships with their fathers, how they wanted their fathers to view them and how they may or may not have adapted their communication and behavior to achieve a desired image. Questions were also specifically asked to determine if the participants used any or all of the IM-5 strategies. For example, one of

the questions related to ingratiation was: Do you adapt conversations with your father to appear more likeable or like a better person? If so, how? Each of the IM-5 strategies had two related questions. Other questions were specifically asked to determine the breadth and depth of communication in these father-daughter relationships. For example, one of the questions related to breadth was: What do you and your father communicate most about?

At the end of each interview, participants were verbally asked short demographic questions. Participants answered questions about their age, race/ethnicity, religious background, current level in school (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate) and relationship to their father (biological, step or adoptive). The questions used for the semi-structured interviews as well as the demographic questions are available in [APPENDIX C](#).

After completion of each interview, the researcher conducted a word-for-word transcription of the interview. To ensure confidentiality, email correspondence between the researcher and participant were deleted following the interview, the consent forms were filed away and any names given in the interviews were changed at the time of interview transcription. After transcriptions were completed, they were printed out and randomly assigned pseudonyms of the researcher's choosing. Audio versions of the interviews were deleted from the recording device and the researcher's personal laptop after ensuring that each transcription was accurately transcribed. Hard copy versions of the transcriptions were secured separate from the consent forms. The data from each of the interviews was deductively analyzed for impression management strategies and how those strategies influenced breadth and depth in communication in father-daughter dyads using thematic analysis.

## **Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that may be used to identify themes within data (Miller, 2016). A thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts from 10 semi-structured interviews. After the ten interview transcriptions were completed, the researcher first read through each of the transcripts and wrote personal memos in the margins that indicated areas of interest to the researcher. Some memos referred to connections to literature or similarities that were present among the interviews.

For RQ1, the researcher deductively identified and coded for the breadth and depth of father-daughter communication and how that was influenced by IM-5 strategies. First, the researcher used a black ink pen to label each instance of breadth and depth for each of the ten transcripts. For breadth, the researcher looked for instances in which the participants reported on what topics were discussed with their fathers. The participants reported breadth of communication when explaining what they chose to discuss with their fathers. Any time a participant said they discussed a certain topic, like academics or cars, that was considered an example of breadth because it illustrated more range in what daughters discussed with their fathers. For depth, the researcher looked for instances in which the participants reported communicating about a topic in more than surface-level detail. Instances in which daughters reported communicating about feelings, emotions, seeking advice or giving opinions about topics were considered examples of depth. Then, the researcher used a black ink pen to label instances of limitations in breadth and depth. The researcher looked for reported instances of participants avoiding certain topics or avoiding discussing some topics in detail. For example, some daughters reported that they avoided communicating about relationships altogether with their fathers (limitation in breadth) while other daughters reported that they did communicate about

relationships but the conversations were superficial (limitation in depth). The coded data was reviewed a second time to ensure accuracy and consistency between transcriptions.

Once the breadth and depth and the limitations in breadth and depth were identified on the transcript hard copies, the researcher deductively analyzed the data of each interview line by line to identify and code for the IM-5 strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication and intimidation) reported by the participants. Each of the five strategies were coded for independently. The researcher began with ingratiation. As the researcher read through each transcript, she highlighted every instance of ingratiation. If there was a question of whether or not a statement was ingratiation, the researcher highlighted it and wrote a memo next to that section in the transcript. Once the researcher finished coding for ingratiation in all ten transcripts, the researcher moved on the next strategy. This process was repeated until each of the IM-5 strategies were coded for using a different colored highlighter on the same transcript hard copies. Then, the researcher reviewed each transcription a second time using the same process to ensure that each of the strategies were accurately and consistently identified (Miller, 2016).

To answer RQ1, the researcher analyzed the data for overlaps with the IM-5 strategies (previously highlighted in five different colors) and breadth and depth and placed that content into a separate word document. Within that same word document, the labeled data was organized into two themes: (1) promotion of breadth and depth in father-daughter communication and (2) limitations to breadth and depth in father-daughter communication. Under each of those themes, the researcher divided the data into subthemes with the corresponding color and IM-5 strategy. For example, every instance that breadth and depth was coded and overlapped the highlighted instances of ingratiation, those parts of the transcripts were placed under the first theme in the analysis for RQ1. The data was compared again by each IM-5 strategy. Subthemes were created

to explain how breadth and depth and limitations in breadth and depth in communication were both positively and negatively influenced by impression management.

To answer RQ2, the researcher grouped content identified as representing each IM-5 strategy from the original highlighted document into a separate word document. Each strategy was considered a theme. Then, for each of the IM-5 strategies, the researcher grouped together parts of the transcripts that had commonalities and developed subthemes based on how each of those strategies was reported by the participants in this study. For example, the researcher found many references to the avoidance of communication about relationships with fathers under ingratiation. Each of those reported instances were placed together as one subtheme. The themes for RQ1 and RQ2 were reviewed by the researcher's thesis advisor to ensure accuracy.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

#### **RQ1: How do daughters use impression management strategies to influence breadth and depth of communication with their fathers?**

##### **Perception of openness and intimacy – “We’re just really close.”**

The daughters interviewed for this study agreed that their overall relationships with their fathers were close, and they felt that the communication between them was open and comfortable. When describing her relationship with her father, Sasha said, “I would say it is open and accepting and I have always been kind of a ‘daddy’s girl’ since I was young.” She went on to say that she felt a closer bond with her father than her mother. When asked about her relationship with her father, Beth said, “We’re just really close. He’s like my best friend honestly.” She described her father as “a really good dude. He’s my homie.” Judith and Denise also felt that their communication with their fathers was open. Judith said, “We do have a really open and honest relationship. “We communicate about just really anything.” Sophia said, “So, for me, I have always seen my father and I [sic], our connection to be really strong.”

A number of the daughters in this study reported being thankful for their positive relationships with their fathers. Tara said, “I am grateful that I have a father that is there, that listens and is helpful, that doesn’t judge me, you know, on all areas, but somebody that is willing to sacrifice his all for me.” She went on to say, “I would not be here without him. He’s very supportive.” Carol felt similarly and said, “I think that my relationship with my father had made me a better adult and a better person.” She explained that because her father was so open with her and was supportive, she was more “emotionally adjusted and ready for the real world.”

Sophia considered the negative relationships that some of her peers have with their fathers and said, “It just makes me kind of happy that I am able to talk to my dad about just about anything and communicate as well as I do with him.”

Analysis of interview data in this study indicated that impression management strategies both positively and negatively influenced the breadth and depth of communication in father-daughter relationships. Two overarching themes emerged in answer to the first research question: 1) promotion of breadth and depth in father-daughter communication, and 2) limitations in breadth and depth in father-daughter communication.

### **Theme 1: Promotion of breadth and depth in father-daughter communication**

Ingratiation, exemplification and the avoidance of supplication were the Impression Management (IM-5) strategies found to positively influence the breadth and depth of communication from interviews with daughters in this study. This theme was composed of three subthemes: 1) daughters’ use of ingratiation to promote breadth and depth positively influenced openness and intimacy, 2) daughters’ use of exemplification to promote breadth and depth positively influenced openness and intimacy, and 3) daughters’ avoidance of supplication promoted breadth and depth. The IM-5 self-promotion and intimidation strategies were not found to promote breadth and depth in the father-daughter relationships in this study.

#### **Subtheme 1: Daughters’ use of ingratiation to promote breadth and depth positively influenced openness and intimacy.**

The IM-5 ingratiation strategy was used to promote and maintain likeability by displaying positive emotions or offering compliments. This strategy was achieved through opinion conformity and self-enhancement through self-presentation in which daughters would cautiously share or not share information with their desired image in mind. Daughters in this

study reported ways in which they used the IM-5 strategy of ingratiation to promote the breadth and depth of communication with their fathers. Daughters reported seeking out their fathers for ongoing conversations and advice about work, academics, finances and various other topics.

Sasha said, “I choose to go to him with, like, school and work and that kind of thing, most of the time, talking to him about homework or grades or, um, some personal problems.” This communication promoted openness and intimacy in these father-daughter dyads.

*Breadth.* The daughters in this study reported a wide range of breadth when communicating with their fathers. Daughters reported being comfortable and finding their fathers supportive when they sought conversations with their fathers when asking for advice on a variety of topics. Sophia explained that she felt comfortable communicating with her father about anything. She said, “That’s how we keep up. I think that’s why we’re so close because we don’t have secrets between the two of us.” Andrea reported that she felt comfortable being straightforward with her father in their conversations. She said, “I’m honest about it all because I can really like, if I’m really frustrated I can let it all out and he’s the one that’s kind of, like, lets me go out and ramble about it and doesn’t try to butt in or put his two cents into my conversation.” Andrea said she was more likely to seek out her father whenever she was having problems in her life.

Tara felt that there was a great deal of breadth in her relationship with her father. She said, “We talk about pretty much anything. We talk about places, politics, news, gossip, you know, fashion. Even up to my personal intimate wears. I can tell him if I need something.” Similarly, Sasha reported breadth in her communication with her father and felt that she could talk with her father about many topics. She said, “I think I can talk to him about political or religious things without any type of judgement.” Carol stated, “So, I call him pretty regularly and

we talk about a lot of things. Uh, politics, my job situation, college, clients, the construction business. Pretty diverse topics overall.” When asked what she discussed with her father the most, Enid said, “Work, what my plans are for the summer, and a lot of car stuff. If anything happens with my car, he’s the one I call.” Similarly, Sophia reported that she discussed finances, education, and car issues with her father.

*Depth.* When explaining why she sought out her father for advice on certain topics, Sasha said, “I think he’s, we’re a little bit more alike personality-wise and I think that intellectually and academically, I kind of relate to him more than I relate to my mom.” Sasha agreed and said, “So, I’ve always just talked to him about school and work when I was younger because we just, I think, personally are on the same level there and I am more like he was when he was in high school/college kind of range.” In addition, Maggie and Carol reported seeking advice from their fathers on a variety of topics as well. Maggie said, “I would say I prefer to speak with my dad more about advice, whether it’s life advice or relationship, friendship, school. He really is a good listener.”

Some daughters in this study sought out their fathers for advice concerning their careers. Tara, Beth, Denise, Carol and Enid reported work as one of the most common topics in which they communicated with their fathers. Denise and Carol both reported that they communicated about work with their fathers because of the similarities in their careers. Denise said, “My dad is a nurse and I am pre-med, biology and I work in a nursing home and so we share quite a bit of stories about what kind of things we see at work.” Enid said, “He is really good at helping me decide between two options if it comes down to tough decisions.” Carol reported communicating with her father more deeply about work-related matters because “I like to talk to him about what his perception is on whether I’m getting hustled or I’m doing the hustling. I really appreciate his

perspective.” Depth was promoted in these situations as daughters used ingratiation to seek advice on important life decisions.

Interviewees also reported increased depth in their communication with their fathers when talking about their careers and education. Because of similarities in their career interests, Denise and her father talked frequently about her pursuit of becoming a doctor. Sophia, Sasha and Beth also reported frequently communicating with their fathers about their progress in school.

Communication surrounding friends and family and advice about these relationships was another topic where daughters reported depth. Judith said, “Sometimes I’ll ask him or we will just talk about our family and have conversations about what is going on and who’s doing what.” Judith reported that both she and her father communicated about her mother, and her father would often ask for Judith’s advice on how he should communicate with her. Sophia said, “We talk about family problems sometimes.” Sophia’s mother was diagnosed with cancer, and she reported communicating to her father about that as well as what was going on with other family members. Sasha reported communicating “pretty deeply about” friendships with her father and reported going to him for advice when she had a fight with a friend. She said, “Just recently I have, like, somewhat of a falling out with a friend, who’s been my best friend for, uh, since, like, fifth grade, and I talked to my dad about it. I just went home for spring break, and I talked to him about it. I pretty much told him everything about the situation.”

Judith and Tara both reported taking an interest in athletics simply because sports were important to their fathers. When referencing when she communicated with her father about sports, Judith said, “He gets really excited. He’s not a very animated person so to see him get excited brings me joy, so sometimes I will bring up topics that I know he’s excited about just to

see him get excited because I know he likes to talk about those things.” While Judith reported being happy that communicating about sports with her father made him happy, she also said, “I’m sitting there, like, thinking I don’t really care about this topic.” Tara said, “I love watching wrestling now. Or I can stand watching soccer and wrestling... I see when my dad watches those sports, he likes them and we talk about. We bond more, you know.”

These instances illustrated how the use of the IM-5 ingratiation strategy promoted depth in communication and positively influenced openness and intimacy in these father-daughter relationships. Daughters reported seeking out fathers for advice on work, their education and about friends and family members. They also took an interest in sports to deepen their connections with their fathers. Tara felt that her close relationship with her father led to her seeking him out more. Even though Tara reported not communicating every detail with her father, she said, “He gives me advice. He’s supportive, in terms of emotionally, he’s very supportive.” The use of ingratiation promoted depth in communication with their fathers and led to more openness and intimacy in these father-daughter relationships.

**Subtheme 2: Daughters’ use of exemplification to promote breadth and depth positively influenced openness and intimacy.**

The IM-5 exemplification strategy was used to achieve an appearance of worthiness through actions rather than verbal communication. Daughters would demonstrate their abilities and integrity to promote breadth and depth in their father-daughter relationships. Daughters in this study reported using exemplification and promoted the breadth and depth of communication by aligning their behavior and interests with those of their fathers. Daughters reported using exemplification when taking part in activities and sharing common interests with their fathers, behaving more openly with their fathers and through participation in sports.

Some daughters reported not feeling as though they had to modify their behavior around their fathers. Beth, Maggie and Judith both reported acting the same around their fathers as they would their friends. Sophia reported feeling that she was apt to be more open around her father than her friends. She said, “Yeah, most definitely because my friends are, a lot of my friends are out-going and they’re less accepting, so sometimes I have to kind of conform what I say or what I do so that I don’t offend anybody. So, I do act differently around them or speak differently around them than I do my father.” In these instances, the IM-5 exemplification strategy positively influenced the breadth and depth of intimacy in these father-daughter relationships. These daughters reported feeling comfortable enough to portray their behavior consistently, rather than modifying it to achieve a certain image.

There were instances in which daughters reported taking part in activities or sharing interests with their fathers, even if the daughters reported not being interested in those activities for themselves. Denise explained that by spending time working with her father on her grandfather’s motorcycle, she developed an interest in motorcycles that she didn’t have prior to this project. She said, “It has led me to getting a motorcycle license now so I guess that’s kind of changed my perspective on what I’m interested in.” Judith reported taking more of an interest in her yard because of her father’s interest in keeping a well-manicured lawn. She said, “I make sure to take good care of it so when he sees it, he’ll be impressed.”

Maggie, Sophia, Andrea, Carol and Enid reported that they made efforts to go hunting or fishing with their fathers even though they didn’t personally enjoy these activities. Maggie said she shot clay pigeons with her father because of his interest in hunting. She went on to explain that they also went bowling together, which she enjoyed, and watched the same television shows.

Sophia said, “I actually enjoy going out and fishing and such. So, I try to do things with him, just to try to build a better bond and get to know him better than I do.”

In addition, Sophia and Beth reported watching television shows and movies with their fathers that they didn’t always like to watch to intensify their father-daughter bonds. When talking about a movie that her father loves to watch, Beth said, “And like it’s the weirdest movie ever, but I’ll just sit there and watch it with him.” Exemplification positively influenced the breadth and depth of intimacy in these father-daughter relationships because daughters were purposely choosing to engage in activities to spend more time with their fathers and build a stronger connection.

Daughters similarly reported building stronger connections with their fathers by participating in sports. Andrea has played softball since she was very young and attributes part of her closeness with her father to their mutual interest in sports. She said, “Me and my dad are really close. So, I play softball and growing up, he was really that, kind of, mentor, that coach and everything.” Andrea utilized the IM-5 exemplification strategy to positively influence breadth and depth in her relationship with her father.

Daughters in this study reported using the IM-5 exemplification strategy when taking part in activities and sharing common interests with their fathers, behaving more openly with their fathers and through participating in sports. At times, these daughters adapted their behavior and interests for the benefit of their bonds with their fathers. These instances, when daughters’ reported participating in activities in order to better the bond with their fathers, illustrated how exemplification positively influenced the breadth and depth of intimacy in their relationships with their fathers.

### **Subtheme 3: Daughters' avoidance of supplication promoted breadth and depth.**

The IM-5 supplication strategy was not reported as being used by half of the daughters in this study because it was counterproductive to their desired image. This strategy would be used to achieve the appearance of helplessness or being unknowledgeable through the advertisement of weaknesses. Most of the daughters were able to be open and communicate their knowledge honestly rather than pretending to be unknowledgeable to avoid tasks. When asked if she ever played dumb or pretended to not know something around her father, Enid said, "No, not really. He knows me really well and I can just be really open and honest around him." Sasha responded, "I don't think so. I can't think of any situation like that."

Denise explained why she didn't use supplication. "I think my dad has some valuable input on every single thing we talk about, he's kind of a jack of all trades and I more often than not would want to show off what I've learned to him." Similarly, Judith said, "I like to, any time I do know information about something, I'm going to speak up about it for sure because he's so smart, and I want to be as smart as he is, so I just want him to see that I'm not an idiot." By avoiding the use of supplication in their communication with their fathers, the daughters in this study influenced breadth and depth and positively promoted openness and intimacy.

### **Theme 2: Limitations in breadth and depth in father-daughter communication**

Participants in this study revealed a variety of limitations in the breadth and depth of communication that existed in their father-daughter relationships. This theme had two subthemes: 1) daughters' use of ingratiation to maintain likeability negatively influenced breadth and depth and 2) daughters' use of exemplification to hide undesirable behavior negatively influenced breadth and depth. The IM-5 self-promotion, supplication and intimidation strategies

were not reported as being used by daughters in this study in a way that negatively influenced breadth and depth in communication. Both IM-5 strategies used and their relationship to the limitations in breadth and depth were explained below.

**Subtheme 1: Daughters' use of ingratiation to maintain likeability negatively influenced breadth and depth.**

Daughters in this study reported using the IM-5 ingratiation strategy to maintain their desired image with their fathers. They achieved this by limiting breadth and depth about topics that could negatively impact their likeability or be counterproductive in attaining the desired image daughters wanted their fathers to have of them. This negatively influenced openness and intimacy in these relationships. Under this subtheme, there were five sub-subthemes: 1) ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth regarding relationships, 2) ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth of communication about family, 3) ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth of communication about emotions, 4) ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth and deception, and 5) ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth and communication about politics.

**Sub-subtheme 1: Ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth regarding romantic relationships.**

Daughters reported that they limited breadth in communication by avoiding communication about a variety of topics, including romantic relationships, sexuality, politics, their mother or other relatives, religion and emotions. However, the most avoided topic was romantic relationships. Judith, Carol, Enid, Tara, Sasha and Sophia each reported that they avoided communicating details about romantic relationships with their fathers. Enid stated, "I can usually call him about anything, except friendships and boyfriends because he doesn't

understand that.” Tara reported, “Boyfriends. And that’s the one thing that he hears last, you know, because he’s the kind of guy that doesn’t, because he has five daughters, so he’s very protective.” Sasha engaged in ingratiation and did not communicate about “girl stuff” with her father to maintain her likeability by avoiding potentially awkward conversations that could detract from the image she was trying to portray. She said, “Uh, I think like personal intimate stuff with relationships I probably would never talk to him about.” In doing so, the breadth and depth of intimacy within their relationships with their fathers were limited.

Although, not all of the daughters reported completely avoiding the topic of romantic relationships, some daughters reported limiting how much detail they gave their fathers. When referring to discussing her boyfriend with her father, Sasha reported that she would leave out the details of fights and only tell her father positive things. Judith also said, “I do bring up little things here and there, especially if I feel like it’s necessary that he knows about it.”

### **Sub-subtheme 2: Ingratiation’s influence on limitations in breadth and depth of communication about family.**

Two daughters in this study also reportedly avoided discussing their mothers or other family members when they were concerned it would create tension with their fathers. This ingratiation strategy was used to limit breadth and depth to avoid discomfort and promote likeability. This resulted in limited openness and intimacy around these topics. Denise said, “If I avoid anything else, it’s usually talking about my mom with my dad because they did not have a good relationship after the divorce and my sister and I were kind of used as liaisons between their conversations and that was not a good experience.” Beth also reported that she avoided communicating about her mother and other family members on that side. These instances

illustrated how ingratiation could be used to limit the breadth and depth of intimacy in father-daughter relationships.

**Sub-subtheme 3: Ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth of communication about emotions.**

Maggie and Sasha both reported using ingratiation to maintain likeability and avoid awkwardness by not discussing their emotions with their fathers. This was an example of limitations in the depth of communication within these two father-daughter relationships. Sasha said, "Because I'm more of an emotional person, and my dad, he's emotional for a guy, but at the same time, it's kinda like I wouldn't want ... sometimes he thinks I'm too emotional at times."

**Sub-subtheme 4: Ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth and deception.**

Another instance in which the use of ingratiation negatively influenced breadth and depth in father-daughter communication was when daughters reported adapting information to be seen in a more positive light. Maggie reported changing how she communicated information to her father when she feared his response. She said, "Um, in situations where I know that I did something wrong, I explain it to my dad just to let him know that I did something wrong, but I make it sound like someone else did something wrong and I was just there." Sasha reported leaving out information when communicating with her father that could detract from her desired image. When asked if she adapted information to make herself look better to her father, Beth said, "It's not that I don't tell him things, I just kind of stray away from some things that would make me sound like a bad person."

**Sub-subtheme 5: Ingratiation's influence on limitations in breadth and depth and communication about politics.**

Avoiding the discussion of politics was another instance in which daughters reported using ingratiation in a way that negatively influenced breadth and depth. Enid said, “I will just agree with whatever he says political because I do not want to get in that conversation with him. That is one subject that I do not like to go with.” Beth agreed that politics was also a topic that she avoided discussing with her father. She said, “Uh, usually I just try not to talk about it. Like, we will be watching the news or something and something about Trump will come on. And he will make a comment about it ‘Yeah, I think Trump is a really good president. I think putting up the wall is a good idea’ and I’m just like, I usually just try to keep quiet just like, ‘okay, don’t’ share your opinion.’”

Ingratiation was used in these instances to maintain likeability by limiting breadth and depth in communication about various topics. This was especially true when daughters believed that communicating about the topics would negatively impact the daughters’ desired image and detract from her overall likeability. By using ingratiation in this manner, the breadth and depth of intimacy in these father-daughter relationships were limited.

**Subtheme 2: Daughters’ use of exemplification to hide undesirable behavior negatively influenced breadth and depth.**

Daughters in this study reported modifying their behavior around their fathers to appear worthy and as though their values aligned with their fathers’ values. Daughters used the IM-5 exemplification strategy to modify their use of emotion around their fathers and to modify their behavior so that they demonstrated actions that they believed their fathers would find more acceptable. In doing so, daughters restricted breadth and depth in communication and limited the openness and intimacy within their father-daughter relationships.

Maggie and Sasha both reported modifying how they displayed their emotions around their fathers because of their assumptions of their fathers' reactions. Maggie tried not to cry in front of her father because of his negative response when she had cried in front of him in the past. Sasha also said, "I think if I, I cry a lot. I'm kind of an emotional, sensitive person and I think that, um, sometimes my dad is like 'you need to stop doing that, people are going to think you're a cry baby' and stuff, so, I don't always, um, always show my emotions completely with him, but sometimes I do." These daughters' use of exemplification to hide behaviors that displayed their feelings from their fathers created limitations in the breadth and depth of communication, negatively impacting intimacy.

Daughters in this study also reported modifying their behavior to appear worthy. Beth reported that she would modify her behavior on social media because of concerns that her father would not approve. She said, "Sometimes, like there was this really funny, like, dis-rap about Trump that I really wanted to share, but my dad, he always, like, comments on everything I share on Facebook or, like, reacts to it." Carol also modified her behavior around her father by avoiding swearing in his presence in order to be viewed in a more favorable light. She felt that he wouldn't approve of that language because of his religious beliefs. Similarly, Sophia avoided complaining about things with her father because of his negative reaction. She said, "I don't know, sometimes I just want to rant to him. And he's the kind of man that doesn't want to hear that stuff."

The IM-5 exemplification strategy was reported as being used by daughters to modify their behavior in order to maintain the appearance of being worthy and to uphold their desired image of making their fathers proud. By modifying their behavior, daughters in this study limited

the breadth and depth of their communication, thus limiting the openness and intimacy that existed in their relationships with their fathers.

### **Summation of RQ1**

The breadth and depth of intimacy in father-daughter communication was found to be both positively and negatively influenced by the IM-5 strategies reported by daughters in this study. Daughters' use of ingratiation, exemplification and the avoidance of supplication was found to positively influence breadth and depth when their language and behavior aligned with their desired image. In addition, daughters' use of ingratiation and exemplification were found to negatively influence breadth and depth when their communication or behavior was perceived as threatening to their desired image of making their father proud.

### **RQ2: How did daughters' communication with fathers reflect usage of impression management strategies?**

#### **The Desired Image – Making Dad Proud**

The consensus among the ten female participants in this study was that they desired to make their fathers proud while exhibiting a positive and independent image. Judith said, "I think mostly I just want him to be proud of me and everything that I do." Maggie, Beth, Sasha, Tara, Denise and Carol shared this desire. Enid wanted "him to have the image of a very hardworking, successful daughter." Andrea also wanted to be viewed as hardworking and dedicated. Sophia said, "I've always tried to be the independent girl, so I want him to see me as someone who has control in my life and not someone who, you know, is out constantly, you know." Data analysis revealed how the daughters in this study used IM-5 strategies to advance this desired image through communication with their fathers and how the use of these strategies ultimately influenced the breadth and depth of communication in their relationships.

A thematic analysis of interview data with women who identified as having a positive relationship with their fathers during their adolescence and young adulthood revealed that openness and intimacy in these relationships was both positively and negatively influenced by the IM-5 strategies. The desire to make their fathers proud of them framed the context for understanding their communication strategies in terms of openness, intimacy, breadth and depth. Three of the five IM-5 strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion and exemplification) were reported as the most used by daughters in this study. Supplication and intimidation strategies were reported minimally as they were perceived by participants as counterproductive to their desired image.

### **Theme 1: Ingratiation**

Ingratiation was used to increase friendliness and likeability through communication. Essentially, daughters wanted to be in their fathers' favor. In this study, ingratiation was used by daughters in ways that influenced openness and intimacy, which were explained further in the following two subthemes: 1) daughters' use of ingratiation positively influenced openness and intimacy, and 2) daughters' use of ingratiation negatively influenced openness and intimacy. Daughters both shared with and hid information from their fathers selectively to promote their desired image. Both sharing and withholding information were considered ingratiation as, in both cases, daughters were working to establish and maintain a desired image and likeability with their fathers.

#### **Subtheme 1: Daughters use of ingratiation positively influenced openness and intimacy.**

Data analysis illustrated that daughters positively influenced openness and intimacy through ingratiation by highlighting certain aspects of their character when communicating with their fathers. Two sub-subthemes were identified in analysis: 1) daughters achieved likeability

through openness with limitations, and 2) daughters increased openness and intimacy in relationships by seeking advice. While daughters generally reported positive and open communication with their fathers, some aspects of their communication were adapted to uphold their desired image. Daughters also increased openness and intimacy by seeking advice, specifically educational or vocational advice, as a way of making father feel appreciated and that their knowledge and experience was valued.

**Sub-subtheme 1: Daughters achieved likeability through openness with limitations.**

Some women in this study felt that their relationships with their fathers were already positive and that they did not have to drastically adapt their communication with them to appear more likeable or friendly, yet limitations in the topics they discussed did exist. Sophia and Denise both held the view that they did not need to modify their communication in any way with their fathers. Denise summarized their views when she stated, “I am pretty honest with my dad about situations and stories.” Despite Sophia and Denise feeling that they didn’t need to modify their communication with their fathers, they also reported adapting information or not discussing certain topics with their fathers later in their interviews. This illustrated the discrepancy in their perceived level of openness and intimacy and their actual level of openness and intimacy.

Beth and Judith also felt that they didn’t need to make changes to the language they used when communicating with their fathers. Beth felt free to swear in front of her father, and she reported that he would swear around her as well. When asked if she ever adapted communication to make herself look better, Judith said, “No, I really don’t. I don’t cuss a lot but when I do, I do it about the same amount around my friends as him. And I don’t drink a lot either but I’ll drink the same amount around my friends as I would my dad. Sometimes we’ll have a bloody Mary together.” Both Beth and Judith felt their relationships with their fathers were strong enough that

they didn't need to change their communication. Similar to Sophia and Denise, Beth and Judith also reported other instances in which they would have limitations on certain topics discussed even though in the previous reports, they felt that they could communicate openly.

The other six women in this study admitted that they did not communicate everything with their fathers even though they felt secure in their relationships. These daughters utilized ingratiation by communicating frequently on a variety of topics with their fathers. This promoted likeability and friendliness by illustrating closeness. Tara reported that she was very comfortable communicating with her father, and when asked about her relationship with him, she said, "Well, I would say it's pretty good. I don't tell him everything, obviously, but we have a good talking relationship, we talk. I can confide in him." Sasha felt similarly, "There's nothing that I really leave out when it comes to friendships. He knows about most of my friends that I have made in college. I have told him about my friends. Obviously, not every single detail but he knows most of it." Denise, Tara and Carol reported that they changed the way in which they communicated with their fathers in comparison to how they communicated with friends. Tara said, "With my dad, maybe because of my culture, but with my dad, I try not to curse. I try to be more respectful in my choice of words." Carol reported feeling similarly to Tara, and Denise said that while she did swear in front of her father, she did so much less, than with her friends, she will "definitely tone it down."

Most the women in this study admitted to adapting their communication in more acceptable ways for their fathers to achieve likeability, by sharing some details while leaving out others. Maggie explained that she did this in situations where she was uncomfortable. "I would still tell him, but I would tell him in a different way so it's not as awkward." Despite not being completely open about every aspect of their lives, daughters still promoted openness and

intimacy by sharing with their fathers about their friendships and other experiences while simultaneously working to uphold their desired image through limitations on what was discussed.

**Sub-subtheme 2: Daughters increased openness and intimacy in relationships by seeking advice.**

Interviewees reported seeking out their fathers for advice in making decisions, specifically financial and vocational advice as well as guidance in their personal lives. Enid said, “When I was looking for an internship. I would call my dad if I got accepted by two, like which one should I decline and which one should I take.” When desiring vocational advice, Denise also looked to her father because of the commonality they share in their careers. She said, “My dad is a nurse and I am pre-med, biology and I work in a nursing home and so we share quite a bit of stories about what kind of things we see at work and I think he’s really involved in my pursuit of being a doctor someday and really wants to foster that.”

Andrea also reported seeking out her father when she felt irritated with her educational progress. She said, “So, if I have a class and I like failed a test and I’m like frustrated with a teacher or something like that, I would go to him.” Maggie even reported going to her father for something as simple as making decisions on what to buy at the grocery store. “Or if I’m going to the grocery store and I want to buy a certain snack, and call him um and like, “Hey dad, this snack is like \$10, should I still buy it?” You know, simple stuff like that.” By seeking out their fathers for advice on these topics, daughters reinforced their connection by showing their fathers that their insights were desired, appreciated and often needed.

**Subtheme 2: Daughters’ use of ingratiation negatively influenced openness and intimacy.**

Data analysis illustrated that daughters also negatively influenced openness and intimacy in their relationships with their fathers through ingratiation. This subtheme was explained using four sub-subthemes: 1) daughters limited openness and intimacy through deception to maintain likeability, 2) daughters limited openness and intimacy to avoid tension and increase likeability, 3) daughters limited openness and intimacy regarding romantic relationships, and 4) daughters limited openness and intimacy concerning body changes and appearance to avoid awkwardness.

**Sub-subtheme 1: Daughters limited openness and intimacy through deception to maintain likeability.**

Sasha, Maggie and Judith each reported changing how they communicated with their fathers or the information they told them in order to maintain a positive image of themselves in their fathers' eyes. Sasha said, "Um, I think, I feel like maybe I just leave out certain parts of stories. If I think they're kind of ... or just try to make them seem a little bit better, like little white lies maybe, in some situations." Maggie reported behaving in a similar way to preserve the image her father has of her. She would go to her father when she made a mistake, but Maggie said that rather than accepting responsibility for her actions, she would blame someone else. Maggie also reported leaving out information when she went to parties to preserve her image with her father. "A lot of it may be, you know, if I was going to a party, you know, I might not tell him what I did at the party or something like that. Because, you know, not very many people would tell their parents that stuff."

Maggie explained why she chose to change or leave out information in her communication with her father. "A lot of the times I don't talk to my dad about a certain subject is probably because I don't want to hear his reaction. Because I know that it will either disappoint him or he won't care." Sasha reported that the reason she changed or left out

information when communicating with her father was because “sometimes I think that I can kind of do that because I don’t want him to know, um, all of my weakness I guess.”

Interviewees reported that there were times when they felt the truth would take away from or damage their desired image with their father. To keep this from happening, they adapted or excluded information that could tarnish their image. This action of limiting openness and intimacy maintained their likeability with their father as it allowed daughters to portray themselves in a consistently positive manner. It also negatively influenced openness and intimacy.

**Sub-subtheme 2: Daughters limited openness and intimacy to avoid tension and increase likeability.**

While the majority of daughters in this study felt that most topics were open for discussion with their fathers, there were some topics that daughters chose to avoid because of either how they anticipated their fathers would react or because the daughters themselves felt uncomfortable discussing the topics.

Politics was frequently cited as a primary topic avoided in these father-daughter relationships. Beth explained, “Politics. That’s super stressful. He’s a Republican, I’m not. He voted for Trump. It’s just, like, anytime we talk about politics or anything like political at all, it just gets super-heated and it’s not fun to talk about.” Judith reported that politics was also something that she avoided discussing with her father because they didn’t support the same candidate. The tension that these conversations could create in these father-daughter relationships was viewed as threatening by participants. They avoided these topics to maintain their already established likeability with their fathers.

Other women in this study reportedly avoided discussing other family members with their fathers because of family dynamics. Beth explained “We don’t talk about my mom, we don’t talk about his family, any of that. Like I am, I’ve met his whole side of the family and stuff but we never visit them. We don’t really talk about family, it’s just kind of us.” Denise reported that she felt uncomfortable discussing her mother with her father because her parents were divorced and not on good terms.

The daughters in this study felt that they knew what topics would create tension in their father-daughter relationships from either 1) assumptions about the responses from their fathers or 2) prior experience with their fathers’ reactions. To avoid this tension and the possibility of damaging their likeability and desired image with their fathers, the daughters in this study reported using ingratiation by limiting the breadth and depth in their communication about topics that could lead to disagreements or threaten likeability. By using ingratiation in this way, the daughters maintained their likeability and desired image with their fathers.

### **Sub-subtheme 3: Daughters limited openness and intimacy regarding romantic relationships.**

Women interviewed for this study reported avoiding or limiting the amount of information they shared about romantic relationships with their fathers. Sophia said, “I usually don’t talk about how I am feeling or about relationships and such.” She recounted a weekend she had spent with her family and her boyfriend, “I just kind of let it run its course and I didn’t say much of anything. My mom, my dad and my boyfriend kind of talked, so, I didn’t get uncomfortable, I just don’t put much input into it.” Carol also said that “boys” was a topic that was discussed the least with her father.

Tara and Judith told their fathers about their romantic relationships but only when there was something that they felt was important. Tara reported that discussing boyfriends with her father was one of the topics she communicated with her father the least about. She said, “He sees guys as, you know, guys. If you want to talk to my dad about a boyfriend, it should be someone that you are taking serious. You know, you’re sure about him. But if you’re talking about a guy you’re just seeing, you’re not sure about, you’re just having fun, then oh no, he doesn’t want to hear that.” Judith felt similarly and reported that she communicated with her father about her boyfriend if they had broken up or if there was something else that she felt was important to tell him. Both women said that they didn’t communicate casually with their fathers about men they were interested in dating or were not serious about.

Andrea indicated that she didn’t communicate with her father about her boyfriend when they first started dating, “especially in the beginning, it was not very much about relationships.” Sasha communicated with her father about some aspects of her romantic relationship, “but not super detailed stuff like fights or anything. I’m just like ‘oh yeah, we’re good!’ and I just tell him that. I mean, he knows about my relationship, but he doesn’t know um as in depth as my mom does about it.” Sophia reported that she didn’t like to talk to her father about “girl stuff” or relationships, but he has offered his opinion, saying “he just kind of tells me ‘that boy is bad’ or ‘that boy is good.’” Enid said that even though she can usually discuss anything with her father, romantic relationships and friendships are off limits. “He doesn’t understand that.” Judith said that her father “doesn’t really care to know the details of all of that stuff.”

Ingratiation was used in these instances to limit openness and intimacy in these father-daughter relationships using selective self-presentation. Daughters in this study avoided communicating about romantic relationships in great detail or at all with their fathers to maintain

their likeability. By avoiding discussing romantic relationships with their fathers yet seeking their fathers out for more educational and vocational topics, daughters worked to reaffirm their desired image.

**Sub-subtheme 4: Daughters limited openness and intimacy concerning body changes and appearance to avoid awkwardness.**

The daughters in this study also reported limited communication about puberty and sex related topics due to perceived awkwardness and the desire to keep their overall communication pleasant. In reference to topics Carol didn't like to discuss with her father, she said, "And probably just specifics about romantic relationships and feminine hygiene probably." Tara also reported that she limited communication with her father about "body changes" because "he was very uncomfortable with that." Tara was also uncomfortable in these situations, "Oh, I laugh a lot. Just to make it light, make the atmosphere light. But I think now it's better. When I was like 15-years-old, you know, before 18-years-old, I would have left the room if something came up about boyfriend or body changes. I was too embarrassed to talk about it." Sasha reported that she would not talk to her father about sex-related topics in conjunction with her relationship because it was also uncomfortable for her.

Daughters reported that they felt their fathers wouldn't understand from a female perspective. By using ingratiation in that instance, daughters were again maintaining likeability and avoiding awkwardness that could threaten their desired image with their fathers. Limiting openness and intimacy by avoiding uncomfortable or assumed undesirable conversations with their fathers allowed daughters to feel secure in their likeability status.

**Theme 2: Self-Promotion**

Self-promotion was the IM-5 strategy used to establish competence. The daughters in this study reported using self-promotion to impress their fathers and uphold their desired image to make their fathers proud. Overall, the use of self-promotion positively influenced openness and intimacy in these father-daughter relationships. Analysis of the data revealed that there were two ways in which self-promotion was reported: 1) daughters shared achievements to positively influence openness and intimacy, and 2) daughters demonstrated competence through language use.

**Subtheme 1: Daughters shared achievements to positively influence openness and intimacy.**

Daughters in this study reported seeking out their fathers to tell them about achievements and to impress their fathers with their skills to increase openness and intimacy in their relationships. Sophia reported calling her father immediately after she finds out good news. “I usually just pick up the phone and start screaming at him like what I did, or just get really excited about it. Then, he’ll tell me to calm down and repeat it because he is probably deaf. Usually I just get super excited and he gets super excited for me, or acts super excited for my sake.” Enid and Denise both reported that their fathers were the first to be told about an achievement. Denise said, “He is usually the first person to know. It’s really important to me that he knows about my accomplishments.”

Maggie, Beth and Tara reported specifically seeking out their fathers to tell them of their educational achievements. Maggie said, “It depends on how important it is and where he’s at, like if he’s at home then I’ll call him right away even if it’s like ‘oh, I got a B on my test today’ or something like that.” Beth said, “I’m usually pretty excited. Like when I got that 98 on my final, I texted him like right after I saw the grade, because he was like at work on something, and I texted all caps, like 20 exclamation marks and was like ‘Oh my God!’ and he was like ‘we’re

getting ice cream!” Tara explained that her work ethic in school has been partially because of her desire to make her father proud. “Yes, going to school, you know, getting my master’s. Getting my master’s is making him really proud. I used to, from when I was in elementary school, I used to try to be on top of the class. I tried my best. I read and I study and I think about my dad. Just because I want him to be proud of me. I want him to have this pride.”

Self-promotion was reported by daughters in this study as a means to make their fathers proud. Education and work-related achievements, which were also topics on which daughters reported seeking out their fathers for advice, were the most common achievements that daughters chose to share with their fathers. Daughters’ desires in these instances were to impress their fathers with their achievements. In doing so, there was a greater display of openness and intimacy in those father-daughter relationships.

### **Subtheme 2: Daughters demonstrated competence through language use.**

Daughters in this study reported that they wanted to demonstrate competence and impress their fathers through knowledge about a topic they have in common. Their overall goal was reported to be making their father feel proud, so their communication reflected their desired image. Judith explained that she wanted to show her father that she was competent and independent. “So, I try to do a lot of things myself, or if I can’t do it I will call him and ask him and say, ‘Hey I want to do this will you help me learn how?’ or um ‘I want to do this, but I need to buy something to do it, can you help me buy that?’ So just being able to show him that ‘Hey, I can do those things too, that you’ve taught me growing up.’” Judith wanted to include her father in the process so that he would see that she was capable.

Maggie used the same strategy and maintained her image by sharing her knowledge. She said, “If I know how to do something, then I’m going to do it. I’m pretty independent even

though I'm dependent on my dad for like a living situation." Both Judith and Maggie wanted to support the appearance of being strong, independent women. Judith said, "I like to, any time I do know information about something, I'm going to speak up about it for sure because he's so smart and I want to be as smart as he is so I just want him to see that I'm not an idiot."

Carol set out to impress her father with her knowledge about hunting in a conversation that took place before a hunting trip with her father and boyfriend. She said, "For instance, my boyfriend, uh, went and talked to him about guns, about which guns they are going to buy this upcoming quail season, and I participated in the discussion because he's very into the outdoors. So, things like that, yeah. Um, trying to appeal to what would make him happy." By taking part in that discussion about hunting with her father and boyfriend, Carol was illustrating her competence in a subject that her father cared about and was attempting to impress him with her knowledge and implied interest. On Facebook, Sasha reported that she posted things with her father in mind. "I'll post certain things, not just for him, but I do know in the back of my head 'my dad would be proud of me for posting this' or I'll just um just tell him stuff that I know he'll be proud of."

In these instances, daughters reported trying to demonstrate their competence through communication, and in doing so, they reaffirmed their desired image of appearing competent and independent to make their fathers proud while positively influencing openness in those relationships. Daughters cited in this section reported wanting to impress their fathers with their knowledge, so they communicated in ways that put their knowledge and favorable decisions on display.

### **Theme 3: Exemplification**

Exemplification was the IM-5 strategy used with the desire to appear worthy through actions. The motives of this strategy were similar to ingratiation and self-promotion; however, the focus is on actions or behaviors. Behavioral matching was reported by daughters under this theme as a way to show integrity and appear worthy. Daughters both negatively and positively influenced openness and intimacy through the use of exemplification. This theme was composed of three subthemes: 1) daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy through behavior and reactive modifications, 2) daughters positively influenced openness and intimacy through behavior consistency, and 3) daughters shared interests to positively influence openness and intimacy.

**Subtheme 1: Daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy through behavior and reactive modifications.**

Data analysis revealed that there were two different ways in which daughters made modifications to their behavior to appear worthy to their fathers: 1) daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy using behavioral modifications, and 2) daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy using reactive modifications. Both types of modifications were utilized by daughters to maintain their appearance of worthiness in their fathers' eyes as well as to promote the desire to make their fathers proud. By making these modifications, daughters limited openness and intimacy in their relationships with their fathers by hiding their true selves.

**Sub-subtheme 1: Daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy using behavioral modifications.**

When asked if they changed their behavior around their fathers to create or maintain a specific image, a few of the daughters in this study reported that they hid emotions from their fathers. Sasha reported that she hid emotional behaviors, like crying, from her father because of

his negative reactions to it. Maggie reported a similar strategy. She said, “I get really emotional so I don’t even like to because then he usually just tells me ‘quit crying about simple stuff, you just have to worry about stuff that’s worth worrying about.’” In these instances, daughters reported using exemplification to modify their behavior to appear less emotional. By changing their behavior, these daughters were able to maintain their desired image and exemplified an appearance of competence and strength but limited openness in their relationships.

Maggie and Andrea reported that their overall behavior changed when around their fathers. When talking about the difference in her behavior with her friends versus her father, Maggie described herself as “a little bit more out-there” when she was with her friends and siblings. However, when with her father, she indicated: “I just kind of censor it just a little bit.”. Andrea said, “I think I’m a lot more, I’m a very loud and out-going person, and my dad is very calm and quiet so I think around him I’m a little more like mellow than when I’m around other people.”

Beth even reported making changes to her future plans to demonstrate worthiness to her father and support a more positive image in his mind. Beth wanted to attend an online college instead of a four-year university. She said, “I didn’t like actually want to go to a university. I just think it’s like too much for me. I just really want to go to online college, but I haven’t been able to talk to him about it yet because I know he really wants me to go to an actual university.” Beth explained that she just wanted to “make him proud and happy” with her decision to attend a four-year university even though that wasn’t what she necessarily wanted.

In addition, social media was a place where some daughters in this study reported making modifications for their fathers. Beth reported not posting or sharing certain things on social media because of the reaction she anticipated from her father. She recalled choosing not to share

a political post because of his potential reaction to it. Maggie reported that she would change her behavior but that it wouldn't be very much. She said, "I wouldn't completely change. I would change very slightly, like barely noticeable. But the way I am publicly is almost the exact same way I am privately. Almost. But I act the same way towards my friends as I do my dad." Again, these instances illustrate limited openness in father-daughter relationships.

**Sub-subtheme 2: Daughters negatively influenced openness and intimacy using reactive modifications.**

Daughters reported modifying their emotions as well as their reactions around their fathers to appear worthy through exhibiting behavior their fathers would view as more acceptable. Sophia reported changing the tone in which she communicated with her father to maintain her desired image and show integrity. She said, "Maybe, just how, uh, sassy I can be sometimes and how, uh, rebellious. I sometimes try to tone that down, and I sometimes try to be as respectful as possible." Similarly, she avoided complaining to him about things that were bothering her because of how she thought he'd respond. Sophia reported that she wished that she should call him and "complain about things to him," but she doesn't feel like that would be welcome.

Daughters reported using the IM-5 exemplification strategy by modifying their behavior and language to hide their emotions, changing their tone when communicating with their fathers about certain topics and adapting how they used social media to appear more competent. The daughters in this study felt these modifications were necessary because of how their fathers had reacted in the past or how they assumed their fathers would react. These modifications were used to portray a self-image of worthiness while limiting openness and intimacy in their father-daughter relationships.

**Subtheme 2: Daughters positively influenced openness and intimacy through behavior consistency.**

In contrast to modifying their behavior to appear worthy, there were also areas in which daughters were consistent in their behavior around their fathers. Similar to ingratiation, daughters felt they already portrayed an image of worthiness to their fathers, and, therefore, did not have to make further efforts to achieve that image. Openness and intimacy already existed in these relationships which led to daughters not feeling as though they needed to modify their behavior.

Some women in this study reported that they would not need to change their social media behavior for their fathers. Judith, Tara and Sophia reported that they wouldn't need to change their behavior on social media at all because their relationships with their fathers were so open already. Judith said, "No, not at all. Because he wouldn't care. It wouldn't matter to him what I posted really and um and we talk about all of the things." Tara agreed that she wouldn't change anything either. Sophia reported that even though her father doesn't have a social media, her mother shows her father everything. She didn't feel that she needed to change her behavior and said, "I don't think it would affect me any."

For this subtheme, daughters using exemplification in this way reported that they did not modify their behavior, adapt their tones when communicating with their fathers or change what they posted on social media. Rather than feeling the need to make modifications, these daughters reported that they felt comfortable enough in their relationship with their fathers that they could behave and communicate consistently without fearing a threat to their appearance of worthiness.

By being consistent in their already perceived positive behavior, daughters' behavioral consistency positively influenced openness and intimacy.

### **Subtheme 3: Daughters shared interests to positively influence openness and intimacy.**

When asked if they tried to take interest in things their fathers were interested in to bond, most daughters in this study reported that they engaged in behavioral matching, meaning that they did things they didn't always enjoy so that they could spend more time with their fathers. Sophia said, "I do try to do things with him, just to try to build a better bond and get to know him better than I do." She said she would watch old television shows, work on cars and go fishing with him to strengthen their father-daughter bond. Enid said, "We both like going to the lake, like inner tubing and stuff but I can't stand fishing. But I will do whatever it takes to make him happy."

Maggie said, "He really enjoys hunting. I don't like shooting animals, but I'll go out and I'll shoot clay pigeons, that are just like little clay discs, you just throw them in the air and you shoot them, or bowling pins, so I'll do that." Andrea and Carol also reported that they went hunting with their fathers because that was something that their fathers liked. Carol explained that even though she was a vegetarian, she went hunting with her father because her uncle was no longer able to do so. She said, "So I went and got a hunting license and we went to opening weekend pheasant hunting. And he really appreciated that, because he had been hunting with his brother for 50 years and he couldn't go this year."

Maggie said that she watched television shows with her father that she didn't always like because she wanted to spend time with him. Beth reported watching movies and television shows she didn't like to spend more time with her father. She reported, "Yeah, his favorite movie is

Notting Hill and I cannot stand that movie. Like he watches it twice a week.” Judith stated she took special care with her lawn because she knew how important her father’s lawn was to him. “I make sure to take good care of it so that when he sees it he will be impressed.”

Study participants reported using exemplification to appear worthy by using behavioral matching and sharing interests in things their fathers were interested in to increase openness and intimacy in their father-daughter relationships. Daughters would go so far as to engage in activities with their fathers that they didn’t necessarily like so that they might enhance connections with their fathers. By engaging in the IM-5 exemplification strategy and using behavioral matching in these instances, these daughters were demonstrating an appearance of worthiness and integrity that supported their desired image and positively influenced intimacy.

#### **Theme 4: Supplication**

Supplication was the IM-5 strategy used to appear helpless or inexperienced in order to get sympathy or avoid taking responsibility. Supplication was reported by half of the daughters who pretended to not know how to complete tasks so that their fathers would complete the tasks for them. However, the other half of daughters in this study felt that this strategy undermined the image they desired their fathers to have of them. Sasha, Carol, Judith, Enid and Denise all reported not regularly engaging in supplication. Denise said, “I more often than not would want to show off what I’ve learned to him. Just to make him proud, so I wouldn’t say that I have ever dumbed it down just to make him feel better.” Carol also said, “It’s more about mutual learning because he’s been around for a long time and I want to learn from him and he wants to know how to set up a website.” Denise reported that she would rather show off her knowledge than hide it to appear helpless because that wouldn’t contribute to her desired image of making her father proud.

While some women in this study reported that they did not “play dumb” around their father often, some reported that they did this to avoid doing certain tasks. Sasha said, “Yeah, I do that all the time. Like if I know how to do something, but I just don’t feel like doing it, I’ll tell him. He’ll usually call me out on it, but he will do it for me anyways.” Andrea said, “At times, like when I was in the house I would do it just to get out of things. Like I would pretend that I didn’t know how to mow the lawn, so he would just like mow the lawn. So, I was never given that responsibility because he was like, ‘oh, you don’t know how to do it.’” Tara also reported doing this every time the power went off in her home and the generator needed to be turned on. She said, “I know how to turn it on, so I just pretend. And every time it comes on I tell him I can’t remember, just so my dad would do it.”

Beth and Carol engaged in supplication to avoid tasks in an attempt to get closer to their fathers. Carol said, “I pretend I don’t know how to make coffee correctly. But that’s usually just on Sunday morning. I can make coffee every day of the week, except for Sunday mornings when I pretend I don’t know how to make coffee and then we make coffee together.” Beth also reported asking her father for help on homework even though she didn’t need the help. Beth used this as an opportunity to let her father be more involved in her education. She said, “I’m really good at writing English papers, like I think I got a 98 percent on my last English final. Like, I have no problem writing papers. There’s just sometimes that I will just be sitting there writing an English paper, and he’ll be sitting there watching TV and just keep looking over at me like ‘whatchu doing?’ and I know he wants to see what I’m doing.”

The instances in which supplication was used by daughters in this study were to 1) avoid certain tasks like mowing the lawn or other household chores, and 2) to build a better bond with their fathers by making them feel needed. In the first instance, the use of supplication negatively

influenced openness and intimacy because daughters were deceiving their fathers to get out of a responsibility. In the second instance, the use of supplication positively influenced a connection because daughters were seeking help from their fathers to make them feel more powerful and important. However, the IM-5 supplication strategy was not found to promote openness and intimacy because daughters who used this strategy were not portraying themselves and their capabilities honestly.

### **Theme 5: Intimidation**

Intimidation was the IM-5 strategy used to appear more powerful and dominant. The majority of daughters reported that they did not utilize this strategy in their relationships with their fathers. Use of this strategy was reported in only two instances, including one participant, Sophia who indicated that she tried to use this strategy once, but it was not effective, so she had not used it since. Maggie explained that she often gets upset when talking to her father about her mother. She will get angry with him in order to put a stop to the conversation. She said, “But when he piles it on, then I just get really angry and I blow up and I say ‘Alright, I don’t want to talk about it anymore. Please shut up! Don’t keep pressing me. It’s just going to make me angry.’ But usually if there’s yelling, it’s me. And usually because I want him to stop talking about something.”

The IM-5 intimidation strategy was not reported by most daughters because it did not have a place in these positive father-daughter relationships. Carol said, “No, um, tantrums were never acceptable in my family from anyone. He’s more of the ‘we need to talk’ and sit across the dining table and be like ‘so, how are you doing?’” Using intimidation could have been counterproductive to the desired image that the daughters in this study wanted their fathers to have of them.

## **Summation of RQ2**

Openness and intimacy were found to be both positively and negatively influenced by the IM-5 strategies reported by daughters in this study. Daughters reported using ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication strategies to positively influence openness and intimacy and to promote their desired image with their fathers. In instances that daughters felt that their desired image would be threatened, they utilized ingratiation, exemplification and supplication strategies in ways that would limit openness and intimacy.

## **Other findings – The mother-daughter relationship effect**

Discussions concerning which topics were talked about with which parent emerged frequently in this study. All ten participants reported more limitations in the breadth and depth of their communication with their fathers concerning romantic relationships, sex-related topics and/or feminine hygiene in comparison to mothers. Sasha preferred to discuss romantic relationships with her mother over her father because she felt that her mother offered a better perspective as she is a woman. Sasha concluded, “I mean, he knows about my relationship, but he doesn’t know, um, as in depth as my mom does about it.” Sophia said, “Yeah, I talk with, if I need help in a class I’ll ask my mom or if I’m having trouble with like a boyfriend or something like that I’ll ask my mom.” However, Sasha perceived her relationship with her father as being more intimate than her relationship with her mother. She said, “I’ve gotten along with my dad more than I got along with my mom growing up. And as I’ve gotten older, it’s now a kind of a mix between the two of them, but I still think that I’m a little bit closer with my dad.” Andrea said, “Like, anytime I’m having problems ... I really go to my mom.” When asked what she communicated with her father least about and why she said, “Um, I guess, relationships and friends or boyfriends, I would go to my mom ... because he doesn’t understand that.”

However, daughters who reported negative relationships with their mothers were more likely to report having more, yet still limited, communication concerning romantic relationships, sex-related topics and/or feminine hygiene with their fathers. Sophia said, “I had a better relationship with my dad than I did with my mom because my dad was disabled so he was always home and my mom was always at work.” She also said that she was more likely to communicate more openly with her father over other people, however, she still did not frequently communicate with him or her mother about romantic relationships. In addition, Beth said, “My mother kind of wasn’t around when I was younger, so he kind of took over the role of both parents. And we just have really always bonded.” Beth went on to say, “She’s just not a nice person.” Because Beth’s mother was not present in her life during her adolescence or young adulthood, Beth built a closer connection to her father because he was the parent with whom she spent the most time. She reported that she communicated with her father about romantic relationships more than other daughters.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results of this study found a unique contrast between how daughters perceived their relationships with their fathers versus the reality of their communication choices within those relationships. While daughters perceived their relationships with their fathers as open and intimate as daughters, their reported communication choices indicated a different reality. Daughters described their relationships as open and accepting. They claimed that their connections with their fathers were strong and that they communicated about everything. However, in each of the ten interviews, daughters also reported limited breadth and depth concerning a myriad of topics, which would indicate that daughters in this study did not communicate about everything despite their claims of complete openness.

Participants' use of impression management (IM-5) strategies played significant roles in the limitations of breadth and depth that existed in these father-daughter relationships. Each of the ten daughters interviewed in this study indicated that they supported a desired image with the goal of making their fathers proud of them. They wanted to be perceived as independent, competent and strong. Because of this desire, they utilized the IM-5 strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication and intimidation) to both promote and limit breadth and depth in communication, impacting openness and intimacy both positively and negatively.

The daughters' perceptions of reward versus cost, when the implications of sharing information with their fathers were considered, led to positive and negative effects on self-disclosure (Altman & Taylor; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). If the cost was considered too great, if disclosure threatened their desired image, daughters used IM-5 strategies to adapt and withhold

information from their fathers. If the reward outweighed the cost, daughters emphasized open communication with their fathers.

Because the IM-5 strategies were sometimes used to limit breadth and depth and negatively influenced openness and intimacy, these father-daughter relationships were not able to reach a state of complete openness and intimacy in communication. This related back to Altman and Taylor's third factor that could lead to limited self-disclosure: situational context (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). Not all conversations are appropriate in every context. Daughters in this study may have felt that certain topics were not appropriate conversations to have with their fathers, which led to limited self-disclosure. The parameters that daughters placed on what they would self-disclose in communication with their fathers led to a barrier that prevented the advancement of their relationships from the exploratory affective and affective stages of intimacy to the stable stage of intimacy (Alman & Taylor, 1973).

### **Between exploratory affective and affective stages of intimacy**

The Social Penetration Theory explains how relationships become psychologically closer over time through mutual self-disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013). As mutual self-disclosure increased, so too did the breadth and depth of communication, which was explained through five stages: the orientation stage, the exploratory affective stage, the affective stage, the stable stage and depenetration (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Altman, Vinsel & Brown, 1981; Punyanunt-Carter, 2013).

In this study, daughters perceived their relationships as being at the stable stage of intimacy, which was characterized by communication at its most open and comfortable. Daughters reported that they could communicate about everything with their fathers, even though they each reported otherwise throughout the interviews. Increased vulnerability in the

relationship at this stage as well as very limited secrets or withheld information would also have been indicated. However, the reports of communication with their fathers by daughters in this study positioned their relationships at the exploratory affective stage, the affective stage, or somewhere in between. The exploratory affective stage involved sharing opinions concerning superficial topics, such as sports or other impersonal information. While some mutual self-disclosure occurred at this stage, personal or private information was avoided, such as details about romantic relationships, or feelings and emotions. The affective stage involved more mutual self-disclosure concerning personal and private information. Daughters at this stage felt more comfortable with criticism or arguments and were able to anticipate their fathers' reactions.

Three daughters in this study reported their communication with their fathers in ways that fit into the SPT's exploratory affective stage of intimacy. While the exploratory affective stage was typically associated with relationships like work friendships or friendly neighbors, daughters reported avoiding disclosing private information, which was an aspect of this stage (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Beth, Tara and Andrea reported communication with their fathers that aligned most closely with this stage.

For example, Beth reported promoting breadth and depth about many topics, however, personal discussions about her mother, politics and education were avoided. She reported that she hadn't discussed switching to an online college next year because of her assumptions and concerns about her father's reaction and disappointment. Mutual self-disclosure was also not found to be very prevalent in Beth's relationship with her father. She reported that she wanted to know more about her father, but she said, "Because, like, he was in the military and he doesn't like talking about it at all. Like, I think it's probably bad memories. But I just want to know more about any of his childhood." Based on reciprocity in self-disclosure, if her father was not willing

to communicate about more personal and private topics with her, she would not be likely to communicate about similar topics with him and vice versa.

Daughters in this study also reported that their fathers didn't necessarily seek out conversations about romantic relationships or personal hygiene either, which illustrated additional limitations to self-disclosure. Like Beth, Tara's relationship with her father seemed to be at the exploratory affective stage. Sex-related topics and men were the main topics that were not discussed in this relationship. She reported that her father had made it clear that he was not interested in communicating about those topics, which prevented their relationship from progressing further in the SPT's stages of intimacy. Andrea's relationship with her father didn't display much breadth from what she reported in her semi-structured interview. The main topics she communicated with her father about were softball and other superficial topics. They didn't have much communication outside of athletics, which would suggest that mutual self-disclosure was not occurring in regard to more personal and intimate topics.

Six of the ten daughters, Sasha, Sophia, Judith, Enid, Maggie and Denise, reported levels of intimacy that fluctuated between the exploratory affective stage and the affective stage. Sasha was one of the participants situated between these two stages of intimacy in the SPT. While she did report a close relationship with her father, Sasha and her father did not have open mutual self-disclosure. Sasha chose not to divulge personal information about her romantic relationships with her father, an aspect of the exploratory affective stage (Altman & Taylor, 1973). However, she did report being comfortable having disagreements with her father on certain issues and also communicated about some other personal aspects of her life, a facet of the affective stage (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Sasha was also able to predict how her father would react to certain pieces of information. When asked if her father reacted in a way that she expected when she told

him about a fight she had with a friend, she said, “Yeah, he did react the way I expected him to. He was on the same page as me and just supported me.” Being able to predict the other person’s responses or reactions is a part of the affective stage (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Sophia’s relationship with her father was also between the exploratory affective stage and the affective stage. She felt comfortable enough to have disagreements about politics and other topics and chose to communicate with her father about much of her personal life. However, there were still topics that Sophia did not discuss with her father, like relationships, which illustrated limitations in the breadth and depth of intimacy in their relationship. These limitations prevented their relationship from moving to the stable stage of intimacy. Similarly, Judith’s relationship with her father seemed to rest in the middle of these stages as. She reported that she didn’t communicate about relationships or religion with her father. She said, “I just have never felt comfortable doing that because I have never crossed the line in communicating with him in that kind of way or crossed over boundaries. So, I feel like we have such a good relationship, I wouldn’t want to jeopardize that.” This was another example of limited mutual self-disclosure that prevented this father-daughter relationship from advancing to the stable stage of intimacy.

Enid, Maggie and Denise’s relationships with their fathers were also between the exploratory affective and affective stages of intimacy. While Maggie did withhold information from her father, she reported significant breadth and depth of communication. She said, “All the way up to stuff about my personal problems, you know, if I’m having problems with my boyfriend or my mom or my body.” Communication about these topics was atypical between fathers and daughters in this study. When talking about her communication with her father, Maggie said, “He just advises me what would be best but still gives me freedom to make my own decisions for myself.” She felt comfortable enough in her relationship with her father to

debate about politics and other topics without feeling like it would hurt their relationship. “We will literally sit there and we share our viewpoints, and then we’ll talk about why our viewpoints are the better viewpoints and then all that stuff.” This illustrated closeness in their relationship as well as increased mutual self-disclosure. However, Maggie also said that she felt as though she had to hide emotions from her father because of his negative reactions to them, which would indicate limits in the depth of their communication and that their relationship was not at the stable stage. Denise’s relationship with her father fluctuated between the exploratory affective stage and the affective stage because there were still many topics not discussed in her relationship with her father which limited the breadth and depth of intimacy in their relationship and prevented it from progressing. Avoided topics included finances, politics and relationships. Yet, she said, “There is not any subject that is really off-limits between us.” She perceived her relationship as being at its most open and comfortable with full self-disclosure even though she reported otherwise throughout her interview.

While most father-daughter relationships in this study fit between the exploratory affective stage and the affective stage of intimacy, one interviewee, Carol, reported communication with her father that would better fit into the affective stage. She illustrated increased breadth and depth as well as reported self-disclosure concerning personal and private information. Relationships at this stage were more comfortable with criticism of each other and would be characterized by more arguments (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Daughters in this study reported instances in which they would have disagreements with their fathers, but they felt comfortable enough in their relationships to have those arguments. Carol reported that one of the topics she felt she couldn’t communicate with her father about, but wanted to, was death. “Once people die, he takes it very hard so that was one thing that I’ve always tried to be understanding

out.” She wanted to open communication about that topic with him, but she never felt comfortable doing so. Carol’s relationship with her father seemed to be at the affective stage because, although, there was not a complete openness in her relationship with him, they did communicate in more breadth and depth than other daughters in this study. Romantic relationships and personal hygiene were not discussed frequently, but Carol said, “I don’t think that it’s an avoidance of the topic. I just think that my relationship with my father is so rich that it’s not something that is a point of contention.”

Overall, daughters in this study felt that their relationships with their fathers were very close and described them as open and accepting, yet data analysis revealed they were not at the stable stage of intimacy with their fathers. Daughters in this study reported many instances where there were limitations in breadth and depth as well as openness and intimacy that would not be present if their relationships with their fathers were at the stable stage. Interestingly, daughters in this study seemed to identify their relationships as being at the stable stage of intimacy. An important point to note when evaluating the father-daughter relationships in this study for the SPT stages of intimacy, was that no relationship fit perfectly into any stage. Because their communication was on-going and ever changing, their reported intimacy varied based on the topic they were discussing. For a father-daughter relationship to be considered as advancing to the next stage of intimacy, that relationship must reach all of the criteria at that stage. For the daughters in this study to advance their relationships with their fathers to the next stages of intimacy, they must be willing to communicate about topics in their relationships that have been previously avoided because daughters want to portray an image to their fathers that makes them proud.

### **Assumptions led to limitations in breadth and depth**

Consistent with prior research (Fisher & Miller-Day, 2006), fathers whose daughters were interviewed for this study experienced several gender-based barriers when communicating with their daughters. Sasha assumed that her father wouldn't want to discuss romantic relationships with her because she felt that he didn't understand her emotions. She reported that even though she felt her father was emotional "for a guy" she didn't think that he would be able to understand her feelings. Maggie made assumptions about what her father cared about concerning her. She said, "A lot of the times I don't talk to my dad about a certain subject is probably because I don't want to hear his reaction. Because I know it will either disappoint him or he won't care."

Nine of the ten daughters in this study reported that some of the limitations in the breadth and depth of intimacy with their fathers was due to gender differences. Sasha said that the main reason she went to her mother for advice on romantic relationships was, "because it's just a different perspective versus male and female." She went on to say that her father didn't understand her emotional responses like her mother. Fathers were not often portrayed as emotional and, therefore, daughters did not seek to engage their fathers in emotional conversations (Dunleavy et al., 2011). This assumption that fathers, as men, weren't as emotional as women contributed to the limitations in the father-daughter communication reported by the daughters in this study.

When asked why she didn't communicate with her father about romantic relationships, Andrea responded, "I would say it's like a guy's point of view versus a girl's point of view." She felt that her mother would be more understanding. Tara said she preferred to communicate with her sisters and mother about relationships and personal hygiene. "Maybe because they are girls

and they have been in my situation, because my mom tells us her stories when she was our age and how there were other guys that she liked before she met my dad.” She continued, “So, and about boys, she likes to be very involved.” Sophia said that it just seemed more natural to communicate with her mother rather than her father about relationships. She said, “So, I think it’s just instinct to go to my mom rather than my dad because he’s a male. You know, he may not understand what I am talking about or he may tell me to just dump him or something like that.” Enid agreed and said, “My mom, since she’s a girl, she knows how to handle the situations better than my dad who doesn’t really know how to give advice on relationships.” These findings are consistent with Nielsen et al. (2013) who suggested that neither daughters nor fathers sought one another out for emotional support. The restrictions that existed in communication about romantic relationships and sex-related topics prevented openness and intimacy from increasing in the father-daughter relationships in this study.

Collins et al. (2008) suggested that daughters frequently viewed their fathers as failing at communication concerning romantic relationships and sex-related topics because of the perception that communicating with fathers on these topics was uncomfortable. Tara reported that she never opened up a dialogue about boyfriends with her father because of the assumptions she had about his reactions. “Because of his rules on boys. Because he stopped boys from coming to the house. And he stopped us from visiting boys. So, we just assumed that anything about a boy while we were still living there with him would not be so cool to talk about. So, we try to stay away from the boy-zone.” Judith, Carol, Enid, Sasha and Sophia also reported avoiding discussions with their fathers concerning romantic relationships. Sasha did not talk about romantic relationships with her father to avoid potentially awkward conversations. She said she would never discuss details about romantic relationships or sex-related topics with him.

These instances also illustrated how daughters' anticipation of their fathers' reactions without actually knowing their reactions led to limited breadth and depth.

Judith said, "I think he just didn't know, um, since I was so young, how to really relate to a young girl who's going through changes and growing up. I think that he struggled with that a little bit." Enid described her relationship with her father when she was in middle school as: "Not as close, but I think it was because my sisters and I were growing and going through that stage and I think he didn't know how to act towards a moody middle schooler, but once we hit high school, so much better relationship." These assumptions that the fathers wouldn't understand their perspective or would react in a negative way led to limitations in their communication and intimacy.

### **Impression management and its influence on intimacy**

Impression Management Theory explained how people adapted their behavior and communication strategies in ways that support how they want to be perceived (Goffman, 1959). How they adapted their communication depended upon the audience. Daughters in this study adapted their behavior and communication strategies when communicating with their fathers to promote and maintain an image that would make their fathers proud. Daughters used the IM-5 strategies to highlight and modify how they communicated with their fathers in order to uphold that image.

The instances where daughters used ingratiation to promote likeability in their father-daughter relationships were examples of how facework can be utilized in conjunction with IM-5 strategies (Goffman, 1959). Daughters in this study reported that they adapted information when communicating with their fathers to essentially save face, which was accomplished with self-enhancement through selective self-presentation (Goffman, 1959; Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Daughters communicated selectively about romantic relationships and other topics they wished to avoid that could have potentially detracted from their desired image and maintenance of likeability. Interestingly, in order to achieve likeability in many instances, daughters chose to limit the openness and intimacy in communication with their fathers.

While daughters accounts didn't reflect boasting or bragging about deeds or accomplishments when they engaged in self-promotion, they highlighted their accomplishments in ways that made them appear more competent and downplayed their deficits. This strategy was occasionally associated with negative behavior in other studies because of its tendency to lead to boasting, but in this study, daughters used the IM-5 self-promotion strategy to uphold their desired image without appearing boastful (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009).

Part of using the IM-5 exemplification strategy was being willing to make sacrifices or go above and beyond to increase the appearance of integrity and worthiness (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). Daughters in this study often reported engaging in activities they did not necessarily enjoy, like fishing, hunting or watching certain television shows or movies, with the hopes of improving their bond with their fathers. Even though they were not behaving true to their nature, these daughters used behavioral matching to make sacrifices in order to promote intimacy in their father-daughter relationships. However, daughters also reported hiding their emotional responses, like crying, from their fathers because of their assumptions about how their fathers would respond. Using exemplification in this manner negatively influenced openness and intimacy in these relationships because daughters were not able to honestly express themselves without threatening their desired image.

The IM-5 supplication strategy was reportedly avoided by five out of ten participants in this study. The use of this strategy threatened to negatively impact their desired image because

its purpose was to garner sympathy through advertising weaknesses or helplessness (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). By avoiding this strategy, daughters maintained their desired images and positively influenced openness and intimacy through not attempting to appear weak when they weren't. The daughters who did use this strategy, used the strategy to either get out of doing something or to build better connections with their fathers by involving him.

In addition, the use of intimidation was also avoided by eight of the ten daughters in this study. Appearing angry or eager to punish others was not reported as being appropriate by those interviewees (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Metts, 2009). The desire to assert dominance over their fathers would not have been viewed as complementary with their desired image. One of the two daughters only used this strategy once because it proved to be ineffective, and the other participant, Maggie, used the strategy to avoid discussing topics that were emotionally distressing to her, like communicating about her mother.

### **Influence of “daddy’s little girl” image**

Hutchinson and Cederbaum (2011) indicated that the “daddy’s little girl” image was one of the most common barriers that existed in father-daughter communication. The “daddy’s little girl” image was still a reality for a number of the daughters in this study. Sasha identified herself as a “daddy’s little girl,” which she cited as a barrier to father-daughter communication. This image could lead to limitations in breadth and depth and negatively influence openness and intimacy in father-daughter relationships because fathers still saw their daughters as their “little girls” rather than as adult women (Hutchison & Cederbaum, 2011). Wilson et al. (2010) suggested that fathers who viewed their daughters as “daddy’s little girl” were more protective of their daughters than even their mothers. Sophia and Tara described their fathers as “very

protective.” Tara attributed his protectiveness over her and her sisters to the reason she did not communicate about romantic relationships with her father.

### **Further research**

The participants in this study were largely homogeneous; all participants reported positive father-daughter relationships with their biological fathers. Most women in this study were also Caucasian and Christian. Future studies should aim to conduct semi-structured interviews with greater diversity in participants to provide more insight into the communication within this dyad. Research could also be conducted in separate studies based on targeted demographics. Comparing the reported use of the IM-5 strategies with daughters who have biological, step and adoptive fathers would also lead to more insight in this field of study.

Additionally, the interviews from this study revealed that the daughters had varying relationships with their mothers. Future studies could examine the similarities and differences in the use of the IM-5 strategies in father-daughter communication with daughters who have positive and negative relationships with their mothers, or even absent mothers, to understand the implications of mother-daughter relationships on father-daughter relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Daughters in this study reported using IM-5 strategies to both promote and limit breadth and depth as well as positively and negatively influence openness and intimacy in order to achieve their desired image of appearing competent and independent to make their fathers proud. Daughters who utilized IM-5 strategies to primarily promote breadth and depth would have father-daughter relationships at higher stages of intimacy in regard to the SPT. Daughters who utilized IM-5 strategies primarily to limit breadth and depth had father-daughter relationships at lower stages of intimacy. Overall, the father-daughter relationships in this study fluctuated

between the exploratory affective stage and the affective stage. Daughters perceived their relationships with their fathers to be at the stable stage, yet data analysis revealed too many reported limitations on openness and intimacy for these father-daughter relationships to be considered at that stage.

The IM-5 strategies were utilized to both positively and negatively influence openness and intimacy depending on the situation. Daughters considered the reward versus cost of sharing information with their fathers in this study. If the information would be supportive of their desired image, daughters would use the IM-5 strategies to highlight that image. If the information would be threatening to their desired image, daughters would use the IM-5 strategies to either adapt or withhold information. Perceptions of threatening information to their desired image led to limitations in depth and breadth and negatively influenced openness and intimacy.

After analyzing the father-daughter communication reported in this study, could father-daughter-relationships truly be considered intimate and close with so many limitations on openness? Daughters reported that their relationships were positive and their communication with their fathers was open. Yet, they also reported varying levels of breadth and depth as well as openness and intimacy. The important idea to note here, would be that there were different levels of intimacy according to the SPT. The more limitations of breadth and depth reported by daughters in this study, the lower the stage of intimacy. The perceived stage of intimacy by daughters in this study was the stable stage. The actual stages of intimacy based on data from the semi-structured interviews indicated that these relationships rested at the exploratory affective stage, the affective stage and in between. For daughters in this study to be truly at the stable stage of intimacy, they would have to overcome the limitations in their relationships with their fathers and communicate about those topics that they categorized as threatening to their desired image.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

### IRB RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Recruitment email: This email was sent to Communication instructors in the Elliott School of Communication to ask them to invite their students to participate in the study:

Subject: Master's Thesis Participants Needed

Dear Instructor [ LAST NAME HERE],

As a graduate student in the Elliott School of Communication, I am conducting semi-structured interviews as a part of my master's thesis. My study is titled, Why don't we talk?: Daughters' perceptions of impression management and depth and breadth in communication with their fathers. For my interviews, I need female participants aged 18 and older who identify as having had a positive relationship with their fathers during their adolescence and young adulthood. I would greatly appreciate you taking the time in your class to help recruit any interested participants who fit this criterion. These interviews could help to fulfill any research requirement that you have for your students or could be used as a chance to give out extra credit. The purpose of this research is to examine how daughters perceive the depth and breadth of communication with their fathers as well as the impression management strategies they use with their fathers to perpetuate a desired image. The interviews will last approximately 25 to 45 minutes and will take place in the Elliott School of Communication. Anyone with questions or anyone who is interested in taking part in an interview can email me at [srbowman@shockers.wichita.edu](mailto:srbowman@shockers.wichita.edu).

Thank you,

Shelby Bowman

Wichita State University, IRB #3869

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT FORM



WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF  
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

*Elliott School of Communication*

### CONSENT FORM

**Purpose:** You are invited to participate in a research study discussing positive father-daughter communication. I hope to learn communication strategies in this relationship as well as the depth and breadth of communication between fathers and daughters.

**Participant Selection:** You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a female aged 18 years of age and older who self identifies as having a positive relationship with her father during her adolescent and young adult years. Approximately 10 participants will be invited to join the study.

**Explanation of Procedures:** If you decide to participate, you will take part in a semi-structured interview with co-investigator, Shelby Bowman, a master of arts in communication student for whom this study will serve as her master's thesis. The interview will include questions about your relationship with your father, what you choose to discuss or not discuss with your father and why, how you would like to be perceived by your father and what communication strategies you use to achieve that perception. In addition, demographic questions will also be asked at the end of the interview. These questions will include your age, level in education and your relationship to your father (biological, adoptive or step). The interview will require one 25- to 45-minute session to complete, which will take place in person at an agreed upon location. The interview will be audio recorded to assist the researcher with transcription.

**Benefits:** This study will allow female participants to discuss what they perceive as a positive relationship with their father, which may lead to them becoming more conscious of their overall communication with their father.

**Discomfort/Risks:** There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, questions might bring up sensitive memories of communication with

## APPENDIX B (continued)

your father. Note, you will be able to stop the interview at any time, or refuse to answer any question you don't want to answer.

**Confidentiality:** Every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, in order to make sure the study is done properly and safely there may be circumstances where this information must be released. By signing this form, you are giving the research team permission to share information about you with the following groups:

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Wichita State University Institutional Review Board;

The researchers may publish the results of the study. If they do, they will only discuss group results. Your name will not be used in any publication or presentation about the study.

Signed informed consent documents and transcriptions of interviews will be kept in a locked, secure file cabinet at Wichita State University. The researcher will destroy the audio recordings securely after they have been transcribed by the researcher, which will be within four weeks of its recording.

Should you be enrolled in a course that grants extra credit for participation in research studies, you will receive course credit as determined by your instructor. If you choose not to participate, your instructor will offer you an alternative activity for equivalent course credit.

**Refusal/Withdrawal:** Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relationship with Wichita State University and/or the Elliott School of Communication. If you agree to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Contact: If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at:

Shelby Bowman  
(316) 641-8129  
[srbowman@shockers.wichita.edu](mailto:srbowman@shockers.wichita.edu)

Dr. Deborah Ballard-Reisch  
1845 Fairmount Street, Wichita, KS 67260-0007  
(316) 978-6066  
[deborah.ballard-reisch@wichita.edu](mailto:deborah.ballard-reisch@wichita.edu)

APPENDIX B (continued)

If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or about research related injury, you can contact the Office of Research and Technology Transfer at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount Street, Wichita, KS 67260-0007, telephone (316) 978-3285.

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that:

- You have read (or someone has read to you) the information provided above,
- You are aware that this is a research study,
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to your satisfaction, and
- You have voluntarily decided to participate.

You are not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In addition to agreeing to participate, your signature below indicates that you consent to having your interview audio recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AND DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS

1. Describe your relationships with your father.
  - a. Is it open?
  - b. Accepting?
  - c. *Intimidation*: Controlling?
  - d. *Intimidation*: Authoritative?
2. What perception do you want your father to have of you?
3. What do you and your father communicate most about?
4. Are there certain topics that you prefer to talk with your father about over others?
  - a. What are they?
  - b. How deeply do you discuss these topics with your father?
5. What topics do you and your father communicate least about?
  - a. Why?
  - b. Who do you prefer to discuss these topics with?
6. What topics do you avoid communicating with your father about?
  - a. Why?
7. If a topic comes up with your father that you do not wish to discuss, what do you do?
8. Are there topics that you aren't comfortable discussing with your father that you would like to?
  - a. What are they?
  - b. Why do you think you don't talk with your father about those topics?
  - c. Who do you talk about those topics with instead?
  - d. Why them?
9. If you could talk to your father about anything without any judgment or awkwardness, what would it be?
10. Do you have your father on social media? If yes, does his presence change what you post or don't post?
11. *Ingratiation*: Do you adapt conversations with your father to appear more likeable or like a better person?
12. *Ingratiation*: Do you try to take interest in things your father is interested in? Explain.
13. *Supplication*: Are there times when you pretend to play-dumb or to not know something around your father? Explain.
14. *Supplication*: Do you ever pretend to need help even when you don't around your father? Explain.
15. *Exemplification*: Are there personal behaviors that you try to hide when in your father's presence?
  - a. What are those behaviors?
16. *Exemplification*: Do you change your behavior around your father to appear to have your values aligned with his?
17. *Self-Promotion*: How do you tell your father about your accomplishments?
18. *Self-Promotion*: Do you ever find yourself trying to impress your father?
  - a. If so, how do you do that?

APPENDIX C (continued)

19. *Intimidation*: Do you ever act aggressively (yelling, throwing a temper tantrum) toward your father to avoid discussing topics?
  - a. Or vice versa?
20. Demographic questions
  - a. What is your age?
  - b. What is your ethnicity?
  - c. What is your religion?
  - d. What is your level in school? (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student?)
  - e. What is your relationship to your father? (biological, step or adoptive?)