

## **SEX-ROLES AND DYADIC UNIQUENESS IN PARENT-CHILD PERSONALITY TRAIT RELATIONSHIPS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Parent-child personality trait intercorrelations were examined in 127 intact, middle-class, Caucasian families (393 children: 162 females and 231 males between ages 6 and 22), using the age-appropriate test in the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire series. The main parent/child linkages differed for each parent-child dyad: daughters' unconflicted, introverted dependency was linked with mothers' unconflicted, emotionally sensitive dependency; daughters' sensitive, unconflicted dependency was linked with fathers' inhibited dependency; sons' dependent, introverted neuroticism was linked with insecure, sensitive, emotional neuroticism in mothers; sons' inhibited, resentful, insecure neuroticism was linked with dependent, introverted neuroticism in fathers. These patterns indicate that family relationships revolved around neuroticism versus mental health for boys and sex-role traits of dependence, emotionality, and introversion for girls. For adolescent sons (over 13 years), sex-role traits of aggressiveness, tough-mindedness, and emotional insensitivity replaced low neuroticism in important linkages with both parents. Eldest daughters showed unusually strong and unique linkages with fathers, emphasizing father-daughter similarity on central character traits such as ego and superego strength, tension level, and strength of self-image.

### **BACKGROUND**

Relationships between parents' and children's personalities remain one of the most fundamental areas of concern to developmental psychologists. One prominent empirical approach to these phenomena has focused on the impact of parental child-rearing attitudes. For example, Walters and Stinnett (1971) summarized a decade of research in this area. However, there have been a number of problems with this research, centering on questions about the meaning and validity of the parent attitude measures. These problems include substantial parental acquiescent response set, faulty memory or perception in parents' self-evaluation, a strong relationship between the attitude measures and parental educational level, and lack of comparability of child-rearing dimensions across instruments and studies (Becker, 1965; Becker & Krug, 1965; Brody, 1969; Robbins, 1963).

Another approach to examining parent-child personality interactions has involved the use of observer ratings of particular child and/or parent behaviors thought to represent particular traits, such as aggressiveness, dependency, generosity, or sociability (Feshbach, 1970; Hilton, 1967; Olejnik & McKinney, 1973; Stevenson & Lamb, 1979). While useful, this approach also has several limitations. Beyond the obvious problems with interrater reliability, the lack of guidelines to use in deciding which particular behavior is an indicator of a

## MULTIVARIATE EXPERIMENTAL CLINICAL RESEARCH

particular trait has necessarily led to arbitrariness. Often the measures used by different investigators as indicators of the same trait show very low correlations with each other, and when factor analyzed, do not emerge as a coherent dimension (Maccoby & Masters, 1970). Similarly, one behavior may be used as an indicator of several different traits by different investigators.

More importantly, these studies have serious limitations when viewed from an integrative perspective in that they rarely investigate more than one dimension of the child's or parent's personality. A search of the last 15 years of *Psychological Abstracts* revealed only four studies that investigated multiple personality variables for both parents and children. These studies suggested some interesting relationships, but also have some empirical and conceptual limitations. Troll, Neugarten, and Kraines (1969) looked at correlations between personality traits of college students and their parents, but used a poorly researched questionnaire of their own design. The most interesting aspect of their results was the finding of different relationships among different parent-child dyads. For instance, one trait, "cognitive complexity," was significantly correlated only for the two son dyads (father/son and mother/son), while another trait, "intraception," was significantly correlated only for the two daughter dyads. These patterns suggest that both parents may have responded differently to sons and daughters. They also found that only the mother/son and mother/daughter dyads were significantly correlated on "spontaneity" (implying that this trait was uniquely fostered by the mother's model), while the same-sex dyads (mother/daughter and father/son) were the only dyads with significant correlations on "critical of others" (suggesting sex-role modeling). Troll et al. concluded that although no one of the four dyads showed significantly stronger influence overall, different traits were important within each dyad. A second study (Scarr, Webber, Weinberg, & Wittig, in press) also calculated separate parent/child trait intercorrelations for each of the parent/child dyads on traits of extraversion and neuroticism (Eysenck Personality Inventory, Differential Personality Questionnaire) and on a measure of physical and social trait anxiety (the Activities Preference Questionnaire). These authors also found evidence of differential parent/child similarity among the four dyads.

The two remaining multivariate studies (Grotevant, 1976; Grotevant, Scarr, & Weinberg, 1977) employed the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory, an instrument typically used in reference to vocational interests. The first study found more significant trait similarities for same-sex dyads, as might be expected on these role-related dimensions: mother/daughter on "realistic" and "investigative," father/son on "enterprising" and "social," and both mother/daughter and father/son on "conventional." The second study found similar but more comprehensive results: Both father/child dyads (father/son, father/daughter) showed high positive correlations on some traits (artistic, social, enterprising), while both mother/child dyads showed high positive correlations on different traits (realistic, investigative, conventional).

While all of these studies used multivariate instruments, they examined only parent/child intercorrelations of identical traits (same-trait similarity/dissimilarity). The possibility that one parental trait was associated strongly with a different trait in the child (the off-diagonal, cross-trait intercorrelations)

## SEX ROLES AND DYADIC UNIQUENESS

was not examined, and so both studies provided no information about these potentially important facets of the parent/child relationship. Thus, the overwhelming majority of studies of the parent/child relationship have been univariate and could not provide a comprehensive picture of the multiple child traits that may be affected by (or may be affecting) a particular parent trait, or the multiple parent traits that may be affecting (or be affected by) a particular child trait.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate parents' and children's personality interrelationships in a way that obviated these limitations. The trait measure of personality that was used, the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), has well-established reliability and validity (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970), and was designed to cover the whole range of personality dimensions. Age-appropriate forms of the 16PF were given to both parents and children in an unusually large sample of intact families. Both same-trait similarities and cross-trait relationships were examined for the various parent/child dyads.

### METHOD

#### Subjects

Subjects were members of 127 intact, middle-class, Caucasian families from the Chicago Metropolitan area (average annual income in 1970 was \$13,100, and average years of education was 12.8 for fathers and 12.2 for mothers). The 393 children (162 females and 231 males) tested were natural siblings and included all children who were at least 6 years of age and living in the home. Mean ages of mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons were 37.1, 39.7, 11.1, and 11.4 years, respectively; the age ranges of mothers, fathers, and children were 26-52, 28-54, and 6-22 years, respectively.

These subjects were previously used in an extensive study (Ruess & Lis, 1972) of families who had one child with a cleft lip or palate that had been surgically corrected in the first 18 months of life. There were 80 of these "experimental" families and 47 control (no cleft child) families. The services of the University of Illinois Survey Research Laboratory were used in the original research to locate the group of control families, who were selected for comparability with the experimental group on the following demographic characteristics: Parents' educational levels, father's occupation, annual family income, parents' ages, and total number of living children. In addition to having the cleft abnormalities completely corrected at this very early age, these "experimental" children appeared normal in that they did not differ significantly from either their siblings or the control children on any of the following diverse set of measures: Wechsler Intelligence Scales, Gray Oral Reading Test, Wide Range Achievement Test in Arithmetic, Witkin Embedded Figures Test, Bender-Gestalt Visual-Motor Test, Human Figure Drawings, Raven Progressive Matrices, Leary Interpersonal Checklist, and the scales of the 16PF.

#### Tests and Procedures

Each family member completed Form A of the age-appropriate version of the 16PF: The Early School Personality Questionnaire (ESPQ) for 6- to 8-year-

## MULTIVARIATE EXPERIMENTAL CLINICAL RESEARCH

olds; the Children's Personality Questionnaire (CPQ) for ages 8 to 12; the Jr.-Sr. High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) for 12- to 18-year-olds; and the 16PF for persons 18 or older. The 16 primary personality factors were scored, and, in addition, scores were calculated for the second-order factors of extraversion, independence, anxiety, cortertia (tough, objective, task-oriented versus tender-minded, emotional, sensitive), and neuroticism from equations given in the test manuals.

To minimize fatigue, boredom, and other factors that often affect reliability and validity, the psychological tests were individually administered and staggered with medical, physical, and ability tests. All subjects who showed a reading comprehension score below the lower range of the age-appropriate questionnaire were administered the test verbally with a simultaneous visual presentation.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pearson product-moment correlation of each child trait with each parent trait was calculated separately for each of the four parent/child dyads (father/son, mother/son, father/daughter, and mother/daughter). The significant correlations for these four dyads are given in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The inherent difficulty of random results when calculating such a large number of correlations must be noted: While the number of correlations significant at the .05 level for the father/daughter dyad (22) was virtually equivalent to chance expectations (21), the number for the father/son, mother/son, and mother/daughter dyads far exceeded chance (77, 42, and 43, respectively). Trait intercorrelations for each of the four dyads were also calculated separately for those children under 12 years (childhood sample), for those children over 13 years (adolescent sample), and for the eldest and youngest child in each family. In order to determine the degree of relatedness between the several parent traits and several child traits that were most significantly related in these univariate analyses of each dyad, canonical correlations were calculated.

In the father/son interaction (Table 1), the second-order trait that showed the most linkages for sons was neuroticism, which was linked with father's second-order traits of dependence, introversion, and neuroticism. The first-order traits for fathers that were linked here included A— (cold, detached, critical), F— (serious, cautious, introspective), H— (timid, shy, easily threatened), Q<sub>2</sub>+ (self-sufficient, socially isolated), and E— (submissive, conforming, docile)—overall, a very withdrawn, inhibited, intropunitive constellation. These father traits linked positively with sons' neuroticism plus sons' first-order traits of E— (submissive, conforming, docile), G— (self-indulgent, disregards standards, low superego strength), H— (shy, easily threatened, inhibited), J+ (guarded, individualistic, obstructive, internally restrained), and O+ (insecure, guilt-prone, worrisome)—again, a very inhibited, over-controlled pattern, but also showing internal conflict and passive/aggressive-type anger. The canonical correlation of these fathers' traits (A, E, F, H, Q<sub>2</sub>) with these sons' traits (A, E, G, H, J, O) showed an  $R = .40$ ,  $R^2 = .16$ , significant beyond the  $p < .001$  level. This relationship may, of course, be viewed from

Table 1  
All Statistically Significant ( $p < .10$ ) Correlations Between  
the 16PF Traits of Fathers and Sons ( $N = 231$ , from 127 families)

Fathers' Traits	Sons' Traits																					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>2</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>	Extrav.	Anx.	Cort.	Indep.	Neur.		
A	13 <sup>c</sup>						19 <sup>b</sup>		-12 <sup>d</sup>	-13 <sup>c</sup>										-11 <sup>d</sup>	-17 <sup>b</sup>	
B		19 <sup>b</sup>											-21 <sup>a</sup>	-13 <sup>d</sup>								
C									13 <sup>c</sup>	-15 <sup>c</sup>			-12 <sup>d</sup>									
E		11 <sup>d</sup>	16 <sup>c</sup>		23 <sup>a</sup>			14 <sup>c</sup>	-21 <sup>b</sup>	-15 <sup>c</sup>			-22 <sup>a</sup>					17 <sup>b</sup>			-25 <sup>a</sup>	
F					13 <sup>c</sup>		14 <sup>c</sup>						-14 <sup>c</sup>	-20 <sup>b</sup>							-18 <sup>b</sup>	
G		16 <sup>c</sup>				-12 <sup>d</sup>		14 <sup>c</sup>		-18 <sup>b</sup>			-11 <sup>d</sup>			-13 <sup>c</sup>					-12 <sup>d</sup>	
H	15 <sup>c</sup>			-11 <sup>d</sup>			20 <sup>b</sup>	11 <sup>d</sup>		-14 <sup>c</sup>	-13 <sup>c</sup>					-11 <sup>d</sup>						-16 <sup>c</sup>
I										13 <sup>d</sup>												
L										16 <sup>c</sup>											14 <sup>c</sup>	
M	-13 <sup>c</sup>	19 <sup>b</sup>		12 <sup>d</sup>										-13 <sup>d</sup>								11 <sup>d</sup>
N					-11 <sup>d</sup>		17 <sup>c</sup>				-16 <sup>c</sup>	-11 <sup>d</sup>		13 <sup>d</sup>	-17 <sup>b</sup>			-11 <sup>d</sup>		-13 <sup>c</sup>		
O								-11 <sup>d</sup>				19 <sup>b</sup>					-11 <sup>d</sup>					12 <sup>d</sup>
Q <sub>1</sub>	-14 <sup>c</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>							-13 <sup>c</sup>	-11 <sup>d</sup>											18 <sup>b</sup>	
Q <sub>2</sub>	-19 <sup>b</sup>			17 <sup>c</sup>			-19 <sup>b</sup>	-11 <sup>d</sup>		25 <sup>a</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>		18 <sup>b</sup>		14 <sup>c</sup>			23 <sup>a</sup>	22 <sup>a</sup>	
Q <sub>3</sub>						-15 <sup>c</sup>								16 <sup>c</sup>								
Q <sub>4</sub>								-16 <sup>c</sup>													12 <sup>d</sup>	13 <sup>c</sup>
Extrav.	12 <sup>d</sup>				13 <sup>c</sup>		20 <sup>b</sup>	13 <sup>c</sup>	-12 <sup>d</sup>	-21 <sup>b</sup>		-18 <sup>b</sup>	-18 <sup>b</sup>								12 <sup>d</sup>	-25 <sup>a</sup>
Anx.								-14 <sup>c</sup>		13 <sup>c</sup>		12 <sup>d</sup>										13 <sup>c</sup>
Cort.	-15 <sup>c</sup>																					
Indep.		14 <sup>c</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>		21 <sup>b</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>			-18 <sup>b</sup>			-18 <sup>b</sup>								13 <sup>c</sup>		-19 <sup>b</sup>
Neur.							-14 <sup>c</sup>	-17 <sup>b</sup>		22 <sup>a</sup>		20 <sup>b</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>					11 <sup>d</sup>			12 <sup>d</sup>	22 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $p < .001$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>b</sup> $p < .01$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>c</sup> $p < .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>d</sup> $p < .10$ , 2-tailed test.

the perspective of the opposite poles of these scales: Fathers' extraverted, low neuroticism (warm, emotional, carefree, impulsive, socially bold, uninhibited, group-oriented, dominating, and aggressive) was linked with sons' low neuroticism (dominating, aggressive, conscientious, responsible, persevering, socially bold, adventurous, zestful, group-involved, secure, and confident). Thus, the father/son relationship seemed to involve issues of low versus high neuroticism. The father/son dyad also showed about twice as many significant linkages as the other dyads, suggesting that it may be an unusually strong relationship in the family.

When these data were examined separately for sons under 12 years of age (childhood sample,  $N = 142$ ), the general pattern was quite similar to that of the overall sample and stronger (canonical correlation showed  $R = .50$ ,  $R^2 = .25$ , at  $p < .001$ ). However, there was a complete shift in the pattern for adolescent sons (over 13 years,  $N = 69$ ). The same father traits (extraverted low neuroticism) that had been linked with sons' low neuroticism in the childhood age range linked even more strongly with different, but sex-role-appropriate, traits in adolescent sons: E+ (aggressive, domineering, competitive), I— (hard, cynical, unemotional), and cortertia (tough-minded, task-oriented, objective)—a "macho" sort of image.<sup>1</sup> The canonical correlation showed this to be an important interrelationship:  $R = .71$ ,  $R^2 = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ . Although causality cannot be determined from correlational data, it is interesting that this socially approved pattern emerged at the age when sons are being socialized into adulthood roles, and that it was linked with positive mental health in fathers. This suggests that well-adjusted fathers play an important role in their sons' acquiring the tough, aggressive traits that are socially desirable. The possibility exists that these age differences could be the result of cohort differences (Nesselroade & Baltes, 1974) or of subtle differences in the several test forms used across the age ranges; however, such sudden shifts in cohort treatment in the same family seem unlikely, and there has been much research (Cattell, 1973; Cattell & Burdsal, 1975; Cattell, Coan, & Beloff, 1958; Friel, 1972) to replicate the factor structure of the tests across the different age ranges.

For the mother/son dyad (Table 2) the second-order trait showing the largest number of correlations with mothers' traits was again sons' neuroticism. Mothers' traits of neuroticism, low cortertia (emotional, sensitive), F— (serious, cautious, introspective), H— (shy, threat-sensitive, inhibited), and O+ (insecure, guilt-prone, worrisome) linked positively with sons' traits of neuroticism, introversion, E— (submissive, conforming, docile), F— (serious, cautious, introspective), and Q<sub>2</sub>+ (self-sufficient, socially isolated). The canonical correlation of mothers' F, H, and O with sons' E, F, and Q<sub>2</sub> showed an  $R = .44$ ,  $R^2 = .19$ , with  $p < .02$ . Thus, a very inhibited, over-emotional, intropunitive pattern in mothers was linked to withdrawn, inhibited submissiveness in sons. This pattern can also, of course, be viewed from the more positive poles of the scales: Mothers' low neuroticism, tough practicality, carefree impulsivity, bold adventuresomeness, and confident security were related to sons' low neuroticism, aggressiveness, carefree impulsivity, and social orientedness. The sons' linkages with both parents revolved around issues of low versus high neuroticism.

Just as in the father/son dyad, the most highly correlated sons' traits in the

Table 2  
All Statistically Significant ( $p < .10$ ) Correlations Between  
the 16PF Traits of Mothers and Sons ( $N = 231$ , from 127 families)

F a t h e r s' T r a i t s	Sons' Traits																				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>2</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>	Extrav.	Anx.	Cort.	Indep.	Neur.	
A																					
B		19 <sup>b</sup>																			
C																					
E			13 <sup>d</sup>																		-11 <sup>d</sup>
F					21 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>c</sup>			-13 <sup>c</sup>							15 <sup>c</sup>			12 <sup>d</sup>		-16 <sup>c</sup>
G	17 <sup>c</sup>																				
H			20 <sup>b</sup>		22 <sup>a</sup>	17 <sup>b</sup>															
I			12 <sup>d</sup>	14 <sup>c</sup>																	
L			11 <sup>d</sup>																		
M					-11 <sup>d</sup>																
N			-12 <sup>d</sup>		-14 <sup>c</sup>																-16 <sup>c</sup>
O			-13 <sup>c</sup>		14 <sup>c</sup>																13 <sup>c</sup>
Q <sub>1</sub>																					
Q <sub>2</sub>			21 <sup>a</sup>																		
Q <sub>3</sub>																					
Q <sub>4</sub>																					
Extrav.			12 <sup>d</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>																
Anx.					-13 <sup>c</sup>																
Cort.			16 <sup>c</sup>		15 <sup>c</sup>																
Indep.			15 <sup>c</sup>																		
Neur.					-21 <sup>a</sup>	-11 <sup>d</sup>															

<sup>a</sup> $p < .001$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>b</sup> $p < .01$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>c</sup> $p < .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>d</sup> $p < .10$ , 2-tailed test.

## MULTIVARIATE EXPERIMENTAL CLINICAL RESEARCH

mother/son dyad were quite different in the adolescent from those in the childhood age range. For adolescent boys, sex-role-appropriate traits of E+ (aggressive, domineering, competitive), I- (hard, unemotional, self-reliant), and cortertia (tough-minded, objective, task-oriented) became salient, just as among the linkages of adolescent sons with fathers.

Daughters showed a greater number of intercorrelations with mothers than with fathers, and these mother/daughter patterns (Table 3) appear to be sex-role related. Mothers' sex-role-appropriate traits of low independence, low cortertia (sensitive emotionalism), E- (submissive, conforming, docile), I+ (sensitive, emotional, tender-minded), L- (trusting, adaptable, easygoing), N+ (socially shrewd, polished, ambitious), and O- (untroubled, confident, expedient) were related to daughters' sex-role-appropriate traits of introversion, E- (submissive, conforming, docile), F- (serious, cautious, full of cares), and Q3+ (self-controlled, follows, socially approved self-image). Canonical correlation of mothers' traits E, I, L, N, and O with daughters' traits E, F, and Q3 showed  $R = .44$ ,  $R^2 = .20$ , at  $p < .003$ . Unlike both of the parent/son dyads that shifted in salient traits at adolescence, this mother/daughter pattern continued, but became much more pronounced in the adolescent age range (over 13 years,  $N = 41$ ), supporting the idea that sex-role socialization processes were at work. Thus, mothers who were confident and unconflicted (O-, low anxiety) in their submissive (E-), emotional (low cortertia), sensitive (I+), adaptable (L-) sex-role, as well as socially shrewd and polished (N+), tended to have daughters who had internalized a carefully controlled, socially appropriate self-image (Q3+), and who were submissive (E-), dependent (low independence), introverted, subdued (D-), and cautious (F-). Canonical correlation of these mother/daughter traits showed this to be a very strong relationship:  $R = .79$ ,  $R^2 = .62$ , at  $p < .001$ . Viewed from the opposite poles of the scales, this pattern shows mothers' traits of aggressiveness, extraversion, unsentimental toughness, suspiciousness, social naivete, anxiety, and guilt-prone insecurity to be related to daughters' traits of extraversion, independence, aggressiveness, carefree impulsivity, overactivity, and lax carelessness of social standards. Thus, mother/daughter linkages seemed to revolve around the transmission of sex-roles.

The father/daughter intercorrelations (Table 4) also emphasized daughters' traits of nonconflicted, sensitive dependency, but here these were linked with inappropriate sex-role traits in fathers. Fathers' traits of E- (submissive, conforming, docile), and H- (easily threatened, shy, inhibited) were linked with daughters' traits of low independence, low anxiety, low cortertia (sensitive emotionality), E- (submissive, conforming, docile), I+ (emotional, tender-minded, sentimental), and Q4- (relaxed, placid, unconflicted). Thus, the more sex-role deviant the fathers' traits, the more sex-role adherent were the daughters' traits, and vice versa. Although this relationship was weaker than that with mothers ( $R = .29$ ,  $R^2 = .08$ ,  $p < .13$ ), it is interesting to note that if both parents of daughters adhered to their respective sex-roles (mothers were dependent and sensitive, while fathers were independent and bold—all sex differences that are consistently found on the 16PF), then daughters appeared to be influenced in opposite directions by the two parents, presumably creating conflict. Overall, both parent/daughter dyads involved the daughters' sex-role

Table 3  
All Statistically Significant ( $p < .10$ ) Correlations Between  
the 16PF Traits of Fathers and Daughters ( $N = 162$ , from 127 families)

Fathers' Traits	Daughters' Traits																				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>2</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>	Extrav.	Anx.	Cort.	Indep.	Neur.	
A	-13 <sup>d</sup>														-17 <sup>c</sup>						
B		21 <sup>b</sup>																			
C																					
E					14 <sup>d</sup>				-16 <sup>c</sup>						13 <sup>d</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>	16 <sup>c</sup>	16 <sup>c</sup>		
F																	13 <sup>d</sup>		13 <sup>d</sup>		
G		13 <sup>d</sup>					16 <sup>c</sup>														
H																20 <sup>c</sup>				15 <sup>c</sup>	
I				13 <sup>d</sup>						14 <sup>d</sup>											
L		-13 <sup>d</sup>						-14 <sup>d</sup>													13 <sup>d</sup>
M																					
N	-14 <sup>d</sup>							-13 <sup>d</sup>							17 <sup>c</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>					16 <sup>c</sup>
O		-13 <sup>d</sup>							13 <sup>d</sup>								-18 <sup>c</sup>				
Q <sub>1</sub>		22 <sup>b</sup>															-16 <sup>c</sup>				
Q <sub>2</sub>																					
Q <sub>3</sub>		24 <sup>b</sup>									-15 <sup>d</sup>								-16 <sup>c</sup>		
Q <sub>4</sub>			-13 <sup>d</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>						15 <sup>d</sup>										
Extrav.																15 <sup>d</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>				13 <sup>d</sup>
Anx.	-15 <sup>c</sup>														14 <sup>d</sup>	-13 <sup>d</sup>					
Cort.		15 <sup>c</sup>			14 <sup>d</sup>																
Indep.									-13 <sup>d</sup>									17 <sup>c</sup>	18 <sup>c</sup>	17 <sup>c</sup>	
Neur.		-14 <sup>d</sup>																			

<sup>a</sup><sub>p</sub> < .001, 2-tailed test.

<sup>b</sup><sub>p</sub> < .01, 2-tailed test.

<sup>c</sup><sub>p</sub> < .05, 2-tailed test.

<sup>d</sup><sub>p</sub> < .10, 2-tailed test.

Table 4  
All Statistically Significant ( $p < .10$ ) Correlations Between  
the 16PF Traits of Mothers and Daughters (N = 162, from 127 families)

F a t h e r s' T r a i t s	Daughters' Traits																				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>2</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>	Extrav.	Anx.	Cort.	Indep.	Neur.	
A									15 <sup>d</sup>												
B		28 <sup>a</sup>																			
C																					
E	14 <sup>d</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>			23 <sup>b</sup>	22 <sup>b</sup>							-16 <sup>c</sup>	-19 <sup>c</sup>		35 <sup>a</sup>		18 <sup>c</sup>	21 <sup>b</sup>	-15 <sup>d</sup>	
F	19 <sup>c</sup>																				
G														18 <sup>c</sup>							
H	14 <sup>d</sup>	15 <sup>c</sup>					13 <sup>d</sup>														
I		16 <sup>c</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>									-13 <sup>d</sup>				-16 <sup>c</sup>	-16 <sup>c</sup>	-14 <sup>d</sup>	-17 <sup>c</sup>	-13 <sup>d</sup>	
L			-13 <sup>d</sup>		24 <sup>b</sup>											23 <sup>b</sup>		24 <sup>b</sup>	15 <sup>d</sup>		
M								14 <sup>d</sup>	-16 <sup>c</sup>											-17 <sup>c</sup>	
N				-17 <sup>c</sup>	-14 <sup>d</sup>	-19 <sup>c</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>									20 <sup>c</sup>	-18 <sup>c</sup>	-14 <sup>d</sup>	-13 <sup>d</sup>	-14 <sup>d</sup>	
O					21 <sup>b</sup>											-19 <sup>c</sup>	17 <sup>c</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>	15 <sup>c</sup>	
Q <sub>1</sub>																					
Q <sub>2</sub>																					
Q <sub>3</sub>	15 <sup>c</sup>									-17 <sup>c</sup>										-16 <sup>c</sup>	
Q <sub>4</sub>																					
Extrav.	20 <sup>b</sup>											13 <sup>d</sup>		-20 <sup>c</sup>		14 <sup>d</sup>					
Anx.					17 <sup>c</sup>									-14 <sup>d</sup>		13 <sup>d</sup>					
Cort.	14 <sup>d</sup>															24 <sup>b</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>		
Indep.		14 <sup>d</sup>			20 <sup>c</sup>	22 <sup>b</sup>										22 <sup>b</sup>					
Neur.					15 <sup>c</sup>					-17 <sup>c</sup>										-18 <sup>c</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> $p < .001$ , 2-tailed test.  
<sup>b</sup> $p < .01$ , 2-tailed test.  
<sup>c</sup> $p < .05$ , 2-tailed test.  
<sup>d</sup> $p < .10$ , 2-tailed test.

## SEX ROLES AND DYADIC UNIQUENESS

traits, while both parent/son dyads revolved around the sons' neuroticism or mental health.

Another interesting finding for the father/daughter dyad was that there were more than twice as many significant linkages between fathers and eldest daughters ( $N = 42$ ) than there were for the total father/daughter sample. Furthermore, the linkages for eldest daughters were sharply discrepant from the overall sample: fathers' central character traits of low anxiety, low neuroticism, C+ (emotionally stable, high ego strength), G+ (conscientious, rule-bound, high superego strength), Q<sub>3</sub>+ (self-controlled, strong socially appropriate self-image), and Q<sub>4</sub>- (unfrustrated, relaxed, placid) were linked with daughters' traits of C+ (emotionally stable; high ego strength), D- (unexcitable, undemanding, stoical), E- (submissive, conforming, docile), Q<sub>3</sub>+ (self-controlled, strong socially appropriate self-image), and Q<sub>4</sub>- (unfrustrated, relaxed, composed). The canonical correlation of these father and daughter traits showed this to be a very strong relationship:  $R = .77$ ,  $R^2 = .59$ ,  $p < .05$ . The highly significant same-trait intercorrelations for fathers and eldest daughters on Factors C, G, Q<sub>3</sub>, and Q<sub>4</sub> indicate a strong similarity on basic character traits involving degree of socialization, internalization of controls, and conflict. These important trait similarities did not occur in any of the other dyads at any age, implying a special relationship between fathers and eldest daughters.

Another interesting way to view these data is in terms of the child traits associated with healthy parental traits (low anxiety and low neuroticism). In the childhood age range (below 12 years), these healthy parent traits were associated with only one trait, dependence, in both sons and daughters, a seemingly appropriate finding for this young age range. The other traits, however, showed definite sex differences: sons' traits correlated with parental mental health included extraversion, E+ (aggressive, domineering), G+ (conscientious, rule-bound, high superego strength), F+ (carefree, impulsive), H+ (socially bold, adventurous), and J- (zestful, socially oriented, vigorous), while for daughters the only other related trait was A+ (warm, softhearted, generous). Thus, in the childhood years, sons of mentally healthy parents tended to be extraverted, uninhibited, and extrapunitive, while daughters were warm-hearted and generous.

In the adolescent (over 13) age range, the correlates of healthy parent traits were entirely distinct and sometimes opposite for daughters and sons: related daughter traits included dependence, introversion, E- (submissive, conforming, docile), J+ (internally restrained, guarded, fastidiously obstructive), and B+ (higher abstract capacity), while for sons the related traits included cortertia (tough, unemotional, task-oriented), E+ (aggressive, domineering), and I- (hard, unsentimental, practical). Again, in the adolescent age range, healthy parent traits were associated with sex-role-appropriate traits: unemotional extrapunitive traits in boys versus inhibited, intropunitive traits in girls.

It also seems noteworthy that these parent/child personality interactions appeared largely free from simply hereditary influences. The positive parent/child same-trait correlations or similarity that would suggest heredity were not found for all four dyads on any factor.

## CONCLUSIONS

General characteristics of the personality interrelationships between, for example, mothers and sons, are necessarily limited unless a host of other important variables are considered, such as the parents' sex-role identification, socioeconomic status, birth order of the child, number of siblings, configuration of power, and other traits between the parents and other family members, etc. These many complexities tend to reduce the magnitude of the correlations observed in the present work. Knowledge of these broad relationships is nevertheless valuable in developing an overview of the different patterns of personality trait linkages in the family, and serves as a basis for future research into these more particularized patterns.

The clear overall finding here was that parent/child personality intercorrelations differed for each of the four parent/child dyads. The father/son data showed that fathers' traits of introverted, inhibited neuroticism were associated with inhibited, but conflicted, neuroticism in sons. In the adolescent age range, sons' salient traits shifted to sex-role-appropriate traits of unemotional, aggressive, tough-mindedness, which were associated with low neuroticism in fathers. The mother/son linkages also involved sons' withdrawn, inhibited neuroticism, which was linked to mothers' overemotional, insecure neuroticism. In the adolescent years, sons' sex-role traits of aggressive tough-mindedness became salient in mother/son linkages, just as they had in the father/son linkages.

While parent/child linkages emphasized sons' neuroticism versus mental health (until adolescence), both parent/daughter dyads revolved around daughters' sex-role traits of emotionally sensitive, unconflicted dependency. These traits were related to mothers' traits of emotionally sensitive, socially attuned submissiveness, as well as nonanxious confidence—suggesting an unconflicted acceptance of the female role. These daughter traits were linked to similar, but sex-role-inappropriate, traits of submissive, timid dependency in fathers, suggesting that if fathers showed sex-role appropriate traits, then daughters would tend to show similar, but sex-role-inappropriate traits, and vice versa. This therefore suggests that if both mothers and fathers follow their respective sex roles, the personality expectations for daughters would be opposite from these two sources, presumably creating conflict.

Daughters who were the eldest child in the family showed strong and unique linkages with fathers that involved similarity to fathers on central character traits such as ego strength, internalized self-control, and low internal conflict. This may indicate a special relationship between fathers and eldest daughters.

Overall, these results suggest that family relationships revolve around issues of mental health for boys, but emphasize sex-role traits of dependency, emotionality, and introversion for girls (although sex-role traits of aggressive toughness appeared for boys in the adolescent age range). Further sex differences were seen in the correlates of healthy parent traits: aggressiveness, extraversion, social boldness, and emotional toughness for boys versus warmth, introversion, and dependency for girls.

In addition to confirming the strong presence of sex-roles in family relationships, the other clear conclusion was that parent/child relationships are differ-

## SEX ROLES AND DYADIC UNIQUENESS

ent for each of the four dyads. This suggests that research that averages results across male and female children, or across parents of both sexes, may well be misleading due to the confounding of different effects.

### NOTE

<sup>1</sup>“Sex-role-appropriate traits” refer to those 16 PF traits that consistently show sex differences. As the *Handbook for the 16PF* denotes, women tend to be more warm and softhearted (A+), more submissive and obedient (E—), more shy and timid (H—), more tender-minded and sensitive (I+), more accepting and trusting (L—), more imaginative and fanciful (M+), more unpretentious and artless (N—), more apprehensive and guilt-prone (O+), more impulsive and poorly controlled (Q3—), more tense and overwrought (Q4+), and, on second-order factors, more dependent, anxious, and emotionally sensitive (low cortertia).

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MULTIVARIATE EXPERIMENTAL CLINICAL RESEARCH

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