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THE IMPACT OF SHARED MUSICAL IDENTITY,  
SHARED FAMILY IDENTITY, AND ACCOMMODATION  
ON SATISFACTION IN PARENT/YOUNG ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Ryan C. Hancock

June 2012

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Title: THE IMPACT OF SHARED MUSICAL IDENTITY, SHARED FAMILY IDENTITY, AND ACCOMMODATION ON SATISFACTION IN PARENT/YOUNG ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

Advisor: Erin K. Willer

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the potential influence of shared musical identities of young adult children and their parents in relation to communicative and relational aspects of family, in order to determine whether musical tastes of individuals impact family relationships. In this research study, 196 college students reported on their perceptions of shared musical identity with their parents, shared family identity, parental accommodative communication behaviors, and family satisfaction. Results indicated that shared musical identity positively predicted perceptions of shared family identity, parental accommodative behaviors, including general accommodation, overaccommodation, topic management, and family satisfaction. Furthermore, shared musical identity and shared family identity positively predicted perceptions of parental accommodative behaviors and family satisfaction. Finally, perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors mediated the relationship between shared musical identity and family satisfaction. These findings indicate that music may have a noteworthy influence on family relationships, including impacting perceptions of communication and satisfaction between parents and their children, as well as perceptions of family identity. These findings also suggest that social identity theory, communication accommodation theory, and shared family identity can be applied to, and illuminate

aspects of, nuclear family communication and relationships, which are areas not often explored with these theories.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical and mental development (Mulliken, 2006). During this period, adolescents begin to recognize themselves as unique individuals, prompting a divergence from their collective family and a search for a unique identity (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; Campbell, Adams, & Dobson, 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Many external factors such as media (Baumgartner, 1992; David, Schnur, & Belloiu, 2002), and music in particular, begin to influence adolescents' perceptions of themselves and others. For example, North and Hargreaves (1999) have found a positive relationship between adolescents' musical preferences—their preferred musical styles and tastes—and their own self-concept and self-esteem, as well as their expectations of fans with various musical styles.

External factors such as music aid adolescents in the cognitive process of categorization, which is a fundamental tenet of *social identity theory* (SIT) (Palmonari, Pombeni, & Kirchler, 1992; Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2001). Categorization, which involves assessing identities based on traits and characteristics can have a powerful effect on how one communicates with others. Specifically, *communication accommodation theory* (CAT) postulates that we regulate our communicative behaviors based on our perceptions of characteristics of other individuals with whom we interact (Giles, 1973; Giles, Couplan, & Wiemann, 1987). SIT and CAT are directly relevant to emerging

adolescent identities, as they provide theoretical lenses through which we can observe and measure communication patterns and behaviors of adolescents, as well as their relationships with others, including parents.

To date, some research has looked at the influence of musical preference on identity, as well as *ingroups* and *outgroups* (Fortman, 2003; Hall, 2007; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Ingroups consist of individuals with whom one feels close, similar, and connected, whereas outgroups consist of individuals with whom one does not feel as connected, or does not share similar characteristics. Research on musical preferences so far has addressed ingroups and outgroups through an analysis of categorization of *peers* (e.g., Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Specifically, research in this vein has compared adolescents to other adolescents, similar both in age and school year (e.g., Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). Little research has addressed the effect of musical preferences on the parent/adolescent dyad. Additionally, there is little research regarding whether or not the level of similarity and/or difference in musical preferences, or *shared musical identity* (SMI) between parents and adolescents can influence aspects of their relationship, such as *shared family identity* (SFI), or family members' feelings of being a family (Soliz & Harwood, 2003), family satisfaction, or perceptions of accommodative communication.

This study, therefore, proposes an exploration into the ways in which shared musical identity among parents and adolescents influences their relationships. Using the theoretical concepts of SIT and CAT as guides, this study will investigate relationships between SMI within the parent/adolescent dyad and adolescent perceptions of SFI,

parental accommodative communication, and family satisfaction. Understanding the role and influence of music within the parent-adolescent relationship stands to benefit communication, psychology, and music research, as well as clinical applications, such as family counseling and therapy. Specifically, this research can further highlight in what ways parents and adolescents understand, view, and relate to each other.

### **The Shifting Dynamic of “Family Communication” in Adolescent Development**

As briefly stated above, with adolescence comes the beginning of a divergence from one’s nuclear family. It is during this time that adolescents begin to develop a concept of *self* as a distinct entity from parents (Campbell et al., 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Once adolescents begin this developmental process, the relationship they have with their parents begins to evolve as well. Parents and adolescents negotiate this changing dynamic of their relationship through communicative functions (Allen, et. al., 1994; Guerrero & Afifi, 1995; Fortman, 2003). For instance, adolescents often begin to distinguish themselves by developing and using language that is unique to their peers and others close in age (Fortman, 2003). Furthermore, adolescents begin to recognize differences in communication styles between themselves and other, older members of their family. This variation in communicative style between adolescents and older family members can influence aspects of the relationship, such as feelings of connectedness with their parents (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985) as well as adolescents’ perceptions of older adults as a distinct identity group (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006).

The evolving parent-adolescent relationship is further influenced by things like topic avoidance and regulating self-disclosure. For example, adolescents might begin to

avoid discussing topics such as negative life experiences, relationship issues, sexual experiences, and friendships, amongst others (Guerrero & Afifi, 1995). Likewise, adolescents begin to monitor and regulate their self-disclosure more with their parents. Research has shown that, in family settings, too much disclosure can create both a sense of vulnerability and feelings of lost individuality and privacy (Hatfield, 1984), while too little disclosure can create a sense of disconnect between family members (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Rosenfled, 1979). This research suggests that, as adolescents develop their individual identities, the type and amount of information they choose to share with parents becomes an integral part of how their relationships change over time.

As a result of this shifting dynamic, parents and adolescents start to establish new norms and balances regarding their communication. Considering that “the significance of effective communication...within families has been recognized by therapists, researchers, and family life educators” (Barnes & Olson, 1982, p. 17), research regarding factors that impact communication behaviors within the parent/adolescent dyad is imperative. Ideally, “identity formation is facilitated by a balance between family connectedness and the encouragement of individuality (or the establishment of autonomously held viewpoints)” (Campbell et al., 1984, p. 511-12). However achieving this balance can be a difficult task, considering, for instance, personality factors of the adolescent (Guerrero & Afifi, 1995) and/or parenting styles of the parent/s (Constantine, 1987). These newly evolving norms regarding interactions between parents and adolescents might be influenced by both parental perceptions of emerging adolescent identities and adolescents’ perceptions of

parental communication. In other words, adolescents' perceptions of parental communication can influence the balance of family connectedness and the adolescents' interpretation of their parents' opinions regarding their identity development. Factors that can contribute to identity, such as music, have the potential to influence family communication, and thus should be explored.

In summary, the above literature explicates that during adolescence perceptions of the self, perceptions of others, and perceptions of self *in relation to* others all begin to evolve. This evolution is a result of both adolescent desire for autonomy and the changing communicative dynamic in the parent/adolescent dyad. The next section reviews the concepts of SIT and CAT, prevalent theories in understanding how one perceives himself or herself in relation to others, and addresses the theories' usage in previous research involving the influence of music on adolescents.

## **Identity and Music**

### **Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

SIT suggests that one utilizes social categories as a basis for ascribing traits and characteristics to both himself or herself and others (Tajfel, 1978; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Through assessments of characteristics and traits of individuals, people can ascribe identities to themselves and others as a form of classification. This takes place by comparing traits to that of an interpreted prototype for the understood group, which allows for the categorizations of ingroups and outgroups (Harwood, Giles & Ryan, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Additionally, once this categorization takes place, one is more

likely to favor the ingroup over the outgroup in terms of perceived characteristics and traits, which contributes positively to self-esteem (Harwood et al., 1995).

Previous research regarding SIT and music has found that adolescents label their peers into ingroups and outgroups based on musical preferences (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). This research suggests that not only do adolescents prescribe characteristics and traits to others based on musical preference (ingroups and outgroups), but that they also categorize themselves based on their own musical preferences (ingroup). This further implies that adolescents incorporate their own musical preferences into their understanding of their self-identity, in essence creating categorizations for themselves and others based on a perceived musical identity (Hargreaves et al., 2002). For example, using SIT as a guiding concept, Bajagiannis and Tarrant (2006) organized a study that separated subjects randomly into two groups. Following this, half of the participants in each group were told that musical preferences between groups were similar, and the other half was told that preferences were different. Participants who were told that the groups had similar preferences used more positive adjectives to describe members of the opposite group, whereas participants who were told that the two groups had different preferences used more neutral and negative adjectives to describe the opposite group. In other words, the authors found that, regardless of any actual variation in musical preference, the mere perception of similarity or difference in musical preferences led to more positive and negative evaluations respectively.

In sum, SIT research involving music suggests that it can impact how one categorizes and characterizes others with regard to similarity or difference in musical preferences. However, to date, most research involving SIT and music has been strongly rooted in psychology. Furthermore, research using SIT to study families, and parent/adolescent dyads in particular, is absent. Since adolescence prompts identity development, communication patterns and behaviors begin to change, and it is with this in mind that factors that contribute to identity development, such as music, become especially relevant.

### **Musical Identity and SIT**

Music and musical preference have been shown to contribute both to one's concept of self-identity (Arnett, 1995; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Hesmondalgh, 2008; North & Hargreaves, 1999), and to one's expression and processing of emotion (Juslin, 2000; Juslin & Laukka, 2003). Hargreaves, MacDonald and Miell (2002) have recognized that "people use music as a means of developing and negotiating interpersonal relationships" (p. 2). For example, research has also shown that music can prompt positive affective responses in people, such as decreased feelings of anxiety and frustration (Rickson & Watkins, 2003; Palakanis, DeNobile, Sweeney, & Blankenship, 1993; Paccetti et al., 2000), further justifying why it has the potential to influence identities and can be influential to interpersonal relationships. Based on these premises, it makes sense that "we use [music] not only to regulate our own everyday moods and behaviours [*sic*], but also to present ourselves to others in the way we prefer" (Hargreaves, et al., p. 1). In short, music can play a vital role in our lives from youth until

death, specifically affecting our perceptions of individuality, others, emotions, and therefore, our relationships.

Musical preferences, and specifically the amount of variation of preference between individuals, thus can become a factor allowing for individuals to identify similarity and distinction. Based on this understanding, one's musical identity is a type of social identity. As social identities are understood through one's perceptions of characteristics and traits, so then would musical identities be subject to the same type of classification. In other words, one has the potential to identify similarities and differences between himself or herself and others by assessing variation in musical interests and tastes. Some research previously cited regarding music and SIT (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002) was attempting to identify the effects of musical identities among peers with regard to categorization and trait classification based on musical preference, although this was not a main purpose of the research. This research suggests that, in addition to variation in musical interest itself, individuals can and do associate musical preferences with particular individual characteristics. Specifically, in these studies, individuals used characteristics generated based on musical preferences as a foundation for assessing ingroup and outgroup classification, as well as opinions about others.

The present study aims to further study musical preference and its influence on relationships with others, specifically to ascertain how similarity and/or difference of musical preference can affect families. With this in mind, CAT becomes a valuable

theoretical tool for assessing how variation in musical preferences can affect *communicative* elements of parent/adolescent relationships.

### **Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)**

CAT postulates that one's communicative behaviors towards others are highly influenced by perceptions of similarities and differences (Giles, 1973; Hummert, Shaner, & Garstka, 1995). These similarities and differences can reflect both identity and/or communication patterns of individuals involved in an interaction. While research regarding accommodation and accommodative behaviors often measures structural aspects of an interaction, such as matching speech rate and posture (Buller & Aune, 1992), accommodation can also refer to emotional and interpretive aspects of an interaction, such as displaying empathy, being attentive and polite, and giving compliments (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998). In this regard, accommodative behaviors have the potential to both reduce and magnify differences between people in an interaction (Giles, 2008). This is also true of families, as the ways in which family members communicate with one another can have an effect on satisfaction (Lin & Harwood, 2003), conflict (Drake & Donohue, 1996), and understanding (Soliz & Harwood, 2006).

Important to CAT is the concept of *nonaccommodation*, which is lack of sync between conversational partners (Giles, et al., 1987; Giles, 2008). Nonaccommodation can be characterized by under- or over- accommodation. Underaccommodation takes place when one conversational partner does not take the other's perspective or interests into consideration (Hummert et al., 1995). For example, a parent who wants to lecture a child on the dangers of drug and alcohol use without hearing the child's viewpoints or

concerns would represent underaccommodation. Conversely, overaccommodation is when one primarily utilizes stereotypes and generalizations to guide conversations, as opposed to unique characteristics of individuals (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998). For example, a parent might assume that having his or her teenager listen to music from the parent's youth would give his or her teenager an idea of the issues taking place during that time in history. However, the teenager may not be interested in that music, feeling no intimate connection to that experience. As a result, the teenager may say things like "That music is so old," or "That music isn't really for people my age." These assumptions by both the parents and children, and the resulting communication, represent a lack of consideration for individual tastes and instead reflect generalizations based on characteristics.

In summary, SIT and CAT collaboratively suggest that communicative behaviors will vary based on the characteristics perceived in others. In a family, the quality and type of communication between members can play a role in how individuals *feel* about their family, including whether they feel like a family at all. These aspects of communication in a family are a part of SFI, which is detailed in the next section.

### **Shared Family Identity (SFI)**

SFI (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006) is a concept that stems from the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), which suggests conceptualizing a common ingroup identity can lessen or diminish some negative implications of intergroup distinctions (Rittenour & Soliz, 2009). SFI suggests that within a family, there is potential for both ingroup and outgroup classifications of individuals because families include both intergroup and intragroup relationships. Specifically, "the

family is inherently a shared ingroup for all members, but family members also possess [individual] identities signifying intergroup boundaries within the family” (Soliz & Harwood, 2006, p. 88). For example, the identity of “family” is itself an ingroup and a strong connective factor for individuals. However, individuals making up a family all have unique characteristics that can be used as differentiating factors, such as food, age, music, or political preference. If family identity is more salient at any given time, then intergroup boundaries that signify differentiation may be superseded (Soliz & Harwood, 2006). For example, a parent’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party may bring to the foreground the age of this individual, and more importantly the age gap between the parent and his or her child, whereas an average day may not prompt distinguishing characteristics such as age, and the significance of being family is foremost present.

There are several communicative, cognitive and psychological consequences of potential intergroup distinction within a family. First, “perceptions of a shared family identity represent family relationships in which intergroup distinctions are minimized” (Soliz, 2007, p. 178-79). More specifically, outgroup distinctions suggest a higher potential for intergroup communication, which is less personal, as opposed to interpersonal communication. For example, communication between a father and child will be highly influenced by how close each individual feels to the other. If the two *perceive* themselves as being close and connected, the tone of the communication between them will most likely reflect these perceptions. If however the father and child feel that they are dissimilar, and feel negatively about these differences, the way they communicate with and about each other will most likely display this. Second, Rittenour

and Soliz (2009) claim that “perceptions of a shared family identity is indicative of *intragroup* and, hence, a more interpersonal and positive orientation” (p. 69). In other words, within families there is potential for outgroup distinctions, and establishing the recognition of a broader, more inclusive group (e.g., a common ingroup, or shared family identity) will reflect more positive relationship qualities (Harwood, Raman & Hewstone, 2006; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009; Soliz & Harwood, 2006). For example, within families, an adolescent might not feel a close bond with his or her nuclear family for reasons such as desire for individuality, lack of common interests, and so on. The parents might then continually reference the fact that, even though the teenager is his or her own person, they are all still a family connected by genes, love, or other commonalities. Thus, the ability to distinguish various groups within a family does not mean that these distinctions must *always* be salient.

SFI is often applied to research involving non-traditional families (e.g., Braithwaite, Olson, Golish, Soukup & Turman, 2001) or studies of families that include multiple generations, such as grandparent/grandchildren relationships (e.g., Harwood et al., 2009; Soliz & Harwood, 2003). However, the tenets of SFI as a theoretical lens suggest that the turbulent time of adolescence combined with development of identity can generate variance in one’s feelings of SFI. Furthermore, it is specific aspects of relationships, such as communication behaviors and commonalities that can affect perceptions and salience of SFI at given times. As previously mentioned, various individual preferences for things such as music and politics can prompt differentiation. However, similarities in these tastes can also prompt stronger ties to an ingroup. The

following section explores music specifically, and how the level of shared musical preferences can potentially influence the salience of ingroup association.

### **Shared Musical Identity (SMI)**

Mans (2009), in an attempt to conceptualize a *shared* musical identity (SMI), suggested that “identity formation begins at the fundamental level of recognizing different behaviors, attitudes, and talk from others, thus allowing individuals to cognitively perceive others as *others* (pp. 95-6). Mans writing suggests SMI is a complex negotiation of similarity and difference with regard to music and musical interests among individuals. Particularly, what would constitute *shared* musical identity is the amount of overlap of musical interests of these individuals.

As stated earlier, musical identities are in essence social identities, in that musical preferences can and do prompt trait and characteristic association of both the self and others. Differences in musical preferences among adolescents can have measurable effects on perceived intergroup distinctions and categorizations (Hall, 2007; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Specifically, adolescents have used music, and more appropriately musical preference, as a distinguishing characteristic of ingroup identification (Fortman, 2003), and as a source for measurable intergroup biases (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). Importantly, this implies that when one considers his or her own preferences in relation to others, he or she is assessing the level of similarity (ingroup) or difference (outgroup) between himself or herself and others. This process is, at the most fundamental level, the assessment of a *shared* musical identity that exists among individuals. Stronger similarity of musical preferences would constitute a stronger shared musical identity, and thus,

stronger potential for interpersonal communication with, or ingroup assessments of, others. Conversely, stronger difference in musical preferences would suggest a weaker shared musical identity, which could in turn stimulate greater potential for less personal intergroup communication with, or outgroup assessments of, others.

To summarize the previously mentioned research, it is during adolescence that perceptions of one's self in relation to others begins to evolve (Allen, et. al., 1994; Campbell et al., 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985), making SIT an exceptionally relevant theory to this demographic. SIT research, specifically involving music, suggests that music can impact how one categorizes and characterizes both himself or herself and others in regard to both individual musical preferences (North & Hargreaves, 1999), and shared musical preferences among individuals (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). This is primarily because of the potential significance music can have on one's life, affecting perceptions of individuality, others, emotions, and relationships. CAT in association with SIT suggests that the communication among individuals can vary based on perceptions of characteristics and traits in others (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998; Hummert et al., 1995). In families specifically, the quality and type of communication among family members plays a significant role in how one feels about their family, and how connected they feel to their family members, or their SFI (Soliz & Harwood, 2006; Soliz, 2007).

### **Hypotheses**

The potential connection between individuals based on assessments of similarity and/or difference becomes intrinsically complex when considering family relationships,

as the familial connection is always present, regardless of its salience. Therefore, considering SMI in regard to families is both novel and challenging. SMI suggests that music has the potential to act as a distinguishing aspect of a relationship, meaning that musical preferences can elicit feelings of similarity or difference with regard to perceptions of social identities (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Within families specifically, music can play both a positive and/or negative role in parent/adolescent relationships. For example, music has the potential to be one of many points of contention between parents and their children. Lohman and Jarvis (2000) have found that “many of the stressors between parents and adolescents occur due to differences in opinions and personal tastes [such as] preferences in clothes, *music*, and leisure” (p. 17, emphasis added). This could be due to the fact that adolescents and youth often prefer music that contains more liberal themes, such as rebellion and drug use (Lull, 1985), suicide and promiscuity (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003), and general themes “that oppose contemporary adult moral standards” (Leming, 1987, p. 364). Conversely, other research has found that similar musical preferences can strengthen family relationships (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Hendricks & Bradley, 2005), and can generate activities that family members can enjoy together (Litle & Zuckerman, 1986). This research implies both that a wide range of musical preference variation can exist between individuals within families, and that shared musical identities do exist in families to varying degrees. Whether or not variation in the level of a family’s shared musical identity is related to other aspects of their relationship has yet to be determined. Therefore, the following

hypotheses explore relationships between shared musical identity and these communicative and relational factors.

### **Hypothesis 1**

SMI can represent a factor of families' SFI. Specifically, a shared musical identity can allow one to feel part of both an ingroup and/or an outgroup, as research with music and SIT has shown (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). SFI claims that ingroups and outgroups are both present within families, and that within families there is the possibility that outgroup distinction can be more salient than the ingroup family identity, or vice versa (Soliz & Harwood, 2006).

The previously-mentioned research advocating that music can stimulate ingroup and outgroup categorization (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002) suggests it is plausible that perception of variation in musical preferences amongst family members can generate a similar effect. Specifically, music's ability to stimulate ingroup/outgroup salience could potentially be related to perceptions of SFI, as variation in musical preference could influence which is more salient—the outgroup distinction or the ingroup family identity. An important aspect of the previously mentioned research involving identity and music, however, is that the only knowledge participants had of each other was actual or manipulated musical preferences (e.g. Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). In other words, music was the only salient aspect of participants' connections to one another. Since family members have previous experience, knowledge, history, and relationships with each other, the salience and effect of music within their relationship is expected to vary considerably (Lohman and Jarvis, 2000;

Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986). The extent of the correlation between SMI and SFI would help determine both the relevance of musical preference variation for individuals within the family, and the significance of music as a contributing factor to family relationships. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1: Young adults' perceptions of SMI with their parents will be positively related to the young adults' perceptions of their SFI.

### **Hypothesis 2**

When considering that musical preference can contribute to an adolescent's developing identity (North & Hargreaves, 1999), no research to date has addressed whether or how musical preference impacts the communicative environment between parents and adolescents. As the previous hypothesis suggests a relationship between SMI and SFI, variation of SMI could also potentially be related to how parents and adolescent children communicate with each other. The extent of the correlation between SMI and SFI would further suggest that a correlation would exist between SMI and perceptions of accommodative communication. This prospect is based on research that suggests accommodative behaviors have the potential to both reduce and magnify differences between people in an interaction (Giles, 2008). In other words, in addition to individual acknowledgement of similarity and difference with others, accommodative behaviors, or lack thereof, stand to strengthen perceptions of those similarities and differences. With regard to identity and music, it is plausible that musical identities are subject to this same influence of accommodative behaviors, as perceptions of similarity and difference are grounded in social identity formation. Therefore, similar to SFI, the salience of shared

musical identity between individuals might influence perceptions of accommodative communication. Previous research has found links between perception of similarity and difference and accommodation (Giles, 1973; Giles, 2008; Hummert, Shaner, & Garstka, 1995), suggesting that perceptions of shared identity can prompt more accommodative communication.

Additionally, as SMI and SFI are both constructs rooted in social identity and ingroup/outgroup comparisons, it is plausible that parental accommodative communication behaviors are influenced by both. As research has shown, accommodative communication can influence, and be influenced by, feelings of connection or lack thereof to others (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998; Giles, 2008), including within families (Drake & Donohue, 1996; Lin & Harwood, 2003; Soliz & Harwood, 2006). This suggests that, within families, assessment of similarity and/or difference can prompt measurable variance in both actual and perceived communicative behaviors. Research finding both positive and negative associations involving music within the parent/child relationship (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000) suggests that feelings of SFI could support SMI's influence on accommodation. Therefore the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: Young adults' perceptions of SMI and SFI will positively predict perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors.

### **Hypothesis 3**

Furthermore, research has found that perceptions of shared ingroup identity can generate greater feelings of relationship satisfaction (Carli, Ganley, & Pierce-Otay, 1991;

Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal & Penna, 2005), suggesting that factors which can prompt the assessment of similarity correlate with perceptions of happiness within a relationship. Research is lacking regarding perceptions of similarity between parents and children and feelings of satisfaction. However, family satisfaction is often determined from assessing feelings of happiness, support, quality of time spent together, conflict, and so on (Carver & Jones, 1992) and many of these aspects are predictive of ingroup/outgroup evaluation (Carli et al., 1991, Haslam et al., 2005). Considering links between music and family relationships, which suggest music has the potential to both positively influence (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986) and negatively influence (Lohman & Jarvis, 2000) families, it is plausible to assume that members of families, a recognized ingroup, who perceive similarities in musical preferences amongst themselves and other family members would be more satisfied in their familial relationships.

Importantly, as mentioned previously, SMI and SFI are both rooted in ingroup/outgroup comparisons. Therefore, it is plausible that feelings of family satisfaction could be influenced by both SMI and SFI. Considering research has found the assessment of similarity via perceptions of shared ingroup identity can influence perceptions of satisfaction (Carli, Ganley, & Pierce-Otay, 1991; Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal & Penna, 2005), and that music can influence family relationships (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000), feelings of SFI could support SMI's influence on feelings of family satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3: Young adults' perceptions of SMI and SFI will positively predict perceptions of family satisfaction.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

While this research is attempting to determine whether feelings of SMI and SFI could influence perceptions of family satisfaction, positive correlations already abound in research regarding accommodative communication within families and perceptions of family satisfaction. Research has found that, within families, positive accommodative communication is related to higher perceptions of quality of relationships (Pierce, Sarason & Sarason, 1991) and SFI (Soliz & Harwood, 2003; Soliz & Harwood, 2006; Soliz, Ribarsky, Harrigan, & Tye-Williams, 2010). Furthermore, adolescents tended to have more positive perceptions of older individuals in general, regardless of relation, when accommodative communication behaviors were common (Williams et al., 1997).

As mentioned previously, research suggests that music can prompt ingroup/outgroup assessments of others (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Based on concepts of accommodative communication, the salience of ingroup or outgroup assessment can stimulate variance in communication behaviors (Soliz & Harwood, 2003; Soliz & Harwood, 2006). Based on this research, a correlation between SMI and parental accommodative communication would suggest a link between SMI and family satisfaction. Given that previous research has found positive correlations when investigating relationships between accommodative communication and family satisfaction, this link between SMI and family satisfaction

might be mediated by accommodative behaviors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4: Perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors mediate the relationship between perceptions of SMI and family satisfaction.

## Chapter Two: Methods

### Participants

Participants were 196 young adults attending a university from a large, metropolitan city in the Midwest, ranging in age from 18 to 22 ( $M = 19.44$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ). Participants in this age were used based on the assumption that, being on the cusp of adolescence, they have recently moved away from their parents (or still reside with them) and have had minimal experience and influence with being away from home. Important to note, 61 of the 196 respondents did not provide their age. Upon review of the online survey format, it is presumed that the placement of the question made it easy to overlook, as it was the only question on the survey that respondents skipped in such large quantity. Participants were 36% male ( $n = 70$ ) and 63% female ( $n = 124$ ). Most indicated they were White/Non-Hispanic (77%,  $n = 152$ ), Hispanic (6.1%,  $n = 12$ ), Asian or Pacific Islander (5.1%,  $n = 10$ ), and Black/Non-Hispanic (3.6%,  $n = 7$ ). Approximately 7% indicated other ethnic groups ( $n = 13$ ).

In addition to age, sex and ethnicity, participants were also asked questions regarding who they perceived to be their primary caregivers and secondary caregivers, their parents' marital status, their living situation before attending the university, and their current living situation. Almost two-thirds of participants reported their biological mother as their primary caregiver (62.2%,  $n = 122$ ), and over one-third reported their

biological father as their primary caregiver (35.2%, n = 69). One reported their adoptive father as primary caregiver (0.5%), and four reported other primary caregivers (2%). Just over half of the participants reported their biological father as their secondary caregiver (52%, n = 102) while a one-fourth reported their biological mother as their secondary caregiver (24%, n = 47). 29 respondents stated that they considered both of their parents to be primary caregivers (14.8%). One reported their step-mother (0.5%), five reported their step-father (2.6%), nine said they did not consider anyone to be their secondary caregiver (4.6%) and three reported others as secondary caregivers (1.5%)

Most participants reported their parents as married (76.5%, n = 150). Others reported that their parents were divorced and neither their mother nor father was remarried (5.6%, n = 11), their parents were divorced and only their father was remarried (3.6%, n = 7) or their mother was remarried (3.6%, n = 7), and their parents were divorced and both were remarried (3.1%, n = 6). Three reported that their mothers were deceased (1.5%), one reported their father was deceased and their mother was remarried (0.5%), and seven reported other marital statuses (3.6%).

Most participants reported living with both their biological parents before attending the university (76.5%, n = 150), living with only their biological mother (9.7%, n = 19), living with only their biological father (2.6%, n = 5) or living with their mother and step-father (2.6%, n = 5). Four participants reported currently living with their parents (2%), three reported living with their father and step-mother (1.5%), and 10 reported other living situations (5.1%).

Regarding their current living situation, most participants reported living on campus, in a student residence or dorm, or fraternity or sorority (66.3%, n = 130), living off campus, but not with a parent or parents (28.1%, n = 55), or living off campus with a parent or parents (4.1%, n = 8). Approximately 2% reported other living situations (n = 3).

## **Procedures**

After receiving Institutional Review Board Approval, the researcher sent emails to faculty and graduate teaching assistants asking for their permission to visit classes and recruit students. Upon instructor acceptance, the researcher visited and recruited respondents from first-year seminar classes (FSEMs) and from 1000- and 2000-level Communication Studies courses, so as to ensure recruitment of the desired age range for participants. Extra credit was offered to students for participating, with the amount of extra credit appointed by the class instructor. The researcher emailed a link to the survey to the instructor, who either forwarded the email to the students, or posted the link on Blackboard, which is an online program allowing students access to information instructors post for their courses. Included with the survey link was a student recruitment summary similar to what the researcher said to students when visiting classes. These announcements are included in Appendix A. In total, the researcher visited 13 classes of 12 instructors. One instructor did not allow the researcher to visit her class, but did forward the recruitment summary and survey link to her students.

The survey was posted online via the data collection software Qualtrics. An informed consent statement was provided to the subjects before they began the survey, which is included in Appendix B. In order to take the survey, subjects had to

acknowledge that they had read and accepted the information provided. Participants were told the survey would take approximately 20 minutes, and the average time taken to complete it was 10. At the end of the survey, students were asked to list their name and instructor's name, so that reports could be sent to the instructor for extra credit purposes. Students were assured their names would not be associated with their survey responses and that the survey was confidential.

### **Measurements**

In order to address the above-mentioned hypotheses, data was collected regarding perceptions of variation in musical preferences between young adults and their primary caregivers, young adult perceptions of SFI, young adult perceptions of parental accommodative communication, and young adult perceptions of family satisfaction via an online survey. Scales for measuring the variables are described in the following sections and presented in Appendix C.

#### **Shared Music Identity**

Perceptions of variation of SMI between participants and their primary caregivers were assessed with an adaptation of the measure of *identity fusion* (Swann, Gómez, Seyle, Morales & Guici, 2009). The identity fusion measure originally stems from the Inclusion of Other in Self (IOS) Scale, which was used to determine characteristics of interpersonal closeness (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). The scale used in the present study and based on Swann et al.'s model is a one-item measure that presents five pictures, each with one large and one small circle. The small circle represents the participant's musical preferences, while the large circle represents the participant's primary caregiver's

musical preferences. The pictures were labeled 1-5, and show the circles increasingly overlapping, with the first picture showing the circles distinctly separate and the fifth showing the circles completely overlapping. Participants were asked to indicate which picture best represented their own and their primary caregiver's musical preferences in relation to each other. Previous research adapting Aron et al.'s IOS scale has indicated reliable results. For example, Schubert and Otten (2002) found reliability when measuring both ingroup/outgroup overlap ( $\alpha = .78$ ), self/group overlap ( $\alpha = .77$ ), and intergroup conflict ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Swann et al. (2009) ran several experiments to determine relationships between identification, fusion and participants' willingness to both fight and die for their respective ingroups based on challenges from ingroup and outgroup members. The measure proved reliable in these experiments (ranging from  $\alpha = .71$  to  $\alpha = .80$ ). In the present study, a reliability analysis was not done for the one-item measure. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

### **Shared Family Identity**

Participants' perceptions of their SFI were determined with an adapted version of Soliz and Harwood's (2006) grandparent-grandchild shared family identity measure. The scale consists of six questions measured on a Likert-type scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) and has been found to have strong reliability in previous studies on grandchildren and grandparents ( $\alpha = .91$ ) (Soliz & Harwood). For the present study the measure was reworded to assess respondents' perceptions of SFI with their primary caregivers as opposed to grandparents. Participants were told these questions were aimed at assessing feelings about their family and were asked to respond based on their

relationships with their primary caregivers. Items include “I am proud to be in the same family as my primary caregiver,” “My shared family membership with my primary caregiver is unimportant to me” [r], “Above all else, I think of my primary caregiver as a member of my family,” “My parent is an important part of my family,” “I feel as if we are members of one family,” and “I feel as if we are members of separate groups” [r].

Reliabilities, means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

### **Perceived Parental Accommodative Communication Behaviors**

Parental accommodative communication behaviors were assessed with Soliz and Harwood’s (2003) scales measuring dimensions of grandchildren’s evaluations of grandparent-grandchild communication (Dimensions of Young Adults’ Evaluations of Conversations with Grandparents, DYAECEG), selections from the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (PACI) (Barnes & Olson, 1982), and questions generated by the author. Soliz and Harwood’s measure focuses on specific assessments of perceived grandparent accommodation, overaccommodation, underaccommodation, and topic management. Since Soliz and Harwood’s measure was originally aimed at assessing accommodative communication within grandparent/grandchild relationships, selections of the PACI and author generated questions were added to certain subcategories to better assess accommodative communication behaviors more relevant to parent/child interaction. Each of these subcategories of Harwood and Soliz’s measure were found reliable in previous research ( $\alpha = .85, .76, .80, \text{ and } .72$  respectively). The PACI targets perceptions of the communicative environment, with specific focus on open family communication, selective family communication, and problems with family communication. Overall

reliability for the PACI has been found to be strong in previous research ( $\alpha = .88$ ) (Barnes & Olson, 1982). Author generated questions were aimed at addressing accommodative behaviors and situations that seem more relevant to parent and adolescent relationships, with a focus on topics more likely to occur in daily parent/child conversation. The resulting measure for this research was structured in Likert format, which is the format for both of the adapted measures, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each of the subcategories, including parental accommodative communication, overaccommodation, underaccommodation, and topic management, were assessed independently, with the impression that together they represent an overall estimation of parental accommodative communication. While accommodative communication was broken down into separate subcategories for analysis, the questions were presented to participants in one undivided section. Participants were told this section of the survey was aimed at assessing how they perceive communication from their parental figure, and were asked to respond based on their relationship with their primary caregiver. Each subscale is discussed in detail below.

### ***Parental Accommodative Communication***

Parental accommodative communication was assessed using six adapted items from Soliz and Harwood's (2003) DYAECEG, and three selections from the Barnes and Olsen's (1982) PACI. Questions from Soliz and Harwood include "My primary caregiver compliments me," "My primary caregiver shows affection for me," "My primary caregiver shows respect for me," "My primary caregiver shares their personal thoughts and feelings with me," "My primary caregiver is attentive to me," and "My primary

caregiver is supportive of me.” Question from the PACI include “My primary caregiver is a good listener,” “My primary caregiver tries to understand my point of view,” and “My primary caregiver insults me when he/she is angry at me” [r]. Reliabilities, means and standard deviations for parental accommodative communication are presented in Table 1.

### ***Overaccommodation***

Perceived overaccommodation from parents was assessed using two adapted questions from Soliz and Harwood’s (2003) measure. Sample questions include “My primary caregiver negatively stereotypes me because of my age” [r], and “My primary caregiver talks down to me” [r]. An author generated question was originally added to this subsection (“My primary caregiver treats me like an ignorant young person” [r]); however reliability was found to be stronger when that question was removed. Therefore, only the original two items from Soliz and Harwood’s measure were used. Reliabilities, means and standard deviations for overaccommodation are presented in Table 1. Important to note, the questions for assessing overaccommodation are reverse-scored, meaning that high scores suggest accommodative behaviors, while lower scores would suggest overaccommodation.

### ***Underaccommodation***

Perceived underaccommodation from parents was assessed using six adapted questions from Soliz and Harwood’s (2003) measure and two author generated questions. Questions from Soliz and Harwood include “My primary caregiver complains about his or her life circumstances” [r], “My primary caregiver complains about his or her health” [r], “My primary caregiver is close-minded” [r], “My primary caregiver expresses

racial/prejudiced opinions” [r], “My primary caregiver makes angry complaints” [r], and “My primary caregiver gives unwanted advice” [r]. Author-generated questions include “My primary caregiver complains about his or her work” [r], and “My primary caregiver always talks about his or her job” [r]. Reliabilities, means and standard deviations for underaccommodation are presented in Table 1. Important to note, all of the questions for assessing underaccommodation are reverse-scored, meaning that high scores suggest accommodative behaviors, while lower scores would suggest underaccommodation.

### ***Topic Management***

Perceived topic management was assessed using four adapted questions from Soliz and Harwood’s (2003) measure and three author-generated questions. Items from Soliz and Harwood include “My primary caregiver tells interesting stories,” “My primary caregiver provides interesting information about my family” and “My primary caregiver provides interesting information about history”. Author generated question include “My primary caregiver asks me about my life in school,” “My primary caregiver asks me about my life with my friends,” and “My primary caregiver asks me about my interests”. Reliabilities, means and standard deviations for topic management are presented in Table 1.

### **Family Satisfaction**

Family satisfaction was measured with the Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS) (Carver & Jones, 1992). The FSS presents 19 questions in Likert format ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Internal reliability for the FSS was found to be very strong in previous research ( $\alpha = .98$ , Carver & Jones, 1992). Participants were told

this section of the survey was aimed at assessing their feelings about their family. Unlike the previous sections of the survey, which were aimed specifically at perceptions of a primary caregiver, participants were told that, for this section, they should answer questions based on their relationships with their immediate family (parental figures and siblings) in general. Items include “In their treatment of one another, my family is consistent and fair,” “I would do anything for my family,” “I have a good time with my family,” “I always feel my parents support me,” “I always know what I can get away with at my house,” “I’m never sure what the rules are from day to day” [r], “My family is one of the least important aspects of my life” [r], “I would do anything necessary for any member of my family,” “There is too much conflict within my family” [r], “I usually feel safe sharing myself with my family,” “I am happy with my family just the way it is,” “Members of my family treat one another consistently,” “There is a great deal about my family I would change if I could” [r], “With my family I can rarely be myself” [r], “I am very unhappy with me family” [r], “I am deeply committed to me family,” “I often find myself feeling dissatisfied with me family” [r], “My family always believes in me,” and “I find great comfort and satisfaction in me family”. Reliabilities, means and standard deviations for family satisfaction are presented in Table 1. Correlations between all variables are presented in Table 2.

**Table 1***Reliabilities, means, and standard deviations*

Scales	Reliabilities ( $\alpha$ )	Means ( $M$ )	Standard Deviations ( $SD$ )
Shared Musical Identity (SMI)	N/A	2.87	.86
Shared Family Identity (SFI)*	.74	6.53	.76
Parental Accommodative Communication (PAC)**	.85	4.47	.55
Overaccommodation (OA)**	.75	4.53	.76
Underaccommodation (UA)**	.83	4.02	.73
Topic Management (TM)**	.78	4.15	.60
Family Satisfaction (FSS)**	.94	4.37	.63

*Note:* \* = 1-7 scale, \*\* = 1-5 scale**Table 2***Intercorrelations for Variables*

Variables	SMI	SFI	PAC	OA	UA	TM	FSS
Shared Music Identity (SMI)	--						
Shared Family Identity (SFI)	.19*	--					
Parental Accommodative Communication (PAC)	.24**	.55**	--				
Overaccommodation (OA)	.17*	.29**	.61**	--			
Underaccommodation (UA)	.15	.37**	.60**	.54**	--		
Topic Management (TM)	.36**	.45**	.59**	.27**	.41**	--	
Family Satisfaction (FSS)	.23**	.68**	.67**	.36**	.46**	.56**	--

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

## Chapter Three: Results

### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive significant relationship between young adults' perceptions of SMI and their perceptions of SFI. A bivariate, one-tailed correlation was run and yielded weak, but significant correlation ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

### Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive significant relationship between young adults' perceptions of SMI and SFI and perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors. Multiple regressions analyses were run for each of the subcategories of accommodative behaviors and are discussed in the following sections.

#### Parental Accommodative Communication

The model with both SMI and SFI entered as predictors of parental accommodative communication was significant ( $R = .57, R^2 = .33, F(2,173) = 42.25, p < .001$ ). SFI was a significant predictor of parental accommodative communication ( $b = .40, \beta = .53, t = 8.42, p < .001$ ), as was SMI ( $b = .09, \beta = .14, t = 2.21, p < .05$ ).

#### Overaccommodation

The model with both SMI and SFI entered as predictors of overaccommodation was significant ( $R = .30, R^2 = .10, F(2,181) = 9.20, p < .001$ ). SFI was a significant

predictor of overaccommodation ( $b = .25, \beta = .25, t = 3.52, p < .01$ ), but SMI was not ( $b = .11, \beta = .13, t = 1.80, p = .08$ ).

### **Underaccommodation**

The model with both SMI and SFI entered as predictors of underaccommodation was significant ( $R = .39, R^2 = .15, F(2,169) = 14.73, p < .001$ ). SFI was a significant predictor of underaccommodation ( $b = .34, \beta = .36, t = 4.94, p < .001$ ), but SMI was not ( $b = .08, \beta = .10, t = 1.29, p = .20$ ).

### **Topic Management**

The model with both SMI and SFI entered as predictors of topic management was significant ( $R = .54, R^2 = .28, F(2,176) = 35.99, p < .001$ ). SFI was a significant predictor of topic management ( $b = .33, \beta = .41, t = 6.29, p < .001$ ), as was SMI ( $b = .19, \beta = .28, t = 4.37, p < .001$ ).

The multiple regression analyses run for each of the perceived parental accommodative communication behaviors all yielded significance, with two subcategories (parental accommodative communication, topic management) yielding significance for both independent variables (SMI, SFI). Combined, overaccommodation and underaccommodation yielded significance, however SMI was not found to be a significant predictor of either within the model. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported

### **Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive significant relationship between young adults' perceptions of SMI and SFI and perceptions of family satisfaction. A multiple regression

analysis was run to test the relationship between SMI and SFI and family satisfaction. The model with both SMI and SFI entered as predictors of family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .68$ ,  $R^2 = .47$ ,  $F(2,166) = 73.5$ ,  $p < .001$ ). SFI was a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .55$ ,  $\beta = .66$ ,  $t = 11.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but SMI was not ( $b = .08$ ,  $\beta = .04$ ,  $t = 1.90$ ,  $p = .06$ ). Thus, hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

Hypothesis 4 predicted that parental accommodative communication behaviors mediated the relationship between young adults' perceptions of SMI and family satisfaction. Baron and Kenny (1986) recommend three regression models for testing mediated relationships. The first model tests the independent variable as predicting the mediator. The second tests the independent variable as predicting the dependent variable. The third uses multiple regression analysis to test both the independent variable and mediator as predictors of the dependent variable. If the independent variable predicts both the mediator and the dependent variable, the mediation model is applicable. Importantly, if this is the case, the independent variable will be a weaker predictor of the dependent variable when the mediator is included, and will be stronger when the mediator is absent (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

For this research, each of the subcategories of parental accommodative communication behaviors were tested as mediating variables for the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction. In addition to Baron and Kenny's (1986) three model test, simple regression analyses were run testing whether the mediator predicted the dependent variable. Additionally, the added model allows for distinction between full and partial

mediation effect. If the independent variable remains significant after controlling for the mediator, then the finding supports partial mediation. If, however, the independent variable is no longer significant, but the mediator remains significant, the findings support full mediation.

With the exception of underaccommodation, SMI was statistically significant as predictors of accommodative behaviors (see Table 2). The second model testing SMI as a predictor of family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .27$ ,  $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(1,173) = 9.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with perceptions of SMI as a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .30$ ,  $\beta = .38$ ,  $t = 11.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The results of this second model test are applicable to each of the accommodative behaviors subcategories. Details of the additional regression analyses are discussed in the following sections for each subcategory.

### **Parental Accommodative Communication**

The first model testing SMI as a predictor of parental accommodative communication, was significant ( $R = .24$ ,  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1,181) = 10.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with perceptions of SMI as a significant predictor of perceptions of parental accommodative communication ( $b = .15$ ,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $t = 30.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The added model testing parental accommodative communication predicting family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .67$ ,  $R^2 = .45$ ,  $F(1,167) = 136.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with parental accommodative communication as a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .77$ ,  $\beta = .67$ ,  $t = 11.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The third model, testing both SMI and parental accommodative communication as predictors of family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .67$ ,  $R^2 = .46$ ,  $F(2,166) = 69.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In this model, parental accommodative communication was a significant predictor of family

satisfaction ( $b = .75, \beta = .65, t = 11.03, p < .001$ ), however SMI was not a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .05, \beta = .07, t = 1.17, p = .24$ ).

The coefficients for SMI as a predictor of family satisfaction indicated that the strength of the association is much weaker when parental accommodative communication is included in the equation ( $\beta = .07$ ) than when it is not included ( $\beta = .38$ ), providing support for the mediated model. These findings suggest that perceptions of parental accommodative communication have a full mediating effect on the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction.

### **Overaccommodation**

The first model testing SMI as a predictor of overaccommodation, was significant ( $R = .17, R^2 = .03, F(1,190) = 5.39, p < .05$ ), with perceptions of SMI as a significant predictor of perceptions of parental overaccommodation ( $b = .14, \beta = .17, t = 22.44, p < .05$ ). The added model testing overaccommodation predicting family satisfaction and was significant ( $R = .38, R^2 = .14, F(1,171) = 27.92, p < .001$ ), with perceptions of parental overaccommodation as a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .30, \beta = .38, t = 11.51, p < .001$ ). The third model, testing both SMI and overaccommodation as predictors of family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .41, R^2 = .17, F(2,170) = 16.98, p < .001$ ). In this model, overaccommodation was a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .28, \beta = .35, t = 4.86, p < .001$ ), as was SMI ( $b = .12, \beta = .16, t = 2.31, p < .05$ ).

The coefficients for SMI as a predictor of family satisfaction indicated that the strength of the association is much weaker when overaccommodation is included in the

equation ( $\beta = .05$ ) than when it is not included ( $\beta = .38$ ), providing support for the mediated model. These findings suggest that perceptions of overaccommodation have a partial mediating effect on the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction.

### **Underaccommodation**

The first model testing SMI as a predictor of underaccommodation, was not significant ( $R = .15$ ,  $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1,174) = 3.78$ ,  $p = .053$ ), with perceptions of SMI not acting as a significant predictor of perceptions of parental underaccommodation ( $b = .12$ ,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $t = 20.21$ ,  $p = .053$ ).

### **Topic Management**

The first model testing SMI as a predictor of topic management, was significant ( $R = .36$ ,  $R^2 = .13$ ,  $F(1,185) = 26.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with perceptions of SMI as a significant predictor of perceptions of parental topic management ( $b = .24$ ,  $\beta = .36$ ,  $t = 24.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The added model testing topic management predicting family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .56$ ,  $R^2 = .32$ ,  $F(1,166) = 77.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with perceptions of parental topic management as a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .59$ ,  $\beta = .56$ ,  $t = 6.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The third model, testing both SMI and topic management as predictors of family satisfaction was significant ( $R = .57$ ,  $R^2 = .32$ ,  $F(2,165) = 38.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In this model, topic management was a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .58$ ,  $\beta = .56$ ,  $t = 8.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ), however SMI was not a significant predictor of family satisfaction ( $b = .01$ ,  $\beta = .02$ ,  $t = .29$ ,  $p = .76$ ).

The coefficients for SMI as a predictor of family satisfaction indicated that the strength of the association is much weaker when topic management is included in the equation ( $\beta$

= .05) than when it is not included ( $\beta = .38$ ), providing support for the mediated model.

These findings suggest that perceptions of parental topic management have a full mediating effect on the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction.

## **Chapter Four: Discussion**

To briefly review, previous research has explored the potential for music to influence the identities of individuals, including adolescents (Arnett, 1995; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Hesmondalgh, 2008; North & Hargreaves, 1999). Research has also proposed that music can influence the ingroup and outgroup perceptions of adolescents, or perceptions of others' social identities in relation to their own, potentially acting as a factor that adolescents consider in intergroup and interpersonal contact situations (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Regarding families specifically, researchers have also suggested that perceptions of identity—and most importantly shared identity— can influence communication between individuals in intergroup and interpersonal settings, including both an individuals' communicative acts, and that individuals' perception of others' communicative acts (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006; Soliz, 2007). Additionally, despite the fact that research has suggested music can influence family relationships, often finding a range of both positive and negative effects (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Leming, 1987; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003), little research has considered music's influence on shared identity in relation to family communication and relationships.

The primary goal of this study was to determine whether music and shared musical preferences might influence the relational and communicative dynamic between young adult children and their parents. For this study, relational and communicative dynamics were operationalized by assessing the predictive significance of SMI on perceptions of SFI, perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors, and perceptions of family satisfaction. Results indicate that SMI is related to SFI; SMI is related to some parental accommodative communication behaviors; including parental accommodative communication and topic management, and SMI is related to family satisfaction. Additionally, SMI and SFI together are related to parental accommodative communication behaviors, and family satisfaction. Finally, parental accommodative communication behaviors mediated the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction, with all accommodative behaviors emerging as significant predictors of family satisfaction. These results in general suggest that shared musical tastes can influence the parent/child dyad by prompting shared ingroup identity salience over outgroup differentiation. Specific results are discussed in detail in the following sections.

### **SMI and SFI**

The first hypothesis tested whether perceptions of SMI could positively predict perceptions of SFI and was found to be significant. This supports several initial speculations. First, it supports the idea that SMI and SFI are both rooted in identity assessment, and that this assessment influences perceptions of others, which in turn influences the communicative environment and perceptions of salience of shared identity.

These findings are in line with previous research suggesting that music can generate stronger feelings of ingroup assessment of others (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006).

Second, the findings suggest that similarity in musical preference does prompt a stronger ingroup assessment of parents, which in turn would strengthen feelings of shared family identity. This makes sense when considering previous research has suggested that perceptions of musical preferences can act as factors in the assessment of ingroup and outgroup labels of others (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Furthermore, Hays and Minichiello (2005) have advocated that music can have a strong emotional impact on the lives of older adults. This sentiment has been echoed in others' research involving music's influence on emotion (Hargreaves et al., 2002; Juslin, 2000; Juslin & Laukka, 2003), and as an indirect result music's potential influence connections with others with whom individuals have preexisting strong emotional connections, such as family members. The present study's results of SMI being related to feelings of SFI would support the idea that an acknowledgement of *shared* enjoyment of music, and more importantly an enjoyment of similar music between parents and their children, could strengthen the relational bond between them.

Third, it suggests that young adults do recognize, whether consciously or unconsciously, that music can act as a categorization variable when considering ingroup or outgroup evaluation of others. As previous research has shown, music can have this effect on the assessment of peers (North & Hargreaves, 1999; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Frith (1981) speculated that sub cultures can form around pop music styles (e.g. hippies,

ravers) because adolescents use music to communicate values, attitudes and opinions to others. While this research is dated, more recent research has confirmed this speculation to hold merit. The results of this present study's first hypothesis would suggest that perceptions of similarity in musical preferences between young adults and their parents might also prompt assessment of similarity or difference in personal characteristics, which could in turn strengthen ingroup identity salience. This research supports the significance of music and assessment of musical preferences regarding identity assessment in general, and suggests that, even within families, identity and shared identity assessment can be influenced by music.

#### **SMI, SFI, and Parental Accommodative Communication Behaviors (PACB)**

The second hypothesis tested whether perceptions of SMI and SFI could significantly predict perceptions of PACB. The findings of this analysis indicated support for this hypothesis. SMI and SFI, when considered together, were found to have strong significance for each subcategory. The strongest correlations were parental accommodative communication and topic management. While overaccommodation was significant, it was weaker compared to parental accommodative communication and topic management.

These results prompt several speculations. First, Soliz and Harwood (2006) conclude that the salience of shared identity can vary based on a number of factors, including communication and discussion topics. When considering the measurement tool used, each subcategory of PACB implied different tones of interaction. Overaccommodation and underaccommodation seem to assess both a more negative tone

of communication, and imply the parents, or the parents' opinions of the child, as the central focus of the interaction. The measurements for these two subsections were reverse-scored, meaning that lower scores represent perceptions of these behaviors, while high scores represent perceptions of accommodative behaviors. Parental accommodative communication and topic management, on the other hand, included more empathetic and supportive themes where the child is the primary focus. It is possible, then, that as shared family identity salience is subject to variation, shared musical identity salience could be subject to the same variation. For example, parental accommodative communication and topic management imply a cognitive acknowledgement from the parents that the child is the main focus. As this present study was conducted based on participant perception, it is logical to assume that conversational instances where the child is the focus would prompt stronger recognition of ingroup salience from the child. Previous research has suggested that communication among family members may be influenced by and reflect variant social identities of individual members (Harwood, Soliz & Lin, 2006; Soliz, Thorson, & Rittenour, 2009). Therefore, the strength of the results from these two subsections of the present study would suggest that when parents actively engage their children in topics and behaviors that positively centralize the children, shared identity salience could be a prevalent factor.

Additionally, using the Parent Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) —from which several questions were implemented for this present study— Barnes and Olson (1985) found that “families with good parent-adolescent communication had higher levels of family cohesion, family adaptability, and family satisfaction” (p.445). Previous

research regarding parental behavior to adolescents identified the concept *parental support*—operationalized as transmitting positive affect from parents towards their adolescents through praise, encouragement, warmth, physical affection, and related behaviors—as a behavior that can influence both adolescents’ identification and practice of empathy (Henry, Sager & Plunkett, 1996; Koestner, Franz & Weinberger, 1990). The strength of the correlations for parental accommodative communication and topic management suggests that, regarding adolescent perceptions in the present study, adolescents positively respond to parental communication that is empathetic and child-focused or *supportive*. Perhaps it was this supportive tone implicit in the parental accommodative communication and topic management that allowed for shared identity salience to become prevalent when considering family relationships.

Second, Schwartz and Fouts (2003) concluded that musical preferences can have a significant impact on adolescent personality, such as influencing self-esteem and self-doubt, and prompting concern with “doing right and proper things” (p.211). With regard to the present study, the results of hypothesis 2 suggest that the perception of similar music preferences between young adults and their parents might prompt an identification of similar personalities and similar values that may have otherwise gone unaddressed without the musical connection. Hendricks and Bradley (2005) discovered that incorporating the discussion of music into family therapy sessions allowed for a dialogue to develop that was rooted in previously undiscovered musical similarity between the adolescent and the parents. Since communication challenges, such as self-disclosure and topic avoidance become more prevalent during adolescence (Guerrero & Afifi, 1995;

Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hatfield, 1984; Rosenfield, 1979), it is possible that music, and specifically shared musical tastes, can act as a catalyst for both identifying other similarities between parents and their children, and grounding an emotional connection during a time where adolescents seek individuality and autonomy. This identification would in turn influence the communication taking place between adolescents and their parents. As previous research has suggested, empathetic and positive communication can impact the perception of quality in relationships (Cai et al., 1998). The strength of the significance of parental accommodative communication and topic management, which highlighted positive and empathetic communication, further suggest that the participants recognized and positively responded to this communication when similar musical preferences were considered.

In general, these findings suggest that, as many factors can contribute to ingroup assessment, positive and empathetic communication can be influenced by shared musical identities. In a case study implementing interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT-A) and music therapy for a family with a depressed adolescent, Hendricks and Bradley (2005) found that identifying common tastes in music allowed a family with poor communication to “embark on a different style of communication, a style that enabled them to be more forthright about their feelings” (p.403). Specifically, the counselors and family identified that using music to help communicate their feelings and emotions allowed for a previously lacking dialogue to take place.

Conversely, while overaccommodation and underaccommodation scales include topics that could likely come up in parent/child interaction, they decentralize the child as

the main focus. Underaccommodative communication specifically re-centers the primary focus of the interaction on the parent, whereas overaccommodation is directly related to the child, but with the parents' potentially critical feelings and opinions of their child as the primary focus. These results seem to support the idea that an ingroup assessment of parents based on shared musical preference would prompt a higher confidence in communication in which the child is the focus, such as in instances highlighted in the parental accommodative communication and topic management subsections. In other words, acknowledgement of shared musical identities between parents and children appears to influence the perception of accommodative behaviors from parents that are positive and empathetic, and where children are the main focus.

### **SMI, SFI, and Family Satisfaction**

Hypothesis 3 tested whether SMI and SFI could positively predict perceptions of family satisfaction. The findings of this analysis found support for this hypothesis. When SMI and SFI were both considered as predictors of family satisfaction, results were strongly significant.

These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that perceptions of shared ingroup identity can play a significant role in perceptions of relationship satisfaction (Carli, Ganley, & Pierce-Otay, 1991; Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal & Penna, 2005). In a similar vein, previous research has found that parents who spend more time with their children are viewed by their children as having better communication and have higher feelings of family satisfaction (Strom et al., 2003). As Hypothesis 1 found support for the claim that strong feelings of SMI will in turn influence feelings of SFI, the

results of Hypothesis 3 imply that perceptions shared ingroup identity can stimulate greater feelings of *relationship* satisfaction—and in this case, family satisfaction. It is plausible that, as this sample population had overall high feelings of family satisfaction, these young adults were able to spend quality time with their parents, which led to stronger family identity salience. As previous research has suggested that music can influence family relationships (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000), it is not unlikely that during time spent together, these participants and their parents were able to identify musical similarities and differences. These findings make sense, then, when considering that the perception of common interests can stimulate greater ingroup identity salience (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Therefore, parents and children that perceive themselves as having shared interests, such as musical preferences, are likely to also perceive higher relationship satisfaction (Hendricks & Bradley, 2005).

Importantly, when both SMI and SFI were considered as predictors of family satisfaction, the correlation was strong. However, when considered individually, SFI was still a significant predictor, while SMI was not. These results suggest that SFI might act as a mediator when considered together with SMI regarding effects on family satisfaction. While the extent of the decrease in strength of SMI in relationship to family satisfaction is surprising, this finding is in line with the results of Hypothesis 2, where the strength of the correlation dropped when considering specific accommodative communication behaviors (OA). The potential for SFI to act as a mediating variable might have been influenced by the salience of family identity to individual participants. As proposed

previously, one's shared musical identity with another could be considered among many factors that could encompass a shared family identity. Therefore, the strength and salience of SMI might not take precedent when considered along with family identity salience. This would make sense when considering research suggesting that judgments of ingroup variability are dependent on whether social identity or personal identity are salient (Brewer, 1993). Specifically, Brewer suggests that when social identity is salient, individuals often compare their own self-concept to that of a prototype member, which reduces awareness of self-other comparisons within the group. Yet when personal identity is salient, individuals often attempt to distinguish differences within their own ingroup. It is important, then, to consider that within families, individuals might be balancing their perceptions of their own personal or individual identities with that of both their family identity and their potential social identities. It is also logical to assume that one's personal identity is influenced by perceptions of both their family identity and social identities, as previous research has suggested that individuals often encompass multiple identities, which are subject to situational salience (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Therefore, it is plausible that, while music can generate group categorization and prototypical ideals of a "normal fan" (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002), the categorization of peers, friends, or general others and the categorization of family members based on musical preferences might involve different cognitive and social processes. As a result, music's influence on family relationships may not be as clear-cut as its influence on peer relationships. The

potential mediating effect of SFI on SMI and family satisfaction suggested from these results both supports this proposal, and warrants further study.

These findings also indicate that, as music can act as a factor in social categorization, perceptions of shared musical identity within families might incorporate aspects of perceived social identities into assessment of family identities. This present study echoes other research that has challenged the applicability of social identity theory as it pertains to groups, suggesting that social identities might play important roles within families (Harwood et al., 2006; Soliz et al., 2009). While research involving music and social identity often find support for the power of music to stimulate group categorization, the results of this present study indicate that shared identity within families based on music is influential. However it may be subject to additional factors that might skew the observable strength of that shared identity. Specifically, perceptions of shared musical identity may be predictive of family satisfaction, but perceptions of shared family identity play a significant role in perceptions of that satisfaction. This implies that, when individuals are prompted, whether consciously or unconsciously, to assess family satisfaction based on shared musical preferences, they must incorporate both perceptions of their family identity, as well as perceptions of social identities based on music. If accurate, this implication, combined with the results of this hypothesis, suggest both that one's family identity is influenced by this particular social (musical) identity—as was suggested from Hypothesis 1—and that the perception of relational satisfaction based on shared musical identities within family relationships is contingent upon perceptions of shared family identity. While previous research regarding shared family identity and

relational satisfaction involving nuclear family dyads (e.g. parent/adolescent, sibling) is often rooted in the study of non-traditional families, which would decrease its applicability to this sample population, research does suggest that perceptions of a strong shared family identity generally lead to higher family satisfaction (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006, Soliz, 2006). This finding, then, implies that perceptions of shared musical identities (a social identity), which influence shared family identities (family identity), can in turn influence perceptions of family satisfaction.

### **PACB as a Mediator of SMI and Family Satisfaction**

Hypothesis 4 predicted that PACB mediate the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction. This relationship is consistent with previous research that has found family communication to impact feelings of family satisfaction (Lin & Harwood, 2003, Pierce et al., 1991). Additionally, previous research has concluded that the quality and type of communication can impact identity salience within families (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006; Soliz, et al., 2010), which would suggest support for the mediating effect of accommodative behaviors regarding SMI.

While, results indicated support for this hypothesis, each subcategory of PACB had different mediating effects. Parental accommodative communication and topic management were found to have a full mediating effect on the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction, while overaccommodation was found to have a partial mediating effect. Perceptions of PACB were found to be related to SMI. Specifically, Hypothesis 2 found that parental accommodative communication, overaccommodation, and topic management were all related to SMI. This is in line with research that has found

accommodative communication to be related to feelings of higher quality relationships (Pierce, et al., 1991). The results of this analysis make sense when considering the results of Hypothesis 2, which suggests that positive, empathetic communication can generate stronger salience of shared identities.

The subsections parental accommodative communication and topic management, which suggest a full mediating effect on the relationship between SMI and family satisfaction, are surprising, when considering the strength of the correlations from hypothesis 2 regarding SMI and parental accommodative communication and SMI and topic management in comparison with SMI and overaccommodation. Speculations made regarding perceptions of positive and empathetic communication from parents as influencing perceptions of both shared identity salience and relationship satisfaction do coincide with these findings, but frame specific aspects of identity salience as subject to interpretations of communication behaviors. While the quality and type of communication perceived coming from parents can have a powerful impact on feelings of relationship satisfaction (Strom et al., 2003) the findings of Hypothesis 4 imply that positive accommodative communication can have such a strong influence on a family relationship that shared musical identity salience becomes weaker when this communication is considered. This suggests that the proposed link between SMI and SFI—specifically that SMI might be a factor of SFI— may not be as clear as previously proposed.

Conversely, the subsection overaccommodation, which contains more negative tones and centralizes the parents and the parents' opinions of the child, was found to only

have partial mediating effects. Namely, SMI remained a weak, although significant predictor of family satisfaction even when overaccommodation was considered as a mediator. This also seems surprising when considering Hypothesis 2, where shared identity salience became less significant or nonsignificant when parental interactions could be interpreted as negative or critical.

Hypothesis 4 also seems to support the idea that the quality and type of communication perceived from parents can influence the necessity for identity salience in a particular interaction. However, these findings seem to contradict the findings of Hypothesis 2, which suggest that identity salience becomes prevalent when the tone of the parent/child conversation is positive. In Hypothesis 4, the findings suggest that when communication is perceived as accommodative and positive, the context of the relationship seems to be immaterial to the interaction itself. However, if the communication is perceived as nonaccommodative, shared identity salience becomes a relevant factor.

These results prompt several speculations. First, the results of Hypothesis 3 suggested that this particular sample, having generally high family satisfaction, might have spent significant quality time with their parents, allowing for identification of musical similarities and differences. In addition to this speculation accounting for the potential influence of music on shared family identity development, it also supports the findings from the PACB measurement, which found that the communication between these young adults and their parents was generally positive and focused on the child. Additionally, this sample's responses to SFI, PACB and Family Satisfaction were overall

strong and positive (See Table 1). Caughlin and Malis (2004) proposed that, in certain parent/adolescent dyads, a demand/withdraw communicative relationship can develop, where children withdraw from their parents in attempts to establish greater privacy, and in turn parents demand greater monitoring and involvement with their children. The result of this pattern is usually negative, with greater instances of conflict and dissatisfaction. While this present study did not address privacy specifically, the results of the PACB and family satisfaction measurements suggest both a generally healthy communicative environment, and that shared identity salience is strong for these families. While the subsection topic management, which assessed parental interest and involvement in their children's activities and friendships, would fit the "demand" side of Caughlin and Malis's demand/withdraw model, participant responses regarding high family satisfaction suggest that they did not perceive this interest as a demand. This would imply generally that, in this particular sample, these participants were able to facilitate a balanced relationship with their parents regarding their development of individuality from their parents. Furthermore, it is conceivable that a healthy development of individuality during adolescence, combined with perceptions of support from parents, helps to facilitate a greater likelihood of openness to similar interests, such as musical tastes, between children and their parents (Hendricks & Bradley, 2005, Strom et al., 2010). If this is the case, then the mediating effect of accommodative behaviors makes sense, as accommodative communication would help foster the acknowledgment, acceptance, and situational salience of shared identity, which could in turn influence perceptions of relational satisfaction.

Second, it is plausible that, similar to Hypothesis 3, the salience of shared musical identity is contingent upon additional aspects of an interaction—in this case, the accommodative tone of the communication. As mentioned previously, the results of Hypothesis 2 suggests that identity salience becomes an important factor when the tone of an interaction is seen as positive. However, the results of Hypothesis 4 suggest just the opposite—that nonaccommodative behaviors prompt identity salience, while accommodative behaviors supersede the need for identity salience. Research involving accommodative communication has suggested generally that accommodative behaviors are often associated with positive perceptions of an interaction or relationship, whereas nonaccommodation, which can prompt intergroup distinction, is perceived more negatively (Soliz et al., 2009). The seemingly contrasting results of Hypotheses 2 and 4 suggest that accommodative communication among nuclear family members might not conform to this generalization of perceptions of accommodation. One reason for this may be that nonaccommodative communication can often be associated with certain aspects of parenting, such as disciplining or enforcing rules and expectations. Indeed, previous research suggests that parents often have different approaches to discipline and discussing important topics with children, such as alcohol use and sexual activity (Constantine, 1987). While previous research has suggested that, within families, identity salience can be subject to accommodative communication, which can in turn influence family satisfaction (Soliz, 2006; Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006), the results of this hypothesis suggest that additional research is necessary to understand the relationship between prevalence of identity salience and relational satisfaction.

## **Theoretical Implications**

This present study has implications for theories based in social science. For example, this present study is one of few examples of research that utilizes SIT for family communication research. In addition to expanding the understanding and applicability of SIT as a social science theory, this present study has supplemented research advocating links between one's interpretation of his or her social identity and family identity (Harwood et al., 2006; Soliz et al., 2009). Specifically, as music has often been explored in research as influencing, or being a type of, social identity, this present study's incorporation of shared musical identities among family members suggests a potential intricate link between social and family identities, which, based on previous research, are often explored separately. While highly influenced by a fundamental tenet of SIT, the utilization of traits and characteristics ascribed to others as a process of social categorization, this present study did not allow for a specific exploration into this process based on traits ascribed resulting from specific musical interests. However, the results of this present study do suggest that future research involving music and family could potentially benefit from considering specific trait association based on specific musical types, and how this trait association influences interpretations of individual family members and family identity. In general the utilization of SIT in this present study offers a great deal of potential avenues for future exploration of social identities' influence on family identities.

Additionally, this present study stands to benefit CAT as well. For example, this research found significance regarding perceptions of social identity and perceptions of

accommodative communication, which is in line with previous research involving SIT and CAT (Cai et al., 1998; Hummert et al., 1995). Also, as mentioned previously, research involving CAT is common in family research, but usually involves multi-generational families, where differences in communication behaviors can be more pronounced (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006). One of the tenets of CAT, proposing that interpretations of communicative behaviors can highlight perceptions of similarity or difference of another, has been relatively unexplored within nuclear family research (parent/child, sibling). Furthermore, while research has often explored parenting styles and communicative topics between parents and children, accommodative communication is often not a label or theoretical perspective utilized, despite that this research is addressing aspects of CAT (e.g. displaying empathy, attentiveness, and so on). This present study is one of few to explicitly incorporate CAT directly into parent/child communication. Therefore, in addition to the musical aspect of this research, the present study can potentially prompt further consideration of accommodative communication as influencing nuclear family behaviors and perceptions.

### **Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions**

#### **Strengths**

As mentioned previously, while prior research has linked music with influencing individual identities (Arnett, 1995; Hesmondalgh, 2008; Hargreaves, et al., 2002; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; North & Hargreaves, 1999) and perceptions of others (Abrams, 2009; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002), this present study is the first to explore a link between shared musical interests and family

identities, and how these perceptions influence communication and satisfaction.

Additionally, this is one of the first studies to quantitatively explore music's potential to influence relationships in general, especially family relationships. This fact suggests that, from a cultural perspective, there is a plethora of untapped information to be explored regarding music's influence on communication, behaviors, and affiliations with others.

Furthermore, for this present study, the term *shared musical identity* has been initially conceptualized in the hopes of generating future research to expand upon the concept of music generating social identities. While research often recognizes music's potential to have a strong impact on youths and adolescents, and even that traits can and are ascribed to others based on perceptions of musical tastes, this present study has taken the first step in creating a foundation from which future research can stem. Hopefully future researchers can utilize and expand upon this term to investigate the potential for music to influence our relationships with others. The frequency of statistical significance regarding this present study's hypotheses serves to suggest that future research in communication and psychology can benefit from exploring the concept of shared musical identities, both within families and within general relationships.

The incorporation of SIT, CAT and SFI into family research is also beneficial. This present study, exploring the communicative and behavioral relationship of parent/adolescent dyads is by no means novel, but the incorporation of these three theoretical perspectives is. As mentioned previously, SIT is not often utilized with family research, and CAT and SFI are not often utilized in research involving nuclear families. Hopefully, this research will generate future avenues of exploration with family research

that can incorporate these social science theories, allowing for a better understanding of both the applicability of the theories and what can be understood about families based on them.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Despite this present study's novelty, it is not without its limitations. For starters, the scales constructed for SMI is a one-item measure. Future research would stand to benefit by expanding the operationalization of SMI, and specifying additional elements that could influence this perception of shared identity. For example, additions to an SMI scale could include aspects such as specific artist references, musical categories, time spent listening to music alone, or with others (specifically family members). This information might prompt significant variation in the variables used in this present study (e.g. shared family identity, accommodative communication behaviors, and family satisfaction).

Second, while data was collected regarding parents' marital statuses, and current and recent living situations of participants, this data was not included in this study. It is possible that all of this information could have influenced this present study's outcomes. For example, previous research has suggested that variation in marital structure of families can generate differences in parent/child communication (Bumpass & Raley, 1995), conflict (Montemayor, 1986), discipline (Lutz, 1983; Sandefur, McLanahan & Wojtkiewicz, 1992), and negative adolescent behaviors (Deleire & Kalil, 2002). Future research should consider these demographic aspects of family structure to determine

potential mediating or moderating effect on SMI in relation to these structural aspects of family relationships.

Third, the participants for this study were asked their perceptions regarding their parents, or primary caregivers. Future research would stand to benefit from consideration of different dyads within family (e.g. sibling, grandparent). As this present study is novel in regards to the incorporation of music and musical identities as influencers of family relationships, considering additional dyads and larger family clusters could help illuminate the prevalence of music's role within families, as well as variation in music's influence based on which relationships are being considered. Furthermore, research regarding CAT is common among multi-generational families. Previous research has found that communication style and content can often shape individuals' perceptions of family members (Soliz & Harwood, 2003, 2006). Considering the results of this study, incorporating music into CAT research could illuminate additional aspects of, for example, grandparent-grandchild, family relationships not previously considered.

Fourth, this research collected data only from the child in the parent/child dyad. Specifically, questions asked and hypotheses posited were framed as exploring perceptions within this relationship, and only one set of these perceptions were considered and analyzed. Future research should consider collecting data from both parents and children regarding music and musical influence within families, as well as parental perceptions of SFI, their children's accommodative behaviors, and family satisfaction. This would allow for more encompassing, and potentially less biased, data that could illuminate additional aspects of the variables considered in this research.

Additionally, based on the collection of only one side of this dyad, there is no way to consider discrepancies in perceptions of SFI, accommodative communication, and family satisfaction that might exist. Future research would stand to benefit greatly from collecting data from both sides of the parent/child dyad.

Fifth, several aspects of the demographic for this sample population must also be considered. For example, the overall strength of relationships with parents could have been an effect of this demographic (mostly Caucasian, upper middle class). Future studies should consider a wider variety of cultural backgrounds, larger variation in socioeconomic statuses of families, and specific differences in musical tastes regarding these families. For example, previous research involving music, media, gender and identity has been conducted in non-Western cultures (Lwin & Malik, 2012; Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Future research could potentially clarify differences in musical influences based on a family's culture. Also, most participants in this study were female. Previous research regarding SIT and music that was cited as justification for this present study often included sample populations that were mostly, if not all, adolescent males (Bajagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant et al., 2001; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). While the strength of the findings of this present study would suggest that females use music as a social categorization tool similar to males, future research should strive for a more equivalent baseline of males and females. However, future research might also benefit from considering sex and gender as an independent or mediating variable regarding music's influence on families. For example, considering same-sex dyads (e.g. father-son, mother-daughter, grandfather-grandson,

grandmother-granddaughter, brothers, sisters, and so on) could potentially generate results that could not be considered in this research based on the structure of the hypotheses. Additionally, while ages of the participants were considered, data was not collected regarding ages of participants' primary caregivers. Future research could stand to benefit from exploring whether variance in age ranges between adolescents and young adults influences varieties in musical tastes regarding accommodative and relational aspects of the parent/child dyad.

Lastly, most participants for this study reported living with both their biological parents. While information was collected regarding family structure, this data was not included in this study. Future research would stand to benefit from exploring the influence of music and musical identities within alternative family structures, such as step-families, adoptive families, and single-parent families. Considering research suggesting that there can be variation in perceptions of shared family identity (Grotevant, 1997; Samuels, 2009), accommodative communication (Harwood et al., 2006; Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey, & Stewart, 2001), and elements of family satisfaction (Montemayor, 1986) based on family structure, research that incorporates family structure variation and musical influence is not unwarranted.

### **Practical Implications**

As mentioned previously, this study was conducted with practical implications and applications in mind. Specifically, understanding the role and influence of music within the parent/child relationship stands to benefit communication, psychology, and music research. However, the information gained from this research could have potential

clinical applications, such as with family counseling and therapy. Previous research that has incorporated music into family therapy has found that music can help stimulate emotional communication within troubled families (Hendricks & Bradley, 2005). Based on these premises, coupled with research suggesting music's potential to positively influence emotions of individuals (Juslin, 2000; Juslin & Laukka, 2003), including anxiety and frustration (Rickson & Watkins, 2003; Palakanis, DeNobile, Sweeney, & Blankenship, 1993; Paccetti et al., 2000), and the findings of this present study, being able to identify a point of connection within musical tastes that might have previously gone unnoticed could potentially aide in establishing common ground between parents and children that struggle with connection or depression.

In addition to research citing music as a significant influence on one's emotion (Juslin, 2000; Juslin & Laukka, 2003), significant research abounds suggesting the positive influence of music as a therapeutic tool. For example, research has found music can prompt positive affective responses in individuals (Brentar, Neuendorf, & Armstrong, 1994), act as a mood regulator (Cassileth, Vickers, & Magill, 2003), and aide in perceptions of pain, physical comfort and relaxation (Krout, 2001). While a great deal of this research has been conducted both in the field of medicine and on older individuals, the implications for all individuals must be considered. The results of this research, coupled with the results from this present study, suggest that music could potentially be used as a therapeutic tool within relationships. Indeed, families that can find common musical ground, whether on their own or from the assistance of counseling, could stand to benefit from this discovery on emotional and interactive levels.

Conversely, music has also been cited as a point of contention between parents and children (Leming, 1987; Lohman & Jarvis, 2006; Lull, 1985). While the results of this present study frame music as a generally positive influence, future research may discover contrary findings based on family structure, specific musical tastes and genres, parenting styles, and so on, based on the variables chosen for analysis and theoretical foundations used as support. Indeed, contrary findings would also aid in generating a more rounded understanding of specific aspects of musical influence, helping to pinpoint possible areas for improving operationalization of variables in future research, and allowing researchers to discover potential negative characteristics of musical influence on families and family relationships.

## **Chapter Five: Summary**

This present study found evidence that young adults' perceptions of shared musical identities with their parents is related to perceptions of shared family identity, accommodative communication behaviors, and family satisfaction. Additionally, this study also found evidence that perceptions of parental accommodative communication behaviors mediate the relationship between perceptions of shared musical identity and family satisfaction, and that perceptions of shared family identity may mediate the relationship between perceptions of shared musical identity and family satisfaction. These findings provide support for the construct shared musical identity generated for this research, the inclusion of SIT and CAT in nuclear family research, and the general conceptualization of music as influencing family relationships.

This study has demonstrated that shared musical identity has real implications in its associations with young adults' perceptions of family communication behavior, relational quality, and perceptions of relationships with parents. In doing so, the study provides evidence that young adults incorporate consideration of similarity and difference in musical tastes into their understanding of their relationships with their parents, and that these perceptions influence their shared identities, communication, and satisfaction with their family. Understanding the ways music can influence perceptions within family relationships furthers our understanding of the influence of media on family

communication, identity, and relational quality, as well as how music can contribute to perceptions of relationship with family members, and supports the idea that shared musical identities play a significant role in our relationships with others.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Announcement to Students

I am Ryan Hancock, a Master's candidate in Communication Studies Department doing research about music and musical preferences and parent/adolescent communication and relationships. I am asking men and women in your age group to complete a short (approximately 25 minute) survey on this topic. You will be asked questions about your perspective in your relationship with your parents. I am the first person in our field to conduct research like this, meaning that you and I will be creating an entirely new line of family communication research with a lot of potential benefits for family counseling, therapy, and better understanding how family relationships may be influenced by music and similar media.

If you are interested in participating, please click on the link to the survey below. This study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering and you can stop participation at any time.

In order to receive extra credit for participating in this study, at the end of the survey, you will be asked to input your name and your instructor's name. I will report your name to your instructor/professor so that he or she can give you your extra credit points. Your names will be kept separate from your survey responses.

Also, since this is relatively new research, if you are interested I can share some of the results of what I find with you! Please know that I will not be sharing names, or any identifying characteristics of those who choose to participate, but would simply be sharing some of the general results of the study. When you complete the survey, you can choose to put yourself on a "Tell me what you find!" list. If you select this, you will have the option to type in your email address, and I will send out a summary of my findings when the study is complete.

Thank you so much for your time. I hope you'll consider contributing to this research. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [Ryan.Hancock@du.edu](mailto:Ryan.Hancock@du.edu).

Please go to [https://udenver.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6uiC1DqthYQw3ys](https://udenver.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6uiC1DqthYQw3ys) in order to complete the survey

Sincerely,

Ryan Hancock

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

*Survey on Music and Communication in Parent/Adolescent Relationships*

*Participant Consent Form*

You are invited to participate in a study on music and communication in parent/child relationships. The purpose of this research is to investigate music and musical preferences and parent/adolescent communication and relationships. In this questionnaire you are asked to report on your shared musical preferences with one of your parents, your feelings of shared family identity with your parents, your feelings about how your parents communicate with you, and your feelings of family satisfaction. This research study is being conducted by Principal Investigator Ryan Hancock, Master's candidate under the supervision of Erin K. Willer, Ph.D. at the University of Denver.

In order to participate in this study you must be 18 years of age or older. Participating in this study involves completing a questionnaire regarding those issues mentioned above, as well as some demographic information.

Your involvement in this study will be kept confidential. Results of this research may be presented at professional conventions and included in journal articles. However, your survey responses will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. If you choose to participate in this study in order to receive extra credit, you will be required to provide your name and your instructor's name at the end of the survey. Your name will be kept separate from your survey responses. If you are participating in this study for extra credit, the researcher will report your name to your instructor or professor in order to let him or her know that you have participated.

Participation in this study is voluntary –your class standing, your class grades, your job status, and your membership on an athletic team cannot be affected by either your refusal to participate in, or withdraw from participation in, this study. You can stop at any point without fear of penalty. You do not have to complete any questions you prefer not to answer. Risks associated with participation in this study are minimal. You may feel

uncomfortable recalling potentially negative events involving your communication and relationships. Completing and returning the survey indicates that you have agreed to participate in this study. This survey takes about 25 minutes to complete. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, your participation will contribute valuable knowledge about parent/adolescent communication and relationships.

Should you feel upset as a result of any of the questions on the survey, you may wish to speak to a professional at the University of Denver Health and Counseling Center. Call 303-871-2205 to set up an appointment.

If you would like more information about this research project, please feel free to contact Ryan Hancock at [Ryan.Hancock@du.edu](mailto:Ryan.Hancock@du.edu). This study has been approved by the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you have any concerns or complaints about this research, please contact:

Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-4820.

We sincerely appreciate your participation! You may print this page for your records. Please click "yes" below if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please contact one of the researchers with any questions you have.

*I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time.*

*By clicking “Yes,” you indicate that you have read the informed consent above, and you willingly agree to participate in this study.*

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

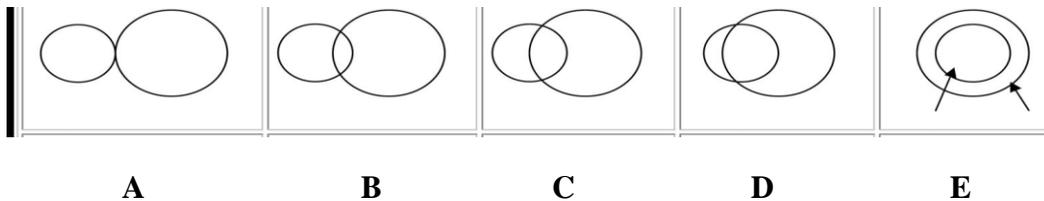
### Appendix C: Survey on Musical Preference and Family Communication

Who would you consider to be your primary caregiver, or the parental figure with whom you spent the most time in your childhood and teenage years? If more than one person played a primary role, please select a male figure. If more than one person played a primary role and they are both/all female, please select any one.

- A. Biological Mother
- B. Biological Father
- C. Step-mother
- D. Step-father
- E. Adoptive mother
- F. Adoptive father
- G. Other. Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Schubert & Otten, 2002)

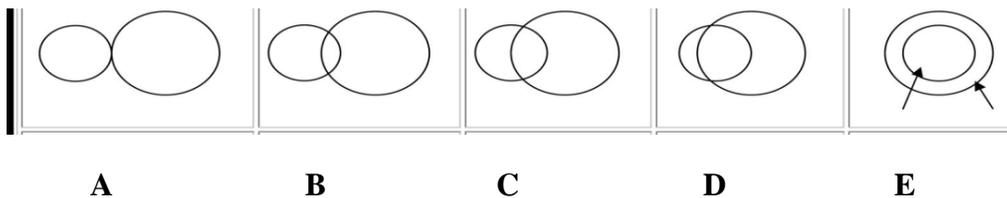
The following question asks you to reflect on you and your primary caregiver's musical preferences. Based on the following diagram, where the small circle represents your musical preferences, and the large circle represents your primary caregiver's musical preferences, which picture do you feel best represents the degree to which your tastes are similar? For example, if you believe you and your primary caregiver's preferences for music are nothing alike, choose A. If you believe your preferences are almost exactly the same, select E.



Who would you consider to be your secondary caregiver, or the parental figure with whom you spent time growing up, but was not the primary parental figure in your childhood and teenage years?

- A. My biological mother
- B. My biological father
- C. My step-mother
- D. My step-father
- E. My adoptive mother
- F. My adoptive father
- G. Neither, because I consider both of my parents to be equal primary caregivers
- H. I do not consider anyone to be a secondary caregiver
- I. Other. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

The following question asks you to reflect on you and your secondary caregiver's musical preferences. Based on the following diagram, where the small circle represents your musical preferences, and the large circle represents your secondary caregiver's musical preferences, which picture do you feel best represents the degree to which your tastes are similar? For example, if you believe you and your secondary caregiver's preferences for music are nothing alike, choose A. If you believe your preferences are almost exactly the same, select E. If you did not identify a secondary caregiver above, you may skip this section.



**When filling out the rest of this survey, please answer based on how the questions relate to your relationship with the person you identified as your *primary caregiver*, or the parental figure with whom you spent the most time in your childhood and teenage years. Again, if more than one person played a primary role, please report on the male figure you selected. If more than one person played a primary role and they were both/all female, please report on the one you selected above.**

(Adapted from Soliz & Harwood, 2006)

This section of the survey assesses how you feel about your family. Please answer the questions below based your relationship with your *primary caregiver*.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. I am proud to be in the same family as my primary caregiver  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
2. My shared family membership with my primary caregiver is unimportant to me  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
3. Above all else, I think of my primary caregiver as a member of my family  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
4. My primary caregiver is an important part of my family  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
5. I feel as if we are members of one family  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
6. I feel as if we are members of separate groups  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7

(Adapted from Soliz & Harwood, 2003)

\*\*(Adapted from Barnes & Olson, 1982)

\*\*\*Researcher-Generated Questions

This section of the survey is for assessing how you perceive communication from your parental figure. Please answer the questions below based your relationship with your *primary caregiver*.

Please use the following scale for your answers:

- A. Strongly Disagree
  - B. Somewhat Disagree
  - C. Neither Agree or Disagree
  - D. Somewhat Agree
  - E. Strongly Agree
- 

1. My primary caregiver compliments me  
1 2 3 4 5
2. My primary caregiver shows affection for me  
1 2 3 4 5
3. My primary caregiver shows respect for me  
1 2 3 4 5
4. My primary caregiver is a good listener\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
5. My primary caregiver shares their personal thoughts and feelings with me  
1 2 3 4 5
6. My primary caregiver is attentive to me  
1 2 3 4 5
7. My primary caregiver is supportive of me  
1 2 3 4 5
8. My primary caregiver tries to understand my point of view\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
9. My primary caregiver insults me when he/she is angry at me\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
10. My primary caregiver treats me like an ignorant young person\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5

11. My primary caregiver negatively stereotypes me because of my age.  
1 2 3 4 5
12. My primary caregiver talks down to me  
1 2 3 4 5
13. My primary caregiver complains about his or her life circumstances  
1 2 3 4 5
14. My primary caregiver complains about his or her health  
1 2 3 4 5
15. My primary caregiver complains about his or her work\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
16. My primary caregiver is close-minded  
1 2 3 4 5
17. My primary caregiver always talks about his or her job\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
18. My primary caregiver expresses racial/prejudiced opinions  
1 2 3 4 5
19. My primary caregiver makes angry complaints  
1 2 3 4 5
20. My primary caregiver gives unwanted advice  
1 2 3 4 5
21. My primary caregiver tells interesting stories.  
1 2 3 4 5
22. My primary caregiver provides interesting information about my family  
1 2 3 4 5
23. My primary caregiver provides interesting information about history  
1 2 3 4 5
24. My primary caregiver asks me about my life in school\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
25. My primary caregiver asks me about my life with my friends\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5
26. My primary caregiver asks me about my interests\*\*\*  
1 2 3 4 5

(Adapted from Carver & Jones, 1992)

In this section of the survey, the following questions are aimed at assessing your feelings about your family. You do not need to think about specific caregivers, but instead answer the following questions based on your relationships with your immediate family (parental figures, siblings) in general.

Please use the following scale as a reference for your answers:

- A. Strongly disagree
- B. Disagree
- C. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- D. Agree
- E. Strongly Agree

1. In their treatment of one another, my family is consistent and fair  
1 2 3 4 5
2. I would do anything for my family  
1 2 3 4 5
3. I have a good time with my family  
1 2 3 4 5
4. I always feel my parents support me  
1 2 3 4 5
5. I always know what I can and cannot get away with at my house  
1 2 3 4 5
6. I'm never sure what the rules are from day to day  
1 2 3 4 5
7. My family is one of the least important aspects of my life  
1 2 3 4 5
8. I would do anything necessary for any member of my family  
1 2 3 4 5
9. There is too much conflict within my family  
1 2 3 4 5
10. I usually feel safe sharing myself with my family  
1 2 3 4 5
11. I am happy with my family just the way it is  
1 2 3 4 5

12. Members of my family treat one another consistently  
1 2 3 4 5
13. There is a great deal about my family that I would change if I could  
1 2 3 4 5
14. With my family I can rarely be myself  
1 2 3 4 5
15. I am very unhappy with my family  
1 2 3 4 5
16. I am deeply committed to my family  
1 2 3 4 5
17. I often find myself feeling dissatisfied with my family  
1 2 3 4 5
18. My family always believes in me  
1 2 3 4 5
19. I find great comfort and satisfaction in my family  
1 2 3 4 5

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you...?

- Male
- Female
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How do you describe yourself?

- Black/Non-Hispanic
- White/Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current living situation?

- Live on campus / Student residence or Dorm / Fraternity or Sorority / Other
- Live off campus with a parent or parents
- Live off campus, but not with a parent or parents
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

With whom did you live before you came to school at DU?

- My biological parents
  - My mother
  - My father
  - My mother and step-father
  - My father and step-mother
  - My adoptive parents
  - Other. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
-

What is your biological parents' current marital status? If you are adopted, please report on your adoptive parents.

- My parents are married
- My parents are separated
- My parents are divorced, and neither are remarried
- My parents are divorced, and both are remarried
- My parents are divorced, and only my mother is remarried
- My parents are divorced, and only my father is remarried
- My father is deceased
- My father is deceased, and my mother is remarried
- My mother is deceased
- My mother is deceased, and my father is remarried
- My mother and father are deceased
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

In order to receive extra credit for participating in this study, please provide your name and your instructor's name.

Your name:

Instructor's Name:

If you would like to receive information about the findings of this study, please enter your email address.

Email address: