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**Using Equity Theory to Examine Relationship Maintenance and
Satisfaction in Father-Daughter Relationships**

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to use equity theory to examine communication maintenance behaviors in father-daughter relationships. It was proposed that equity types would be possible determinants of relationship maintenance behaviors and, ultimately, relational and communication satisfaction. One hundred ninety-eight father-daughter dyads participated in the study. Results indicated that father-daughter equity types affect the use of relationship maintenance behaviors and perceptions of satisfaction.

The father-daughter relationship is one of the least understood family dyads (Punyanunt-Carter, 2005, 2006). Endres (1997) reported few studies dealing with father-daughter relationships in the communication discipline. Likewise, Stafford and Dainton (1995) noted that family research has mainly focused on the mother and ignored the father. The present study sought to remedy this deficiency. The goal of this study was to analyze an important feature of communication in father-daughter relationships, relational maintenance. Using equity theory as a guide, this paper examined relationship maintenance behaviors and how they relate to satisfaction between fathers and daughters. By doing so, this study hoped to extend what is known about communication patterns in the father-daughter relationship.

Equity Theory

Equity theory maintains that people seek rewards in relationships, and rewards are greatest in relationships that are equal. Messman, Canary, and Hause (2000) explained that equity theory is based on balance for both relational partners. If one relational partner feels that the relationship is unbalanced—where he or she gives more—then it is *underbenefited*. And if one of the relational partners receives more than he or she gives, resulting in an unbalanced relationship, then it is called *overbenefited*. Messman et al. highlighted the fact that equal, or *equitable*, relationships are the best type of relationships. Underbenefited and overbenefited relationships have different impact on partners. For instance, Sprecher (1986) noticed that people reported strong feelings of anger and sadness for underbenefited relationships. Equity theory has received support in a variety of relationship maintenance studies.

Underbenefited and overbenefited marital partners have different perceptions about their relationships. Stafford, Perry, and Rankin (1999) found that husbands and wives had different views of equity and relationship maintenance. For wives, being overbenefited was related to husbands' assurances and positive behaviors. On the other hand, for husbands, being overbenefited was related to wives' involvement in more tasks. In addition, Stafford et al. noted that the connection between underbenefitedness and satisfaction was influenced by the partner's perceptions of maintenance behaviors. In addition, Canary and Stafford (1992) discovered that relational maintenance behaviors were used more by wives who defined their marriages as equal than wives who perceived that their husbands overbenefited them. But not all research dealt with husbands and wives.

Some of these connections have also been found in friendship relationships. Messman et al. (2000) studied equity and relationship maintenance strategies in opposite-sex friendships and found that equal friendship relationships were those in which the dyads did not frequently flirt, gave support, and maintained positivity. In addition, they found that positive and proactive maintenance behaviors were used mostly in equal friendship relationships. We would expect similar results for equitable father-daughter relationships.

Equity has also been connected to relationship maintenance in parent-child relationships. Vogl-Bauer, Kalbfleisch, and Beatty (1999) adopted equity theory for a study of relational maintenance and satisfaction in parent-adolescent relationships and found that equity theory adequately explained parents' perceptions of equity satisfaction. Parents' satisfaction levels were positively related to perceptions of equity with their children and the sex of the parent influenced the type of maintenance strategy used by the children. However, the findings relating to overbenefited relationships did not support equity theory, and findings about underbenefited and equitable relationships offered only partial support. Nevertheless, Vogl-Bauer et al. argued that the theory was ideal for studying parent-adolescent relationships because of the unique nature of the relationship. During the adolescent years, adolescents are trying to gain autonomy from their

parents, yet are trying to maintain a balance in their relationship. Equity theory, then, has been used to study parent-child relationships and relationship maintenance, yet few studies have investigated fully the father-daughter relationship and, specifically, relationship maintenance.

Relationship Maintenance

Stafford and Canary (1991) defined five key maintenance behaviors. *Positivity* is a relational factor used by people when they communicate with their partners in a happy and supportive manner. *Openness* occurs when partners focus their communication on the relationship. *Assurances* are words that emphasize the partners' commitment to the duration of the relationship. *Networking* is communicating with family and friends. *Sharing tasks* is dividing household chores and work. Canary and Zelle (2000) later discovered two additional ones: conflict-management and advice. *Conflict-management* focuses on how arguments and disagreements are handled. *Advice* deals with how guidance is given to partners. These seven strategies, then, represent the various types of efforts that relational partners expend to maintain and enhance their relationships; they strengthen romantic or marital relationships over time.

One line of research has employed equity theory to uncover the connection between relationship equality and maintenance behaviors. Canary and Stafford (1992) discovered that wives' equity perceptions predicted their husbands' perceptions of assurances, openness, and positivity behaviors. At the same time, husbands' equity perceptions predicted their wives' perceptions of positivity, assurances, and sharing tasks. Canary and Stafford also found correlations between perceptions of partners' maintenance behaviors, relational characteristics, and relationship quality.

Few studies have focuses on relational maintenance in father-daughter relationships. As described above, most research on relationship maintenance has focused on romantic relationships (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1994, Dainton & Stafford, 1993; Dindia & Baxter, 1987). Non-marital family relationships are also important in that all combinations of family members contribute to family stability and satisfaction. The literature indicates that certain relationship maintenance behaviors lead to particular relational outcomes, one of which is satisfaction.

Satisfaction

Researchers have identified two types of satisfaction: relational and communication. Dainton, Stafford, and Canary (1994) defined *relational satisfaction* as "an individual's attitude toward the partner and the relationship, typically in terms of the perceived quality of the relationship" (p. 90). Thus, relational satisfaction has an inherent quality component to it in addition to positive regard. Hecht (1978b) noted that *communication satisfaction* is based on the fulfillment of expectations through verbal and nonverbal means. It encompasses need fulfillment as well as assessment of the effectiveness of one's own communication behavior. Thus, satisfaction between dyadic partners can be assessed by analyzing the levels of relational and communication satisfaction

Past research on parent-child communication has investigated satisfaction as an important dependent variable. Time spent together, listening skills and sympathy skills led to greater satisfaction with fathers for college-aged sons and daughters (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, & Buerkel, 1995). And parallel intimacy styles (Heisler, 1998) and affection motives (Martin & Anderson, 1995) for fathers and daughters has led to greater satisfaction. Lastly, Richards (1989) noted that high levels of satisfaction occur in families that display more supportive, agreeable, and positive interactions.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on the previous literature, the levels of equity in relationships influence partners'

perceptions of their relationship. According to equity theory, equitable relationships should be more satisfying than inequitable relationships. Thus, the following hypotheses were created:

- H1: Equitable father-daughter relationships will have significantly higher levels of daughter relational satisfaction than inequitable father-daughter relationships.
- H2: Equitable father-daughter relationships will have significantly higher levels of daughter communication satisfaction than inequitable father-daughter relationships.
- H3: Equitable father-daughter relationships will have significantly higher levels of father relational satisfaction than inequitable father-daughter relationships.
- H4: Equitable father-daughter relationships will have significantly higher levels of father communication satisfaction than inequitable father-daughter relationships.

Vogl-Bauer et al. (1999) contended that the use of relationship maintenance behaviors might also depend on the perceptions of relationship equity. Underbenefited relationships, because they have negative outcomes, are characterized as having fewer relationship maintenance behaviors (Canary & Stafford, 1992). Equitable relationships, on the other hand, prolong the use of relationship maintenance behaviors because maintenance behaviors have positive connotations. It is important to look at how equity and relationship maintenance behaviors are related in the father-daughter relationship. Thus, the following hypotheses were posited:

- H5: Relationship maintenance scores will be higher for fathers who perceive equity, rather than inequity, with their daughter.
- H6: Relationship maintenance scores will be higher for daughters who perceive equity, rather than inequity, with their father.

In addition, the following research question was created:

- RQ1: Do fathers and daughters differ in their reported use of relationship maintenance behaviors?

Finally, the above literature indicated that relationship maintenance behaviors influence relationship outcomes. For instance, Vangelisti and Huston (1994) have shown a positive significant relationship between relationship maintenance behaviors and satisfaction. However, most of the studies on relationship maintenance have not specifically concentrated on the father-daughter relationship. Hence, the following research question was created:

- RQ2: Do certain father-daughter relationship maintenance behaviors lead to greater relational and communication satisfaction?

Method

Participants

One hundred ninety-eight female college students from various majors (with a living father) enrolled in an introductory communication course at a large university and their fathers served as participants in this study. Daughters ranged in age from 18 to 35 years old ($M = 20.2$, $SD = 2.50$), and fathers ranged in age from 38 to 72 ($M = 49.6$, $SD = 6.16$). The father-and-daughter data were paired together by a number given to each father-daughter dyad, so questionnaires were completed anonymously.

Instruments

Equity. To assess equity between fathers and daughters, daughters were presented with two equity items developed by Sprecher (1986). The first item is from Hatfield, Utne, and Traupmann's (1979) *Global Measure of Equity*. It asks, "Consider what you put into your relationship with your partner, compared to what you get out of it...and what your partner puts in

compared to what he/she gets out of it. How does your relationship ‘stack up’?” The response options to this item ranged from 1 (*I am getting a much better deal than my partner*) to 7 (*My partner is getting a much better deal*). The second item asks:

Sometimes things get out of balance in the relationship and one partner contributes more to the relationship than the other. Consider all the times when the exchange in your relationship with your partner has become unbalanced and you or your partner contributed more than the other for a time. When your relationship with your partner becomes unbalanced, which of you is more likely to contribute more?

Responses to this item range from 1 (*My partner is more likely to contribute more*) to 7 (*I am much more likely to be the one to contribute more*). Both items were adapted by changing the word “partner” to “father.” Consistent with Canary and Stafford’s (1992) study and Vogl-Bauer et al.’s (1999) study, equity was computed by adding the two items together, with scores ranging from 2 to 14. Accordingly, equity relationships were those with a combined score ranging from 7 to 9. Overbenefited relationships had combined scores ranging from 2 to 6. Underbenefited relationships had combined scores ranging from 10 to 14.

Results indicated that 20.1% ($n = 50$) were in underbenefited relationships, 59.4% ($n = 148$) were in equity relationships, 20.4% ($n = 51$) were in overbenefited relationships, and .04% ($n = 1$) did not complete the question.

Relationship maintenance. Stafford, Dainton, and Haas’s (2000) *Relational Maintenance Measure* was used to assess relational maintenance behaviors. In order to adapt the scale to the relationship in this study, I changed the words from the original measure from “my partner” to “my father” or “my daughter.” This measure contained 31 Likert-type items that assess strategic and routine relational maintenance behaviors. The scale consists of seven subscales: openness, positivity, assurances, social networks, conflict management, advice, and sharing tasks. The scale asks respondents to indicate their use of relationship maintenance behaviors (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*). Relationship maintenance subscale items were summed and averaged.

The *positivity* subscale contains communication items that deal with optimism (Stafford et al., 2000). The *openness* subscale contains items that focus on self-disclosure. The *assurances* subscale contains items that look at behaviors and interactions to let the partners know that the relationship will persevere through time. The *network* subscale contains items that tap into the networks that the partners share with each other. The *tasks* subscale contains items that look at the partner’s obligations and duties in the relationship. The *conflict management* subscale contains items on how partners handle disagreements in their relationship. The *advice* subscale contains items that tap into their advice-giving behaviors. In this study, daughter relationship maintenance behavior alpha reliabilities were: *advice* (.92), *conflict-management* (.85), *shared tasks* (.92), *network* (.79), *assurances* (.91), *openness* (.91), and *positivity* (.92). Father relationship maintenance behavior alpha reliabilities were: *advice* (.73), *conflict-management* (.82), *shared tasks* (.88), *network* (.78), *assurances* (.88), *openness* (.84), and *positivity* (.73).

Satisfaction. Two scales were used to measure father-daughter relational and communication satisfaction. The scale that assessed relational satisfaction was used in Beatty and Dobos’s (1992) study to measure relational satisfaction between fathers and sons. This scale contains five 7-point bi-polar items: satisfying-dissatisfying, fulfilling-disappointing, rewarding-punishing, positive-negative, and good-bad. Responses to the five items were summed and averaged to create an index of relational satisfaction. In the current study, daughters ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.30$, $\alpha = .96$) and fathers ($M = 6.30$, $SD = .98$, $\alpha = .95$) were given the same scale and

asked to rate their relationship with the each other.

The second scale is the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (Com-Sat) created by Hecht (1978a, 1978b). The scale consists of 19 Likert-type items that assess participants' agreement with statements; responses ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). The scale's reliability was .94 for the daughters and .89 for the fathers for recalled conversations.

Results

The first hypothesis posited that equitable father-daughter relationships would have significantly higher levels of daughter relationship satisfaction than inequitable relationships. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and detected a significant main effect for equity ($F(2/257) = 14.77, p < .01, \eta^2 = .20$). As shown in Table 1, Tukey post-hoc tests revealed a statistically significant difference between equitable relationships and overbenefited relationships in terms of relational satisfaction. Daughters in overbenefited relationships were less satisfied than those in equitable relationships and underbenefited relationships. The means for underbenefited and equitable relationships were not significantly different. Hence, hypothesis one was partially supported.

Table 1: Means of Fathers' and Daughters' Relational and Communication Satisfaction

Satisfaction	<u>Underbenefited</u>		<u>Equitable</u>		<u>Overbenefited</u>	
	Daughter	Father	Daughter	Father	Daughter	Father
Relational	31.94 _b	32.49	30.27 _a	31.52	26.29 _{ab}	30.52
Communication	112.14 _{cd}	106.97	103.38 _{cf}	107.71	90.61 _{df}	106.05

Note. Means in the same row that share subscripts differ at the $p < .05$ in the Tukey honestly significant difference comparison.

The second hypothesis posited that equitable father-daughter relationships would have significantly higher levels of daughter communication satisfaction than inequitable relationships. Again, an ANOVA revealed a significant difference ($F(2/198) = 20.32, p < .01, \eta^2 = .33$). As shown in Table 1, Tukey post hoc tests revealed that equitable relationships were significantly different from both underbenefited and overbenefited relationships. Moreover, underbenefited and overbenefited relationships were significantly different. Specifically, overbenefited daughters reported lower communication satisfaction than daughters in equitable relationships, and equitable daughters were less satisfied than underbenefited daughters. Hence, hypothesis two was supported.

The third hypothesis posited that equitable father-daughter relationships would have higher father relational satisfaction than inequitable father-daughter relationships. An ANOVA failed to reveal a significant difference between or among equity types and father relational satisfaction, $F(2/196) = 1.25, p = .28, \eta^2 = .23$. Thus, the third hypothesis was not supported.

The fourth hypothesis posited that equitable relationships would result in higher father communication satisfaction than inequitable relationships. An ANOVA failed to uncover a significant difference between equity types for father communication satisfaction, $F(2/196) = .89, p = .41, \eta^2 = .11$. The fourth hypothesis was not supported.

The next two hypotheses predicted differences in relationship maintenance for equitable and unequitable relationships. Because the maintenance behaviors can be interrelated, multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to uncover differences between equity relationship types. Follow-up ANOVA post-hoc comparisons of means are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means of Fathers' and Daughters' Relationship Maintenance Behaviors

Maintenance Behaviors	<u>Underbenefited</u>		<u>Equitable</u>		<u>Overbenefited</u>	
	Daughter	Father	Daughter	Father	Daughter	Father
Assurances	5.32 _a	6.78	5.12 _b	6.57	5.67 _{ab}	6.43
Openness	4.71 _c	4.98	4.33 _d	4.93	3.99 _{cd}	4.75
Conflict						
Management	5.82 _f	5.89	5.40 _{fg}	5.81	5.36 _g	5.49
Shared Tasks	4.88	5.89	5.18	5.95	5.50	5.65
Positivity	5.80	4.75	5.65	5.85	5.61	5.96
Advice	4.80	5.43	4.58	5.65	4.20	5.41
Social Networks	4.65 _g	4.87	4.25 _h	4.75	3.98 _{gh}	4.46

Note. Means in the same row that share subscripts differ at the $p < .05$ in the Tukey honestly significant difference comparison.

The fifth hypothesis posited that relationship maintenance scores would be higher for fathers who perceive equity, rather than inequity, with their daughter. MANOVA failed to uncover differences between the three different types of equitable relationships, Wilks $\lambda = .55$, $F(2/196) = 2.33$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = .41$.

The sixth hypothesis proposed that daughter relationship maintenance scores would be higher for daughters who perceive equity, rather than inequity with their father. MANOVA showed that there was a significant difference among the three different types of equitable relationships and daughter relationships maintenance behaviors, Wilks $\lambda = .21$, $F(2/196) = 3.33$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .41$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed significant differences between the equity types for *assurances*, *openness*, *conflict-management*, and *social networks*.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 queried differences between fathers' relational maintenance behaviors and daughters' relational maintenance behaviors. For this research question, I calculated repeated-measures MANOVA on the two sets of relationship maintenance behaviors. Results showed significant differences for all of the relationship maintenance behaviors, Wilks' $\lambda = .38$, $F(7, 198) = 44.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .54$. These results are presented in Table 3. Fathers were significantly more likely than daughters to use all of the relationship maintenance behaviors. Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 4.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 focused on the influence of daughters' relationship maintenance behaviors on daughters' communication satisfaction. First, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with daughters' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and daughters' communication satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(2,198) = 250.90$, $R = .72$, $R^2 = .51$, $p < .001$. The significant predictor variables were assurances and conflict management. Table 5 presents a summary of this regression.

Table 3: MANOVA Results of Fathers' and Daughters' Relationship Maintenance Behaviors

Maintenance Behaviors	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Assurances	1	220.39**	0.39	.00
Openness	1	27.96**	0.03	.00
Conflict Management	1	10.38*	0.07	.01
Shared Tasks	1	46.47**	0.08	.00
Positivity	1	3.15	0.03	.08
Advice	1	57.35**	0.51	.00
Social Networks	1	12.31*	0.08	.01

Note. *N* = 198. **p* < .01. ***p* < .001.

Table 4: Means of Fathers' and Daughters' Relationship Maintenance Behaviors

Maintenance Behaviors	Daughter		Father	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Assurances	5.07 _a	1.22	6.58 _a	1.06
Openness	4.34 _b	1.27	4.90 _b	1.00
Conflict Management	5.47 _c	1.00	5.76 _c	0.85
Positivity	5.67 _d	1.03	5.85 _d	0.97
Advice	4.54 _e	1.71	5.55 _e	1.07
Shared Tasks	5.18 _f	1.22	5.87 _f	0.88
Social Networks	4.27 _g	1.35	4.71 _g	1.28

Note. Means with identical subscripts are statistically significant from each other using Tukey post-hoc analyses at *p* < .001.

N = 198.

Table 5: Stepwise Regression Analysis Summary for the Daughters' Maintenance Behaviors Predicting Daughters' Communication Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE β	β
Step 1			
Assurances	1.20	0.11	0.59**
Step 2			
Conflict Management	0.84	0.21	0.21**

Note. $R^2 = .51$ for Step1; $\Delta R^2 = .03$ for Step 2 (*ps* < .05).

** *p* < .001.

Second, a stepwise multiple regression was computed with daughters' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and fathers' communication satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(2,198) = 11.27$, $R = .33$, $R^2 = .11$, $p < .001$. The significant predictor variables were social networks and conflict management. Table 6 shows the summary of the regression.

Table 6: Stepwise Regression Analysis Summary for the Daughters' Maintenance Behaviors Predicting Fathers' Communication Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	\square
Step 1			
Social Networks	1.26	0.43	0.20**
Step 2			
Conflict-Management	0.66	0.24	0.19*

Note. $R^2 = .11$ for Step1; $\square R^2 = .04$ for Step 2 ($ps < .05$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Third, a stepwise multiple regression was created with daughters' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and daughters' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(1,198) = 217.85$, $R = .69$, $R^2 = .48$, $p < .001$. The only significant predictor variable on daughters' relational satisfaction was assurances, $\beta = .69$, $t = 14.76$, $p < .001$.

Fourth, a stepwise multiple regression was computed with daughters' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(2,198) = 7.09$, $R = .27$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$. The significant predictor variables were shared tasks and social networks. Table 7 shows the summary of the regression.

Table 7: Stepwise Regression Analysis Summary for the Daughters' Maintenance Behaviors Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	\square
Step 1			
Shared Tasks	0.13	0.05	0.18*
Step 2			
Social Networks	0.27	0.12	0.15*

Note. $R^2 = .07$ for Step1; $\square R^2 = .02$ for Step 2 ($ps < .05$).

* $p < .05$.

Fifth, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with fathers' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and daughters' communication satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(2,198) = 14.60$, $R = .27$, $R^2 = .070$, $p < .001$. The only significant predictor was positivity, $\beta = .27$, $t = 3.82$, $p < .001$.

Sixth, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with fathers' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and fathers' communication satisfaction as the dependent variable,

$F(3,198) = 28.64$, $R = .56$, $R^2 = .30$, $p < .001$. The significant predictor variables were positivity, conflict management, and assurances. Table 8 shows the summary of this regression.

Table 8: Stepwise Regression Analysis Summary for the Father's Maintenance Behaviors & Fathers' Communication Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β
Step 1			
Positivity	2.07	0.67	0.24**
Step 2			
Conflict Management	0.97	0.29	0.25**
Step 3			
Assurances	0.41	0.16	0.18*

Note. $R^2 = .30$ for Step1; $\beta R^2 = .06$ for Step 2, $\beta R^2 = .02$ for Step 3 ($ps < .05$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Seventh, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with fathers' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and daughters' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(1,198) = 12.16$, $R = .24$, $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$. The only significant predictor variable on daughters' relational satisfaction was shared task, $\beta = .24$, $t = 3.48$, $p < .001$.

Eighth, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted with fathers' maintenance behaviors as independent variables and fathers' relational satisfaction as the dependent variable, $F(2,198) = 41.60$, $R = .55$, $R^2 = .31$, $p < .001$. The significant predictor variables were assurances and positivity. Table 9 shows the summary of this regression.

Table 9: Stepwise Regression Analysis Summary for Fathers' Maintenance Behaviors Predicting Fathers' Relational Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β
Step 1 Assurances	0.20	0.04	0.34**
Step 2			
Positivity	0.65	0.15	0.29**

Note. $R^2 = .31$ for Step1; $\beta R^2 = .06$ for Step 2 ($ps < .05$).

** $p < .001$.

In summary, daughters' assurances relationship maintenance behaviors lead to daughters' communication and relational satisfaction. Daughters' social networks maintenance behaviors lead to fathers' communication and relational satisfaction. Fathers' positivity predicted daughters' communication satisfaction. Fathers' shared tasks with their daughters predicted daughters' relational satisfaction. Fathers' positivity and assurances predicted fathers' communication and relational satisfaction.

Discussion

Results revealed that satisfaction is more likely to occur in relationships where daughters feel that they are equitable or underbenefited in the relationship. Overbenefited daughters or daughters who feel that there is a lot invested in their relationship and perceived more than equal amounts in return are very unsatisfied with their fathers. Therefore, in order to attain satisfaction in the father-daughter relationship, there should be a balance of expectations. Vogl-Bauer et al. (1999) noted that equitable relationships can be achieved through negotiation. Noller and Callan (1991) stated that daughters that move away from still desire their families' affection and attention. Results from this study suggested that daughters are more satisfied with equitable and underbenefited relationships with their fathers. In addition, results showed that equitable relationships significantly differ in their use of relationship maintenance behaviors as well. Yet, results indicated that equitable father-daughter relationships used mainly assurances, openness, conflict management, and social networks to maintain their relationships with their fathers. Investigating married couples, Dainton and Stafford (2000) noted that the best predictor of an individual's use of a maintenance behavior is the perception that his or her spouse employed the same behavior. Daughters and fathers both use positivity, assurance, and conflict management. Ayres (1983) has argued that the stability of a relationship means that similar behaviors and actions occur in the relationship. Moreover, Duck (1988) has mentioned that people maintain relationships by routine activities and behaviors to sustain relationships.

The daughters' relationship maintenance behaviors appear to be both functional and practical behaviors when at college. Assurances are expressions of love and commitment. Conflict management deals with how disagreements are handled. Openness is concerned with self-disclosure. When daughters are at college, daughters may want to let their fathers know how much they care for him. Also, when disagreements occur, daughters know when to cooperate and/or apologize. Moreover, daughters may want to share their experiences with their fathers.

Even though marriages differ from father-daughter relationships, there are still some similar characteristics. First, most marriages contain different genders. It has been found that different genders use different relationship maintenance behaviors. For instance, Simon and Baxter (1993) found that females were more likely to use assurances than males. Second, both types of relationships use relationship maintenance behaviors (Shea & Pearson, 1986). Thus, marriages and father-daughter relationships are distinct, but they also have common characteristics similar to findings on male-female relationships.

Results showed that daughters' communication satisfaction was based on their fathers' positivity relationship maintenance behavior and relational satisfaction was based on fathers' shared tasks. Fathers' communication satisfaction was based on their behaviors of positivity, conflict management, and assurances, and relational satisfaction was based on assurances and positivity with their daughters. This finding supports Dainton et al.'s (1994) study on relationship maintenance behaviors and satisfaction. They found that marital couples reported high levels of satisfaction with assurances and positivity. Moreover, they found higher satisfaction levels when spouses shared tasks. Even though fathers and daughters are not married to each other, they may find the same type of pleasure that married couples do when they share tasks.

It is also important to note there was a strong correlation between communication and relational satisfaction. Nevertheless, daughters' and fathers' reported experiencing communication satisfaction with certain maintenance behaviors more than others. Likewise, daughters and fathers reported experiencing relational satisfaction with specific maintenance

behaviors. Therefore, communication satisfaction and relational satisfaction may go hand-in-hand, but be due to different factors.

Interestingly, fathers use more relationship maintenance behaviors than daughters during her college years. This may be a noteworthy finding for corporations and businesses that seek financial opportunities. These companies could actually make a profit for finding easier ways for fathers to maintain their relationships with their college-aged daughters. After all, Noller and Callan (1991) reported that adolescents who move away from home still desire their families' affection. Results showed that fathers reported making a conscious effort to fulfill their daughters' need for affection.

Future research should compare sons' and daughters' relationship maintenance behaviors with their fathers and mothers. Comparing genders and cross-gender family relationships can enhance our understanding of how these important family relationships are maintained in live-apart conditions. In the same fashion, future research should also look at sons' and daughters' satisfaction levels with their fathers. Because of the differences between people in equitable and unequitable relationships, how communication is used to maintain relationship and how these behaviors can enhance relational and communication satisfaction, comparing sons and daughters might produce important findings.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine father-daughter equity, relationship maintenance behaviors, and satisfaction levels. The results discussed earlier illustrate the need for further research concerning father-daughter relationships. In addition, results have shown that certain relationship maintenance behaviors are present in father-daughter relationships. Results also reveal how equity in father-daughter relationships affects levels of satisfaction. This study has provided support for using equity theory to study father-daughter relationships.

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