

Young Adults' Provision of Support to Middle-Aged Parents

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Objectives. Middle-aged adults often provide support to aging parents, but researchers know little about support that young adults provide middle-aged parents. This study examined support that young adults provide parents and explanations for that support from both offspring's and parents' perspectives.

Method. Young adults ($n = 515$, mean age = 22.34) and their parents ($n = 364$, mean age = 50.09) from the Family Exchanges Study reported support that offspring provide parents. Participants also reported parental personal problems, parental disability status, relationship quality, and support that parents provide offspring.

Results. Offspring provided parents with emotional support and listening more often than other forms of support. Offspring reported providing more frequent support than parents reported receiving. We examined factors associated with support using multilevel models. Both offspring and parents reported more frequent support provided to parents when they had higher quality relationships and when parents gave more frequent support to offspring. Offspring (but not parents) reported providing more frequent support to parents when parents were disabled.

Discussion. Findings are consistent with solidarity theory, which suggests that high-quality relationships may explain support. The concept of self-enhancement and generativity in middle-aged parents may explain the intergenerational differences in the association between parental disability and support.

Key Words: Family—Intergenerational relationships—Social support.

INTERGENERATIONAL support plays a key role in the material and psychological well-being of family members (Bengtson, 2001; Cheng, Li, Leung, & Chan, 2011; Davey & Eggebeen, 1998). Researchers have documented help that middle-aged adults provide to their older parents (Katz, Gur-Yaish, & Lowenstein, 2010; Zarit & Eggebeen, 2002). Middle-aged adults tend to support aging parents when parents are in need (Eggebeen & Davey, 1998), have close intergenerational ties (Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Albert, & Mayer, 2005), and when in response to support that parents provided (Silverstein, Conroy, Wang, Giarrusso, & Bengtson, 2002). However, it is not clear whether these support patterns found among middle-aged offspring are also evident among young adult offspring.

Young adults may provide support to parents, albeit with different type of support (Silverstein & Giarrusso, 2010). Indeed, a study in Europe documented emotional and practical support young adults provide to parents (Bucx, van Wel, & Knijn, 2012). In Asian countries, young adults also may provide financial support to parents (Kim, Cheng, Fingerman, & Zarit, in press). However, it is not clear what types of support that young adults in the United States provide their parents.

This study examined young adults' support to middle-aged parents with a U.S. sample and contributes to the

literature in three ways: (a) by examining several different types of support (e.g., listening to parents talk about their daily lives, practical, financial, and technological support), (b) by including both offspring and parent reports of support provided to parents, and (c) by considering reasons that may underlie young adults' support of parents.

Types of Support Young Adult Offspring Provide

The types of support that young adults provide parents may be associated with the characteristics of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2007). In the twenty-first century, youth tend to experience delayed marriage, difficulty obtaining full-time jobs, and extended education (Furstenberg, 2010). Due to these prolonged transitions, adult offspring have few responsibilities or ties that pull them away from their family of origin. Moreover, current technologies allow them to engage in frequent contact via e-mail, text messaging, and cell phones (Lefkowitz, Vukman, & Loken, 2012). Thus, young adults may provide companionship and advice, lend a listening ear, and offer emotional support to parents on a frequent basis. However, longer transitions into adulthood may also limit their monetary resources. Studies from the Netherlands examining financial support revealed that young adults gave little money to parents (Bucx et al., 2012). This support pattern may be similar in the United States.

Young adults may also provide practical support to parents. In United States, norms of filial obligation require offspring to provide practical support and care when parents incur health problems in late life and require support (Gans & Silverstein, 2006). Although young adults may not be expected to provide care for their parents, they may help with a variety of every day chores such as running errands, offering rides, or remodeling or moving.

Technological support may be another type of assistance that young adults provide their parents. Technological advances, such as computers, the Internet, and cell phones, have become an essential feature of family life (Kennedy, Smith, Wells, & Wellman, 2008). Although both middle-aged adults and their adult offspring may be familiar with technological devices, young adults are more likely than their parents to use cutting edge technologies (Smith, 2010). Therefore, they may provide valuable information about new computer programs or selecting electronic equipment.

Discrepancies in Reports of Support by Offspring and Parents

Assessing both parties' perspectives regarding exchanges may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of intergenerational support. Many studies of intergenerational exchanges have relied on the child's or the parent's report (See a review by Bianchi, Evans, Hotz, McGarry, & Seltzer, 2007). The few studies that have examined dyads, including middle-aged offspring and older parents, have found that parents report receiving less support than offspring report giving (Kim, Zarit, Eggebeen, Birditt, & Fingerman, 2011).

Parents' minimization of offspring support may reflect self-enhancement, that is, the tendency to describe one's actions more positively than others perceive those actions (Krueger, 1998). According to Erikson's (1950) lifespan theory, middle-aged parents seek generativity and desire to give to future generations. Thus, parents may perceive themselves as providers rather than receivers of support and report receiving less support than young adults report providing.

Why Do Young Adults Provide Support to Parents?

This study applied three perspectives from literature regarding middle-aged offspring and aging parents to help understand why young adults may provide support to their parents. Factors that may explain offspring support include the following: (a) parental needs (Katz et al., 2010), (b) close intergenerational ties (Schwarz et al., 2005), and (c) reciprocation of support offspring receive from parents (Silverstein et al., 2002).

Offspring support and parental needs.—Children of any age may respond to parental needs (Eggebeen & Davey, 1998; Ha, Hong, Seltzer, & Greenberg, 2008). Contingency theory in sociology and altruism theory in economics (Kohli & Kunemund, 2003; Becker, 1974) predict that offspring

step in to assist when parents incur problems, such as health difficulties, functional limitations, or financial crises (Katz et al., 2010; McGarry & Schoeni, 1997).

In young adulthood, offspring may provide help to parents when they have dire needs. Although older adults often encounter health problems (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010), middle-aged adults can also experience significant health challenges that require temporary or long-term assistance. Indeed, prior studies suggest that young adult offspring assist as caregivers when parents suffer crises, such as depression, early onset dementia, and cancer (Ha et al., 2008; Shifren, 2001). Additionally, middle-aged parents may experience personal problems, such as financial crises or relationship troubles, which may elicit various types of everyday support from young adult offspring.

Offspring support and close intergenerational ties.—Solidarity theory suggests that support exchanges occur in relationships characterized by positive sentiments and high relationship quality (Bengtson, Giarrusso, Mabry, & Silverstein, 2002). These patterns have been documented in late life; middle-aged adults provide more support to parents when they have better quality relationships (Schwarz et al., 2005).

Similarly, in young adulthood, high-quality relationships may present opportunities for offspring to provide support to their parents. In the context of positive quality relationships, young adults may offer emotional support, lend an attentive ear, help with chores and special projects, serve as a companion for mutually enjoyable activities, share information about the latest technologies, and provide advice.

Offspring support and reciprocity of support.—Offspring may also respond to the parental support they receive by providing help in return. Life-span reciprocity theory suggests that offspring repay parents for support in early life by providing them with support in old age (Antonucci & Jackson, 1990). For example, emotional support that parents provided to young adult children explained children's propensity to support aging parents 26 years later (Silverstein et al., 2002). This reciprocity may begin earlier with young adults providing support in response to what they receive, before parents require help. In a European sample, Grundy (2005) found that both older and middle-aged parents who provided more practical and financial support received more practical and financial assistance from adult offspring. Thus, young adult offspring may provide greater support when they receive more parental assistance.

Other Factors Explaining Young Adults' Support of Parents

We controlled for other variables that may be associated with the amount of support that young adults provide their parents. Offspring's life course statuses contribute to patterns

of support (Bucx et al., 2012). Specifically, students may provide more support than nonstudents (Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2000). By contrast, married offspring may give less support to parents than unmarried offspring (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2008). Offspring who have children themselves were less likely to provide financial support to their parents than offspring without children, after controlling for offspring's age and coresidence with parents (Bucx et al., 2012).

We also controlled for offspring's race, gender, and age. Studies have documented different support patterns between Black and White middle-aged offspring (Fingerman, VanderDrift, Dotterer, Birditt, & Zarit, 2011). Daughters generally provide more support to parents than sons (Raley & Bianchi, 2006). Moreover, older offspring typically provide more support to parents than younger offspring (Litwin, Vogel, Künemund, & Kohli, 2008).

In addition, we controlled for characteristics of middle-aged parents, which may also be associated with the amount of offspring support including gender, marital status, family size, education, and geographical proximity between parents and adult children. Studies have found that mothers receive more support than fathers, and married parents receive more support from offspring than divorced parents (Grundy, 2005). In a European study of 10 nations, grown children who had more siblings (i.e., larger families) provided less practical support to parents (Bonsang, 2007). Parents with higher education also received less help from offspring (Bucx et al., 2012). Finally, geographical proximity allows parties to provide practical support (Lowenstein, Katz, & Gur-Yaish, 2007); however, other forms of support may transcend geographical distances.

In sum, we assessed support that young adults provide to their middle-aged parents. We predicted that offspring provide listening, companionship, advice, emotional, and technological support frequently but give less practical and financial support. Additionally, we compared offspring's and parents' perspectives and expected offspring to report giving more support than parents reported receiving. Drawing on contingency theory, we predicted offspring would provide more support to parents when parents have greater needs (i.e., disability, personal problems). Based on solidarity and reciprocity theory, we also predicted offspring would provide more support when they had better quality relationships with parents and when they received more support from parents.

METHOD

Sample

The sample was from the Family Exchanges Study (FES; Fingerman et al., 2011) conducted in 2008. Parents from the Philadelphia Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area were initially recruited using random digit dialing within regional area codes as well as purchased lists from Genyses Corporation.

Parents.—The FES recruited 633 parents, aged 40–60 years, who had at least one child over 18 years old. The response rate for eligible parents was 75%, which is comparable to similar studies (Grundy, 2005; Silverstein et al., 2002; Suito, Gilligan, & Pillemer, 2013).

For the parent sample in this study, we utilized data from 364 parents who had at least one young adult child who also participated in this study. FES oversampled areas with high ethnic minority representation. In comparison to the U.S. population, the parents in this study included a higher proportion of African American adults and were slightly higher in educational attainment and income (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). As shown in Table 1, parents had an average income of \$40,001–\$75,000; 52% of the parents are women, 26% African American, and 65% married.

Adult offspring.—At the end of the interviews with parents, we requested contact information for up to three grown children, aged 18 years or older. The majority of parents (88%) had three or fewer children; we asked for information regarding each of their children. For the 12% of parents who had more than three grown children, we asked about the grown child who received the most support, the least support, and a randomly selected other child.

We obtained contact information of offspring from 63% of the 633 parents in the sample. We interviewed 75% of the offspring with contact information ($N = 592$, aged 18–45). The response rate for offspring was higher than studies recruiting middle-aged children from aging parents (Suito et al., 2013).

To focus on young adults, we further limited the sample to offspring aged 18–30 ($n = 515$). Among offspring, 54% were women; 22% were African American; 10% were multiracial; 10% were married; 16% had children; and 40% were full-time students (See Table 1). The 515 young adult offspring in this study were recruited from 364 parents/families where 18 (5%) families had 3 offspring who participated, 115 (32%) families had 2 offspring, and 231 (63%) families had 1 offspring who participated. Based on data from the parents' interviews, we conducted t tests comparing offspring aged 18–30 who participated and offspring aged 18–30 who did not participate in the interviews. Grown children in this study were younger, perceived as less healthy, and more likely to be White, women, and students compared with young adult offspring who did not participate. Parents also reported better relationship quality and more frequent support from their participating young adult offspring.

Procedure

Most parents and offspring completed the survey via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI). Offspring also had the option of a web-based survey. In this study, 86% of the offspring completed the survey by phone and

Table 1. Background Characteristics of Young Adult Offspring Aged 18–30 and Their Parents

Variable	Offspring (<i>n</i> = 515)			Parents (<i>n</i> = 364)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age	22.34	3.43	18–30	50.09	4.51	40–60
Years of education	13.69	2.10	10–17	14.32	2.03	9–17
Annual income ^a	3.68	1.61	1–6	4.56	1.40	1–6
Health status ^b	3.69	0.97	1–5	3.46	1.02	1–5
Number of parent problems	—	—	—	1.20	1.32	0–7
Positive relationships ^c	4.17	0.78	1–5	4.13	0.71	1–5
Family size (number of children)	—	—	—	2.85	1.47	1–11
			Proportions			
Women		.54			.52	
Married ^d		.10			.65	
African American or multiracial		.33			.32	
Disabled		.00			.09	
Has children		.16			1.00	
Has full-time job		.42			.70	
Full-time student		.40			.00	
Coresidence		.33			—	
Resides at a distance (≥ 50 miles)		.23			—	

Note. ^aHousehold income: 1 = less than \$10,000, 2 = \$10,001–\$25,000, 3 = \$25,001–\$40,000, 4 = \$40,001–75,000, 5 = \$75,001–\$100,000, 6 = more than \$100,000.

^bSelf-reported health rated from 1 = poor to 5 = excellent.

^cPositive relationships with parents from 1 = Not at all to 5 = A great deal.

^dMarital status: 0 = Other, 1 = Married or remarried.

14% completed it via the web-based option. Compared with offspring who completed the phone interview, offspring who completed the web-based survey were more likely to be White ($t = -4.85, p < .001$), but no other differences were evident in demographic characteristics or patterns of support. Each participant received \$30 compensation for completing the survey. The phone interview lasted approximately 45 min, and the web-survey took approximately 30 min.

Offspring answered questions regarding themselves and each living parent. Thus, offspring provided information about the parent who did not participate in the study as well as the parent who did. The majority of offspring (97%, $n = 498$) reported on two parents.

Measures

Intergenerational support index.—Participants completed the *Intergenerational Support Index (ISI; Fingerman, Cheng, Cichy, Birditt, & Zarit, 2013)*. The ISI assessed six types of support including (a) listening to talk about daily life, (b) emotional support, (c) companionship, (d) advice, (e) practical, and (f) financial support. We also included an additional type of support, technological support (Boase, Horrigan, Wellman, & Rainie, 2006). Offspring reported the frequency with which they provided each type of support to their mother and father separately rated: 1 = less than once a year or never, 2 = once a year, 3 = a few times a year, 4 = monthly, 5 = a few times a month, 6 = weekly, 7 = a few times a week, and 8 = daily. Parents completed the same items regarding support received from each child.

For the research question regarding support, the mean of seven items served as a summary score; for the offspring report, $\alpha = .83$; for the parent report, $\alpha = .80$. We also considered the frequency of each type of support separately.

Parental needs.—Parental needs were assessed with items measuring parental problems and disability. Offspring completed the Life Problems Scales (Birditt, Fingerman, & Zarit, 2010), indicating whether parents experienced eight types of problems in the past 2 years: physical, emotional/psychological, drug/drinking or financial problems, death of people they felt close to, victim of a crime, divorce/relationship problems, or other problems. Each problem was coded 1 or 0 and summed into a total score. Offspring reported whether each parent was physically disabled, coded as 0 = not disabled or 1 = disabled.

Close intergenerational ties.—Participants responded to two widely used items regarding positive qualities of relationship: (a) how much they felt loved and cared for (Umberson, 1992) and (b) how much they felt understood by the other (Fingerman, Cheng, Birditt, & Zarit, 2011); rated 1 = not at all to 5 = a great deal. For offspring reports, $\alpha = .57$; for parent reports, $\alpha = .63$.

Reciprocity of support.—Offspring and parents reported how much support the parent provided to offspring using the same ISI items.

Control variables.—We controlled for variables potentially associated with support. Offspring gender was

coded: 0 = *women* or 1 = *men*. We also coded offspring statuses dichotomously: (a) student status: 0 = *not student* or 1 = *student*; (b) parental status: 0 = *no child* or 1 = *have children*; and (c) marital status: 0 = *other* or 1 = *married or remarried*.

Family size was coded as the number of children parents have. Parents reported the number of years of education they completed. Consistent with other studies, we coded offspring geographical proximity to parent as 0 = *50 miles or closer* or 1 = *51 miles or more* (Merolla, 2010).

Analysis Strategy

Analyses treated parents' and offspring's reports separately. The initial analyses focused on descriptive statistics pertaining to support that offspring provide parents. The support measure relied on an ordinal scale that has been used in other studies (Bucx et al., 2012; Lin & Yi, 2011; Silverstein, Gans, & Yang 2006). Some previous studies have measured intergenerational support by asking about support over *the last month* (Bonsang, 2007; Eggebeen, 2005). For descriptive purposes, we present the proportions of parents and offspring who reported each type of support at least once a month, with each type of support recoded as 1 (*at least once a month*) or 0 (*less than once a month*).

For hypothesis testing analyses, we treated the support measure as continuous, which is typical in research using temporal scales for support (Silverstein et al., 2002; Lin & Yi, 2011). We examined factors associated with offspring support. To do so, we used multilevel analysis with the PROC Mixed function in SAS (Littell, Milliken, Stroup, & Wolfinger, 1996; Singer, 1998). PROC Mixed allowed us to consider multiple offspring nested within families, shared variance of offspring in the same family (i.e., reports about offspring in the same family), variance between families, and unbalanced data (i.e., unequal number of family members). We used pairwise deletion for missing data (rates of missing data were minimal < 2%).

To assure that the treatment of support as a continuous outcome did not distort findings, we also estimated the models treating each type of support as a dichotomous outcome with 1 (*at least monthly support*) or 0 (*less than once a month*). We used the PROC Glimmix function in SAS, which estimates multilevel models with binary outcomes. The patterns of findings were nearly identical. For ease in interpretation, we present findings from the continuous outcome.

Predicting offspring reports.—For offspring reports, 515 offspring reported on 1,013 parents. These offspring were nested within 364 families. We used a three-level model structure throughout the analyses where the lower level was the offspring's reports of 1,013 parents, the middle level was 515 offspring, and the upper level was 364 families.

Predicting parent reports.—For parents' reports, 364 parents reported on 515 participating offspring. Because each family had only one parent's report, two-level multilevel models were used. The lower level was the parents' reports on 515 offspring, and the upper level was the 364 families.

We estimated three multilevel models to examine reasons for offspring support: (a) parental need (problems and disability status), (b) offspring's relationship quality with parents, and (c) support parents provided to offspring. We considered two types of dependent variables: (a) a composite measure of the average of the seven types of support, and (b) each of the seven types of support examined separately. Control variables included offspring's race, gender, age, student status, marital status, and parental status as well as parents' gender, marital status, family size, education, and geographical distance between parents and offspring.

We did not test the differences of coefficients predicting offspring support between parents' and offspring's reports because offspring's reports involved 3-level models, whereas parents' reports involved 2-level models. Similarly, we did not test the differences of coefficients predicting offspring support across types of support because types of support were dependent variables in different statistical models. Moreover, for models testing reciprocity of support between offspring and parents, we did not include companionship because providing and receiving companionship usually indicates being together for the same activities.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Discrepancies in Offspring's and Parents' Reports of Support

We first considered descriptive information regarding types of support. Figure 1 shows the percentages of offspring providing support at least once a month. A large proportion of offspring and parents reported listening to parents talk about daily life at least monthly (88% from offspring reports; 90% from parent reports), whereas only 18% of offspring and 11% of parents reported that offspring provided financial support at least monthly. Contrary to expectations, only 53% of offspring and 38% of parents reported technological support from offspring at least monthly.

We also compared parents' and offspring's reports of offspring support. As expected, paired *t*-tests revealed that offspring reported providing emotional support ($t = 3.81$), advice ($t = 4.36$), practical ($t = 8.13$), technological ($t = 7.08$), and financial support ($t = 5.12$), more frequently than parents reported receiving these types of support ($ps < .001$). Offspring's and parents' reports did not differ for listening or companionship.

Why Do Children Provide Support to Parents?

Next, we considered factors that may explain support young adults provide to parents. We tested parental needs,

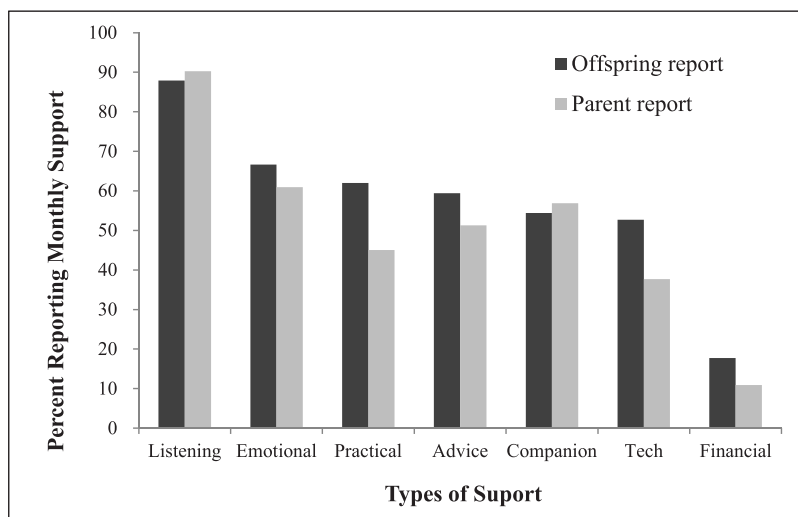


Figure 1. Percent of parents and offspring reporting offspring support at least once a month for each type of support.

close intergenerational ties, and reciprocity of support in separate models.

Parental needs.—As can be seen in Table 2, consistent with predictions, young adults reported providing more overall support (average support across all types) to parents who had a disability. We estimated this model for each type of support separately (See Supplementary Table 1). Offspring reported giving more money to parents who experienced personal problems. They also provided more practical, technical, and financial support when parents were disabled.

On the other hand, with parents' reports (Table 2), we did not find an association between parents' personal problems/disability and offspring support. This pattern was the same for each type of support (See Supplementary Table 1).

Close intergenerational ties.—We then examined whether offspring provide more support when they have better quality relations with parents (See Table 2). For offspring's reports, having a more positive relationship was associated with offspring giving more overall support as well as each type of support, except financial support (See Supplementary Table 2). For parents' reports, too, having a better relationship was also associated with greater overall support and more of each type of support from offspring.

Reciprocity of support.—Table 2 also includes findings from a model with parental support of offspring as the independent variable. Offspring who reported receiving more support from parents provided more overall support to parents and more of each type of support, except technological support. Parents reported receiving more overall support and more of each type of support when they provided offspring with more support (See Supplementary Table 3).

DISCUSSION

This study examined intergenerational support from young adults to their middle-aged parents. Overall, we found that patterns of support evident in middle and older adulthood may originate in earlier adulthood. Consistent with solidarity theory (Schwarz et al., 2005; Silverstein et al., 2002), young adults provided more support to parents when they had better quality relations and when they received more support from their parents. However, unlike support patterns in late life (Eggebeen & Davey, 1998; Katz et al., 2010), parental needs were not as salient a predictor of offspring support during young adulthood, particularly from the parents' perspective.

We also found that middle-aged parents reported receiving less support than young adult offspring reported providing, which is consistent with studies of parents and offspring in later life (Kim et al., 2011). This finding may have implications for each party's well-being. In the United States, young adults who report giving support are associated with higher levels of positive mood (Gleason, Iida, Bolger, & Shrout, 2003), whereas older adults receiving support from offspring report worse psychological outcomes (Thomas, 2010). Thus, differences in parents' and offspring's reports may be important for their well-being.

Types of Support Young Adult Offspring Provide Parents

Young adult offspring provided multiple types of support to parents. As expected, a high proportion of parents and offspring reported lending a listening ear and offering emotional support. Providing money to parents, however, was less frequent. These findings may reflect the characteristics of emerging adulthood. During encounters in which parents provide support (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe, Birditt, & Zarit, 2012), young adults may have opportunities to reciprocate

Table 2. Multilevel Models Predicting Offspring Support by Parental Needs, Relationship Quality, and Support Parents Provided

Predictors	Parental needs		Relationship quality		Support parents provided	
	Offspring report	Parents report	Offspring report	Parents report	Offspring reports	Parents reports
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Intercept	6.41***	5.71***	4.67***	3.72***	2.18***	0.32
Parent problems ^a	0.06	0.02				
Parent disabled ^b	0.32*	0.19				
Relationship quality ^c			0.53***	0.60***		
Support parents provided ^d					0.62***	0.62***
Offspring controls						
Race ^e	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.06	0.03
Gender ^f	0.14	-0.11	0.13	-0.05	0.24**	0.05
Age	-0.08***	-0.04	-0.08***	-0.05**	0.01	0.06***
Student	-0.13	0.09	-0.19	-0.08	-0.27*	-0.01
Married ^g	-0.22	-0.12	-0.43*	-0.29	-0.29*	-0.01
Parental status ^h	-0.06	-0.21	0.20	-0.08	-0.07	-0.43**
Parent controls						
Gender ^f	-0.77***	-0.36**	-0.69***	-0.30*	-0.65***	-0.36***
Married ^g	0.43***	0.42**	0.25*	0.37**	0.18	0.13
Family size	-0.06	0.02	-0.02	0.04	-0.01	0.05
Years of education	0.01	-0.06	-0.01	-0.07*	-0.04*	-0.06*
Geographical closeness ⁱ	-1.05***	-0.78***	-1.09***	-0.78***	-0.46***	-0.19
-2LogLL	2207.3	1335.3	2192.0	1314.3	1984.8	1233.1

Note. In models with offspring report, 515 offspring reporting on 1,013 parents; in models with parent report, 364 reporting on 515 offspring.

^aSum of parental personal problems ranged from 0 to 7.

^bParents disabled: 0 = not disabled rated, 1 = disabled.

^cRelationship quality: 1 = poor to 5 = excellent.

^dSupport parent provided: 1 = less than once a year or never to 8 = daily.

^eRace: 0 = White, 1 = Minority.

^fGender: 0 = women, 1 = men.

^gMarital status: 0 = Other, 1 = Married or remarried.

^hParental status: 0 = No child, 1 = Have at least one child.

ⁱGeographical closeness between offspring and parents: 0 ≤ 50 miles, 1 > 50 miles.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

with nontangible support, such as listening or companionship. Meanwhile, the paucity of monetary support may reflect a dearth of material resources in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2007; Bucx et al., 2012).

We expected technological support to be frequent because young adults are likely to use the latest technologies (Charness, Fox, & Mitchum, 2011), but only around half of the offspring provided such assistance at least once a month. Parents may not need technological support, such as suggestions about computer programs, on a weekly or daily basis. This is not to say that technology plays no role in support between parents and offspring. For example, cell phones or social networking programs may facilitate parents and offspring to provide other types of support. However, new technological devices that facilitate communication may also increase distractions when parents socialize with offspring. Given the complexity of today's technological developments, future studies should examine the role of different aspects of technological use and support in intergenerational ties.

This study also suggests that support patterns in later life may have roots in young adulthood. Silverstein and colleagues (2002) found that when parents and young adult offspring spent more time together (e.g., having conversations,

talking about important matters, having dinner together), offspring provided up to five types of support to their parents 26 years later. Our study further indicated that young adults also may reciprocate parental support concurrently. Furthermore, young adults who spend more time with their parents (e.g., listening, companionship, advice, and emotional support) may set up a future pattern of support to parents.

This pattern also may be evident with regard to caregivers in late life. Family systems theory emphasizes that the family members' shared values about family tend to shape behaviors over time (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). Empirical research has found that older mothers prefer the same offspring to be their caregivers across time, especially those who provided expressive or instrumental support to them (Sutor et al., 2013). Therefore, young adults who provide more support to their middle-aged parents may provide caregiving in the future.

Discrepancies in Offspring and Parents Reports of Support

As expected, parents reported receiving less support than offspring reported providing. Self-enhancement

theory suggests that individuals wish to present themselves in a positive light that fits social norms (Krueger, 1998). Middle-aged parents may report receiving less because of the desire to view themselves as providers of support rather than recipients (Marks & Greenfield, 2009). This tendency is consistent with Erikson's (1950) lifespan theory regarding generativity in midlife. Young adults may also engage in self-enhancement by believing they provide more to parents to compensate for receiving a lot of support from parents.

Reasons Why Grown Children Provide Support

Reasons underlying young adults' support of parents were consistent with theoretical perspectives explaining why offspring provide support later in middle adulthood. Furthermore, both offspring's and parents' reports showed that factors regarding solidarity and reciprocity theory were associated with young adult offspring's support to parents.

Parental needs.—Young adults reported providing financial support rarely, but they did provide monetary support when parents experience personal problems. Offspring reported responding to personal problems, including divorce and relationship crises. These findings contrast with past findings that parental crises, such as divorce during childhood, are not associated with support provided by grown biological offspring (Aquilino, 1994). It is possible that young adults in more recent cohorts are more likely to be in contact with their parents (Furstenberg, 2010), so that parents who are undergoing a relationship problem may be more accessible to them. In addition, the patterns observed regarding parental divorce in childhood may reflect a loss of relationship closeness between parent and child following divorce; this may not be the case for young adults who continue to have strong bonds with their parents.

We failed to find an association between parents' reports of personal problems or disability and support from their adult offspring. Parents who experience problems or disabilities may receive support from other social partners so that adolescents and young adult children may serve supplementary roles, whereas other family members are primary supporters (Levine et al., 2005). It is also possible that the support from offspring to parents is invisible, which may promote parents' adjustments to stressors (Bolger, Zuckerman, Kessler, 2000).

Close intergenerational ties.—The solidarity theory suggests that positive quality relationships go hand-in-hand with intergenerational support (Bengtson et al., 2002). In this study, good relationships may be associated with more time spent with parents when opportunities for support occur, except for financial support.

Reciprocity of support.—Reciprocity of intergenerational support was evident in offspring's and parents' reports. In late life, middle-aged adults provide support to

aging parents who currently help or have helped them in young adulthood (Eggebeen & Davey, 1998; Leopold & Raab, 2011). Similarly, in young adulthood, intergenerational exchanges may be bidirectional, with offspring providing support when they also receive support (Fingerman et al., 2012).

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study. Although we used a socioeconomically and ethnically diverse sample, the offspring who participated tend to be those who had better quality relationships and who exchanged more frequent support with their parents than their siblings who did not participate. This selection bias may reflect parental favoritism in participation rates (Kalmijn, 2013; Suito et al., 2013). Thus, this study may have overestimated the amount of support the average young adult child provides to parents.

This study used cross-sectional data and did not have enough information to examine the differences between the support from young adult and middle-aged offspring. Therefore, we cannot empirically investigate offspring's patterns of support over time. Additional studies are necessary to compare support patterns across three generations and to ascertain whether support patterns among young adults carry over into late life.

In summary, this study suggests the endurance of family relationships into the adult years, which go beyond affection or obligation to children and include ongoing mutual engagement and support. In young adulthood, offspring provided support to parents in repayment for parental investment and within the context of high-quality relationships, whereas parental needs may not be as a salient predictor of offspring support.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Supplementary material can be found at: <http://psychogerontology.oxfordjournals.org/>.

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