

Intergenerational Attachment Relationship and Its Effect on Elderly Life Adaptation: Adult Children's Filial Belief and Relating Autonomy as Antecedents

Wu, Chih-Wen¹ & Yeh, Kuang-Hui^{2,3}

Department of Human Development and Family Studies, National Taiwan Normal University¹

Department of Psychology, National Taiwan University²

Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan³

The quality of intergenerational relationship has been identified as a critical factor for elderly life adaptation. Recently research has shown adult child is an important attachment figure for elderly seeking security supports and reducing worry in old age. However, to date, little is known about the antecedent factors of intergenerational attachment bonding and few studies have been conducted by using intergenerational dyadic data to test hypotheses. In accordance with the value of filial piety in Chinese family, this study investigated that adult children's endorsement of filial belief and relating autonomy capacity, which maintain parent-child connection and practice filial piety, contributes to perceive the extent to which children can be securely attached and its further effect on elderly life adaptation. Analyzing intergenerational dyadic data constituted by 100 adult children (mean age was 37.88 years; 60% female) and 158 elderly parents (mean age was 66.99 years; 52% female) with hierarchical liner modeling, the main results showed that (1) adult children's endorsement of reciprocal and authoritarian filial piety belief, as well as their relating autonomy, facilitated elderly parents perceiving the extent to which children can be securely attached; (2) elderly parents perceiving higher extent to which children can be securely attached was associated with lower frequency of depression but higher meaning of life and satisfaction of personal freedom; and (3) adult children's reciprocal filial belief, authoritarian filial belief, and relating autonomy, decreased their elderly parents' frequency of depression but increased meaning of life and satisfaction of personal freedom, through the mediating effect of elderly parents perceiving the extent to which children can be securely attached. The theoretical implications of these findings, as well as limitations and future directions, were discussed comprehensively at the end.

Keywords: *Elderly Life Adaptation, Filial Piety Belief, Intergenerational Attachment Relationship, Relating Autonomy*

The effects of intergenerational relationships on the safety and security, life adaptation, and well-being of the elderly have been a crucial focus of family research (e.g., Lin & Yi, 2011; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2007; Silverstein, Gans, & Yang, 2006; Swartz, 2009). To better understand how the elderly's life adaptation benefits from intergenerational relationships, this study attempts to identify the antecedent factors influencing the security attachment bond between adult children and their elderly parents, and the effect of this bond on the life adaptation of the elderly.

According to attachment theory, a secure attachment bond is a deep affective connection between an individual and her or his significant other, and has the adaptive function of ensuring and maintaining the individual's safety and security (Bowlby, 1979, 1982). The significant other is called the 'attachment figure,' and can provide support and care to generate a safe haven and reduce feelings of restlessness (Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Previous research has pointed to adult children as the most suitable caregivers and attachment figures for the elderly, because they

are younger and stronger than other family members (Antonucci et al., 2004; Cantor, 1991; Cicirelli, 2010; Hsu, 2014; Doherty & Feeney, 2004; Lu, 2001; Van Assche et al., 2013).

To assess the perception of elderly Taiwanese on the extent to which they can be securely attached to their adult child, Wu (2016) interviewed 17 elderly persons to explore their level of threat from loss and stress in old age and the characteristics of the potential attachment figures from whom they could seek safety and security. Based on the results of this study, Wu further developed the Attached-to-Child scale assessing two sub-concepts, namely *reliable responsiveness* and *cherishment*. The former measures the extent to which their adult child could respond to their needs immediately and reliably in an emergency, while the latter assesses the extent to which their adult child could provide understanding and attention to the worries of their old age. He also found these two sub-concepts to be negatively related to the mental distress, experience of negative emotions, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance of elderly Taiwanese, and positively related to their life satisfaction and experience of positive emotions. However, there was limited exploration of the antecedent factors that could improve the perception of the elderly towards the secure attachment bond with their adult children. As previous research had found belief in filial piety and high relating autonomy to be beneficial to intergenerational relationships (e.g., Chen, Wu, & Yeh, 2016; Wu & Yeh, 2015), they were considered as two potential antecedent factors.

An attachment bond between an adult child and her or his elderly parents is highly consistent with the filial piety ethic, which as a guiding principle refers to Chinese children's beliefs that they should take care of their parents in old age due to authentic affection and role obligation (Yeh, 2009a; Yeh & Tsao, 2014; Wu, 2016). According to the dual model of filial piety (Yeh, 2003; Yeh & Bedford, 2003), filial piety has two distinct aspects, reciprocal and authoritarian, with different impacts on intergenerational relationships in Chinese families. *Reciprocal filial piety* (RFP) urges children to voluntarily support their parents and care for them out of affectional

intimacy and sincere gratitude, while *authoritarian filial piety* (AFP) regulates children to obey the requirements and demands of their parents out of role obligation and compliance with parental authority. Previous research has shown that RFP has a more positive effect on the intergenerational relationship between adult children and elderly parents than AFP. More specifically, RFP has been shown to evoke a stronger willingness among adult children to live with their elderly parents (Cheng, 2005), to have a more positive influence on adult children's caregiving behavior (Yeh, 2009b) and likelihood to identify as a caregiver to elderly parents (Lin, 2018), and to increase feelings of satisfaction among elderly parents (Liu, Li, Yeh, & Huang, 2011) while reducing depression (Lu, 2016).

To be well-qualified as attachment figures, not only do children need to agree with filial piety, they must also develop the capacities to effectively assess and properly meet their parents' needs. Relating autonomy (RA; Yeh & Yang, 2006) represents a volitional capacity to act in a way that achieves a psychologically interdependent self-identity, taking into account the harmony and authenticity of self in relation to others and emphasizing self-transcendence in relationships as a personal concern. It could be viewed as a capacity to practice filial piety through self-determination and self-identity. Research has found a positive effect of RA capacity on the quality of parent-child interactions (Wu, Guo, Hsieh, & Yeh, 2015; Wu & Yeh, 2015).

Although existing evidence verifies the contribution of RA capacity and both filial piety beliefs (i.e., RFP and AFP) to the quality of intergenerational relationships, most studies have used self-reported data from adult children (e.g., Cheng, 2005; Lin, 2018; Yeh, 2009b; Wu et al., 2015; Wu & Yeh, 2015) and elderly parents (e.g., Liu et al., 2011; Lu, 2016). In order to fulfill this empirical gap, the intent of this study is to obtain parent-child dyadic data from adult children and their elderly parents, investigating whether adult children highly endorsing RFP and AFP beliefs and developing a mature RA capacity are perceived as well-qualified attachment figures by their elderly parents, and further benefit their elderly parents' life adaptation in old age.

Three indicators were used in this study to represent elderly parents' life adaptation. First, *depression* is a common maladaptation symptom in modern elderly (e.g., Blazer, 2003; Fiske, Gatz, & Pedersen, 2003; World Health Organization, 2015), and Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) pointed out the relationship between attachment bonds and depression in an extensive review of the literature. Second, exploring and confirming the *meaning of life* is an important task in old age (Huang & Chung, 1987). Bowlby (1973, 1982) proposed the internal working model, emphasizing that a secure attachment bond is related to having a positive self-image. Carstensen, Isaacowitz, and Charles (1999) also found that the elderly could gain a sense of value in their lives by maintaining close connections with family and friends. Last, but of equal importance, Glasser (1998) advocated that individuals have a need for personal freedom, and attachment theory emphasizes that a quality attachment bond is the most important basis for individuals to enjoy freedom of life (Bowlby, 1969). Although the importance of this need for the elderly is often neglected, some research has nonetheless verified that *satisfaction of personal freedom* is essential for old-age life adaptation (Friedan, 1993; Li, Chen, & Tin, 2015).

Overall, in drawing on dyadic data from adult children and their elderly parents, this study has three purposes: (1) investigating the effect of adult children's filial piety belief and relating autonomy capacity, and the interaction between them, on elderly parents' perceived secure attachment bond; (2) investigating the effect of elderly parents' perceived secure attachment bond on their life adaptation in old age (i.e., less depression, more meaning to life, and more satisfaction with the degree of freedom in their life); and (3) testing the mediating effect of elderly parents' perceived secure attachment bond on the mechanism from adult children's filial piety belief and relating autonomy capacity to their elderly parents' life adaptation.

Method

This study recruited adult-child participants and asked them to invite their parents, who then became the

elderly parent participants. The adult-child participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and the elderly parents at least 60 years of age.

Adult-child participants were asked to complete a questionnaire comprised of (1) the Dual Filial Piety scale (Yeh & Bedford, 2003), to measure their endorsement of RFP (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and AFP (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$) beliefs; and (2) the relating autonomy subscale from the Adolescent Autonomy scale (Yeh & Yang, 2006), to assess their autonomous capacity to achieve and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships with their elderly father (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and mother (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$).

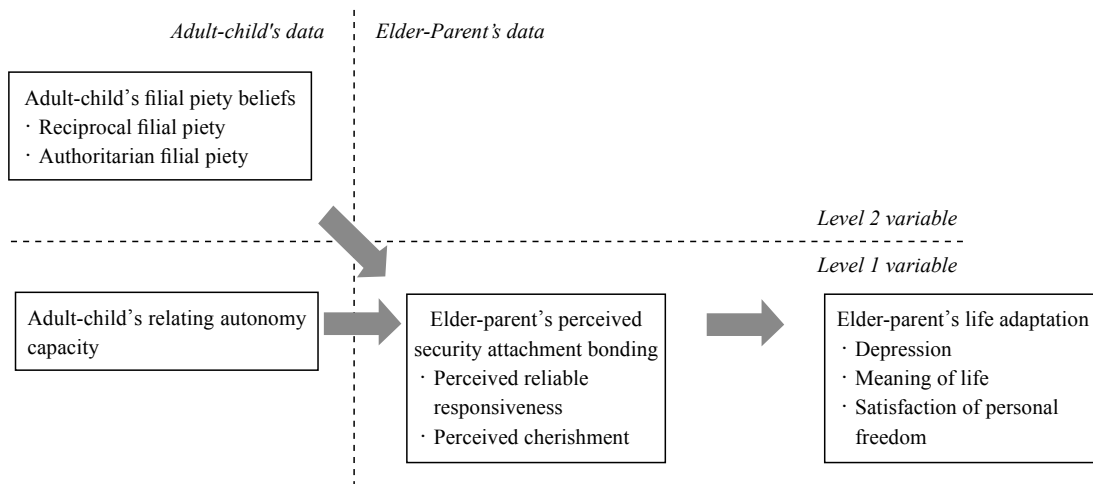
Elderly parent participants were asked to complete a different questionnaire consisting of (1) the Attached-to-Child scale (Wu, 2016), to measure their perception of the extent to which their child who also participated this study can be said to be securely attached; (2) a 10-item version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale (Radloff, 1977), translated by the Department of Health, Executive Yuan (2006), to measure their depression experience in old age (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$); (3) a 9-item version of the Purpose in Life scale (Frankl, 1959), translated by Huang and Chung (1987), to measure their sense of life having a meaning in old age (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$); and (4) the Matching Degree of Need for Freedom scale developed by Lee, Chen, and Ting (2015) to assess their satisfaction with the level of personal freedom they experience in old age (Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$).

Included in the analyses were a total of 100 valid adult-child responses with an average age of 37.88 years ($SD = 9.61$) collected from 60 females and 40 males, and 158 valid elderly parent responses with an average age of 66.99 years ($SD = 7.11$) collected from 82 females and 76 males. We adopted hierarchical linear modeling (HLM, Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) with Mplus software version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) to estimate our hypothesis model (as presented in Figure 1), and used the code suggested by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010) (available at <https://www.statmodel.com/download/Preacher.pdf>) to estimate the mediation effect.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Main Variables

Variables	Descriptive statistics			Correlation coefficients						
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 2										
1. Adult-child's reciprocal filial piety belief	100	5.39	0.55							
2. Adult-child's authoritarian filial piety belief	100	3.34	1.13	.54**						
Level 1										
3. Adult-child's relating autonomy	158	4.61	0.90	.41**	.52**					
4. Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness	158	3.63	0.98	.48**	.44**	.23**				
5. Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	158	3.70	0.96	.55**	.38**	.42**	.68**			
6. Elder-parent's depression experience	158	0.94	0.63	-.18*	-.13	-.01	-.48**	-.36**		
7. Elder-parent's meaning of life	158	3.12	0.47	.43**	.30**	.20*	.59**	.61**	-.63**	
8. Elder-parent's matching degree of need for freedom	158	3.28	0.53	.46**	.38**	.23**	.64**	.60**	-.62**	.67**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

**Figure 1. Hypothesis model.**

Results

The means and standard deviations of the major variables and the correlation coefficients among them are summarized in Table 1. The correlations closely coincide with our hypotheses.

Table 2 presents the results of the main effects only, because all of the cross-level interaction effects were non-significant. After controlling for the effects of participants' demographic characteristics, the effects of an

adult-child's RFP and AFP were significant and positive on their elderly parent's perceived reliable responsiveness (respectively, coefficient = 0.47, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .01$; coefficient = 0.27, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .01$). The effect of an adult-child's RFP belief was significant and positive on their elderly parent's perceived cherishment (coefficient = 0.66, $SE = 0.14$, $p < .01$), while that of an adult-child's AFP was non-significant. The effect of an adult-child's RA on their elderly parent's perceived cherishment was significant and positive (coefficient = 0.60, $SE = 0.14$, p

Table 2. The summary of results from hierarchical linear modeling

	Elder-parent's Depression		Elder-parent's meaning of life		Elder-parent's matching degree of need for freedom		Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness		Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	
	coefficient	SE	coefficient	SE	coefficient	SE	coefficient	SE	coefficient	SE
Fixed effect										
Intercept	1.10	(0.09)	3.08	(0.08)	3.29	(0.09)	3.45	(0.16)	3.91	(0.15)
Level 2										
Adult-child's gender (male = 1)	0.10	(0.10)	-0.07	(0.07)	-0.10	(0.08)	0.08	(0.14)	-0.10	(0.14)
Adult-child's age	0.02	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Adult-child's marriage status (married=1)	-0.09	(0.10)	0.03	(0.07)	-0.02	(0.10)	0.24	(0.15)	0.00	(0.16)
Adult-child's number of children	-0.09	(0.05)	0.03	(0.04)	0.02	(0.05)	-0.03	(0.07)	-0.20**	(0.08)
Adult-child's job status (stable = 1)	-0.07	(0.13)	0.03	(0.08)	0.05	(0.10)	0.22	(0.17)	0.07	(0.17)
Adult-child's number of sibling	-0.10	(0.05)	0.03	(0.04)	0.05	(0.04)	0.02	(0.08)	-0.01	(0.08)
Elder-parent's marriage status (married=1)	-0.05	(0.16)	0.01	(0.11)	-0.06	(0.11)	0.06	(0.23)	-0.14	(0.22)
Adult-child's reciprocal filial piety belief	-0.01	(0.12)	0.21*	(0.09)	0.22*	(0.10)	0.47**	(0.16)	0.66**	(0.14)
Adult-child's authoritarian filial piety belief	-0.06	(0.06)	0.07	(0.05)	0.13**	(0.05)	0.27**	(0.09)	0.11	(0.09)
Level 1										
Elder-parent's gender (male = 1)	0.01	(0.09)	0.08	(0.08)	0.04	(0.08)	0.03	(0.16)	-0.02	(0.15)
Elder-parent's age	0.00	(0.02)	0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)	0.04	(0.04)
Elder-parent's education level	-0.10	(0.09)	-0.02	(0.05)	-0.05	(0.07)	-0.08	(0.12)	-0.03	(0.11)
Elder-parent's perceived health status	-0.29**	(0.10)	0.08	(0.06)	-0.02	(0.06)	0.29**	(0.10)	0.20	(0.13)
Elder-parent's perceived economic status	-0.19	(0.11)	0.07	(0.11)	0.16*	(0.08)	-0.11	(0.17)	-0.10	(0.15)
Elder-parent's number of chronic illness	-0.07	(0.09)	-0.06	(0.06)	-0.05	(0.08)	-0.15	(0.11)	-0.17	(0.10)
Elder-parent's living with adult-child (yes = 1)	0.48	(0.28)	-0.31	(0.16)	-0.37	(0.19)	0.77**	(0.24)	-0.25	(0.47)
Adult-child's relating autonomy	-0.07	(0.11)	0.03	(0.07)	0.04	(0.08)	0.23	(0.18)	0.60**	(0.14)
Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness	-0.38**	(0.08)	0.20**	(0.07)	0.37**	(0.07)				
Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	-0.01	(0.10)	0.16*	(0.07)	0.04	(0.09)				
Random effect										
Intercept	0.05	(0.04)	0.01	(0.02)	0.02	(0.03)	0.14	(0.08)	0.09	(0.05)
Level 1	0.16	(0.03)	0.09	(0.02)	0.10	(0.02)	0.43	(0.08)	0.32	(0.07)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. The summarized results of mediating effects

	Elder-parent's depression		Elder-parent's meaning of life		Elder-parent's satisfaction of personal freedom	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
2-1-1 mediation path						
Antecedent variable: Adult-child's reciprocal filial piety belief						
<i>Mediating effect through these variable</i>						
Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness	-0.19**	(0.07)	0.09*	(0.04)	0.17*	(0.07)
Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	-0.01	(0.07)	0.11*	(0.05)	0.02	(0.06)
<i>Direct effect</i>	-0.01	(0.12)	0.21*	(0.09)	0.22*	(0.10)
<i>Total effect</i>	-0.19	(0.17)	0.41**	(0.14)	0.41**	(0.15)
Antecedent variable: Adult-child's authoritarian filial piety belief						
<i>Mediating effect through these variable</i>						
Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness	-0.10*	(0.04)	0.05*	(0.03)	0.10**	(0.04)
Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	-0.00	(0.01)	0.02	(0.02)	0.00	(0.01)
<i>Direct effect</i>	-0.06	(0.06)	0.07	(0.05)	0.13**	(0.05)
<i>Total effect</i>	-0.16	(0.08)	0.14*	(0.07)	0.23**	(0.07)
1-1-1 mediation path						
Antecedent variable: Adult-child's relating autonomy capacity						
<i>Mediating effect through these variable</i>						
Elder-parent's perceived reliable responsiveness	-0.09	(0.07)	0.05	(0.04)	0.08	(0.07)
Elder-parent's perceived cherishment	-0.01	(0.06)	0.10*	(0.04)	0.02	(0.05)
<i>Direct effect</i>	-0.07	(0.11)	0.03	(0.07)	0.04	(0.08)
<i>Total effect</i>	-0.16	(0.12)	0.18*	(0.09)	0.15	(0.10)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

< .01), but that on their elderly parent's perceived reliable responsiveness was non-significant.

For an elderly parent's depression, the effect of the elderly parent's perceived reliable responsiveness was significant and negative (coefficient = -0.38, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .01$), while that of the elderly parent's perceived cherishment was non-significant. For an elderly parent's meaning of life, the effects of the elderly parent's perceived reliable responsiveness and cherishment were

both significant and positive (respectively, coefficient = 0.20, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .01$; coefficient = 0.16, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .05$). And for an elderly parent's matching degree of need for freedom, the effect of the elderly parent's reliable responsiveness was significant and positive (coefficient = 0.37, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .01$), whereas that of the elderly parent's perceived cherishment was non-significant.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the mediation effects that we hypothesized as well as their direct and

total effects. Mediated by the elderly parent's perceived reliable responsiveness, an adult-child's RFP and AFP could significantly and indirectly reduce elder-parent's depression (respectively, estimate = -0.19, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .01$; estimate = -0.10, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .05$) and enhance their meaning of life (respectively, estimate = 0.09, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .05$; estimate = 0.05, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .05$) and satisfaction of personal freedom (respectively, estimate = 0.17, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .05$; estimate = 0.10, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .01$). Mediated by the elderly parent's perception of cherishment, however, only an adult-child's RFP and RA could significantly and indirectly enhance the elderly parent's meaning of life (respectively, estimate = 0.11, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .05$; estimate = 0.10, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

Our results indicate that Taiwanese adult children's filial piety beliefs and relating autonomy capacity as antecedent factors could facilitate the perception among elderly parents of the extent to which their adult children can be said to be securely attached, and further contribute to the life adaption of the elderly, with less experience of depression, higher meaning of life, and more satisfaction of personal freedom.

We adopted the dual model of filial piety (Yeh, 2003; Yeh & Bedford, 2003) and found differences between the effects of RFP and AFP. Based on affectional intimacy and sincere gratitude, adult children endorsing a higher RFP belief could make their elderly parents feel more securely attached with more reliable responsiveness and cherishment. However, behaving in line with role obligations and compliance with parental authority, adult children endorsing a higher AFP belief could make their elder parents feel more securely attached with more reliable responsiveness only. These findings are consistent with existing research results in which RFP is related to a more positive attitude toward the elderly (Cheng, 2005), more support and care toward elderly parents (Lin, 2017; Yeh, 2009b), and better intergenerational relationships (Liu et al., 2011; Lu, 2016). Nonetheless, an AFP belief at least provides a guarantee for the elderly that their children should respond to their needs immediately

and reliably, even though there is a lack of affectional intimacy and sincere gratitude in their intergenerational relationship.

This study also found that adult children with a more mature RA capacity could provide their elderly parents with a better secure attachment bond and a higher sense of being cherished. The effect of adult children's RA capacity was non-significant on elder parents' perceived reliable responsiveness, probably because this performance does not require an understanding of the psychological needs and expectations of old age.

Although the results showed a non-significant cross-level interaction effect between filial piety belief and RA capacity, a trend matching this interaction effect between adult children's RFP and RA was found on their elderly parents perceived cherishment (estimate = -0.30, $SE = 0.21$, $p = .15$). Further analysis showed that the effect of RA was positive and significant only for adult children endorsing a higher RFP belief (+1SD; estimate = 0.43, $SE = 0.13$, $p < .01$), while it was non-significant for those endorsing a lower RFP belief (-1SD; estimate = 0.10, $SE = 0.18$, $p = .56$). This finding indicates that adult children's filial piety belief and relating autonomy capacity are both crucial for together determining their performance in guaranteeing their elderly parents' security and safety in old age. It is hopeful that future research could provide stronger empirical evidence for this finding.

In regard to the perception among the elderly of being attached to their adult children, the results show that the two sub-concepts, namely reliable responsiveness and cherishment, could contribute to the life adaption of the elderly in different ways. The elderly perceiving more reliable responsiveness from their adult children could experience less depression, more meaning of life, and more satisfaction with personal freedom in old age. However, the significant effect of cherishment was only found on promoting meaning of life among the elderly parents. It is possible that the need for the attachment figure's reliable responsiveness and cherishment could echo Maslow's (1943, 1954) concepts of deficit- and being-need, respectively. Because the former need takes precedence over the latter, meeting the need for an attachment figure's reliable responsiveness provide

broader benefits to the life adaptation of the elderly than meeting the need for an attachment figure's cherishment. Future work will hopefully clarify the difference between the mechanism of these two sub-constructs.

The mediation effect of elder parents' perceptions of the extent to which their adult children can be said to be securely attached was also partially verified, but since the results were equivalent to the combination of the already mentioned findings, here we restrict our discussion to the theoretical meaning attached to these findings. Whereas attachment theory is one of the most important mainstream theories in the field of psychology to understand the parent-child relationship, filial piety in Chinese societies is a culture-specific Confucian value that also prescribes how individuals ought to interact with their parents. To date, however, there have been few attempts to investigate intergenerational relationships in Chinese families with an integrated consideration of both attachment theory and the filial piety ethic. Through this study, we make progress in the search to find a potential mechanism connecting these two crucial perspectives, by which the life adaptation of elderly Chinese could benefit from a secure attachment bond with their adult children who endorse a higher filial piety belief and develop a more mature relating autonomy capacity for practicing their filial piety. Despite the exciting first step made by this study, further research is required.

Several limitations of this study need to be taken into account by future work. The first limitation concerns the insufficient heterogeneity of our data. By asking adult-child participants to invite their parents as elderly parent participants, this study is likely to have excluded cases of poor intergenerational relationships, a great distance between adult children and their elderly parents, and elderly parents with low levels of education. Next, although the dyadic data that this study collected could reduce the bias of common method variance, it was still biased in the relationship between elderly parents' perceived attachment bond and life adaptation because these were collected through a self-reported questionnaire. In addition, we asked elderly parent participants to evaluate the extent to which their children who also participated this study can be said to be securely attached, but perhaps some adult-child participants were not the primary attachment figures of the elderly parent participants. This problem with the research design limits our interpretations and these therefore need to be treated circumspectly by additional studies. Finally, the effect of other attachment figures, such as a spouse, siblings, close friends, other children, and children-in-law, was neglected in this study. To better understand how the life adaptation of elderly Chinese benefits from their internal attachment behavior system, future investigations ought to adopt a more comprehensive perspective on the relational network of the elderly participants.

