

Stability of Perceptions of Family Environments: Family of Origin and Current Family

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Abstract

Stability of adults' perceptions of family of origin and of current family environments on 8 dimensions of the Moos & Moos (1986) scale was investigated for four age groups of SLS members. Participants ($N = 2,005$; $M = 808$, $F = 1,197$) reported perceptions of environment in one's family of origin and current family twice within a 7-year interval. Average age was 59.3 years ($range = 28-96$) at the second assessment; average education level was 15.6 years ($range = 7-20$ years). Overall, perceptions were more stable over time for the family of origin measure ($r = .68-.82$) than for the current family measure ($r = .49-.67$). Stability at the individual level was examined within four age groups: young (28-44 years), middle-aged (45-64 years), young-old (65-74 years), and old-old (75+ years). For each of the 8 domains of family environment, individuals were classified into three categories of change: (1) significant decrease in perceived level of domain (e.g., family conflict), (2) no significant change, (3) significant increase in perceived level of domain. Chi-square analyses found that age group was not significantly related to changes in perceptions of environment in the family of origin but was significantly related to changes in 6 domains of current family environment. The occurrence of certain age-normative life events was related to changes in perceptions of current family environment within each age group.

Previous investigations have examined the similarity of different family members' perceptions of the environment in their family. High agreement between siblings' retrospective perceptions of early family environment was found by McCrae and Costa (1988), a relationship that may be stronger for younger individuals and same-sex siblings (Robins, Schoenberg, Holmes, Ratcliff, Benham, & Works, 1985). Schaie and Willis (1995) also found that adult siblings' perceptions of the environment in their family during childhood and adolescence were quite similar, especially for sister-sister pairs. Aquilino (1999) examined similarities between parents and their adult offspring regarding the early family environment and found that parents perceived their relationships with their adult children differently than the adult children perceived the same relationship. Specifically, parents reported greater closeness and contact while being less conflicted and controlling than offspring reported.

However, few studies have examined the stability over time of adults' perceptions of their early and current family environments. Yarrow, Campbell, and Burton (1970) examined retrospections of mothers and preschool children taken at 5 to 9 months after the period of interest and again at 3 to 30 years after the period of interest. Low to moderate correlations across time were found for both the mothers and the offspring. In a review of multiple studies, Brewin, Andrews, and Gotlib (1993) found that individuals gave fairly reliable ratings of early family environment at multiple time points.

Age may be related to individuals' retrospective reports of family environment. Field (1981) found that adults interviewed three times in mid- to late life increasingly gave a positive report of memories of childhood. As parents and their offspring age, familial relationships are more likely to be characterized as having less conflict and greater closeness (Suitor, Pillemer,

Keeton, & Robison, 1995). These age differences may be reflected in perceptions of current as well as prior shared environments.

In this study, we were interested in investigating whether perceptions of one's early family environment or one's current family environment would show more stability over a seven-year period. We predicted that perceptions of one's family of origin would be more stable than perceptions of current family environment, given that recall of earlier periods is less likely to be affected by current life events (e.g., Loftus, 2000; Wells & Loftus, 2003). However, recent work on long-term memory suggests that recall of events can change over time, particularly when related to major life events. Given the findings on memory declines in old age (Bäckman, Small, & Wahlin, 2001), we expected to find a relationship between stability of perceptions and age. However, the occurrence of certain age-normative life events may also influence the stability of perceptions.

Thus, three research questions were investigated in this study. First, do perceptions of the environment in one's family of origin and one's current family environment differ in stability? Second, does the stability of perceptions of environment in one's family of origin and current family vary by age group? Finally, are the occurrence of salient life events, such as those described by Holmes and Rahe (1967), related to changes in family environment perceptions?

Method

Sample

Individuals in this sample were assessed twice as part of the Seattle Longitudinal Study (SLS; $n = 1,115$) or the Family Similarity Study ($n = 890$). Individuals in the SLS sample were tested in 1991 and 1998, while individuals in the family study were tested in 1989 and 1996.

Family Similarity Study members were the siblings and adult offspring of participants in the longitudinal SLS sample.

The total analysis sample included 2,005 individuals (808 males and 1,197 females) who had two time-points of data on a measure of perceptions of current family environment and/or a measure of the environment in their family of origin. The sample was generally well-educated ($M = 15.6$ years, $range = 7 - 20$ years) and had an average age of 59.3 years ($range = 28 - 96$ years) at the second time of measurement. Of the 1,930 participants reporting ethnicity, 96% were white (not Hispanic). Participants were classified as belonging to one of four age groups at the second time-point: young adults (ages 28-44, $n = 436$), middle adults (ages 45-64, $n = 776$), young-old adults (ages 65-74, $n = 375$), and old-old adults (ages 75 and older, $n = 418$). Of the total sample, 1,990 had two time-points of data on perceptions of current family environment, and 1,927 had two time-points of data on perceptions of environment in the family of origin.

Measures

Family Environment. The family environment perception measures were adapted from the Moos and Moos Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 1986). Two versions of this scale were created: a family of origin environment scale, focusing on the family environment in which one was raised, and a current family environment scale. For the current family environment scale, single individuals were allowed to consider relatives and close friends as “family” if they had contact with them at least once a week. The two versions of the scale were identical except that the wording on the family of origin scale was in the past tense. Eight of the original FES subscales were included: achievement orientation, active-recreational orientation, cohesion, conflict, control, expressivity, intellectual-cultural orientation, and organization. Each subscale consisted of five questions on five-point Likert scales. Previous psychometric work

reported in Schaie and Willis (1995) found that the dimensions of the original Moos and Moos Family Environment Scale are appropriately represented in this adaptation.

Life Complexity Inventory. Data from the Life Complexity Inventory (LCI; Gribbin, Schaie & Parham, 1980) provided information about demographics as well as the occurrence of life changes during the seven-year interval, such as those suggested to be among the stressful life events identified by Holmes and Rahe (1967). Specifically, the birth of a child, marriage or remarriage during the seven-year interval, a son or daughter moving out during the seven-year interval, change in profession or trade in the last five years, and death of one's spouse in the seven-year interval were examined. Data from the 1989/91 and 1996/98 administrations of the LCI were used in this analysis.

Marriage/remarriage and change in profession or trade were assessed with direct questions on the LCI about these events. The other life events were inferred from indirect questions about that event; thus, the score for the occurrence of a life event (i.e., 0=no, 1=yes) was highly dependent on accurate and reliable reporting by the participant. Birth of a child was assessed by an increase in the reported number of children. A child moving out of the home was assessed by a decrease in the number of reported children in the home. Death of a spouse was determined when marital status at the second time-point, but not the first time-point, was marked as "widowed".

Health Behavior Questionnaire. The occurrence of a change in health status was assessed with an item from the Health Behavior Questionnaire (HBQ) administered in 1996/98.

Individuals rated changes in their general health since the previous administration of the HBQ measure on a 7-point scale from 1=improved greatly to 7=declined greatly. Three categories of change in health status were defined: (1) improved health status (i.e., "improved greatly" and

“improved moderately”), (2) decline in health status (i.e., “declined greatly” and “declined moderately”), and (3) no significant change in health status (i.e., “improved slightly”, “declined slightly, and “no change”).

Classification of change in perceptions at the individual level.

Change over seven years on each family environment subscale was computed, and three categories of change were defined using one standard error of measurement as the criterion for significant change (Dudek, 1979) in perceived level of that domain of family environment. The three categories of change were: (1) significant decrease in perceived level of domain (e.g., family conflict), (2) no significant change in perceptions (i.e., stable perceptions), (3) significant increase in perceived level. It should be noted that, although the conflict scale actually reflects the lack of conflict within a family, these categories were reverse-scaled for conflict so that the “increase” category actually reflected an increase in conflict to make interpretation of results more straightforward.

Results

Three research questions were investigated in this study. First, are perceptions of environment in one’s family of origin or of one’s current family more stable? Second, does the stability of family of origin and current family environment perceptions vary by age group? Finally, within each age group, are the occurrence of particular age-graded life events related to changes in perceptions of family environment?

Stability of perceptions over 7 years

Correlations of perceptions of family environment at the two time points were higher for family of origin ($r = .68$ to $.82$) than for current family ($r = .49$ to $.67$). As shown in Table 1, the

correlations for the four age groups also showed the same pattern of greater stability of perceptions of family environment for family of origin than for current family.

Stability was further examined at the individual level by classifying individuals into one of the three categories of change in each of the 8 domains of family environment. The percentage of individuals with no significant change (i.e., within ± 1 SEM) was considered for each domain. In the total sample, the percentage of individuals with stable perceptions over seven years of their family of origin for each of the eight domains was: 66% (achievement-orientation), 74% (active/recreational orientation), 66% (cohesion), 64% (conflict), 65% (control), 63% (expressivity), 62% (intellectual/cultural orientation), and 72% (organization). The percentage of individuals with stable perceptions about their current family environment for each of the eight domains was: 59% (achievement orientation), 65% (active/recreational orientation), 73% (cohesion), 66% (conflict), 70% (control), 72% (expressivity), 74% (intellectual/cultural orientation), and 61% (organization).

Relationship of perception stability to age group

Chi-square analyses were performed to examine whether age group (4 levels: young, middle-aged, young-old, and old-old) was related to stability of perceptions (3 levels: significant decrease at time 2, stable, significant increase at time 2). Results showed that age group was not significantly related to changes in perceptions of the eight domains of family environment for family of origin. In contrast, age group was significantly related to changes in six of the eight domains of current family environment (achievement orientation, $p < .01$; active-recreational orientation, $p < .001$; conflict, $p < .001$; control, $p < .001$; intellectual-cultural orientation, $p < .001$; organization, $p < .001$). Perceived level of changes in cohesion and expressivity were not related to age group. As shown in Table 2, for five of the six domains that showed a significant

relationship with age group, young adults (aged 28 to 44 years) were least likely to report stable perceptions of their current family environments; old-old adults (aged 75 years and older) were least likely to report stable perceptions of achievement orientation.

As a secondary follow-up analysis, chi-square analyses were performed to compare the young adults with old-old adults on the 6 significant domains. Five of the six chi-square tests were significant ($p < .01$); perceptions of change in control did not vary between young adults and old-old adults. For active-recreational orientation, conflict, and organization, more young adults reported increases in the domain and fewer old-old adults reported increases in the domain than would have been expected if perceptions did not vary by age group. For achievement-orientation, fewer young adults reported increases and more old-old adults reported increases than would have been expected. Finally, for intellectual-cultural orientation, both the “significant decrease” and “significant increase” in perception change showed differences between the young adults and the old-old adults. More young adults reported an increase in intellectual-cultural orientation than was expected, and more old-old adults reported a decrease in intellectual-cultural orientation than was expected.

Relationship of life changes to stability of perceptions: Within age group

Because stability of perceptions of environment in one’s family of origin did not vary by age group, the following analyses relating the category of change in perceptions to the occurrence of life events were performed only for current family environment. The occurrence of the following six life events during the seven year interval were examined: (1) birth of a child, (2) marriage or remarriage, (3) son or daughter moving out, (4) death of spouse, (5) change of profession or trade in the last five years, and (6) moderate change in health status in the last 3-5 years. Because some of these events were not age-normative for certain age groups, only those

life events for which at least 10% of the age group had experienced the event were examined within that age group. The percentages of each age group experiencing these six life events are presented in Table 3.

The experience of these life events was investigated as a predictor of level of change in perceptions of current family environment using chi-square analyses. For changes in health status, a 3 (change in perceptions: decrease, stable, increase) x 3 (change in health status: improve, stable, decline) chi-square was computed. For all other life events, a 3 (change in perceptions: decrease, stable, increase) x 2 (event occurred: yes/no) chi-square was used. These chi-square tables were then examined for differences in the percentage of individuals reporting significant increases in a domain and significant decreases in a domain, based on whether they had experienced the life event or not. The classifications of perception change status for individuals who experienced the life events are shown in Tables 4 to 7 for the four age groups; chi-square values for these tests are also given.

Young (28-44 years). Four life events were examined for the youngest age group: (1) marriage/remarriage, (2) birth of child, (3) change in profession or trade, and (4) change in health status. Marriage/remarriage was significantly related to perceived changes in active-recreational orientation ($p < .01$) and organization ($p < .001$). Of the 28% of young individuals who married or remarried in the last 7 years, more individuals reported significant decreases in perceptions of active-recreational orientation than significant increases. Significant increases in perceptions of organization were more likely than significant decreases in perceived organization for young adults who had married or remarried during the seven-year interval.

Birth of a child was significantly related to perceived changes in active-recreational orientation ($p < .05$), conflict ($p < .001$), and control ($p < .01$). Of the 38% of young adults who

added a child to their family during the seven-year interval, significant increases in perceived conflict and control were more likely than significant decreases. For active-recreational orientation, young adults who had added a child to their family during the seven-year interval were more likely to report significant decreases in perceptions than significant increases of this domain.

Change in profession was significantly related to perceived changes in control ($p < .05$). Of the 33% of young individuals who changed their profession in the last five years, significant increases in perceptions of control were more likely than significant decreases. Change in health status was not significantly related to perceived changes in current family environment for the youngest age group.

Middle-aged (45-64 years). Four life events were examined for this age group: (1) marriage/remarriage, (2) son or daughter moves out, (3) change in profession or trade, and (4) change in health status. Marriage/remarriage was significantly related to perceived changes in conflict ($p < .05$) and intellectual-cultural orientation ($p < .001$). Of the 11% of middle-aged adults who married or remarried during the seven-year interval, more individuals reported significant decreases in perceived conflict and intellectual-cultural orientation than significant decreases in these domains.

A son or daughter moving out of the home was significantly related to perceived changes in achievement orientation ($p < .05$), active-recreational orientation ($p < .01$), conflict ($p < .001$), intellectual-cultural orientation ($p < .05$), and organization ($p < .001$). Of the 35% of middle-aged adults who experienced having a son or daughter move out of the home, individuals were more likely to report significant decreases in achievement orientation, active-recreational

orientation, and conflict and were more likely to report significant increases in intellectual-cultural orientation and organization.

Change in health status was significantly related to perceived changes in achievement-orientation ($p < .01$). Middle-aged adults who reported a decline in health status (7%) at the end of the seven-year interval were much more likely to report changes in perceptions of achievement-orientation (equally for increases and decreases in this domain) than middle-aged individuals whose health remained stable or improved. Change in profession was not significantly related to perceived changes in current family environment for middle-aged adults.

Young-old (65-74 years). Two life events were examined for this age group: (1) son or daughter moves out of the home and (2) change in health status. A son or daughter moving out was significantly related to perceived changes in control ($p < .05$) and organization ($p < .001$). Of the 12% of the young-old group who experienced an adult child moving out of their home, individuals were more likely to report significant increases in control and organization than significant decreases. Change in health status was not significantly related to perceived changes in current family environment for young-old adults.

Old-old (75+ years). Two life events were examined for this age group: (1) death of a spouse and (2) change in health status. Death of a spouse was related to perceived changes in achievement orientation ($p < .001$) and active-recreational orientation ($p < .001$). Of the 11% of old-old adults who were widowed during the seven-year interval, more individuals reported a significant increase in achievement orientation and active-recreational orientation than reported a significant decrease in these domains. Change in health status was significantly related to changes in active-recreational orientation ($p < .001$). Individuals whose health declined during

the seven-year period (17%) were most likely to report a significant decrease in active-recreational orientation.

Discussion

This study examined stability of adults' perceptions of both their early and current family environments. The first research question examined the relative stability over a seven-year period of perceptions of the environment in one's family of origin and perceptions of one's current family environment. Our hypothesis of greater stability for perceptions of the environment in one's family of origin was supported.

The second research question examined the relationship of age to the stability of perceptions for the family of origin and for current family environments. The four age groups did not differ in the stability of their perceptions of their early family environment. This finding may suggest that perceptions of early family life may be crystallized fairly early in adulthood and do not undergo significant change at least over a seven-year interval. Alternatively, if perceptions of early family environment do change, these changes do not appear to be associated primarily with age. Furthermore, these findings do not provide supportive evidence for the suggestion that older adults' long term memories, particularly of early close social relationships, become more positive with age.

However, significant age/cohort differences were found in stability of perceptions for six of the eight environmental domains with respect to the current family measure. Interestingly, the two current family environment domains not showing age differences in stability focused on emotional aspects of relationships: expressivity and cohesion. Expressivity was assessed by items such as: "We tell each other about our personal problems, and someone usually gets upset

if you complain in our family”. Cohesion was assessed by items such as “Family members really helped and supported one another, and “There was a feeling of togetherness in our family.”

We examined in greater depth the differences in the distribution of the three change categories (stable, decrease, increase) for the two extreme age groups: young adults and old-old. For the achievement-orientation domain, a smaller percentage than would be expected of young adults reported an increase in achievement, while a larger percentage than expected of old-old adults reported an increase in the achievement domain. Given their likelihood of being involved in educational pursuits at the first time-point, the young adults may have already been reporting high levels of achievement orientation and thus further increase was less likely. The greater than expected increase in achievement orientation in the old-old is particularly noteworthy given the cognitive declines and rate of depression that is normative in this age group. In particular, those who had lost a spouse during the seven-year interval reported a greater increase in achievement orientation. It may be that the caregiving preceding the death of a spouse had limited the surviving spouse’s lifestyle. Once freed of the caregiving responsibilities, the surviving spouse began to establish a new identity and initiated or resumed activities that provided a sense of accomplishment.

For the active-recreational domain, an increase in active-recreational orientation was reported by a greater proportion of young adults than expected, while the proportion of old-old adults reporting an increase in active-recreational orientation was less than expected. Again, life events are associated with changes in the active-recreational orientation of the old-old. Decline in health was associated with a greater decline in an active-recreational orientation in the old-old age group.

With regard to the conflict domain, a smaller than expected proportion of young adults reported stability in conflict, and a greater than expected proportion of young adults reported a changes in conflict. In contrast a greater than expected proportion of old-old reported stability in family conflict, and fewer than expected reported a decrease in family conflict. No life event in old-old age was associated with conflict. Data on personality and coping support our findings in that older adults report increased attempts to deal with conflict through negotiation than through aggression. In young adulthood, birth of a child was associated with decreased conflict.

With regard to intellectual-cultural orientation in the family, a greater than expected proportion of young adults reported an increase in intellectual-cultural orientation. In contrast, a greater than expected proportion of older adults reported a decrease in this domain. Finally, with regard to organization, a greater than expected proportion of young adults reported an increase in family organization, while fewer than expected older adults reported an increase.

Finally, our third research question focused on individual difference variables that were associated with change in perceptions of current family environments. Specifically, we were interested in the impact of salient life events on changes in perceptions of current family environment within each age group. For each age group, events that could be considered age-normative for that group were examined.

For the young adult group, marriage/remarriage and birth of a child were the two life events impacting perception of family environment. Marriage/remarriage impacted two environment domains, and birth of a child impacted three domains. Both marriage and birth of a child were associated with perceived decrease in the active-recreational orientation. Prior research on birth of a child has indicated a decrease in leisure time for couples. Both marriage and birth of a child were associated with increased perceptions of structure in the family

environment; marriage was associated with increases in perceptions of organization, and birth of a child was associated with increases in perceived control in the family environment (e.g., “There are set ways of doing things at home”).

Interestingly, it was in the middle age group that life events impacted the greatest number of dimensions of family life. In particular, a child leaving home was associated with perceived change in five different domains. Emptying of the nest was associated with perceived decreases in achievement orientation, active-recreational orientation, and conflict. It may be that the departing child’s educational activities and recreational pursuits had impacted the level of achievement and leisure pursuits in the home. On the other hand, emptying of the nest was associated with increases in two domains: intellectual-cultural and organization. The SLS data examined to this point do not indicate whether or not this was the final child leaving home and whether the home environment now involved only the couple. However, these data suggest a strong impact of the departure of a child on the structural, emotional and intellectual climate of the home. The nature of these perceived changes merits further study.

Twelve percent of young old adults experienced an adult child leaving the family home. Departure of the adult child was associated with perceived increases in both control and organization in the family environment.

Finally, the impact of life events on stability of family environment perceptions in old-old age has been discussed to some extent in the second question above. Of particular note are positive perceived changes in achievement and active-recreational orientation following the death of a spouse. These findings indicate that many adults even in old-old age are dealing positively with the loss of a spouse.

Future work is needed on detailing how these life events impact family life within the age groups studied. Given that Brewin et al. (1993) found that men's perceptions of home environment remain more stable over time than women's perceptions, it may also be interesting to consider the differential impact of life events on men and women's perceptions of family environment. Personality characteristics may also be important to explore as predictors of stability and change in perceptions of family environment.

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Table 1. *Correlations of Perceptions over 7 years: Total Sample and By Age Group.*

Family Environment	Domain	Total	Young	Middle	Young-old	Old-old
Current Family	Achievement	.51	.52	.50	.54	.47
	Active-Recreational	.57	.42	.62	.59	.55
	Cohesion	.49	.36	.52	.56	.48
	Conflict	.51	.43	.52	.60	.47
	Control	.56	.47	.60	.65	.51
	Expressivity	.49	.37	.52	.58	.46
	Intellectual-Cultural	.63	.57	.63	.74	.59
	Organization	.67	.62	.69	.67	.58
Family of Origin	Achievement	.68	.68	.67	.74	.65
	Active-Recreational	.76	.75	.75	.79	.68
	Cohesion	.81	.81	.80	.86	.77
	Conflict	.80	.79	.82	.80	.74
	Control	.77	.77	.78	.79	.71
	Expressivity	.73	.69	.74	.77	.69
	Intellectual-Cultural	.82	.81	.84	.81	.77
	Organization	.79	.79	.77	.80	.74

Note. All correlations were significant at $p < .001$.

Table 2. *Categories of perception change within age group: Domains of current family environment significantly related to age group.*

		Achievement	Active-recreational	Conflict	Control	Intellectual-cultural	Organization
Stable	Young	62.4	60.1	57.1	64.6	70.1	56.7
	Middle-aged	59.5	67.2	65.1	69.6	72.9	60.3
	Young-old	60.0	67.2	70.2	75.1	81.6	65.3
	Old-Old	54.3	62.7	70.8	70.7	70.8	60.5
Increase	Young	16.4	20.0	19.4	22.9	19.1	22.4
	Middle-aged	18.9	12.1	12.8	13.6	16.3	22.4
	Young-old	16.5	17.1	13.8	13.3	9.2	21.7
	Old-Old	27.1	12.7	13.9	17.4	11.3	14.2
Decrease	Young	21.2	19.8	23.5	12.5	10.8	21.0
	Middle-aged	21.6	20.7	22.1	16.8	10.8	17.3
	Young-old	23.5	15.7	16.0	11.7	9.2	13.0
	Old-Old	18.6	24.6	15.3	11.9	17.9	25.3

Note. The chi-square test for achievement was significant at $p < .01$; the other 5 chi-squares were all significant at $p < .001$.

Table 3. *Percentage of individuals in each age group experiencing life events examined.*

Life Event	Young	Middle	Young-old	Old-old
Marriage/Remarriage	28	11	4	3
Birth of child	38	7	3	3
Son/daughter moves out	8	35	12	4
Death of spouse	1	1	8	11
Change in profession/trade	33	18	6	3
Change in health status				
Improvement	13	10	9	7
Decline	5	7	10	17

Note. Events experienced by at least 10% of the age group were examined as predictors of change in perceptions of current family environment.

Table 4. *Percentage of individuals experiencing the life events examined in each change category: Young adults.*

Domain	Change Status	Life Event					
		Marriage/ Remarriage	Birth of child	Child moves out	Death of spouse	Change in trade or prof.	Decline in health
Achievement	Increase	15	12	---	---	19	25
	Decrease	18	24	---	---	20	25
	Stable	67	63	---	---	61	50
	χ^2	0.9	3.9			0.5	1.9
Active-recreational	Increase	16	17	---	---	21	15
	Decrease	30	30	---	---	21	10
	Stable	54	53	---	---	58	75
	χ^2	10.2**	8.1*			0.1	4.8
Conflict	Increase	19	27	---	---	19	25
	Decrease	30	12	---	---	27	15
	Stable	50	61	---	---	54	65
	χ^2	5.4	16.2****			1.3	3.1
Control	Increase	26	32	---	---	24	40
	Decrease	12	8	---	---	19	15
	Stable	61	60	---	---	56	45
	χ^2	0.9	12.5**			7.8*	4.1
Intellectual-cultural	Increase	23	15	---	---	19	15
	Decrease	12	14	---	---	15	5
	Stable	65	72	---	---	67	80
	χ^2	1.7	5.1			4.6	4.9
Organization	Increase	35	23	---	---	24	10
	Decrease	18	18	---	---	24	25
	Stable	47	60	---	---	53	65
	χ^2	13.5****	2.0			2.3	2.2

Note. Events marked with --- had fewer than 10% of the age group experiencing that event.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; **** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Percentage of individuals experiencing the life events examined in each change category: Middle-aged adults.

Domain	Change Status	Life Event					
		Marriage/ Remarriage	Birth of child	Child moves out	Death of spouse	Change in trade or prof.	Decline in health
Achievement	Increase	19	---	13	---	16	34
	Decrease	19	---	21	---	18	32
	Stable	63	---	66	---	66	34
	χ^2	0.5		6.1*		2.9	15.0**
Active-recreational	Increase	12	---	6	---	10	15
	Decrease	24	---	22	---	19	21
	Stable	63	---	72	---	71	64
	χ^2	0.9		10.0**		1.1	1.8
Conflict	Increase	12	---	7	---	13	26
	Decrease	35	---	28	---	20	26
	Stable	53	---	64	---	68	49
	χ^2	8.3*		13.2***		0.9	8.2
Control	Increase	14	---	9	---	14	21
	Decrease	11	---	17	---	14	9
	Stable	75	---	75	---	71	70
	χ^2	2.2		2.8		1.0	4.9
Intellectual-cultural	Increase	16	---	17	---	15	21
	Decrease	23	---	6	---	10	9
	Stable	61	---	76	---	75	70
	χ^2	14.4***		6.8*		0.6	1.7
Organization	Increase	26	---	24	---	24	19
	Decrease	26	---	8	---	19	15
	Stable	49	---	67	---	57	66
	χ^2	5.9		15.8***		0.4	0.8

Note. Events marked with --- had fewer than 10% of the age group experiencing that event.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 6. Percentage of individuals experiencing the life events examined in each change category: Young-old adults.

Domain	Change Status	Life Event					
		Marriage/ Remarriage	Birth of child	Child moves out	Death of spouse	Change in trade or prof.	Decline in health
Achievement	Increase	---	---	12	---	---	8
	Decrease	---	---	26	---	---	22
	Stable	---	---	62	---	---	69
	χ^2			0.5			5.8
Active-recreational	Increase	---	---	6	---	---	14
	Decrease	---	---	21	---	---	17
	Stable	---	---	74	---	---	69
	χ^2			3.3			2.7
Conflict	Increase	---	---	21	---	---	14
	Decrease	---	---	21	---	---	33
	Stable	---	---	59	---	---	53
	χ^2			1.9			9.3
Control	Increase	---	---	29	---	---	17
	Decrease	---	---	12	---	---	14
	Stable	---	---	59	---	---	69
	χ^2			8.7*			2.7
Intellectual-cultural	Increase	---	---	15	---	---	14
	Decrease	---	---	9	---	---	17
	Stable	---	---	76	---	---	69
	χ^2			1.4			4.8
Organization	Increase	---	---	47	---	---	22
	Decrease	---	---	12	---	---	14
	Stable	---	---	42	---	---	64
	χ^2			13.6****			0.2

Note. Events marked with --- had fewer than 10% of the age group experiencing that event.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 7. Percentage of individuals experiencing the life events examined in each change category: Old-old adults.

Domain	Change Status	Life Event					
		Marriage/ Remarriage	Birth of child	Child moves out	Death of spouse	Change in trade or prof.	Decline in health
Achievement	Increase	---	---	---	51	---	21
	Decrease	---	---	---	16	---	21
	Stable	---	---	---	33	---	58
	χ^2				14.6***		1.9
Active-recreational	Increase	---	---	---	33	---	20
	Decrease	---	---	---	14	---	41
	Stable	---	---	---	54	---	39
	χ^2				17.2***		21.6***
Conflict	Increase	---	---	---	16	---	17
	Decrease	---	---	---	23	---	24
	Stable	---	---	---	60	---	59
	χ^2				3.0		6.6
Control	Increase	---	---	---	26	---	22
	Decrease	---	---	---	14	---	9
	Stable	---	---	---	60	---	69
	χ^2				3.0		7.4
Intellectual-cultural	Increase	---	---	---	21	---	9
	Decrease	---	---	---	19	---	21
	Stable	---	---	---	60	---	70
	χ^2				4.8		1.2
Organization	Increase	---	---	---	12	---	14
	Decrease	---	---	---	40	---	20
	Stable	---	---	---	49	---	67
	χ^2				5.3		2.6

Note. Events marked with --- had fewer than 10% of the age group experiencing that event.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.