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MEASURING OLDER ADULTS' FILIAL RESPONSIBILITY
EXPECTATIONS: EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF A
VIGNETTE TECHNIQUE AND AN ITEM SCALE

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This study focused on two conceptually distinct measures of the filial responsibility expectations of older adults: a vignette technique and an attitude item scale. Data were based on 1,553 respondents aged 61 to 92 years who participated in the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam in 1998 to 1999. The results showed that the item scale had multiple dimensions of filial expectations. Older adults distinguished between emotional-, instrumental-, contact-, and information-oriented expectations. The vignette technique resulted in a unidimensional measurement of expectations. The intercorrelation between the scores of the item scale and vignette technique was modest, indicating a certain amount of overlap. Child characteristics incorporated into the vignettes added to the specificity of measurements of the filial expectations. The authors observed that older adults were more likely to have expectations for care from an adult child who is not employed and does not have children. Minor differences between sons and daughters were observed.

Keywords: *filial responsibility expectations; older adults; item scale; methodology; vignette technique*

This study focuses on two conceptually distinct measures concerning the filial responsibility expectations of older parents—an important theme within the study of parent-child relationships in general and the informal support exchanged within these relationships in specific. Filial expectations are a reflection of general social norms, that is, a set of beliefs about how people

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ought to behave in a certain situation (Nydegger, 1991). An understanding of the role of the norm of filial obligation in family relationships requires an understanding of how such general rules are interpreted in specific settings (A. S. Rossi & Rossi, 1990). In this study, we defined filial responsibility expectations as a societal attitude toward the duty of adult children to meet the needs of older parents (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987), specifically addressing *parental* expectations for filial support.

The measurement instruments found in the literature appear to assess different aspects of filial expectations, yet there have been few investigations of the relationships between these measures. One might argue whether filial expectations focus on the relative merits of assessing filial responsibility as a general set of societal norms or conceptualizing filial expectations as a set of expectations about appropriate behavior. The solution to this controversy may depend on the measurement instruments employed emphasizing either a more general norm or specific expectations. Does the use of different methods, therefore, specify filial expectations, or do different measures produce convergent findings about the same empirical domain? Answering this question could clarify discrepancies in previous findings, advance our understanding of the expectations of older parents for care, and aid researchers interested in selecting measures sensitive to the phenomena of interest.

In past research on filial expectations, researchers have relied predominantly on attitude measurements for their analysis (Hamon & Blieszner, 1990; Lee, Dwyer, & Coward, 1993; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977), although the vignette technique has also been used (Brody, Johnsen, & Fulcomer, 1984; A. S. Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Vignettes consist of short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, and the respondent is invited to respond to the characters' situation. Vignettes have been widely used as a complementary technique alongside other data collection methods. They can be employed either to enhance existing data or to generate data untapped by other research methods (Barter & Renold, 2000).

The Vignette Approach

In addition to the application of the vignette approach in the study of filial expectations (Brody et al., 1984; Finch, 1987; Roff & Klemmack, 1986), the vignette technique has also been employed by researchers from various disciplines to study a range of topics, including cognition and motivation (Stolte, 1994), end-of-life medical decision making (Denk, Benson, Fletcher, & Reigel, 1997), peer violence in children's homes (Barter & Renold, 2000), and public judgments of appropriate punishment for crime (P. H. Rossi, Simpson, & Miller, 1985). Many of these studies typically employ vignettes within a quantitative paradigm, generally as a self-contained method

or following a large-scale survey questionnaire; however, some studies employ vignettes within qualitative paradigms. The common element is the hypothetical situation: This may be short and simple or longer and complex. Some of the vignettes were followed by fixed-choice responses; some included fixed-choice plus an open-ended question, and others included only open-ended questions.

The specific procedure applied within the vignette approach determines the data that are ultimately acquired. The predominantly employed factorial survey design (P. H. Rossi & Nock, 1982) presents respondents with independent samples from a fully crossed vignette universe, allowing many dimensions and levels within dimensions to be employed. The statistical qualities of the resulting data set permit unbiased estimates of the contributions of each of the several dimensions incorporated into the vignettes to the overall judgment. In a study on kinship norms, A. S. Rossi and Rossi (1990) included 1,628 unique vignettes in the total set of all possible vignettes. Each respondent answered a general question for a random selection of these vignettes. This procedure allows group differences to be measured as long as there is an approximately equal distribution of the different vignette versions across the sample groups. However, only subsamples of the total sample can be compared when looking at specific combinations of dimensions. Therefore, one sacrifices the opportunity to compare responses to specific circumstances across the survey population as a whole (Finch, 1987).

The technique of altering the circumstances within a single vignette is a distinctive feature of a number of British studies (e.g., Finch, 1987). In a study on obligations between relatives, Finch includes four vignettes in which respondents are asked to make a judgment on a given set of circumstances that change over time and in which the type of response elicited both varies between vignettes and includes an open-ended element. This procedure enables more insight into complex situations, but as Finch (1987) also acknowledged, the issue of what triggers a response is not wholly resolved. Finally, it may be argued that the factorial survey design provides judgments of events that typify situations of real-life experience; however, it also includes events that are relatively unusual occurrences. We can wonder whether the dynamics of judgment will operate in the same way for both situations (Durham, 1986). When a design is applied, such as in our study, in which all respondents receive the same vignette, using a limited number of dimensions, aimed at a real-life situation, some of these objections become less valid. Moreover, because the stimulus is held constant over a heterogeneous group of respondents, the research instrument secures uniformity, which is a prerequisite for the reliability of the scores. In conclusion, there are different vignette designs, each with their own specific procedures, which in turn determine the data that are ultimately acquired.

Comparison of the Vignette Approach With the Item Scale

The employment of different measures results in different outcomes. In contrast to the item scale instrument, the vignette technique offers the opportunity to specify expectations according to various circumstances, such as the amount of help needed by the parent and whether a child is married. Using the item scale, Hamon and Blieszner (1990), for example, found that older parents did not expect adult children to adjust their work schedules to help them. In contrast, Brody et al. (1984), employing the vignette technique, observed that a majority of the oldest women expected working unmarried daughters to adjust their work schedules if the mother required help. Furthermore, the importance of specifying situational characteristics is stressed by the results of a study by Peek, Coward, Peek, and Lee (1998), who applied two instruments to measure expectations of filial responsibility. First, an item scale was used to measure social norms about older parent-child relationships. Second, specific expectations were measured by asking older parents to indicate to whom they would turn if they felt lonely, needed help, did not have enough money to pay a bill, or could no longer live alone. Peek et al. observed that the characteristics of the children had a greater effect on specific expectations for care than did the personal circumstances of the older parent. The extent to which parents' expectations for assistance are actually fulfilled by their children is estimated more precisely when the children's particular circumstances are taken into account than when global norms are measured.

Expanding on previous research, the first instrument used in this study is a modified item scale of filial responsibility expectations. Most researchers have used only a small number of filial expectation items (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987; Lee, Coward, & Netzer, 1994; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977), with questions concerning, for example, the expectancy to live together or nearby or for the children to take financial care of older parents. With a limited number of items, only a specific domain within the broader concept of filial expectations can be studied. Hamon and Blieszner (1990) revised previously used scales of filial responsibility expectations and included items on contemporary issues, resulting in a 16-item scale that goes beyond this limitation and might result in scores with increased content validity. Although filial responsibility expectations have generally been treated as a unidimensional construct, we believe that the broader concept includes different types of filial expectations. Filial expectations are directed toward the behavior of adult children, and ample evidence confirms that parents have frequent contact and receive a substantial amount of emotional and instrumental support from adult children (Mancini & Blieszner, 1989). Based on social support literature, we also distinguish information-oriented expectations. According to

the content of the items, we split the scale into four dimensions: emotional, instrumental, contact, and information oriented.

The second instrument is based on the vignette technique. In the current study, we employ a design with a limited number of vignette situations specifically aimed at the respondent. Four vignettes are employed within one overall vignette using only a limited number of dimensions. We attempt to differentiate between the situations of the adult children; therefore, the situations, which were least common, were not included because they were least likely to occur in real life, for example, an adult son who is not married, has no job, and does not have children. The details of the vignette, specifying various features of its context, enhance the respondent's capacity to make normative statements about a comprehensive set of social circumstances. In contrast, studies using an item scale do not systematically take into account specific characteristics of the children, such as gender, employment, marital status, and availability of their own children, all of which have been viewed in the filial responsibility literature as relevant (e.g., Lee et al., 1993). To give an example, an older parent may expect most support from an adult child who has more time or who has fewer child care or employment responsibilities. However, another older parent may have the same expectations for all children, irrespective of their situation.

In this study, we test the construct validity of filial responsibility expectations. We hypothesize that the scale has multiple dimensions of filial expectations (Hypothesis 1). Considering the specific set of circumstances of the vignette, we hypothesize that the vignette technique can be perceived as a unidimensional construct (Hypothesis 2). Finally, we test the convergent validity of both instruments. We investigate whether the properties of the vignette technique in measuring expectations of filial responsibility are complementary to those of the item scale. This may shed more light on the specific dimensions of the expectations and take into account the links between filial expectations and the situation of the adult children in the family. We hypothesize that there are moderate positive relationships between corresponding dimensions of filial expectations represented by each scale, with the dimensions of the vignette technique providing additional information on the specific situations of the children (Hypothesis 3).

Design of the Study

Respondents

Data were available for older people who participated in the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam (Deeg & Westendorp-de Serière, 1994). This study used a stratified random sample of 3,805 men and women born between 1908 and 1937 (Knipscheer, de Jong Gierveld, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 1995). The

sample was taken from the registers of 11 urban and rural municipalities in the east, south, and west of the Netherlands, regions that represent differences in religion and urbanization in the country. The oldest individuals in these areas, particularly the oldest men, were overrepresented in the sample. The response rate was 62%.

During the fourth wave (1998-1999), data were collected from 2,076 older people (55% of the respondents who were interviewed at baseline) by means of a face-to-face interview that included the vignette technique, followed by a written questionnaire using the item scale. Reasons for attrition were the death of the respondent (30%), refusal (11%), illness or cognitive impairment (3%), or the respondent had moved to an unknown destination or abroad (2%). The main reason for dropping out was mortality, which in a sense is not a problem because it is a natural phenomenon that not only occurs in the study sample but also in the total population. Respondents who refused, more often did not have children compared to those in the final sample, $\chi^2 = 5.1$, $df = 1$, $p < .02$. There were no associations between respondents who refused and activities of daily living, general health, and frequency of contact with children. We can, therefore, conclude that dropout is not selective for our sample.

Two hundred two respondents had a short interview by phone or by proxy, leaving 1,874 respondents who were interviewed face to face. In the present study, only community-dwelling respondents ($n = 1,780$) who had living children ($n = 1,596$) were included. Interviews that had to be shortened because of frailty ($n = 90$), that had to be broken off ($n = 12$), or in which too much information was missing ($n = 33$) were not included. This resulted in 1,461 respondents for whom data were available for the vignette. There was no information available from the written questionnaire for 185 respondents because of nonresponse, leaving $n = 1,411$. Data for both filial responsibility instruments were available for 1,319 respondents, and for 1,553 respondents, there were data from either one or both instruments.

The sample contained 726 men and 827 women who were between 61 and 92 years of age, with a mean age of 73.4 years. Most of the respondents reported that they had high functional capacity. Only 24% reported no chronic illness. A total of 61% of the respondents were married, less than 1% were unmarried, 6% were divorced, and 33% were widowed. Furthermore, 66% of the respondents had a partner, 1% had stepchildren only, and 6% had both stepchildren and their own children.

Measurements

The authors and a native speaker of Dutch independently translated the 16-item English scale into Dutch, after which the authors combined the translations into one version (see Table 1). As a check, an English native speaker

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Items on the Filial Responsibility Scale (n = 1,411)

Item Number	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Children should live close to their parents	2.7	1.3
2 Children should take care of their sick parents	2.6	1.2
3 Children should give their parents financial support	2.1	1.1
4 Children who live nearby should visit their parent at least once a week	3.4	1.3
5 Children should phone their parents on a regular basis	3.8	1.1
6 Children should feel responsible for their parents	3.2	1.3
7 Children and parents should be together at special occasions, such as Christmas and weddings	4.0	1.1
8 Parents should be able to talk to their children about matters of personal importance that have influence on their lives	4.1	1.0
9 Children should give emotional support to their parents	3.7	1.1
10 Children should be willing to give up free time for their parents	2.6	1.1
11 In emergencies, children should make room for their parents in their home	2.7	1.2
12 Children should offer advice to their parents	3.2	1.1
13 Children should adjust their work situation to help their parents, for example, by working less overtime or temporarily working less hours	2.1	1.1
14 Children should monitor the quality of care given to their parents	3.4	1.2
15 Children should adjust their situation at home to help their parents, for example, assign activities to others or put activities aside temporarily	2.4	1.1
16 Children should familiarize their parents with health care services	3.7	1.1

Note. Possible answers were (1) *totally disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *neither agree nor disagree*, (4) *agree*, (5) *totally agree*.

translated this version back into English. Discrepancies between the original and the retranslated English version were minor, so no further changes were required. Two items that are deemed less important by both older parents and adult children (Hamon & Blieszner, 1990) were excluded from the scale: children who live at a distance should write their parents once a week and older parents should be able to live with one of their adult children. Two new items were added: one directed toward communication (Item 5) and one related to an ever-changing health care system (Item 14). The respondents were informed that we were interested in their opinion concerning their filial expectations, therefore, we assume they answered within the context of a need for care.

Four hypothetical situations were developed as vignettes (see Table 2). Respondents were instructed to disregard their own family circumstances and imagine they were in a hypothetical situation. Respondents were asked what adult children should or should not do in a hypothetical situation in which an 80-year-old widowed parent, with children, needs daily care for a period of 3 weeks. It was assumed that the 80-year-old widowed parent had four children: Mary, a working, married daughter with children; Sophia, a nonworking, married daughter with children; Emily, a working, single,

Table 2
Properties of the Filial Responsibility Vignette (N = 1,461)

	Mary: Married, Daughter, Children, Employed		Sophia: Married, Daughter, Children, Unemployed		Emily: Not married, Daughter, No Children, Employed		John: Married, Son, Children, Employed	
	% Agree	H_i	% Agree	H_i	% Agree	H_i	% Agree	H_i
1 Should . . . take care of his/her father/mother?	25	.73	55	.72	42	.72	22	.69
2 Should . . . adjust his/her situation at home?	21	.76	46	.67	35	.70	17	.76
3 Should . . . adjust his/her work situation?	14	.79			23	.66	9	.86
4 Should . . . visit his/her father/mother more often?	81	.56	84	.55	87	.62	83	.63
5 Would you, if you were Mr./Mrs. Hendriks, be disappointed if . . . did not take care of you?	38	.63	57	.69	51	.70	36	.60

Note: Possible answers were (0) no, (1) yes. Questions 2 and 3 were asked only when the answer to Question 1 was positive. When Question 1 was no, then 0 was assigned to Question 2 and 3. Question 3 for Sophia was not asked because she does not work. H_i = item homogeneity conform Mokken's scale analysis.

daughter with no children; and John, a working, married son with children. Five questions were asked for each child. The sequence of the four children was randomly chosen and varied from one respondent to the next.

Procedure

The answering patterns for both instruments were described. In addition, a more condensed method was chosen for the vignette technique. Specifically, we wanted to know whether the characteristics of the hypothetical children (employment, having children, and gender) were related to parent's filial expectations with respect to giving care, adjusting home, adjusting work, improving the contact, and satisfaction. For each respondent and each of these five relationship aspects, there are responses to the situation of four hypothetical children. Five multilevel logistic regression analyses (Rasbash & Woodhouse, 1995) were conducted with the respondents at a higher level of analysis and the four responses on the hypothetical children on the lower level. Three dummy variables were created and entered in the equations as explanatory variables, with Mary as the reference category: To see if there were employment differences, Sophia was compared to Mary; to assess differences between (grand)children, Emily was compared to Mary; and to assess whether there were gender differences, John was compared to Mary. The odds ratio (OR) expresses the effect of a specific predictor: The effect is positive if $OR > 1$, negative if $OR < 1$, and there is no effect if $OR = 1$.

We reviewed the homogeneity of the scores from two measures of the expectations for care of older parents. The postulated existence of one global dimension for the item scale was tested by means of confirmatory factor analysis with the LISREL program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1988). We assumed equal variances of error terms and unrelated error terms, and we therefore applied the maximum likelihood estimation procedure. We adopted the procedure and evaluation criteria for model fit recommended by Hu and Bentler (1998, 1999). More specifically, we applied the combinational rules of comparative fit index ($CFI \geq .95$) and standardized root mean square residual ($SRMR \leq .08$). Postulating different concept dimensions assessed construct validity. For the item scale, an expert panel of 10 researchers in the field of gerontology classified the 16 items into four dimensions: emotional (Items 6, 7, 8, and 9), instrumental (Items 2, 3, 10, 11, 13, and 15), contact (Items 1, 4, and 5), and information expectations (Items 12, 14, and 16). As an alternative for the existence of one global dimension, the model with four dimensions of the item scale was tested by means of confirmatory factor analysis.

The homogeneity of the scores obtained with the vignette instrument was tested by means of Mokken's scale analysis (Debets & Brouwer, 1989), which is a probabilistic version of a Guttman scale analysis. The technique assumes the existence of one underlying latent (unobservable) attribute,

which is represented by a set of items related to the latent attribute. The vignette scores are dichotomous, and the average proportions of agreement differed strongly across the items, which fit with this type of analysis. Scale homogeneity (Loevinger's H) and reliability (ρ) and item homogeneity (H_i) were computed. Mokken's scale analysis is a nonparametric approach to item response theory. The reliability coefficient (ρ) can be interpreted in a similar way to Cronbach's α . Mokken scale analysis assumes the existence of a latent unidimensional scale represented by a set of items related to this scale. Scale criteria are met when all coefficients of homogeneity for pairs of items (H_{ij}) are positive, while the homogeneity coefficients for the items in relation to the scale at issue (H_i) and for the whole item set (H) do not fall below a positive constant (c). A minimum value of $c = .30$ is recommended, and a strong scale is one in which all H_i and H exceed $.50$ in value. When scale criteria are met, the respondents can be ordered with respect to this latent scale by means of the proportion agreement. Furthermore, the vignette questions can also be ordered hierarchically with respect to this latent scale. For the vignette technique, dimensions were distinguished according to the four children with their different characteristics and the five questions.

In this study, convergent validity is concerned with correlations between scores derived from the item scale and the vignette technique. In addition, multilevel logistic regression analysis was used to assess whether the filial responsibility vignette was of additional value, that is, whether the child characteristics incorporated into the vignettes added to the specificity of the filial responsibility expectations as measured by the filial responsibility item scale. To do this, questions from the vignettes were compared to corresponding items in the filial responsibility item scale. The first question of the vignettes corresponds to the item on care expectations (Item 2), the second question corresponds to home adjustment (Item 15), the third corresponds to work adjustment (Item 13), and the fourth corresponds to contact (Item 4). Logistic regression analyses were performed with the vignette score as the dependent variable and the score from the scale as explanatory variable. Each analysis consisted of three steps with entry of variables on a priori expectations. The model specified at each step is characterized by a $-2 \log$ likelihood, that is, the deviance from fit between the data and the model. In the first step (the 0-Model), only the constant was included in the equation, to provide a standard for evaluating the change when explanatory variables were entered into the equation. Different models were compared by the difference in their deviance, which is χ^2 distributed. Within Model 1, the equation was extended with the specific item score to assess the general association between that item and the corresponding vignette score. Within Model 2, the equation was further extended with specific variables characterizing the four vignettes to assess whether the respondent differentiated between children with different characteristics (see above).

Results

Answering Patterns

The means and standard deviations of the items are shown in Table 1. The most strongly endorsed norms of the older adults suggest that older parents interpret the filial role as one that includes a great deal of discussion of important matters (Item 8) and contact with children: making telephone calls on a regular basis or being together on special occasions (Items 7 and 5). Furthermore, older parents strongly appreciate being familiarized with available resources and receiving emotional support (Items 16 and 9). Most elderly parents thought it unnecessary for children to adjust their work and family situation to help their parents (Items 13 and 15). Older parents also disapproved of receiving financial assistance from their children (Item 3).

The percentages of agreement for the vignette questions are shown in Table 2. Older parents expect most care from the married daughter who has children and does not work, followed by the unmarried daughter without children who does work. The least is expected of the married daughter and son who have children and work. The majority of the older parents who expect care from a child believe that the child should adjust his or her family situation. They also believe that an adjustment of the work situation should be made, but to a lesser extent especially in the case of the son. Regardless of the type of child in the vignettes, the older parents agree that they expect their children to visit them more often when they need care for a short-term period. The majority of the respondents indicated that they would be most disappointed in the married daughter with children who does not work if she did not take care of the older parent.

The parameters of the specific variables characterizing the four vignettes are shown in Table 3. The results of the care vignette show that the largest distinction is made in the child's employment: Respondents had 3.5 times greater expectations for care from children who are not employed than from children who are employed. Second, respondents had greater expectations for care from children who do not have children of their own. Small differences between sons and daughters were observed (the OR in favor of the daughter was 1.20, which is 1: 0.83). The results of the vignette questions concerning the adjustment of home and work are parallel to the results concerning care. The vignette question on frequency of contact shows that expectations depend first on whether children have children of their own, followed by the child's employment status. The vignette question on satisfaction is analogous to the vignette question on care. Gender was not statistically significant for the vignette questions on either frequency of contact or satisfaction.

On the basis of the vignette scores, it can be concluded that expectations are highest for those with the most time to offer. In other words, expectations

Table 3
Parameter Estimates of the Variables Characterizing the Four Vignettes

	Give Care		Adjust Home		Adjust Work		Improve Contact		Satisfaction	
	N	χ^2	N	χ^2	N	χ^2	N	χ^2	N	χ^2
N respondents	1461		1461		1460		1461		1461	
N vignette scores	5810		5817		4361		5827		5803	
	688		642		357		146		273	
	OR	Wald	OR	Wald	OR	Wald	OR	Wald	OR	Wald
No employment: Sophia (vs. Mary)	3.53	246.9***	3.08	183.8***	1.76	33.5***	1.26	5.5*	2.21	109.1***
No children: Emily (vs. Mary)	2.10	85.1***	1.95	62.8***	0.59	19.4***	1.52	16.6***	1.68	47.3***
Gender: John (vs. Mary)	0.83	4.4*	0.76	8.4**	0.59	19.4***	1.13	1.6	0.93	0.9

Note. OR = odds ratio.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

depend first on the child's employment status, then the combination of work and children, and, finally, on the gender of the child. There also seems to be a connection between the care that is expected and disappointment when that care is not forthcoming. Respondents are most disappointed when the child they have the highest expectations of (the married daughter who has children and does not work) does not provide the expected care. They are least disappointed when the expected care is not provided by the married son who has children and works. It is interesting to note that the disappointment is always higher than the level of care expected from the child.

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents (545) stated that all the hypothetical children were equal; only 75 (5%) believed none were equal. This suggests that many older parents do not want to differentiate between the children. The differences found between the children may be attributed to the degree to which older parents are considerate of the children's specific situation.

Dimensionality of the Expectations

To determine the existence of one global dimension and four specific dimensions in the item scale, two models were tested by confirmatory factor analysis (Hypothesis 1). The model specifying one global dimension had to be rejected (CFI = .75, SRMR = .09). Our hypothesis that the item scale is composed of four dimensions initially only partly finds support. The model distinguishing between four dimensions was poor with respect to the specification of factor covariances and factor loadings (CFI = .89, SRMR = .06). A satisfying four-factor model (CFI = .95, SRMR = .04) was achieved by including factor loadings on more than one factor for three items (1, 6, and 9) and by including a correlated error of Items 13 and 15 (standardized coefficient = .19). The parallel wording of Items 13 and 15 might cause this correlated error. For emotional expectations, the standardized loadings were .09 for Item 6, .65 for Item 7, .76 for Item 8, and .63 for Item 9. For instrumental expectations, the loadings were .35 for Item 1, .73 for Item 2, .66 for Item 3, .34 for Item 6, .25 for Item 9, .77 for Item 10, .66 for Item 11, .69 for Item 13, and .73 for Item 15. For contact expectations, the loadings were .23 for Item 1, .78 for Item 4, .72 for Item 5, and .38 for Item 6. For information expectations, the loadings were .64 for Item 12, .66 for Item 14, and .66 for Item 16. The correlation between the emotional and instrumental dimension was .38, and the other five intercorrelations of the dimensions were higher (between .58 and .68).

Mokken scale analysis was applied to the vignette. The means of the items in the vignette ranged from 0.10 to 0.87. One global dimension with the characteristics of a strong scale ($H = .69$ and $\rho = .94$) was found for the vignette. The findings therefore support the hypothesis that the vignette technique can

be perceived as the measurement of a unidimensional construct (Hypothesis 2). The sum of the scale items measuring the vignette was less symmetrically distributed (skewness = 0.47, kurtosis = -0.72), with a mean of 8.3 and standard deviation of 5.3. The H_i values are shown in Table 2. Homogeneous dimensions concerning the different children can be formed, with all subscales ranging between $H = .67$ and $.83$ and $p = .84$ and $.87$.

Item Scales and Vignette Technique

On the basis of the factor loadings, scores for the four filial responsibility item scales were computed. These scores for emotional, instrumental, contact, and information-oriented expectations and the sum of the scores for the vignette correlated weakly or modestly: $r = .24, .49, .35,$ and $.27$, respectively (for all $p < .001$). To examine the additional value of the vignette for measuring expectations for filial responsibility, vignette questions were compared to the corresponding items on the item scale. Each respondent has four scores on each question for the vignettes, and each separate score on the different children was included. Three multilevel logistic regression models were examined (see Table 4). For all four aspects, Model 1, which included the specific item scores, was a great improvement over the 0-Model, indicating convergent validity. For the expectations of care, for example, the parameter of the item score within Model 1 was 1.98, indicating that respondents who totally agree with the care item (score 5) are 15 times more likely to agree with the vignette question related to care than are those respondents who totally do not agree with the care item (score 1). The odds ratios for the other three aspects were 1.65 for home adjustment, 1.83 for work adjustment, and 1.63 for contact. Estimates for the children are not shown because they do not deviate much from Table 3. The improvement made in Step 3, expanding Model 1 by the specific variables characterizing the four vignettes (Model 2), is statistically significant for all four aspects. The findings therefore support the hypothesis that there are moderate positive relationships between corresponding dimensions of filial expectations represented by each scale, with the vignette providing additional information on the specific situations of the children (Hypothesis 3). It can be concluded that the child characteristics incorporated into the vignettes add to the specificity of measurements of the filial expectations.

Discussion

This study has advanced our knowledge about the dimensions and the relationship between two conceptually distinct measures of the filial responsibility expectations of older parents in a large representative sample of older people. To date, most investigators have focused on expectations of filial

responsibility as one dimension. However, the use of the item scale in this study emphasizes that older parents do not so much recognize certain filial obligations to be fulfilled by adult children in general, which would be confirmed by the existence of one overall dimension, but instead distinguish between emotional-, instrumental-, contact-, and information-oriented expectations. This also confirms earlier findings that older parents have higher emotional-oriented filial expectations than instrumental filial expectations (Hamon & Blieszner, 1990). An additional interesting finding is that three items load on more than one factor and seem ambiguous with respect to different domains of filial expectations. For example, the expectation that children should live near to parents (Item 1) concerns both contact- and instrumental-oriented expectations. Contact between parents and children is a prerequisite for emotional and instrumental support. Contact between parents and children is high with children who live close to parents. Specifying different kinds of filial expectations in future research could provide more insight into the relationship between filial expectations, actual support given and received, and the effect this has on the well-being of the older parent.

This study also determined to what extent the scores from the vignette technique complemented those of the item scale. Moderate correlations were observed between the filial responsibility item and vignette scores, indicating that the two instruments have a certain amount of overlap. It could be commented that the comparability between the scale items and vignettes seems to correspond only in situations in which the parent is in poor health and needs short-term assistance; however, we believe that the respondents place the item questions within the context of a need for care. Moreover, looking specifically at the strength of agreement for the care, adjustment of work and family life items, these are somewhat lower for the item scale than vignette. This may indicate that as a general norm, there is less agreement on how strongly the normative prescriptions should apply; however, within a specific situation, the conditionality becomes clearer (see also Jasso & Opp, 1997). Therefore, the norm is shared to a certain extent by parents, but they differ in the intensity with which they subscribe to the norm.

The vignette complements the item scale by generating data untapped by the item scale. For example, the adult child's employment status appears to influence the older parent's expectations. Whether the adult child has children of his or her own has a slightly weaker influence; the child's gender was found to be even less important. This is partly consistent with findings from other studies. Brody, Johnsen, Fulcomer, and Lang (1983) found some evidence for equalitarian norms concerning the care of aging parents. A majority of the three generations of women they studied favored that sons should share the care of elderly parents equally with daughters. Roff and Klemmack (1986) also observed that both daughters and sons in dual-earner couples were equally expected to help and to maintain contact with their parents.

However, when filial roles were framed in specific terms (sons should do the same kind of household chores as daughters for their elderly parents) rather than in general terms, the levels of endorsement decreased over the three generations (Brody et al., 1983). Consistent with the findings of Brody et al. (1984), respondents in our study who had filial expectations predominantly believed that the working single daughter without children should adjust her work situation. When we take a closer look at the differences between the specific variables characterizing the four vignettes, our study also shows that the expectations of respondents were differentiated only by the gender of the child when an adjustment of the home or work situation was required. This implies that older parents expect care from both daughters and sons, unless a specific adjustment is required. A possible explanation for this could be that the respondents believed it was easier for daughters to adjust their situation than sons (Finley, 1989).

Limitations of the Vignette Approach in This Study

One of the most interesting aspects of using the vignette technique in survey research is that because the characteristics used in the situation description can be systematically varied, it is possible to analyze differences in people's responses. However, using the vignette technique within a quantitative paradigm restricted the design of the vignette to a certain extent, for example, in regard to any modification of the vignette's content. Vignettes also offer the opportunity to manage the complexity of the social world by isolating certain aspects of a given social issue (Barter & Renold, 2000). In the current study, only a limited amount of child characteristics were selected, namely, gender, employment, marital status, and the presence of children. For future studies, different forms of employment (part-time, full-time), the number of children within the family, and the quality of the relationship between the older parent and adult child would be of interest. These are a few examples of the aspects that could influence the extent to which the older parent has expectations of a specific child.

We presented only one hypothetical situation in our vignette, which was a relatively mild form of care provision, with the care required by the hypothetical older person being for only a limited period of time. It is not known whether the expectations of older adults would deviate from our findings if more intensive care or care over a longer period were needed. Furthermore, the linguistic representation of the situation in the vignette could influence the degree to which the informants considered their own current personal situation when answering. When a vignette is presented in the third person, a more general norm may be assessed; when presented in the second or first person, the informant may be more likely to take his or her own situation into account. In previous research, this has varied, with some vignettes presented

in the third person and some in the second person. Future research will need to compare various representations of the vignette technique.

The procedure we applied in this study also had consequences for the data acquired. We did not present respondents with all the possible combinations or unique vignettes. One could comment that interaction effects and the effects of any one dimension cannot be estimated without bias. However, we do not believe our results are less reliable than when we would have fully crossed all vignette dimensions (for further discussion on the reliability of factorial surveys, see Hox, Kreft, & Hermkens, 1991). As Finch (1987) stated in her comparison of different vignette procedures, when it is the specific aim to study causal connections, it is important to vary the elements systematically; however, where research is concerned more with subjective definitions, it is less obligatory. It is not so much the design that is the issue, in the context of the interest of the researchers, but how many there are, what form they assume, and what their impact is on the results of the analysis (Durham, 1986).

Choosing Between a Vignette Approach and an Item Scale

In summary, our findings show that the child characteristics incorporated into the vignettes add to the specificity of measurements of filial expectations. The combination of methods does not produce one unique picture of reality; instead, the different results combine like a sort of jigsaw puzzle to produce a broader image of reality. Still, there are no rules to guide the use of either or both methods. In some cases, it will make sense to employ the item scale, particularly when it is important to distinguish between dimensions of expectations. In other circumstances, the vignette technique might be more useful to obtain a differentiated picture of the situation, especially when it is important to obtain information beyond the informant's current personal situation. This is useful for two types of research (Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000): first, studies of sensitive social phenomena, in which candid and personal responses could be difficult to elicit, and second, studies that assess how awareness and attitude might shape future behavior. The choice of measure will depend largely on the focus and theoretical assumptions underlying the study at hand.

Because filial responsibility expectations form in a dynamic situation, it is important to consider the presentation of ongoing relationships with other people, which are continually negotiated. A first suggestion for future studies is to conduct research on people who are already in established social relationships and investigate how they behave together and describe their social relationships interpersonally. We are thinking, for example, of studies of interaction during a caregiving situation, in which both parent and child(ren) are interviewed, using both the attitude scale and vignette technique, before,

during, and after the caregiving takes place. The use of longitudinal research may be one way of getting closer to the real-time structure of ongoing personal relationships. In the event that only cross-sectional data are available, the vignette technique has the advantage of being able to build changes into the story that occur over time, focusing the questions on what should happen next (see Finch, 1987). Another suggestion concerns the extent to which a vignette can be compared to real-life situations and responses. Hughes (1998) noted that we do not know enough about the relationship between vignette and real-life responses to be able to draw any parallels between the two. Moreover, it has been argued that the vignettes produce unrealistic results because they are not directly comparable to real life (Faia, 1980). These remain unresolved measurement issues.

In sum, the vignettes in conjunction with an attitude scale within a quantitative survey may prove to be a useful tool for exploring complex issues such as filial expectations of older parents. The data are valuable and reflective of the filial expectations parents have; the more the vignette reflects aspects of real-life situations, the more generalizable the findings will likely be. The employment of the vignette techniques is underrepresented in social science research focusing on norms and values. We believe the vignette technique has a great deal of potential and needs to be further developed, tested, and employed in the study of filial expectations.

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