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A PROFILE OF MALE MID-LIFE CONCERNS

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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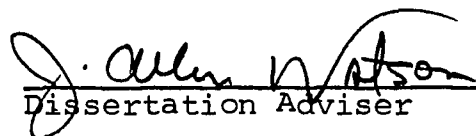
by

Elaine K. Weller

A Dissertation submitted to
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Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by


Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation
Adviser:

J. Allen Watson

Committee Members

Joy A. Mancini
William R. Kiser
William H. Hays

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Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Date of Final Oral Examination

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This investigation examined mid-life males' morale and concern about physical condition, psychological themes related to aging, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships. The main purpose of the study was to determine if there were age-related differences between men in morale and concern about these five life domains. Men between the ages of 34 and 51 were studied in age groupings suggested by previous research.

It was hypothesized that there would be no differences in morale between men in age groupings 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. It was also hypothesized that there would be no differences in concern about physical condition, psychological themes related to aging, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships between men in the selected age groups.

The sample for the study was composed of 150 married men from a large corporation in Greensboro, North Carolina. Fifty men were selected from the three age groupings by a stratified random procedure. Data were collected by personal interviews administered by trained interviewers.

The hypotheses were tested by analysis of variance comparisons (ANOVA). A posteriori multiple comparisons were conducted following a significant ANOVA ($p < .05$). The findings indicated that men in the three age groups did not

differ significantly in morale or concern about physical condition, career issues, or family relationships. Significant differences were found in concern about psychological themes related to aging and interpersonal relationships. Men aged 40-45 were found to be more concerned about psychological themes and interpersonal relationships than men aged 46-51.

The results of this study suggest that mid-life is characterized by successful adaptation and adjustment for middle-class men. The findings do not support assertions that mid-life consists of an age-related crisis or transition period. Furthermore, these data provide no evidence of a mid-life transition for men between 40 and 45 as reported by Levinson (1978). The study suggests that age and life stage may not be the important influences on mid-life males that some past research has indicated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

More than a tenth of the current population in the United States consists of middle-aged males, numbering over 23 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). Yet the mid-life male has been the subject of serious study for a very short time, and there is little empirical research on the mid-life development of American men. In fact, the recognition of mid-life as a period of importance in the life cycle is only now being fully established (Handelman, 1978).

Although middle age is a relatively long period in the life cycle, little research has focused on this period compared to the amount of research on other age groups or life stages (Borland, 1978; Goldberg & Deutsch, 1977). Adulthood as a developmental period has been conceptually and empirically neglected in the psychological, psychiatric, sociological, and family studies literature (Gould, 1972; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1974). Until about 15 years ago, most studies of adults were not developmental in perspective. Most of the information about adults came from cross-sectional studies as a by-product of other research interests. Borland (1978) noted that research on middle age has been characterized by middle age being treated as an auxiliary research topic rather than the central focus of attention.

The transitions and changes of the mid-life male began to attract the serious attention of researchers and popular writers in the mid-seventies. From 1975 to 1978 at least six books were published reporting studies on the middle-aged individual.¹ Although researchers have disagreed on the question of whether middle age is a crisis period, a series of transitional events, or a period of expected adaptation, they have tended to agree that major changes take place in the lives of middle-aged males and that some men deal with these changes better than others (Cohen, 1979). The literature has also indicated various issues or tasks for mid-life males to negotiate, but little attention has been given to identifying the impact and relative salience of these issues for individual men.

The Mid-life Male

Research on mid-life has indicated that there are many positive aspects connected with being a middle-aged man as well as numerous pressures, changes, and frustrations (Borland, 1978; Lowenthal, Thurnher, & Chiriboga, 1975; Neugarten, 1968b; Vaillant, 1977). These "normbearers and decision makers, bill payers and power brokers" (Brim, 1976, p. 2) generally recognize they are the powerful age group with respect to other age groups (Neugarten, 1968a). While the middle-aged man functions in a society oriented toward youth, it is controlled by the middle-aged.

Studies that consider the middle-aged males' recognition of the positive qualities of being in mid-life have indicated that there is an awareness of new personal freedom and maximum command and influence over one's self and environment (Deutscher, 1969; Neugarten, 1968a). Neugarten (1968a) was impressed by the "executive process of personality in middle age: Self-awareness, selectivity, manipulation and control of the environment, mastery, competence, the wide array of cognitive strategies" (p. 98). For many, mid-life brings a sense of being in the prime of life in terms of experience and good judgment (Neugarten, 1968a).

Positive evaluations of a mid-life male's work life have been characterized by reports of growing intellectual ability for decision making, possession of high status jobs, earning a large income, and having relatively good physical and mental health which allows regular work (Axelson, 1960; Desmond, 1964; Jackson, 1974; Jaffee, 1971; Peterson, 1968).

The overriding impression that the literature on mid-life males gives, however, is that mid-life is a time of change, readjustment, and stress as a man confronts the beginning of bodily decline, career stagnation, and changes within the family unit. One author aptly summed up the mid-life period:

The hormone production levels are dropping, the head is balding, the sexual vigor is diminishing, the stress is unending, the children are leaving, the parents are dying, the job horizons are narrowing, the friends are having their first heart attacks; the past

floats by in a fog of hopes not realized, opportunities not grasped, women not bedded, potentials not fulfilled, and the future is a confrontation with one's own mortality. (Lear, 1973, p. 20)

The research on the issues that confront mid-life males can be summarized in five categories: physical conditions, psychological themes, family relationships, career issues, and interpersonal relationships. A brief summary of the major themes in these five areas follows. A comprehensive review of the research findings in these areas is presented in Chapter II.

One of the primary themes in the literature on mid-life males deals with physical changes and health concerns and the meanings such issues may have for a man. The actual physical changes involve a gradual decline in the secretion of the hormones testosterone and androgen as well as more obvious signs of aging such as balding, greying, and deteriorating vision (Brim, 1976; Cohen, 1979; McCary, 1978; Spierer, 1977). Such changes are often accompanied by an awareness that the body is aging and is less predictable than before. A frequently cited cause of mid-life stress for men is the realization that physical changes and conditions are experienced as bodily decline (Brim, 1976; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1976; Neugarten, 1968a; Troll, 1975).

In addition to physical issues, there are also internal processes of change in mid-life that often bring about an

introspective period and a shift in values and orientation toward life (Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968a; Vaillant, 1977). The psychological themes considered in this investigation were "body monitoring," awareness of aging, changing time perspective, confrontation with mortality, reassessment of self, and morale.

Relationships within the family often involve major changes and role adjustments for the middle-aged man. In addition to changes in his relationship with his wife and children, the mid-life male is likely to experience transitions in his role with his parents and in-laws. The marital relationship may undergo various new demands as both partners cope with adolescent children in the home or with children preparing to leave the home. Additional pressures to reassess the marital dyad may come from changing psychological orientations of both partners (Grunebaum, 1979; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a). The middle-aged male may also experience a changing parental role as he confronts the growing independence of his adolescent children and the limited nature of his influence on them (Levinson, 1978). Further family responsibilities may also revolve around the condition of aging parents and in-laws.

Work and career issues are another major area of consideration for mid-life males. Although the specific issues may differ for men, mid-life may bring concerns related to the occupational sphere to the surface (Brim, 1976; Gould,

1972; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975). Concerns over moving up, moving down, reaching a plateau, or hanging on are salient (Neugarten, 1968a). The male is often faced with shrinking career options, shortening of time left before retirement, and perhaps, the feeling he has not been a success (Cohen, 1979). Concerns over increased job pressure or job boredom and feelings of being stuck in a rut beset the successful as well as the unsuccessful (Neugarten, 1968a).

The literature has indicated that interpersonal relationships are likely to be of special significance for men in mid-life (Grunebaum, 1979; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1972; Neugarten, 1979; Vaillant, 1977). Establishing quality friendships may become an increasingly important priority for many middle-aged men as they move toward a more affiliative orientation (Grunebaum, 1979).

Mid-life: Crisis, Transition, or Adaptation?

The study of transition throughout the life cycle is an exciting new area of research in human development (Kimmel, 1980). In the area of adult development, a number of recent studies have investigated the transition to parenthood (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Hobbs & Wimbish, 1977; Russell, 1980), the transition to the "empty nest" (Burr, 1970; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1972; Rollins & Feldman, 1970), and the transition to retirement (Atchley, 1971; Fillenbaum, 1979; Fritz, 1978). The fact that each of these transitions is brought about by a specific external factor facilitates the process of studying

the phenomenon because a special event identifies the transitional process.

The consideration of transitions that are not linked to specific external events is more complex because of the difficulty involved in defining and identifying them. This is particularly apparent in research on the mid-life period for men. This period is variously discussed by theorists and researchers as a crisis period, a transitional stage, or a period of orderly and predictable change.

Crisis

With the recent popularization of adult development and the middle years, the prevailing supposition is that an existential turning point, a "midlife crisis," takes place in adulthood (Perun & Bielby, 1979). Abeles and Riley (1977) have noted that the term "midlife crisis" has been added to the lexicon of the au courant layman and social scientist alike.

The titles of many current popular books on the subject illustrate this phenomenon.² The notion of the inevitable crisis of middle age is also perpetuated by mass media treatments in magazines and movies. Research on the middle years, however, does not support any firm conclusions about a male mid-life crisis. Some of the social science data on the middle-aged male seems to undercut the notion of a mid-life crisis as a common event (Brim, 1976; Deutscher, 1969; Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten,

1979; Vaillant, 1977). Other studies point to mid-life as a crisis period or transitional state characterized by severe or moderate upheaval for many men (Gould, 1972; Jaques, 1965; Levinson, 1978).

Transition

Brim (1976) noted that most scholars of mid-life males used the term "transition." Although the transition concept implies a change that moves a person from one position or stage to another, it is often unclear precisely how the term transition is being used by the various scholars.

The most prominent spokesman of male mid-life transition is Daniel Levinson. Levinson's (1978) research indicated that at age 40 a crucial developmental change occurred for most men. Levinson (1978) defined the mid-life transition as a period that begins at age 40 or 41 and lasts for about 5 years. He contended that the mid-life transition is a time of moderate or severe reappraisal for most men. Levinson (1978) reported that 80% of his sample experienced

tumultuous struggles within the self and external world. Every aspect of their lives comes into question and they are horrified by much that is revealed. They are full of recriminations against themselves and others. They cannot go on as before, but need time to choose a new path or modify the old one. (p. 199)

Levinson's discussion of the mid-life transition and the specific age linkages involved are among the most controversial aspects of his work. Other scholars who consider mid-life as a transitional period have established different

and more flexible age linkages. Gould (1972, 1978) placed the mid-life transition between 35 and 45, while Vaillant (1977) estimated that a transition takes place around 40--give or take as much as a decade. Lowenthal et al. (1975) preferred to focus on events rather than chronological age in studying transitions through the life cycle.

Adaptation

The work of Neugarten (1965, 1968a, 1969, 1976) has offered a different perspective on the character of mid-life for men. She stated "that we should be wary of the too-quick generalizations regarding the midlife crisis or concepts of adult stages" (Neugarten, 1979, p. 889).

Rather than indicating that mid-life is a developmental period that usually involves moderate or severe transitional concerns, Neugarten's studies have indicated that normative transitions which are expected to occur do not bring emotional upheaval for most people. It is the unexpected change that brings a crisis. Individuals develop a concept of the "normal, expectable life cycle" and anticipate that certain life events will occur at certain times. Major stresses are caused by events that upset the sequence and rhythm of the life cycle as conceived by the individual. So mid-life for the majority has normal turning points, but these are not traumatic events or crisis points unless their timing is out of sequence. It is the unanticipated life event that causes upheaval.

Critique of Mid-life Theories

Perun and Beilby's (1979) assessment of mid-life research identified two differing perspectives on adult development that are relevant to the study of the middle-aged male. Using the role of crisis as the key concept, Perun and Bielby (1979) indicated that two fundamentally different models of thought about the nature of adult development exist in both theory and research. These perspectives are particularly distinguished by their treatment of mid-life although they also differ in their theoretical orientation, empirical research, and assumptions about the nature and structure of the life course.

In Model I, crisis is seen as a developmental imperative and the mid-life period is viewed as revolving around a developmental crisis. In fact, development cannot take place without a crisis or until a crisis occurs. Perun and Bielby considered the major contributors to this model to be Erikson, Jaques, Gould, and Levinson.

In Model II, crisis is seen as a consequence of asynchrony. Crisis is viewed as an aberration within the life course of the individual and hence not an issue in mid-life for the majority. Advocates of this model included Butler, Neugarten, and Riegel.

The major issue that distinguished the two models, according to Perun and Bielby, is whether there are "normative crises" in the life course through which every

individual must pass in a prescribed sequence and at a stipulated age. The issue for mid-life concerns the existence of a mid-life crisis: Model I is pro and Model II is con.

Currently we lack adequate data on mid-life development to determine which of these perspectives on adult development is more accurate (Perun & Bielby, 1979). Perun and Bielby suggested that it is possible and perhaps even desirable for both models to coexist for a while as long as researchers remain aware of the assumptions and limitations of each. Further, they stated that "empirical testing of Levinson's or Gould's theoretical statements is presently unfeasible and must await more precise specification of their empirical foundation" (Perun & Bielby, 1979, p. 295). What is abundantly clear from the scholarly assessments of the research on mid-life males is that theoretical understanding and empirical data are in the embryonic stage (Brim, 1976; Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981; Kimmel, 1980; Perun & Bielby, 1979).

Purpose of the Study

Since the substantive findings on the mid-life male are limited, it is premature to expect to resolve the differences between the two models. A great deal more data on the character of the mid-life period for males are needed before some clarity about the nature of this period for middle-class males begins to emerge.

This investigation focused on attaining greater understanding of the characteristics of mid-life men. The purpose of the study was to examine mid-life males' morale and concern about physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships and to determine if there were age-related differences in these domains. Men between the ages of 34 and 51 were studied in age groupings suggested by Levinson: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.

The study addressed the following hypotheses:

- H₁ There will be no significant differences in morale between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.
- H₂ There will be no significant differences in concern about physical condition between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.
- H₃ There will be no significant differences in concern about psychological themes between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.
- H₄ There will be no significant differences in concern about career issues between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.
- H₅ There will be no significant differences in concern about family relationships between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.
- H₆ There will be no significant differences in concern about interpersonal relationships between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.

A Profile of Male Mid-life Concerns was developed.

It consisted of items that measured the dependent variables as well as items that measured various demographic and descriptive variables. The dependent variables used to test

the hypotheses were grouped into two categories: morale and concern about five domains. The five domains were physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships. The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969) was used to measure morale, and the Mid-life Concern Scale was used to measure level of concern in the various domains.

The Profile included items that measured standard demographic characteristics, such as marital status, income, educational achievement, and religious preference. In addition, the Profile had sets of questions that explored physical conditions, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships. These items were exploratory in nature and supplemented the focus of this particular investigation--the testing of the six hypotheses.

Definition of Terms

Some key terms were frequently used in this study: morale, concern, physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships. Following are the definitions used for these terms:

Morale--Morale is the relative balance between positive and negative affective states experienced during the past week as measured by the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale.

Concern--Concern is the score on the Mid-Life Concern Scale which measured the degree of positive or negative

consideration of a specific life domain. Life domains are physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships.

Physical Condition--Physical condition is a respondent's perception of his general bodily health and fitness.

Psychological Themes--Psychological themes are bodily change, the aging process, years to live, personal mortality, and life evaluation.

Career Issues--Career issues refer to the work, economic, and personal aspects of the respondent's occupation.

Family Relationships--Family relationships refer to the respondent's interaction with his spouse, children, parents, and in-laws.

Interpersonal Relationships--Interpersonal relationships refer to interactions relative to the people the respondent considers to be significant acquaintances, friends, and business associates.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitations of this study related to the sample studied, the cross-sectional design, and the measurement of variables. The sample was limited in terms of age, marital status, children, occupational type, socioeconomic class, and locale. One hundred and fifty married males between the ages of 34 and 51 were randomly selected from middle management and technical positions in one corporation in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The sample consisted of men from "normal" middle-class life patterns in both family and occupational realms. Thus, men who were unemployed, single, recently divorced, separated, widowed, or childless were excluded. Through the exclusion of various types of men, the sample consisted of middle-class males who were generally in harmony with the "normative" life cycle. The sample was also limited to white-collar occupational groups. Some writers have indicated that blue-collar and white-collar men face different issues at mid-life largely as a result of the differential impact of work-related concerns (Gordon, Gaitz, & Scott, 1973; Kimmel, 1980; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976).

The cross-sectional design of the study was another limitation. Cross-sectional research does not indicate how individuals change over time. It only indicates how groups of people of a given chronological age function in comparison with groups of persons of a different age. Birren (1968) stated that the basic method for studying aging is longitudinal if one wishes to study age change in individuals, but cross-sectional research is a compromise or substitute for the ideal longitudinal study.

Another limitation of the study related to the measurement process. The Mid-life Concern Scale was developed for this study to measure subjects' level of concern in each of the five life domains. Limited validity and reliability checks are available for this measure.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature related to the development of the mid-life male is presented in Chapter II. The sections of the chapter consider (1) who is middle-aged?, (2) the historical background of developmental theories of the life cycle, (3) the major issues confronting the mid-life male, and (4) the nature of the mid-life period for men.

Who is Middle-Aged?

Characteristic of middle age research is the problem of operationally defining who is middle-aged (Borland, 1978). Kerckhoff (1976) observed that students in the field of human development recognize that there is an element of convenience, if not pure arbitrariness, in the way the life cycle is conceptualized and segmented. Rogers (1979) noted that middle age is a somewhat "fluid" concept, and Borland (1978) concluded that the definition of middle age is in a confusing and ambiguous state:

What period of life is middle age? What calendar years mark the beginning and end of middle age? Who should be included as subjects in a scientific investigation of middle age? (p. 383)

Borland's (1978) review of the research on middle age considered various operational definitions of middle age.

Most operational definitions used to date can be categorized in terms of (1) family development, (2) chronological age, and (3) a combination of chronological and family developmental definitions (Borland, 1978).

In terms of family development, middle age occurs, regardless of age, when the last child leaves home permanently (Borland, 1978; Targ, 1979). This period is usually referred to as "the empty nest period" and is considered to be synonymous with middle age (Targ, 1979). Kerckhoff (1976) noted that middle age may be conceptualized as the period between the children leaving home and the breadwinners leaving their jobs.

The second category of operational definitions of middle age is chronologically determined. Middle age is arbitrarily defined by certain age limits alone, ranging from 30 to 70 years of age (Borland, 1978; Kerckhoff, 1976). The United States Census Bureau uses the ages of 45 through 64 to define middle age. Levinson (1978) considered early adulthood to range from age 17 to 45 and middle adulthood to extend from age 40 to 65. The period of 40 to 45 is viewed as a transition period that bridges early adulthood and middle adulthood.

The third category involves a combination of chronological and family developmental definitions. Social and psychological developmental changes are considered to occur generally within certain age limits (Borland, 1978).

Clearly great diversity exists in the way researchers have conceptualized and operationally defined middle age. In reference to this wide range of operational definitions, Somerville (1972) suggested that while gerontologists recognize that psychological, physiological, and social measures would be more precise measures of aging than chronological age, such measures are not yet available. Moreover, until better measures are developed, chronological years lived will have to be used as the basis for distinguishing groups--inadequate and arbitrary as that measure may be.

Historical Background of Developmental Theories of the Life Cycle

The various stages of development in infancy, childhood, and adolescence have been recognized and studied for years. After a long period of relative neglect, interest in the adult years of the human life cycle has greatly increased in both academic and lay circles (Perun & Bielby, 1979). This current recognition of major changes in adulthood has led to developmental theories of the human life cycle. Indeed, it may be that the current focus on adult development may confirm Graubard's (1976) speculation that an "obsession" with adulthood would soon be evident as we enter the "century of the adult."

We enter the "century of the adult," however, with "arm-chair" theories of the life-span that are based on inferences drawn from clinical and empirical observations but lacking

rigorous testing by empirical research (Kimmel, 1980). Although several theories of the life cycle do focus on adulthood, there is no fully adequate theory of adult development (Gould, 1972; Kimmel, 1980; Levinson, 1978; Perun & Bielby, 1979).

The historical roots of adult developmental theories are found in the works of Bühler (1933, 1968), Jung (1933), and Erikson (1950). A brief review of the contributions of these scholars to theories of adult development and the developmental tasks of mid-life follows. Attention is then given to Klaus Riegel's (1975, 1976, 1977) perspective on the nature of human development. Riegel focused on a dialectic interpretation of development rather than on stages and tasks.

Bühler

Both Bühler (1933) and Jung (1933) viewed adulthood as a period of complex phases in the life course; however, significant examination of the middle years did not take place until much later (Handelman, 1978). In brief, Bühler's view of adult development was conceptualized in terms of two general tendencies: growth and expansion vs. contraction (Kimmel, 1980). Somewhere during mid-life a major turning point between these two contradictory tendencies occurred. Bühler viewed the turning point to be during the period of self-assessment following the culmination phase of mid-life:

"At around age 40 self assessments take place which often lead to redirection of one's life" (1968, p. 333).

Jung

Some consider Carl Jung to be the father of the modern study of adult development (Levinson, 1978). Jung's conception of the stages of life was based primarily on his clinical work and his theory of psychology (Kimmel, 1980). His first stage of life was youth, a period ranging from after puberty to the middle years (ages 35-40). Jung's main interest was the study of adult development. He considered both childhood and old age to be distinctly different from adulthood, which we now call mid-life. The beginning and end of the life course, Jung claimed, were free of conscious problems, while the period of adulthood was not (Handelman, 1978).

Jung (1933) indicated that around 40, "the noon of life," a major opportunity for fundamental change started. He used the term "individuation" for the developmental process that begins then and may extend over the last half of life. He suggested that in the second half of life a person's focus turns inward, involving an inner exploration that may lead to a meaning and wholeness in life that makes acceptance of death possible (Kimmel, 1980). In addition to this increased introversion, the individual may undergo a reorganization of value systems.

Erikson

Erikson's theory of human development, like Jung's, emerged primarily from his clinical impressions and his Freudian view of psychology. Erikson (1950, 1968, 1976) delineated eight stages of life, representing a series of crucial turning points from birth to death. Each stage presents a particular challenge and each challenge is considered salient at a particular age period. Optimal development is characterized by successful resolution of each task in the appropriate stage.

The first five stages of Erikson's theory cover infancy through adolescence. The last three stages of development consider the period of adulthood. The young adult is concerned with resolving the opposing tendencies of "intimacy vs. isolation," the mid-life adult confronts the struggle between "generativity vs. stagnation," and the older adult's crucial task involves issues related to "integrity vs. despair."

Erikson's seventh stage on mid-life is of particular interest in this investigation. This is the longest stage in the life cycle, and the central focus concerns producing something that will outlive oneself, usually through parenthood or occupational achievement. The struggle is between "generativity" or leaving one's mark in some way and "stagnation" or self-absorption. When this stage is successfully resolved, the individual is primarily interested in

establishing and guiding the next generation. If this stage is not mastered, stagnation and self-absorption set in and "a regressive need for pseudo intimacy develops as well as interpersonal impoverishment" (Handelman, 1978, p. 213).

Kimmel (1980) noted that Erikson's theory is quite difficult to test empirically and when it has been examined (e.g., Gruen, 1964), it has not held up well. Yet it does provide insights into the central themes of human development and a useful descriptive framework for viewing some general issues and changes in the adult life span (Kimmel, 1980).

Some of the major theorists and researchers of the mid-life male owe much of their theoretical orientation to Bühler, Erikson, and Jung, viewing development as a series of stages through which the individual progresses. These scholars are Jaques, Gould, Levinson, and Vaillant.

Riegel

Klaus Riegel (1975, 1976, 1977) offered a different perspective on the nature of human development in his dialectic approach. The other theories considered viewed development as a series of stages through which individuals progressed. In contrast, Riegel looked at the developmental process of change. Rather than assuming that development could be understood by studying the period of equilibrium and balance, he contended it should be studied by analyzing the

periods of disequilibrium and change. Consequently, he focused on studying actions and changes instead of equilibrium and balance. He viewed the human as "a changing being in a changing world," and the analysis of time and change over time was essential (Riegel, 1977, p. 689).

Riegel (1977) proposed four major dimensions of development: inner-biological, individual-psychological, cultural-sociological, and outer-physical. The essence of the dialectic approach is the study of the synchronization of these four dimensions as the individual grows older (Kimmel, 1980). Each dimension is constantly interacting with the others and with other elements in the same dimension. Thus, each may create change, problems, questions, or transitions in the life cycle.

Major Issues Confronting the Mid-life Male

The literature on mid-life indicates that there are a number of important issues for most middle-aged men. This section reviews the research pertaining to these issues. The following areas are considered: (1) physical condition, (2) psychological themes, (3) family relationships, (4) career issues, and (5) interpersonal relationships.

The following developmentally oriented researchers have done the majority of the research in these areas: Roger Gould; Daniel Levinson and associates; Marjorie Fiske Lowenthal, Majda Thurnher, and David Chiriboga; Bernice Neugarten and associates; and George Vaillant. Although references to

cross-sectional research on various aspects of the mid-life male from the sociological, physiological, vocational, and family studies perspectives are cited in this review, studies from the developmental framework are most frequently referenced. For the reader interested in background information about the contributions of these six major researchers, a brief summary of the methodological characteristics of their work is contained in Appendix A. Attention is given to sample size and selection procedures, research design, and methodology.

Physical Condition

One of the primary issues for the mid-life male involves various physical conditions, ranging from changes due to aging to physical disorders. While there is no male equivalent to the female's menopause, there are physical and hormonal changes that influence the physical status and well-being of the individual (Cohen, 1979). Beginning at about 30 and continuing throughout adulthood, men experience a gradual decline in the secretion of the hormones testosterone and androgen, which influences sexual activity as well as physical strength and loss of hair and teeth (Brim, 1976; Cohen, 1979; McCary, 1978; Spierer, 1977).

Aspects of physical aging. Physical changes as a result of aging are gradual in the life cycle but become increasingly apparent during middle age (Pruett, 1980; Rogers, 1979). Physical aging involves a progressive

"decline in physiologic competence that inevitably increases and intensifies the effects of accidents, disease, and other forms of environmental stress" (Timiras, 1972, p. 465).

The middle-aged man generally experiences a changing physical image and a somewhat less efficient bodily system. His hair does not grow as rapidly, it thins out, and begins to turn grey (Troll, 1975). There is an increased tendency to gain weight as fat distribution changes (Pruett, 1980; Rogers, 1979).

Sustained muscular effort becomes more difficult, with loss of strength in the leg and back muscles (Rogers, 1979). There are changes in the eye that occur over the years, and by age 50 almost everyone has at least a pair of reading glasses (Timeras, 1972). Digestive and sensory changes also occur (Pruett, 1980). Miles (1963) found that manual dexterity and reaction time make a sharp downward trend between 40 and 50.

Levinson (1978) commented on male mid-life bodily decline:

He cannot run as fast, lift as much, do with as little sleep as before. His vision and hearing are less acute, he remembers less well and finds it harder to learn masses of specific information. He is more prone to aches and pains and may undergo a serious illness that threatens him with permanent impairment or even death. (p. 213)

However, Levinson also indicated that although most mid-life males experience some decline in bodily powers, the decline was normally quite moderate, leaving a man with ample capacities for living.

Physical disorders. A mounting number of studies have shown middle-aged men to exhibit striking incidence and prevalence of various physical disorders (Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976). Berland (1970) noted that mid-life males are prime targets for cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other ills "ranging from baldness to prostate trouble." More than their wives, they are apt to have an ulcer, poor hearing, bad eyes, and diseased gums!

Heart conditions are especially common in middle age, and middle-aged men are far more susceptible to heart attacks than women (Rogers, 1979). Both hypertension and heart disease are increasingly common in middle age as compared to young adulthood (Vital Health Statistics, #37). One study of men aged 39 to 59 found those who were aggressive, competitive, ambitious, and restless to be especially prone to coronary collapse (McQuade, 1972).

Rosenberg and Farrell (1976) noted research that indicated high incidence of physical disorders among mid-life males. In most studies, peptic ulcers had the highest incidence in the 40 to 50 age group, with those in the 30 to 40 age group showing the next highest rate (Blumenthal, 1959). First admissions to state hospitals for alcoholism peaked in the 45- to 57-year-old age group (Moon & Palton, 1963). Psychosomatic and hypochondriacal complaints also were found to increase in mid-life for males (Blumenthal, 1959; Vital and Health Statistics, 1964-1966).

Verbrugge (1975) found males to be most prone to diseases of the heart, lower extremity impairments, back spine impairments, visual impairments, and asthma. This study also found males to have lower illness rates than women but to die earlier. Rogers (1979) suggested that the discrepancy in reported illness may be influenced by the fact that males are taught to ignore their symptoms and proceed normally when they are ill.

On the more positive side, the fact that in general the health of both young and middle-aged adults has been steadily improving over the years merits notation (Rogers, 1979). Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found that health was a major worry for only 9% of their middle-aged respondents ($n = 193$ women and 167 men).

In summation, research has indicated that mid-life men undergo gradual physical and hormonal changes that influence their physical and sexual activity. Studies also indicated that, in general, mid-life men are a high-risk age group in terms of various physical disorders such as heart disease, hypertension, alcoholism, and ulcers.

Psychological Themes

Researchers and writers indicate that middle-aged males are likely to experience various psychological changes and shifts (Brim, 1976; Cohen, 1979; Gould, 1978; Grunebaum, 1979; Jaques, 1965; Jung, 1933; Levinson, 1978; Marmor, 1967; Strickler, 1975). Following is a review of psychological

themes related to the mid-life male. The issues discussed are "body monitoring," awareness of aging, changing time perspective, confrontation with mortality, reassessment of self, and morale.

The change of physical powers and functioning in mid-life is generally quite moderate for most men, leaving ample capacities for an active and satisfying life. Evidence of physical change or decline, however, often has a powerful impact on a man. It may lead to a preoccupation with the body (Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a; Rogers, 1979), trigger a man's first conscious awareness of the aging process (Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968b; Pruett, 1980; Rogers, 1979), contribute to a changing time perspective (Gould, 1972; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968b; Sarason, 1977), and lead to a confrontation with one's own mortality (Brim, 1976; Gould, 1978; Jaques, 1965; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968b).

Body monitoring. Frequently, the most immediate implication of physical change for the mid-life male is a growing preoccupation with the body (Rogers, 1979). Neugarten (1968a) found that the most dramatic cues of middle age were often biological for males. She used the term "body-monitoring" to describe the "large variety of protective strategies used for maintaining the middle-aged body at given levels of performance and appearance" (Neugarten, 1968a, p. 96).

Many of the men in the Neugarten studies described bodily changes as the most salient characteristic of middle

age. Increased attention centered on health. A new sense of physical vulnerability emerged because the body no longer responded as it once did to the dictates of will (Neugarten, 1968a; Steiner, 1972). Middle-aged women, on the other hand, referred far less frequently to biological changes and concerns about health than middle-aged men (Neugarten, 1968a).

Evidence from at least one study (Hayes & Stinnett, 1971), however, did not support findings regarding the mid-life males' focus on bodily processes and functioning. Hayes and Stinnett's (1971) survey of middle-aged couples indicated that loss of youthful appearance and vitality was reported by less than 1% of the respondents.

Awareness of aging. An awareness of personal aging and a sense of the loss of youth is another psychological theme for some mid-life males. Realizing one is middle-aged and the shock of recognizing the distance between oneself and youth are themes noted by writers on mid-life (Kerckhoff, 1976; McMorrow, 1974; Neugarten, 1968a).

Neugarten (1968a) quoted a statement that illustrates the sudden awareness of aging:

When I see a pretty girl on the stage or in the movies-- we used to say 'a cute chick'--and when I realized, 'My God, she's about the age of my son,' it's a real shock. It makes me realize that I'm middle-aged.
(p. 94)

Kerckhoff (1976) reported that the awareness of aging often comes with the realization that the people who are dying from cancer and heart disease are no longer some old

people one's parents knew--they are one's own friends and acquaintances. The processes of aging, illness, and death tends to become more personal in mid-life.

Clinical literature on male mid-life crisis has emphasized themes of aging in terms of physical depletion, loss of health, and diminished vitality. This was particularly noticeable in the psychoanalytic literature.

Strickler (1975) reported from his clinical work that an awareness of some decline in sexual potency and symptoms of physical ill health associated with the aging process were the most common triggering events of "climacteric crises." Psychoanalyst Judd Marmor (1967) talked of a mid-life crisis as essentially a separation loss involving the giving up of the fantasy hopes of youth and a confrontation with personal mortality. Levi, Stierlin, and Savard (1972) found from a 5-year longitudinal study of troubled adolescents and their families that the middle-aged fathers had an increased awareness of their declining physical and sexual powers and of the imminence of death.

Changing time perspective. A change in time perspective is another recurrent theme in the literature on mid-life (Gould, 1972; Neugarten, 1968a; Sarason, 1977). Neugarten reported that although both sexes talked of a new difference in the way time was perceived, men talked of the change more than women. Time became restructured in terms of "time-left-to-live" rather than "time-since-birth." The question was

not "How many years have passed?," but "How many years lie ahead?" (Neugarten, 1979). Men focused increasingly on what was yet to be accomplished and what was to be abandoned.

In addition to a reversal in directionality with regard to time, Neugarten (1979) noted that middle age brought an acute awareness that time was finite. She found that the recognition that there was "only so much time left" was a frequent theme in the Kansas City interviews. The change in time perspective, however, was not necessarily depressing or disruptive as the following statement indicated:

"Time is now a two-edged sword. To some of my friends, it acts as a prod; to others a brake. It adds a certain anxiety, but I must also say it adds a certain zest in seeing how much pleasure can still be obtained, how many good years one can still arrange, how many new activities can be undertaken." (Neugarten, 1968a, p. 97)

Gould (1972) found that questions related to a time sense were most likely to be age determined. In his 35- to 43-year-old age group, he noted an increasing awareness of a time squeeze and the loss of a youthful sense of timelessness. This group emphasized the finitude of time with "an eye toward the past, present, and future equally" (p. 526). Concern centered on whether there was time left to change or time left to shape the behavior of adolescent children.

In the 43-50 age group, Gould (1972) found that men became resigned to finite time as reality and were not so affected by self-delusion. In the younger age group, the sense of the finiteness of time was generally compensated by a feeling that there was still time left if one hurried

to make some dreams come true. In the older group, there was a "die is cast" feeling along with some relief from previous turmoil about time, although it was a "bitter pill to swallow."

Confrontation with mortality. Many writers and researchers indicated that a man's growing awareness of his own mortality is a central issue in mid-life (Brim, 1976; Gould, 1978; Jaques, 1965; Levinson, 1978; Vaillant, 1977). Elliot Jaques (1965) is the principle theorist for the critical role that man's confrontation with mortality plays in mid-life. In his influential paper "Death and the Mid-life Crisis," Jaques said:

The paradox is that of entering the prime of life, the stage of fulfillment, but at the same time the prime and fulfillment are dated. Death lies beyond . . . I believe, and shall try to demonstrate, that it is this fact of the entry upon the psychological scene of the reality and inevitability of one's own eventual personal death that is the central and crucial feature of the mid-life phase--the feature which precipitates the critical nature of the period. (p. 506)

Neugarten (1976) found that death for the middle-aged person became a real possibility and "no longer the magical or extraordinary occurrence that it appears in youth" (p. 18). For men, the personalization of death often brought the rehearsal of "the heart attack." Levinson and Gould also discussed the mortality issue. Gould (1978) said that one of the misconceptions to be challenged in mid-life was that "Death can't happen to me or my loved ones." Levinson (1978) contended that for many reasons,

at 40 a man knows more deeply than ever before that he is going to die. He feels it in his bones, in his dreams, in the marrow of his being. His death is not simply an abstract, hypothetical event. An unpredictable accident or illness could take his life tomorrow. (p. 215)

Brim (1976), Jaques (1965), Levinson (1978), and Gould (1978) argued that one of the major psychological tasks of mid-life was coming to terms with the fact of mortality. Levinson believed that although a major effort toward the awareness of mortality began in the mid-life transition, a more profound spiritual acceptance of it was not likely to emerge until late adulthood. Brim (1976) contended that resignation to death and rearrangement of life priorities were foremost psychological tasks in mid-life. Jaques (1965) found in many clinical cases that successful resolution of the mortality issue liberated energy and led to self-acceptance.

In contrast, the research of Vaillant (1977) and Lowenthal et al. (1975) did not indicate that mortality was a primary issue at mid-life. Vaillant (1977) disagreed with Jaques' emphasis on the central importance of death in mid-life. He did not find that his subjects were particularly focused on death issues although he did say that "at age forty funerals begin to become as important a sacrament as marriages were in the twenties" (p. 222), and that the first death of a parent was a particularly shattering experience. What impressed Vaillant, however, was the renewed vigor and

excitement of his mid-life subjects who had an emerging rebirth experience that came with liberation from the constraints of the thirties.

Reassessment of self. Another major theme in mid-life is an increase in introspection and reappraisal of the self (Gould, 1978; Grunebaum, 1979; Harry, 1976; Jung, 1933; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1976). Neugarten (1976) noted an increased emphasis on the inner-life occurred with aging and was clearly demonstrable by the mid-40's. She summarized the psychological directions of her middle-aged sample:

In middle age, there is an emphasis upon introspection and stocktaking, upon conscious reappraisal of the self. . . . Preoccupation with the inner-life seems to become greater. (p. 17)

Neugarten (1964, 1976) referred to this increased saliency of the inner-life as an increased "interiority" of personality. Neugarten regarded this increased "interiority" as one of the inner psychological regularities of the life cycle. She contended that interiority was age-related and was relatively independent of adaptation or purposive behavior.

Levinson (1978) found the initial focus of a man in the mid-life transition period was a reappraisal of the past. He contended that a man's need to reconsider the past emerged in part from a keen awareness of his mortality and a desire to use time more wisely. This reappraisal often involved the entire life structure--a man's values, goals, and life purpose; his wife, children, friends, work, and community.

Levinson, in contrast to Neugarten, emphasized the strong emotional tone that accompanies this reappraisal, maintaining that the desire to question and modify one's life stems from the healthiest part of the self. He stated

A profound reappraisal of this kind cannot be a cool, intellectual process. It must involve emotional turmoil, despair, the sense of not knowing where to turn or of being stagnant and unable to move at all. . . . Every genuine reappraisal must be agonizing, because it challenges the illusions and vested interests on which the existing structure is based. (Levinson, 1978, p. 199)

Gould (1972) found the introversion-reappraisal theme in his 35- to 43-year-old age group. He noted that his subjects focused on an existential questioning of self, values, and life itself with a tone of "quiet desperation" and an increased awareness of a time squeeze. Harry (1976) suggested that the freeing of "the omnipresent constraints of family" for men with teenage children may furnish the structural conditions for a reflective reevaluation of one's life or for attempts to explore new or long-abandoned experiential possibilities. Kerckhoff (1976) commented that in middle life there is a sudden breaking through of the suppressed and neglected elements in life and a questioning of the purpose of the second half of life.

Morale. A review of the research on the morale of mid-life males needs to be prefaced by noting the complexity and confusion related to operationally defining "morale." In the mid-life research various terms are used that are sometimes synonymous and sometimes not synonymous with morale.

"Life satisfaction," "happiness," and "well-being" are such terms. Schwab and Cummings (1970) argued that satisfaction and morale were the same thing. The Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) Morale Scale consisted of one general question on happiness and 12 questions about various affective states. Most of the research related to the morale of mid-life men has been discussed in terms of life satisfaction and/or happiness. Little attention has been given to definitional clarity of these terms in the mid-life literature.

Vaillant (1977) and Lowenthal et al. (1975) specifically studied the happiness and/or life satisfaction of their samples. Vaillant operationalized "happiness" as four or more of the following self-judgments as being true: (1) job is enjoyable, (2) job meets personal expectations, (3) health feels excellent, (4) marriage is enjoyable, (5) the present is the happiest, and (6) the present is not the unhappiest period in life. Vaillant found that despite inner turmoil, the men he rated as "Best Outcomes" regarded the period from 35 to 49 as the happiest in their lives, and the period from 21 to 35, although seemingly calmer, as the unhappiest. The men who seemed least well adapted in mid-life yearned for the relative calm of their young adulthood and viewed the storms of middle age as too painful.

Vaillant reported that 68% of the men with mature adaptive styles were happy, while only 16% of the men with immature adaptive styles were happy at $p < .001$. Happiness

was four times as frequent, then, among men rated as having mature defenses.³

Lowenthal et al. (1975) measured self-evaluation of well-being by the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) and the Affect Balance Score. The LSI indicated that middle-aged parents were among the least satisfied age groups studied, with only high school seniors being less satisfied. The positive-negative affect assessment revealed that middle-aged men were the group least likely to feel "on top of the world" and were inclined to high levels of restlessness. Preretirement stage men turned out to be the most satisfied of all on the LSI. Lowenthal et al. concluded that their results suggested that there were peaks and valleys in satisfaction throughout the course of adult life rather than a systematic decline in satisfaction.

The Kansas City samples studied by Neugarten and her associates found that life satisfaction was not related to age (Havighurst, Neugarten, & Tobin, 1963). Personality types, however, were found to be related to life satisfaction. Respondents who were high on the "integrated" style of personality had high life satisfaction regardless of whether they were active in a variety of social roles or not. "Unintegrated" types, at the other extreme, were low or medium in life satisfaction regardless of their activity level. Thus, personality characteristics seemed to be pivotal dimensions for measures of life satisfaction in the Kansas City samples.

Cross-sectional research on happiness and life satisfaction for middle-aged men yielded conflicting results. Glenn (1975), Harry (1976), and Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found the mid-years to be a period of general happiness and satisfaction for the majority of men. In contrast, the research of Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) and Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) identified a curvilinear relationship between life satisfaction and age with the mid-years reflecting a downward trend.

Data on the "global happiness" of 2,012 men and women from three recent U.S. national surveys⁴ were reported by Glenn (1975). Glenn found that females, as a whole, reported greater global happiness at each age level than males. Males, however, did report an increase in happiness over the life cycle. Following are the percentages of married males reporting to be "very happy": 18 to 39--33.7%; 40 to 59--39.6%; 60 and over--44.4%.

Harry (1976) analyzed data from the 1973 NORC General Social Survey in order to examine the major correlates of overall happiness for males according to stage in the family life cycle. The survey was a "self-weighting national probability sample of non-institutional United States population, 18 years of age and over" (p. 290). Harry's sample was selected from the survey to include only full-time employed, single, or married males ($n = 374$). Men were classified according to their particular stage of the family life cycle.

The data depicted "a fairly benign aging process in which men become happier over the life cycle, their varying definitions of happiness notwithstanding" (p. 295). Harry did not find any crisis periods in which levels of reported happiness or satisfaction in any particular sphere took a marked drop. He noted, however, that the fifth stage of the life cycle might contain a hint of mid-life transition.

Hayes and Stinnett (1971) developed the Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale (MYLSS) to measure the life satisfaction of middle-aged husbands and wives and to ascertain areas of their lives that were most and least satisfying. The subjects of the study were 360 husbands and wives who were parents of students enrolled in an undergraduate family relations course at Oklahoma State University during the school year 1967-68. The age range of the respondents was primarily from 40 to 54, and the majority (72%) still had at least one child living at home.

The majority, over 51%, indicated that the present time was the happiest time of their life. Females scored significantly higher than males on the MYLSS. Hayes and Stinnett suggested that this might be largely due to the fact that men were experiencing more disappointment and tension in their occupations. This was suggested by the finding that the greatest difference between males and females on subscores was in the occupational area with men indicating less satisfaction than females. The authors speculated that "perhaps

the male's great dissatisfaction with his occupation contributed to a lower level of satisfaction in other areas of his life" (p. 673).

In contrast, studies by Campbell et al. (1976) and Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) found satisfaction and happiness to drop in the middle years. Campbell et al. examined differences in happiness and life satisfaction among adults of all ages, ranging from early adulthood to old age. Their data suggested that old age was a period of relatively low levels of happiness and high levels of satisfaction. However, young adulthood was characterized by relatively high levels of happiness and low levels of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction and happiness were found to be quite low during middle age. Evidently, middle-aged people have lost the fleeting pleasures of youth and not yet attained the tranquility of later life (George, 1980).

Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) found a curvilinear relationship for life satisfaction, with the highest degree of satisfaction found in the over-60 age groups and the lowest levels of satisfaction found from the late 30's to late 40's. They looked at income security aspirations, satisfaction, and achievement by age group. Level of satisfaction was conceptualized as a decreasing function of the perceived difference between levels of aspiration and achievement with the greater the difference, the greater the level of dissatisfaction.

It is difficult to feel confident about making many generalizations about the life satisfaction and happiness of middle-aged men considering the inconsistency of the research findings. Glenn (1975), Harry (1976), and Hayes and Stinnett (1971) reported that the middle years were a time of general happiness and satisfaction for many men, while Campbell et al. (1976), Levinson (1978), Lowenthal et al. (1975), and Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) indicated that they were a time of varying degrees of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Several studies agreed that men were not as happy and/or satisfied as women in the middle years, however (Glenn, 1975; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971). Several studies noted a relationship between occupational satisfaction and life satisfaction (Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Mason & Faulkenberry, 1978), suggesting that the mid-life males' overall life dissatisfaction may be related to occupational dissatisfaction. The results of Vaillant's (1977) and Havighurst et al.'s (1963) research are interesting because they suggested that happiness and satisfaction may be a function of personal adaptive style (Vaillant) or personality type (Havighurst et al.) rather than a function of life cycle stage. Clearly, more research is needed on the life satisfaction of mid-life males.

Family Relationships

The mid-stage of the family life cycle is likely to be a critical time for all three generations involved. In this

period, the average couple has been married for 20 or so years and have adolescent children and parents at retirement or postretirement ages. These stages are widely regarded as crisis points by many authors and researchers (Brim, 1976; Chilman, 1968; Cohen, 1979; Vincent, 1972). The middle-aged parent is often caught in the middle of a three-generational cycle,

between the increasingly complex, costly and disturbing needs of adolescent children who are bursting with desire for entrance into the adult world and the increasing problems and needs of grandparents who generally are bursting with desire not to leave their full status in the adult world. The middle-aged adult, who may feel that his own status is threatened somewhat by his own developmental stage, is apt to feel further threatened by the competing, but somewhat similar claims of both the older and younger generations. (Chilman, 1968, p. 307)

The marital relationship. A recent review of the literature on marital quality and related concepts (happiness, satisfaction, adjustment, etc.) indicated that although the quality of marital relationships continues to be the most widely studied topic in the field, studies on the relationship between marital quality and stages of the family life cycle yield varying results (Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

Prior to 1970, research findings are inconsistent in terms of establishing if the effects of time on the quality of marriage are consistently negative or varied over the life cycle (Lewis, 1975). Some early studies found a linear relationship between marital satisfaction and stages of the family life cycle, indicating that marital satisfaction

appeared to decline as a result of progression through various stages of the family life cycle (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Pineo, 1961).

Cuber and Harroff (1965) identified five marital types in their study of successful upper-middle-class Americans: conflict-habituated, devitalized, passive-congenial, vital, and total. They found the most prevalent types to be the devitalized and passive-congenial and concluded that there are few good husband-wife relationships in middle age in the middle class (Troll, 1971).

Since 1970, most of the studies of marital quality have found a U-shaped pattern over the marital career (Burr, 1970; Campbell et al., 1976; Figley, 1973; Orthner, 1975; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970). George (1980) described the general form of this U-shaped curve:

Levels of marital satisfaction are quite high during the early years of marriage (when most couples are in their 20s). They decrease somewhat for couples in their 30s, reach their lowest point in the 40s, and then increase through late middle age and peak again during old age. Therefore, it appears that middle age is characterized by relatively low levels of marital satisfaction, whereas the later years of marriage are usually quite satisfying. (p. 80)

All of the studies since 1970, however, do not report low levels of mid-life marital satisfaction. Spanier, Lewis, and Cole (1975) found no curvilinear relationship for probability samples of middle-class couples in either Georgia or Iowa. Miller (1976) found that recovery of marital satisfaction occurred earlier in the family life cycle than most

research indicated, resulting in a small positive correlation between length of marriage and satisfaction. Rollins and Cannon (1974) and Rollins and Galligan (1978) suggested that only 4% to 8% of the variance in the marital satisfaction of their sample of Mormon couples could be explained by marital career stage. Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found a high degree of marital satisfaction in their middle-aged sample, and that in some areas of marriage there was an increase in satisfaction during the middle years. Companionship was clearly indicated by the majority of respondents (62%) as the most rewarding aspect of the marriage relationship. This finding was also reported by Clausen (1976), Gould (1972), Grunebaum (1979), and Lowenthal and Haven (1975).

Vaillant (1977) found marital satisfaction to vary with men's overall life adjustment rather than with life cycle stage. He concluded

There was probably no single longitudinal variable that predicted mental health as clearly as a man's capacity to remain happily married over time. How a man described his marriage over the years predicted his career success, the relative maturity of his defenses, and his own perception of his happiness as effectively as did the more obvious fact of his having been labeled or not labeled mentally ill. (p. 320)

Moreover, the men who continued to find satisfaction in their marital sexual adjustment throughout the life cycle were much more likely to have good overall adjustment, to be successful in their careers, and to enjoy their jobs.

Vaillant's findings on the positive relationship between career success and marital stability were confirmed in a

later study of men who head the 100 largest companies in the United States. Ninety-five percent were still married to their first wife (King, 1978).

Lowenthal et al. (1975) and Thurhner (1976) reported extensive data on the mid-life marriages of their samples. In general, their findings are in accord with much of the current research on marital satisfaction in mid-life. They found that marital dissatisfaction tended to peak during the period preceding the empty-nest but that increased satisfaction followed in the postparental and early retirement stages.

Some interesting findings emerged when the quality of middle-age marriage was compared with the other age groups studied--newlyweds and preretirement couples. Sex differences were found among the middle-aged subjects that were not found in the other life stages. Middle-aged women were conspicuously more critical of their spouses and mentioned the most difficulties in getting along with their husbands.

Lowenthal et al. found that although a few men approached their family roles in terms of the interpersonal relationships and responsibilities involved, most men responded to their family roles in terms of the general economic function they performed. In fact, these researchers maintained that a man's sense of identity, happiness, and anxiety centered on occupational attainments rather than on family matters. Rollins and Feldman (1970) reported that marital satisfaction

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may be influenced more by occupational experiences for husbands than the events and developmental levels of the children in their families.

Lowenthal et al.'s examination of the emotional dimensions and unconscious issues involved in marriage by projective material (Murray T.A.T.) revealed especially interesting data. The projective material seemed to pinpoint the importance of affiliative nurturant feelings of the men that had not been evident in the objective discussions of their marital relationships. Among the women, in contrast to the men, the projective material bore close resemblance to the data obtained by the direct approach. Lowenthal et al.'s work indicated differences in men's and women's evaluation of marriage in mid-life with women expressing more dissatisfaction than men.

There appear to be many complexly interwoven structural and psychological factors that may impose special strains on marriage in the mid-life phase of the life cycle (Thurnher, 1976). Three of the most frequently found reasons for strains in the marital dyad at mid-life are (1) men and women being out of phase in their dominant careers, (2) boredom and de-illusionment, and (3) the presence of adolescent children.

Numerous writers on the mid-life period indicated that marital strain and tension increased in the middle years because the marital partners' major careers were out of

phase (Chilman, 1968; Grunebaum, 1979; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1972; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976; Neugarten, 1968a, 1979; Thurnher, 1976). The man's career might be growing, plateauing, or exerting increased pressure and/or boredom-- but for most men, it remained essentially the same career. In contrast, many women's careers as mothers were terminating or abating, and these women were searching for new directions. Neugarten (1968a) reported that for the women the most "conspicuous characteristic" of middle age was a sense of increased freedom. Thus, many mid-life marriages are likely to be taxed by the fact that the spouses' dominant careers are out of synchronization.

Marital boredom and de-illusionment also may contribute to mid-life marital dissatisfaction (Brim, 1976; Cuber & Harroff, 1965; Kerckhoff, 1976; Levinson, 1978). George (1980) noted that "mid-life crisis" has been suggested as a cause of low levels of marital and general life satisfaction in middle life in which individuals reassess the meaning and accomplishments of their marital and family relationships. Levinson (1978) suggested that de-illusionment is involved in a man's relationship with his wife: "Many men are able to consider seriously in their late thirties and forties marital problems that they previously ignored or only dimly acknowledged" (p. 256).

The disruptive influence of teenage children on marital relations is a recurrent theme in the literature and research

on mid-life (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Bohannon, 1973; Chilman, 1968; Clausen, 1972; Feldman, 1965; Levi, Stierlin, & Savard, 1972; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976; Thurnher, Spence, & Lowenthal, 1974; Vaillant, 1977).

Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that children exerted considerable adverse pressure on the marital relationship and that this pressure increased as they became older. Vaillant (1977) noted that there was not one man in his sample who was undisturbed by his adolescent children. Thurnher (1976) found consensus from his subjects that being a parent was most difficult when children were teenagers and that the most frequently reported causes of marital disagreement and conflict were children. In a study of marital communication, Feldman (1965) found that children seemed to have a negative impact on the marriage in terms of reducing spousal interaction.

Lowenthal and Chiriboga (1972) found that both men and women looked forward to the departure of their children as an event that would improve marital relations. The disruptive influence of children was either explicit or implicit in parents' anticipation of improved marital relationships following their children's departure (Thurnher, 1976).

Parenting adolescent children. Although the literature on parent-child relationships is voluminous, studies on the middle phase of the family life cycle and most specifically

on the relationship between the mid-life male and his children are limited. Some of the studies are clinically oriented (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Levi, Stierlin, & Savard, 1972; Westley & Epstein, 1969). Others have investigated the universality and dynamics of intergenerational conflict (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971; Erikson, 1970). Research has also focused on similarities and differences in values and ideologies and the relationship of these domains to socialization practices and the affective aspects of parent-child interaction (Bengtson, 1971; Block, Haan, & Smith, 1969; Keniston, 1968; Thurnher et al., 1974). Studies, however, that focus directly on the permutations of the parent-child relationship across the life cycle (for example, Pressey & Kuhler, 1957) remain rare (Lowenthal et al., 1975).

Vaillant's (1977) and Lowenthal et al.'s (1975) studies did consider the varying perceptions of parents toward their children across the life cycle and the fathers' interactions and perceptions of their adolescent children. The following excerpt from Vaillant's book aptly captured the essence of the relationship between middle-aged men and their teenage children:

Like the character disorder and the infant, the adolescent has the capacity to get under our skin, rekindle old flames, and to stimulate parents in parts of their innermost selves that they had forgotten existed.
(p. 224)

Lowenthal et al. tried to discover how parents' perceptions of their children varied over the years. They found that both the middle-aged, who were still contending with a high school senior, and those in the preretirement stage considered teenage children to be especially trying for parents. About three-fourths of both the middle-aged parents and those facing retirement reported some conflict with children. It should be noted that feelings toward children did not influence the psychological well-being among men but did seem to influence that of women (Thurhner, 1976).

Chilman (1968) noted that different functioning in the parental role was required as children became less attached to the family, and this necessitated new parental role learnings. Adolescent children put "heavier pressure on parental psychological resources" than younger children (Chilman, 1968, p. 305). Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found in their middle-aged sample that children's welfare was the greatest worry for the largest proportion of respondents.

Parent-caring. The responsibilities and concerns over the welfare of aging parents are another issue for the middle-aged. Neugarten (1979) referred to this as "parent-caring." One current study indicated that it is not marriage, parenthood, grandparenthood, the climacteric, or the empty nest but parent-caring that is emerging as a major problem and source of stress in family life (Lieberman, 1978).

In a study of children of the elderly, Lieberman (1978) found differences in the response of men and women to parental change, which are in keeping with the findings of Adams (1968) and Firth, Hubert, and Forge (1970). Women assumed the responsibility of primary "kin-keepers" in kin relationships. Moreover, women perceived more change in aging parents and were more preoccupied and bothered by it than the men were. Lieberman's research also suggested that middle-class couples have greater difficulty than working-class couples in assuming personal responsibility as their parents become increasingly dependent.

Although there is little research on the mid-life male in relationship to parents, there is enough to suggest that there are some important issues in this area for many men. The growing dependencies of aging parents (Troll, 1975) may accentuate the mid-life crisis for "the male if they remind him that his own life is finite and that he too may become dependent on his own children" (Cohen, 1979, p. 469). Further problems may arise when decisions must be made about life circumstances of parents that may conflict with the man's own life style (Cohen, 1979).

Other troublesome feelings are likely to surface for a mid-life male as he contemplates his aging parents. Gould (1972) found that as parents turned more toward their middle-aged children, there was a "muffled renewal" of old conflict lines that was kept suppressed by knowledge that parents

were getting older and direct criticism would be too guilt provoking. Chilman (1968) suggested that the middle-aged are likely to be stirred by a new empathy for their own parents as they feel their adolescent children tugging for separation in a way they themselves once did--and still do when kinship ties get too strong.

To sum up, a review of the literature indicated that the family venture is probably a stormy one for most families at mid-point in the life cycle (Chilman, 1968). For the mid-life male, this means the increased probability of strain and stress in the marital relationship, struggles with adolescent children, and increasing concern about aging parents. Vincent (1972) referred to the middle-aged as the "caught generation"--caught in between the demands of the youth and the expectations of the elderly. The mid-life male is, indeed, likely to experience feeling "caught" in his relationships with his wife, children, and parents.

Career Issues

Considerable research suggests that occupation and family are the most central life arenas for most middle-class, middle-aged men (Bharadwaj & Wilkening, 1980; Kimmel, 1980; Levinson, 1977, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976; Vaillant, 1977). For many mid-life men, however, primary focus is on occupational issues rather than on family concerns (Bharadwaj & Wilkening, 1980; Kimmel, 1980; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a).

There seems to be a particularly close tie between a man's sense of identity and his occupational status. Work takes the largest percentage of a man's waking hours and constitutes for most a fundamental influence on the development and change in the sense of self through the life cycle (Brim, 1976). Kimmel (1980) noted that for men, occupation involved a great investment of time, emotional energy, and commitment during the middle years of the family life cycle. The job is such an important aspect of most men's identities that it ranks in importance along with one's name, sex, and citizenship (Kimmel, 1980).

Various studies underscored the importance of work for the mid-life male. Neugarten (1968a) concluded that men perceived a close relationship between life-line and career-line. Goldman's (1973) study of middle managers and industrial specialists found work orientation to be greatest in the age period 36 through 45. The primacy of work-related factors for men was also documented in a recent study of domain predictors of satisfaction with personal efficacy (Bharadwaj & Wilkening, 1980).

The next section reviews the literature on three major themes in the mid-life career literature: career assessment, aspiration-achievement gap, and financial pressure. Then the findings of the major developmental studies on career-related issues are summarized.

Career assessment. The literature on the mid-life male clearly demonstrates that career assessment and re-examination are major issues for most men in the middle and upper-middle class (Brim, 1976; Chilman, 1968; Cohen, 1979; Grunebaum, 1979; Heald, 1977; Kimmel, 1980; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a, 1979; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976; Thurnher, 1976). In mid-life men are at a point where they review the success or shortcomings of their work careers (Thurnher, 1976). Levinson (1978) noted that at 40 men can make some judgments about their relative success or failure in meeting the goals they set for themselves in early adulthood. They have either achieved their "dream" and found that it was not all they expected, or have not realized their "dream" and face disillusionment (Grunebaum, 1979). Kerckhoff (1976) said that

Mostly, it would seem, the middle-aged, middle-level executive suffers from fears of his ability to compete, and from doubts as to the value of competing; the doubts are epitomized by the title of a recent book, The Failure of Success (1972). (p. 6)

The mid-life male's assessment of career issues may be stimulated by a combination of internal and external factors. Middle age is a time of stock-taking and the occupational realm is a major area of reassessment (Neugarten, 1968a). Tausky and Dubin (1965) and Goldman (1973) found that corporation managers go through a transition period during their early or middle 40's during which they come to look back on their careers rather than forward to them.

A man's career re-evaluation may also be prompted by various factors in a particular job or profession. For professionals and managerial personnel, mid-life is likely to be the "decade of decision" in which significant promotions up the career ladder either occur or do not (Chilman, 1968).

The specific nature of mid-life career concerns vary for men depending on their particular circumstances. Some are striving for promotions, some are thinking of changing to a more self-fulfilling occupation, and others have ruled out their options. These men envisage years of plodding along and shift their sights to retirement, the preparation for which becomes their major goal (Thurnher, 1976). Regardless of whether they succeed, fail, or plateau, however, few men escape some type of mid-life career reassessment.

Aspiration-achievement gap. During mid-life, most American males must adjust their career aspirations of earlier years downward to fit current reality (Brim, 1976). Men evaluate the ambitions and goals of their young adulthood in terms of their actual achievements in middle age. For many men, such a reappraisal points out a gap between earlier aspirations and actual level of success; this is often called the "aspiration-achievement gap." A man's realization of this gap usually involves the readjustment of his goals and idealistic hopes to what is perceived as realistic future possibilities in terms of the amount of time left in the occupation.

Many commentators on the mid-life period have viewed the aspiration-achievement gap and its reconciliation as the "source and content of personality change" (Brim, 1976, p. 5) and/or as a contributing factor to a crisis or turning point (Kimmel, 1980). Because the aspirations that men set for themselves are primarily expressed through work (Brim, 1976), career issues are likely to be a particularly important part of mid-life. Cohen (1979) indicated that occupational concerns are a major component of the transitional process that occurs during mid-life for men. Brim (1976) stated that

While many men make this adaptation, to the aspiration-achievement gap in small steps, in a gradual alteration of one's self image, so that a transition to a new sense of self is accomplished without crisis, for others depression emerges as one realizes he can no longer count on seemingly limitless years ahead. (p. 5)

Many mid-life men have to confront the fact of reaching the final plateau of their career. Writers have commented on the disappointment, frustration, boredom, and fear of youthful colleagues' advancement that often attended recognition of the plateau phenomenon (Bardwick, 1975; Desmond, 1964; Fried, 1967; Jaffee, 1971; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a; Peterson, 1968). The mid-life males of Hayes and Stinnett's (1971) sample experienced high levels of disappointment and tension in their occupations.

In writing on the crisis or turning point in the mid-life males' occupational cycle, Kimmel (1980) said this

"crisis" involves what may be called the "career clock" (p. 285). This "clock" is similar to Neugarten's (1968b) "social clock." It is the individual's subjective sense of being "on time" or "behind time" in career development. If a man is markedly "behind time," or if his goals are unrealistic, he must begin to adjust his goals to become more consistent with what is feasible.

Financial pressure. Another major source of dissatisfaction, frustration, and stress for mid-life men comes from financial concerns (Gould, 1972; Kerckhoff, 1976; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Oppenheimer, 1974; Tarnowieski, 1975). Economists and political scientists have noted the financial pressures placed on the middle-age, middle-income categories of society by both the young and old (Kerckhoff, 1976). Old people and young people cost a lot of money--money which to a large extent is earned by middle-aged people. Middle-class workers, Kerckhoff (1976) noted, often suffer from a "plateau phenomenon" in which salaries do not keep going up, and promotions may be given to people 10 years younger.

Oppenheimer (1974) found the "life-cycle squeeze" to affect most blue-collar and many medium and low level white-collar occupations. The "life-cycle squeeze" refers to the fact that increases in the husband's earning over time do not parallel increases in the cost of living associated with mid-life stages of the family life cycle. Men in their 40's and 50's who typically have adolescent children to care for

and educate undergo strong economic pressure for additional income. Only in the relatively high-level professional, managerial, and sales occupations do average earnings peak at the same time that family income needs are peaking. Thus, Oppenheimer maintained that for many American families-- indeed the average American family--earnings do not keep pace with a maturing family. This is one important factor, according to Oppenheimer, that contributes to the high labor-force participation of married women in their 40's and 50's.

Developmental studies. Levinson (1978), Lowenthal et al. (1975), and Vaillant (1977) reported extensive data on the career and occupational concerns of their subjects. The general nature of their respective findings differed, however, appearing to reflect the diverse composition of the samples. Levinson's treatment of career issues was the most comprehensive of the developmental studies. He focused on occupational sequences and salient career issues for mid-life men. Lowenthal's sample of primarily lower level middle-class workers displayed particularly high levels of work-related stress and boredom. In contrast, Vaillant's elite sample of primarily successful businessmen and professionals displayed remarkably low levels of career anxiety.

The importance of work in the life of men was reflected in Levinson's basic organization of the life sequences of his sample in The Seasons of a Man's Life (1978). He found

that all of the men he studied went through one or another of five work sequences, and the particular sequence influenced the way a man embarked on the mid-life transition and worked on its tasks.

The following statement aptly summarized Levinson's findings on mid-life men and their work:

No matter how well or poorly he has done with the ambitions of his thirties, he is likely to experience a letdown in the Mid-life Transition. Even if he has accomplished a great deal and is on the path to greater attainment, his basic orientation toward success and failure normally begins to change. It is no longer crucial to climb another rung on the ladder--to write another book, get another promotion, earn more of the rewards that meant so much in the past. (p. 214)

Lowenthal et al. (1975) found that financial problems related to work were the main source of stress for middle-aged men. Aside from work, there was no single area which even a fifth of the men found to be stressful. For men in the preretirement stage, however, work issues were a less salient source of stress.

Most of the mid-life men had clearly reached a plateau in their occupational career. Their work problems mainly focused on lack of advancement possibilities, and the pressures of assuring sufficient income to maintain a comfortable life style throughout the retirement period. The men were "apprehensive about the vicissitudes of their work lives and their economic status" (p. 211) and had what the researchers refer to as an "almost obsessive concern" with building up security for retirement.

Other sources of stress related to the extent to which men felt they were responsible for their own success or lack of it. They seemed to believe that their work should be more important to them. They had entered the work world with the assumption that their efforts and diligence would somehow bring "success." Now, stipulations that the job be satisfying were conspicuously absent. Rather, the men were pressured and struggling, questioning their own achievements, and conscious of compromises and sacrifice.

The life style of these middle-aged men was markedly narrow and focused, centering primarily on occupational roles and activities. The men seemed to focus on their closing career options and the present implications of past career choices, rather than on the last child leaving home. There was a realization that original occupational and material goals could never be met. The notion of coping was dominant among these men as they expressed their concern with minimizing frustration. They seemed "to be mustering all their strength to get themselves through another ten or fifteen years on the job, so that their style of life would not have to be too drastically altered at retirement" (p. 235).

In general, these mid-life men presented a stressful profile. The mixture of strain and boredom in the men struck the researchers as a threat to their mental and possible physical health in future years. These men were the least likely of the male groups studied to have a sense of

internal control and to feel they could influence the conditions and circumstances of expected change in the next transition.

Lowenthal and Chiriboga (1972) concluded,

It is, perhaps a sad commentary on the lives of middle-class, middle-aged men in our society, most of whom have reached their peak occupational level, that fewer than $\frac{1}{4}$ of them reported work as a source of current satisfaction; moreover, only five considered their past occupational achievements a matter of pride. (p. 11)

Vaillant's (1977) sample and findings offered a contrast to almost all of the research previously reviewed. The uniqueness of Vaillant's sample is particularly apparent in that virtually all the men had achieved occupational distinction by mid-life.

Vaillant reported profound differences in the way men related to work in their early 30's and late 40's. He found what he called a "Career Consolidation" period between Erikson's stage of Intimacy and Generativity. In the "Career Consolidation" period, which occurred in the 30's, men "seemed to be too busy becoming, too busy mastering crafts; too busy ascending prescribed career ladders to reflect upon their own vicissitudes of living" (p. 202). At 35, the men could not wait to move into the "driver's seat."

By the late 40's and early 50's, Vaillant said these men were far more concerned about those who worked for them and with them. They tended to shift away from an

earlier emphasis on career achievement and mundane responsibilities at work toward more inner explorations and enjoying seeing others become more fruitful in their jobs. Vaillant's flexible age range observations are reflected in his statement at "at age forty--give or take as much as a decade--men leave the compulsive, unreflective busywork of their occupational apprenticeships, and once more become explorers of the world within" (p. 220).

Vaillant's men, in contrast to Lowenthal et al.'s, flourished as they moved out of the career consolidation period. Vaillant noticed a renewed vigor and excitement of this period that seemed to result from a sense of liberation after the constraints of the 30's and career consolidation. He referred to this as a rebirth experience for some. He generally found that the men became vibrant and interesting around 45. Vaillant said that most of the men outgrew "the crassness and narrowness of career consolidation" (p. 219), and became increasingly committed to and responsible for their careers.

Some of the men in one of Neugarten's studies (1968a) revealed a similar sense of the richness of mid-life. It is interesting to note that her sample, like Vaillant's, was composed of successful men. Neugarten's subjects were randomly selected from a pool of names originally drawn from university alumni lists, business and professional directories, and from American Men of Science and Who's Who

in America. Neugarten found that the higher the individual's career position, the greater his willingness to explore various themes of middle age.

Besides a growing introspection and reassessment of career goals, Neugarten found a sense of mastery, competence, and control in the middle-aged business executives. She noted that successful men at this point in their career often reported a highly developed decision-making ability, built from experience in similar situations over a period of years. She also found a sense of "maximum capacity and ability to handle a highly complex environment and a highly differentiated self" (Neugarten, 1968a, p. 97).

In summary, the literature indicated that career-related issues were likely to be particularly significant for mid-life men. Most men reassess their occupational life at this point in the life cycle. A man's evaluation of his career status is important because most middle-class men's identities are closely connected to their work, and many of their aspirations are expressed through their careers. Mid-life is likely to be a turning point in regard to work because future possibilities are generally known, and men are likely to be in touch with both their limitations and the finiteness of time. Further stress is apt to come from various financial concerns that are likely to peak in mid-life.

Interpersonal Relationships

Some literature has indicated that interpersonal relationships are likely to have special importance for mid-life men. The role of friendship in the life of the middle-aged man, however, is characterized by a curious lack of research attention. Tognoli (1980) noted that much of the available literature on male friendships is "highly speculative, but there is beginning to accrue some work with a strong empirical base" (p. 273). Tognoli addressed the issue of impoverished male friendships and concluded from his review of the literature that men alienate themselves from other men. He focused on the deficiencies in male friendships and traced the antecedents of this impaired intimacy.

Although Tognoli referenced what appears to be a most comprehensive bibliography on male friendships, the works of Vaillant (1977), Gould (1972), and Grunebaum (1979) were not cited. These scholars are particularly important to note because they have countered what tends to be the predominant view of male friendships--i.e., "most men are not emotionally close to other men and many men have never had a close male friend" (Lewis, 1978).

Grunebaum (1979) reviewed recent literature on the psychological changes that occur in middle-aged men and women and concluded

In summary, it appears that in middle-age, men turn increasingly toward other people for sources of fulfillment--they seek increased companionship with their

wives, closer relationships with their children, better friendships, and the opportunity to teach and guide their younger colleagues. (p. 50)

A comparison of the references used by Tognoli and Grunebaum is enlightening; Levinson (1978) was the only reference cited by both. Otherwise, they referenced completely different articles on male relationships. This is not to denigrate the scholarship or contribution of either review, but to point out that more research is needed in this area and that male friendships may not be as impoverished as Tognoli indicated.

Vaillant (1977) found a relationship between male affiliation in middle age and adjustment in general. Men who used mature adaptive styles (defenses) had rich friendship patterns. However, only 6% of the men with immature defenses had as many friends. The businessmen who had the best marriages and the richest friendship patterns were the ones who became presidents of their company. Vaillant reported that most of the men at the time of his study were closer to their wives and children, to their friends and colleagues and that no man in the study was less committed to human relations at 50 than he had been at 25. Thus, Vaillant did find men with rich friendship patterns in mid-life: "Friendship and mature defenses went hand in hand" (p. 86).

Several other studies pointed to the importance of friendship for mid-life men. Gould (1972) found that friends became increasingly more important than they had been

previously. Booth (1972) found that white-collar men had more friends than white-collar women. Gutmann's (1969, 1976, 1977) research documented men's increased concern for affiliation as they became older.

The discussion of male friendship was conspicuously absent in Levinson's study. Tognoli (1980) suggested two possible interpretations: (1) Levinson failed to address the issue of friendship because he placed little value on it, or (2) his respondents did not think friendship was important. Levinson said, "as a tentative generalization we would say that close friendships with a man or woman is rarely experienced by American men" (p. 335). It is important to underscore tentative because it is unclear the extent to which the absence of data on friendship reflects Levinson's bias.

In sum, there were some data that suggested that friendship and affiliation are important to many men in mid-life (Gould, 1972; Grunebaum, 1979; Gutmann, 1969, 1976, 1977; Vaillant, 1977). Although research indicated that friendship is an impoverished area for many men, some middle-aged men have or want to have good friends. Clearly, further research is needed in this area.

The Nature of the Mid-life Period

An analysis of the literature on the mid-life male indicates that there are essentially three different perspectives on the nature of this period. Mid-life is variously discussed

by theorists and researchers as a crisis period, a transitional stage, or a time of orderly and predictable change. Writers also differ in their assessment of the age range in which men have their "crisis" or "transition."

Crisis. Elliott Jaques (1965) originally coined the term "midlife crisis" on the basis of his study of the lives of 310 artists. He contended that a middle-aged person's growing awareness of his mortality produced a mid-life crisis. Jaques said that his "main theme is that the mid-life crisis is a reaction which not only occurs in creative genius, but manifests itself in some form in everyone" (p. 506). He identified the mid-thirties as the time for this crisis, allowing that it can continue for some years and does vary among individuals.

The concept of the mid-life crisis has been further elaborated in recent works emerging from the clinical psychiatric tradition (Perun & Bielby, 1979), and has become the subject of many current popular books. Vaillant (1977), however, noted that the popular press, "sensing good copy, has made all too much of the midlife crisis" (p. 222). He concluded that, like adolescent turmoil, "midlife crises are much rarer in community samples than in clinical samples" (Vaillant, 1977, p. 223).

Brim (1976) assessed the status of "male mid-life crisis" from a social scientist's perspective:

It may be that the field of adult development is similar to child development some fifty years ago in its exploration of age-linked developmental sequences. And, like child development then, it is in real danger from pop culture renderings of 'life stages,' from the public seizing on the ideal of age-linked stages of development, such as male mid-life crisis, just as it seizes on astrology and tea-leaf reading. Certainly, the evidence does not justify linkage of crises either to stages, or to specific ages, during the mid-life period. (p. 7)

Similarly, Nydegger (1976) commented on four papers published in the International Journal of Aging and Human Development:

Four papers, differing in research design and using both longitudinal and cross-sectional data, came to a number of convergent conclusions: There was little evidence for a midlife crisis; stability was most prominent during the forty- to fifty-year decade. (p. 137)

Numerous other studies have also indicated that a "mid-life crisis" is not a common event (Clausen, 1976; Gurin et al., 1960; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Neugarten, 1968a, 1968b, 1976, 1979; Nydegger, 1976; Soddy, 1967; Vaillant, 1977).

Transition. The term "transition" is frequently used to describe the mid-life period. Gould, Levinson, Lowenthal, Thurnher, Chiriboga, and Vaillant are the main researchers who use this term in connection with the mid-life male. Levinson, however, is the most prominent spokesman for the mid-life transition concept. Levinson (1978) asserted that the period he calls "mid-life transition" begins around 40 and lasts to about 45. He strongly holds to these specific

age ranges. These age linkages for mid-life transition were one of the most controversial and challenged aspects of Levinson's work and to date, have not been empirically validated.

Levinson (1978) reported that 80% of his respondents had a "mid-life transition" that was a time of "moderate or severe crisis." He found that every aspect of these men's lives came into question, and that they were horrified by much that was revealed. Levinson noted that these men were "somewhat irrational" but concluded that this was a normal part of the developmental challenge in mid-life. He contended that the majority of men between the ages of 40 and 45 experience a moderate or severe transitional period in which they question every aspect of their lives. They cannot go on as before and need time "to choose a new path or modify the old one" (p. 199).

Vaillant (1977), unlike Levinson, did not find much emotional turmoil during mid-life. In fact, he stated "crisis is the exception, not the rule" (p. 223). Further, Vaillant does not believe that there are age linkages connected to mid-life transitions. He estimated mid-life transitions take place around 40, "give or take as much as a decade." He said,

Certainly there is nothing magical about a given year; Elliott Jacques's thirty-seven, Gail Sheehy's "Catch 30," Daniel Levinson's forty-to-forty-two definitions of middle life crisis are as arbitrary as suggesting that adolescent crises occur at sixteen.

Certainly, there were many men in the Study who between thirty-five and fifty got divorced, changed jobs, and became depressed. However, divorce, job disenchantment, and depression occur with roughly equal frequency throughout the adult life cycle. (p. 223)

Gould (1978) developed a phase specific theory of adult life. He divided the adult years into four age periods: 16-21, 22-28, 29-34, and 35-45. He considered the mid-life decade to be a critical period for the development of an adult consciousness:

It is the fundamental task of deep self-renewal that is the force that drives all the mid-life experience. . . . Mid-life, then, is every bit as turbulent as adolescence, except now we can use all this striving to blend a healthier, happier life. For unlike adolescents, in mid-life we know and can accept who we are. (1978, p. 307)

Although Lowenthal et al. (1975) discussed adult transitions, they did not take a position of the nature of the mid-life period. Rather, their main focus in connection with transitions was "to delineate the parameters and identify concepts useful for the study of adaptation to inevitable changes that occur across the life course" (p. x). They noted that there are a "few rather global theories" about the adult life-course, but contended that "at this stage of our knowledge, it would be highly premature to adopt the framework of any one of them" (p. 223).

Adaptation. In contrast to many of the previous researchers, Neugarten's (1979) report on her research indicated that normative changes or transitions that are expected to occur do not bring emotional upheaval for most

people. Neugarten used the concept of the "social clock," which consists of "the interaction of age norms, age constraints, age-status systems, and age-related roles" (Kimmel, 1980). This internalized social clock is one of the major sources of timing for adults. Neugarten contended that as long as life proceeds in accord with individuals' own sense of timing, they make the necessary adaptations and change without great emotional turmoil and upheaval.

Emotional upset and "crisis," according to Neugarten (1976) are caused by events that occur "off-time"--i.e., either too early or too late according to social norms. Events or transitions that happen "on-time," i.e., in keeping with social age norms, are less likely to involve emotional upset. Neugarten (1976) stated her basic perspective,

In summary, then, there are two distinctions worth making; first, that it is the unanticipated life event, not the anticipated--divorce, not widowhood in old age; death of a child, not death of a parent--which is likely to represent the traumatic event. Moreover, major stresses are caused by events that upset the sequence and rhythm of the life cycle--as when death of a parent comes in childhood rather than in middle age; when marriage does not come at its desired or appropriate time; when the birth of a child is too early or too late; when occupational achievement is delayed; when the empty nest, grandparenthood, retirement, major illness, or widowhood occur off-time. In this sense, then, a psychology of the life cycle is not a psychology of crisis behavior so much as it is a psychology. (p. 20)

This review has indicated that there are a number of theories about adult development, in general, and mid-life, specifically. The early theorists--Buhler (1933), Jung (1933), and Erikson (1950)--have been followed by a modern

group of scholars interested in formulating theories of adult development--Gould (1972, 1978), Levinson (1978), Neugarten (1968b, 1979), Riegel (1976, 1977), Vaillant (1977), and Perun and Bielby (1979). Lowenthal et al. (1975) were not included with the above because they have not adopted a theoretical framework as they maintained that to do so was "highly premature" at this point. Rather, they focused on the identification of important concepts in adult development and the systematic collection of relevant data. Thus, the current state of adult development consists of "armchair" theories of the life-span that come from inferences drawn from clinical and empirical observation but lack rigorous testing by empirical research (Kimmel, 1980).

In the mid-life period, we currently lack data to determine which perspective on the nature of the middle years for men is most accurate (Brim, 1976; Kimmel, 1980; Perun & Bielby, 1979). There is no empirical evidence to support the concept of developmental periods in mid-life or to justify the linkage of crises or transitions to specific ages.

Researchers have generally agreed, however, that some mid-life men are likely to confront a number of issues and undergo some profound internal and/or external changes. Some scholars have considered Neugarten's studies to provide a convincing case for mid-life being a time of normal adaptation, with emotional turmoil being the exception (Kimmel,

1980; Perun & Bielby, 1979). However, the studies of Gould, Levinson, Lowenthal et al., and Vaillant suggested that some mid-life men experienced levels of concern and upheaval that cannot be accounted for by Neugarten's "social clock" and "on-time, off-time" explanations.

This investigation considered the systematic collection of empirical data on the ways men dealt with salient mid-life issues to be the most fruitful research strategy at this time. It is premature, and perhaps even misleading, to focus on determining the nature of the mid-life period. Rather, we need to investigate mid-life men's morale as well as the nature and extent of their concerns. Such data may lend support to one of the perspectives on the nature of the mid-life period for men. Regardless, it will contribute to empirical knowledge in the field of adult development and mid-life males.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The data for the study were collected from personal interviews of 150 middle-class men from a large industry in Greensboro, North Carolina. The men were interviewed at the corporation by trained interviewers. The company is involved in the communications industry and employs approximately 3,500 people at the site studied. A variety of professional and technical personnel are employed by the company: managers, engineers, computer workers, administrators, and clerical and office workers. The company also employs its own full-time medical and legal professionals.

Sample

The sample consisted of men that were married, had one or more children, and were currently employed full-time. The subjects were selected by a stratified random procedure (Kerlinger, 1973) from a population of 984 men who met the cited criteria. Fifty men were selected from three age groupings: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.

The majority of the respondents were white (97%) and Protestant (62%). Approximately 29% were Catholic and 1% were Jewish. The mean years of schooling was 15.6 years. Further details on these demographic characteristics may be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Mid-life Male Sample

<u>Age</u>						
<u>Group 1</u> n=50		<u>Group 2</u> n=50		<u>Group 3</u> n=50		
<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>	
34	10%	40	18%	46	14%	
35	14%	41	18%	47	14%	
36	8%	42	16%	48	18%	
37	28%	43	12%	49	26%	
38	16%	44	22%	50	8%	
39	24%	45	14%	51	20%	

<u>Race</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
White	94%	96%	100%	97%
Black	4%	2%	-	2%
Spanish/ American	2%	2%	-	1%

<u>Religious Preference</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Protestant	58%	58%	70%	62%
Catholic	28%	38%	22%	29%
Jewish	2%	2%	-	1%
None	12%	2%	8%	7%

<u>Education</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
12 years	6%	16%	6%	9%
13-15 years	22%	24%	26%	24%
16 years	34%	44%	44%	40%
17 years or more	38%	16%	24%	26%
Mean years	15.9	15.3	15.6	15.6

The men in the study were employed in a variety of salaried positions: managerial, administrative, technical, legal, and clerical. More men were interviewed from the managerial position (36%) than any other single job category. The mean years of employment by the company for the entire sample was 20 years. Forty-seven percent of the subjects had an income of \$40,000 or more. This income figure did not include any salary earned by a spouse. Further demographic characteristics concerning work may be seen in Table 2.

A very high percentage of the men were in their first marriage (92%), and few were in a second (7.3%) or third (.1%) marriage. The mean length of marriage for the total sample was 18.6 years, ranging in duration from 1 year to 33 years. Approximately half of the men's wives were employed (48%) and unemployed (52%). The majority of the women who were employed worked full-time (65%).

The mean number of children for the sample was 2.6. Men in Group 2 had the highest mean number of children living in the home and the largest percentage of teenagers living in the home. Eighty-six percent of Group 2 men had one or more teenagers at home. Most all of the men had living parents or in-laws (93%). Table 3 contains additional demographic data on the family characteristics of the men in the study.

Table 2
Work Characteristics of Mid-life Male Sample

	<u>Job Type</u>			
	<u>Group 1</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Group 2</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Group 3</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>n=150</u>
Managers	34%	46%	28%	36%
Lawyers	2%	2%	-	1%
Engineers	14%	14%	28%	19%
Computer Personnel	14%	10%	14%	13%
Professional Administrators	22%	18%	16%	19%
Clerical & Office	14%	10%	14%	13%

	<u>Income</u>			
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$10,000-15,999	2%	-	-	1%
\$16,000-21,999	4%	2%	8%	5%
\$22,000-27,999	14%	10%	6%	10%
\$28,000-33,999	18%	18%	24%	20%
\$34,000-39,999	26%	16%	10%	17%
\$40,000-45,999	18%	20%	18%	19%
\$46,000+	18%	34%	34%	29%

	<u>Length of Time with Company</u>			
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
1-4 years	4%	2%	-	2%
5-9 years	4%	2%	-	2%
10-14 years	48%	18%	2%	23%
15-19 years	34%	18%	4%	19%
20-24 years	10%	46%	32%	30%
25-29 years	-	14%	38%	17%
30-33 years	-	-	24%	8%
Mean years	14	19	26	20

Table 3

Family Characteristics of Mid-life Male Sample

<u>Marital Status</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Group 2</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Group 3</u> <u>n=50</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>n=150</u>
First marriage	94%	90%	92%	92%
Second marriage	6%	10%	6%	7%
Third marriage	-	-	2%	1%
<u>Wife's Employment Status</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wife employed	34%	50%	60%	48%
Wife unemployed	66%	50%	40%	52%
Part-time work	23%	38%	43%	35%
Full-time work	77%	62%	57%	65%
<u>Living Parents or In-laws</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	94%	94%	90%	93%
No	6%	6%	10%	7%
<u>Years Married</u>				
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
1-5 years	4%	2%	-	2%
6-10 years	12%	4%	2%	6%
11-15 years	62%	8%	2%	24%
16-20 years	22%	60%	18%	33%
21-25 years	-	26%	36%	21%
26-30 years	-	-	38%	13%
31-33 years	-	-	4%	1%
Mean years married	13.4	18.2	24.1	18.6

Table 3 (continued)

	<u>Number of Children</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	
1	12%	6%	12%	10%
2	56%	40%	42%	46%
3	28%	34%	18%	27%
4	4%	16%	20%	13%
5	-	2%	6%	3%
6	-	-	2%	1%
7	-	2%	-	1%
Mean number of children	2.2	2.8	2.7	2.6

	<u>Number of Children Living in Home</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	
0	6%	-	16%	7%
1	10%	16%	32%	19%
2	52%	48%	26%	42%
3	28%	22%	18%	23%
4	4%	12%	8%	8%
5	-	-	-	-
6	-	2%	-	1%
Mean number of children in home	2.1	2.4	1.7	2.1

	<u>Number of Teenagers Living in Home</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>	
0	56%	14%	28%	33%
1	30%	30%	30%	30%
2	12%	42%	32%	29%
3	2%	12%	8%	7%
4	-	2%	-	1%
5	-	-	2%	1%
1 or more teenager in home	44%	86%	72%	67%
Mean number of teenagers in home	.6	1.6	1.3	1.5

Procedures

The public relations department and the medical staff of the company studied were instrumental in obtaining the necessary corporate permission for conducting the study. The public relations manager, however, was the key person in the company for all phases of the study related to the industry. He was primarily responsible for sponsoring the study, getting the permission of the necessary people, and attending to the many details involved in implementing the project.

The public relations department provided a computerized list of all married male employees between the ages of 34 and 51 ordered by age. The random sample was drawn from this listing. Before the men were chosen for the study, however, the residential president of the company sent all male employees between the ages of 34 and 51 a letter informing them of the project and encouraging their participation if selected for the study. The men selected for the study were notified of their selection by a letter explaining the purpose of the research, the basis of their selection, and the importance of their participation. The letter emphasized that the individual interviews would be completely confidential and that their employer would be informed of the study results and not of individual respondents. (See Appendix B for copies of both letters.) Subjects were then personally contacted by phone at work and

asked to participate in 1-hour interviews during work hours. Appointment times were arranged to suit the schedules of the employees.

Ninety-four percent of those contacted agreed to participate in the study. Several reasons were generally given by those that refused to participate. They either stated that they did not have enough time or indicated that they did not like to participate in things like this project.

The Profile of Male Mid-life Concerns was administered individually by trained interviewers during working hours at the chosen industry. The interviews were conducted in private rooms located in a remote section of the building, assuring that the participants could attend the interview with little likelihood of being identified by co-workers. Prior to the interview, subjects were again assured of complete confidentiality and informed that names would not be used on the interview schedule.

The interviews were conducted by three trained interviewers. The interviewers were carefully instructed in correct interviewing techniques and supervised closely throughout the data collection phase of the study. The interviewing process took approximately 6 weeks to complete. At the conclusion of the study, the company was given a report of the findings of the study. A thank-you letter and summary of the study were sent to each participant.

Research Measures

Dependent Variables

Morale. The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969) was used to assess morale (see Appendix C). Morale was operationalized as the relative balance between positive and negative emotional experiences. The Affect Balance Scale taps the general balance of positive and negative feelings one has about the way his life is going (Breytspraak, 1974). Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) found the items in the scale to be representative of a respondent's total affective profile.

Positive experiences were assessed by asking the respondent how often during the last week he felt (1) on top of the world, (2) excited or interested in something, (3) pleased about having accomplished something, and (4) proud because someone complimented him on something he had done.

Negative affect was measured by asking the respondent how often during the last week he felt (1) very lonely or remote from other people, (2) depressed or very unhappy, (3) bored, and (4) so restless he couldn't sit long in a chair.

Response alternatives and coding values were as follows: not felt (1), felt once (2), felt several times (3), and felt often (4). The Affect Balance Score was computed by subtracting a negative-affect score from a positive-affect

score. The positive-affect score was the summation of the four positive items, and the negative-affect score was the summation of the four negative items. Scores can range between -12 and +12.

The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale was selected for this study because prior research has demonstrated that it was a valid and reliable measure of morale for adults (Bradburn, 1969; Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965; Breytspraak, 1974; Larson, 1978; Lawton, 1975; Lowenthal et al., 1975). Lawton's assessment of the scale pointed out some of its merits as a measure of morale. He noted that the scale

was constructed with the rationale suggested by earlier investigations that positive and negative feelings were qualitatively different from one another, capable of coexisting in the same individual at the same time or on alternating occasions, and while relatively independent of one another, could still be looked upon as a 'ledger' of adjustment in terms of the excess of positive feelings over negative feelings. (Lawton, 1975, p. 87)

Lawton (1975) also underscored several other important aspects of the scale. Although both the positive and negative affect scores are related to self-estimates of "happiness," the two scales are virtually unrelated to each other among adults up to the age of 60. Lawton commended Bradburn on the inclusion of positively phrased items, noting some morale measures have predominantly negatively phrased items.

In a review of 30 years of research on the subjective well-being of older Americans, Larson (1978) presented evidence regarding the reliability and validity of major

measures of morale. Bradburn's Scale was included as one of the most frequently used measures of well-being. In a test-retest with adults of ages 18 and older, the scale was demonstrated to have adequate reliability (gamma = .74 for men; gamma = .71 for women). Validity statistics indicated a $r = .61$ correlation to Rosow Morale Scale (Moriwaki, 1974) and $r = .66$ correlation to the Life Satisfaction Index (LSIA) (Bild & Havighurst, 1976). In sum, the evidence suggests that Bradburn's measure is a valid and reliable indicator of morale for mid-life individuals.

Following the example of Lowenthal et al. (1975), the response alternatives in this investigation are expanded to four choices to overcome the criticisms of the "either-or" nature of the Bradburn battery. Lowenthal et al. subjected the expanded response alternative from their study to a principal component analysis with orthogonal varimax rotation and found the two factors contributing most to the total variance were positive and negative factors, indicating that the correlation matrix exhibited the same associations as Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) found using nonfactor-analytic procedures with the original version.

Concern. Concern was assessed by the Mid-life Concern Scale, a Likert-type scale developed for this study (see Appendix D). The scale measured a subject's cognitive evaluation, emotional reaction, reappraisal, and stress relative to each life domain under investigation.

The Scale was composed of four items which are listed below. For each of the five domains, an appropriate term was inserted in the blank for each of the four questions. The terms used in the interview schedule were "physical condition," "issues related to aging" for psychological themes, "career," "family relationships," and "relationships with people" for interpersonal relationships. These terms were defined for the respondent before the Scale was administered. For example, the interviewer said,

Now I want to ask you some general questions about your relationships with people. By "relationships with people," I mean people you consider to be significant acquaintances, friends, and business associates.

Concern was assessed by the following questions:

1. "How often do you think positively about your _____?"
2. "How often are you pleased with your _____?"
3. "How often do you think about new ways to deal with your _____?"
4. "How often do you consider your _____ to be a problem for you?"

Response categories ranged from Never (0) to A Very Great Deal (5) on a 6-point scale. Scores were totaled to obtain a Mid-life Concern Score in each of the five domains. High levels of concern were indicated by a high score, and low levels of concern were indicated by a low score. Theoretically, scores could range from 0 to 20.

This scale was developed for this study because an appropriate measure could not be found in published research.

The scale was designed to measure various degrees of concern, ranging from no concern to great concern. The measure tapped both cognitive and affective components of concern or consideration of a life domain.

The scale was designed to reflect low concern in a domain by showing high levels of positive thinking, low levels of exploring new ways of behavior, high levels of satisfaction, and low levels of perception of a problem in a domain. High levels of concern were reflected by high levels of negative thinking, high levels of exploring new ways of behavior, low levels of satisfaction (or high levels of being upset), and high levels of perception of a problem in a domain.

The underlying concepts for the Mid-life Concern Scale came from Levinson's (1978) discussions of ways many mid-life men deal with major life issues. Levinson discussed the mid-life period for the men in his sample in terms of the way they thought about aspects of their life, the extent to which they reappraised their behavior relative to life areas, and their emotional response to various life domains.

In the construction of the scale, care was taken to avoid a negative bias. Note that the first two items were positively worded to avoid establishing a negative set. Two questions were positively worded (1, 2) and two were negatively phrased (3, 4).

Independent Variable: Age

The age groups of 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51 were the independent variables of the study. As the literature has shown, age is a major variable in any discussion of mid-life men. The selected age categories were suggested by Levinson's conviction that most men experienced crucial change between 40 and 45. Other researchers, however, have not reported these age ranges. Gould (1972, 1978) reported that mid-life transitions were likely to occur from 35 to 45. Vaillant (1977) found such changes to take place throughout the mid-life period--at 40--give or take as much as a decade.

The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule, Profile of Male Mid-life Concerns, consisted of four types of measures: (1) morale, (2) mid-life concern, (3) demographic, and (4) descriptive. Demographic data were obtained through items distributed throughout the interview schedule. The following demographic data were collected: age, educational achievement, religious preference, occupation, income, and information related to marital and family status and relationships. Descriptive measures assessed various aspects of the subjects' physical conditions, psychological themes, family relationships, career issues, and interpersonal relationships (see Appendix E).

The interview schedule examined the five areas that research has indicated were most likely to contribute to male

mid-life concern and re-appraisal: Physical, career, psychological, family, and interpersonal relationships. Each of these sections had two basic types of questions: (1) items designed to elicit descriptive information about the area, and (2) the Mid-life Concern Scale to assess the respondent's concern about the particular domain.

There were several reasons for including questions designed to gather descriptive data. First of all, because limited research has been done on mid-life males, descriptive data are needed. Secondly, the descriptive questions preceded the Mid-life Concern Scale in each of the five major sections, serving to sensitize the subject to the particular area under investigation.

The process of developing the Profile merits consideration. It should be emphasized that this study was basically exploratory due to the limited amount of empirical research on mid-life males. Initially, it was hoped that the majority of items for the interview schedule could be either taken or adapted from valid and reliable existing instruments. An extensive review of possible instruments, however, resulted in few that were deemed appropriate for this study. As a result, it was necessary to develop the Mid-life Concern Scale and some of the items to elicit descriptive data.

The initial phase of the development of the interview schedule consisted of interviews with six mid-life men. Extensive feedback was obtained during these interviews and

used in subsequent revisions. The Profile is a combination of newly developed items, established measures, and adapted items. The items that were constructed for the Profile were based on the review of mid-life literature. Several knowledgeable judges have examined the Profile and attested to its face validity. Further data on the validity and reliability of the instrument are not available. It is hoped that future research will address this area.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study investigated the nature of the mid-life period for middle-class males between the ages of 34 and 51. The sample consisted of 50 men from each of the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. The research considered subjects' morale and concern about physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships.

This investigation tested six hypotheses that stated there would be no significant differences between men in the three specified age groups in morale and in concern about the five domains under consideration. Each of the six hypotheses was tested by analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons. The .05 level of significance was used to determine acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses. A posteriori multiple comparisons (Scheffé test) were conducted for each significant ANOVA to test for significant differences between the means of the three age groups. The .05 level of significance was specified for the Scheffé procedure.

The study also gathered descriptive data about the subjects' physical condition, job, family, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes about the aging process. Some of these data are available in terms of percentages for each

age group and for the total sample. Statistical tests were not performed on these variables.

This chapter reports information regarding the testing of the six hypotheses of the study. It also presents selected descriptive variables related to the five life domains.

Examination of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₁ There will be no significant differences in morale between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, 46-51.

No significant differences in morale between men in the three age groups were found. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Results of the analysis of variance procedure are presented in Table 4. A comparison of the means clearly shows the similarity of the morale scores for the three groups.

Hypothesis 2

H₂ There will be no significant differences in concern about physical condition between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.

No significant differences in concern about physical condition between men in the three age groups were found. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The means and standard deviations of the three groups clearly indicated the homogeneity of the men's concern about their physical condition (see Table 5).

Table 4
Analysis of Variance of Morale for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	7.37	3.69	.24	.78
Within Groups	147	2227.72	15.15		
Total	149	2235.09			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	2.34	3.77
2	2.88	3.40
3	2.66	4.44
Total	2.63	3.87

Table 5
Analysis of Variance of Concern about Physical Condition for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	10.09	5.05	.72	.49
Within Groups	147	1031.4	7.02		
Total	149	1041.49			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	7.00	2.72
2	7.02	2.58
3	6.46	2.64
Total	6.83	2.64

Hypothesis 3

- H₃ There will be no significant differences in concern about psychological themes between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, 46-51.

Significant differences in concern about psychological themes ($p < .03$) were found between men in the three age groups (see Table 6). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Significant differences in concern about psychological themes were found for men between the ages of 40-45 and 46-51 (Scheffé', $p < .05$), with men in Group 2 being more concerned about psychological themes related to aging than men in Group 3. However, no significant differences were found between men in Groups 1 and 2, and Groups 1 and 3.

The mean score on the Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes was 8.02 for Group 2 men and 6.70 for Group 3 men. The standard deviation was 2.05 for Group 2 and 3.12 for Group 3. Clearly, Group 3 men exhibited greater variance in their concern about themes related to aging than Group 2 men but less concern overall. Group 2 men were more homogeneous in their higher level of concern about aging themes.

Frequencies for the items on the Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes may be seen in Table 7. The items that reflected the greatest differences between the two groups were the frequency with which the men thought positively about their aging, were pleased with their aging, and thought about new ways to deal with their aging. There was very little difference, however, in the frequency the men considered their aging to be a problem for them.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance of Concern about Psychological
Themes for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	43.77	21.89	3.44	.03*
Within Groups	147	933.8	6.35		
Total	149	977.57			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	7.44	2.27
2	8.02*	2.05
3	6.70*	3.12
Total	7.39	2.56

*Significant at the .05 level.

Table 7

Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Thinking Positively about Issues Related to Aging

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	-	8%
Most of the Time	18%	26%
More Often than Not	28%	22%
Occasionally	44%	30%
Rarely	8%	10%
Never	2%	4%

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Being Pleased with Issues Related to Aging

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	-	12%
Most of the Time	26%	32%
More Often than Not	28%	24%
Occasionally	32%	18%
Rarely	12%	12%
Never	2%	2%

Table 7 (continued)

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Thinking about New Ways to Deal with Issues Related to Aging

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	-	-
Most of the Time	4%	2%
More Often than Not	18%	8%
Occasionally	46%	32%
Rarely	28%	40%
Never	4%	18%

Percentages of Response Indicating Frequency of Considering Issues Related to Aging to be a Problem

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	-	-
Most of the Time	-	-
More Often than Not	4%	6%
Occasionally	28%	32%
Rarely	60%	40%
Never	8%	22%

When the frequencies for the Mid-life Concern Scale are examined, the extent of the differences between the two groups becomes apparent. Men in Group 3 were almost twice as likely to think positively about issues related to aging "all" or "most of the time" (Group 2--18%; Group 3--34%). Furthermore, almost 20% more Group 3 men were pleased with issues related to their aging "all" or "most of the time" (Group 2--26%; Group 3--44%). On both of these items, a somewhat higher percentage of men in Group 2 than Group 3 selected the "occasionally" response. Very little difference appeared in those who "rarely" or "never" thought positively about their aging (Group 2--10%; Group 3--14%). Thus, the greatest differences between the groups were found in the frequency with which the men thought positively and were pleased with their aging "all" or "most" of the time. Men aged 46-51 reported higher frequencies of positive thoughts and satisfaction about their aging than men aged 40-45.

Differences also showed up in the frequency with which the men thought about new ways to deal with issues related to aging. Sixty-four percent of the Group 2 men and 40% of Group 3 men reported that "more often than not" or "occasionally" they explored new ways to deal with aging issues. Thus, almost one quarter more of the Group 2 men were likely to consider new approaches to issues related to aging with some regularity.

Similar differences appeared in the responses that indicated little or no concern in this area. Fifty-five percent of Group 3 men "rarely" or "never" thought of alternative modes for dealing with getting older, while only 32% of Group 2 men selected these responses. Apparently, men in Group 2 were more likely than men in Group 3 to explore ways of dealing with the aging process.

Virtually no differences appeared in the frequency with which the men considered aging to be a problem for them. Sixty-eight percent of Group 2 men and 62% of Group 3 men "rarely" or "never" thought that issues related to aging were a problem. No men from either group selected the responses "all of the time" or "most of the time" for this item. About 30% of the men in both groups indicated that they "occasionally" considered aging to be a problem.

Hypothesis 4

H₄ There will be no significant differences in concern about career issues between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, 46-51.

No significant differences in concern about career issues were found between men in the three age groups. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported. The means and standard deviations of each group reflected the homogeneity of all the men's level of concern about their careers (see Table 8).

Table 8

Analysis of Variance of Concern about
Career Issues for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	17.61	8.81	1.18	.31
Within Groups	147	1096.58	7.46		
Total	149	1114.19			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	8.40	2.65
2	7.78	2.59
3	7.60	2.94
Total	7.92	2.73

Hypothesis 5

- H₅ There will be no significant differences in concern about family relationships between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, 46-51.

No significant differences in concern about family relationships were found between the three groups of men. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported. Results of the analysis of variance procedure are presented in Table 9.

Hypothesis 6

- H₆ There will be no significant differences in concern about interpersonal relationships between men in the following age groups: 34-39, 40-45, 46-51.

Significant differences in concern about interpersonal relationships ($p < .04$) were found. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Men between 40-45 were found to have significantly more concern about interpersonal relationships than men between the ages of 46-51 (Scheffé, $p < .05$). No significant differences in concern about interpersonal relationships, however, were found between men in Groups 1 and 2 and in Groups 1 and 3 (see Table 10).

The mean score on the Mid-life Concern Scale for Interpersonal Relationships for men in Group 2 was 7.00, and for men in Group 3 was 5.98. The standard deviation for Group 2 was 2.29 and for Group 3 was 2.04. The differences between men in Groups 2 and 3 are more precisely seen in Table 11 which contains frequencies for the scale on interpersonal relationships. Some interesting differences and similarities between the two groups are reflected in these items.

Table 9
Analysis of Variance of Concern about Family
Relationships for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	19.37	9.69	1.47	.23
Within Groups	147	968.42	6.59		
Total	149	987.79			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	5.28	2.29
2	6.16	2.35
3	5.74	3.00
Total	5.73	2.57

Table 10
Analysis of Variance of Concern about Interpersonal
Relationships for Mid-life Males

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between Groups	2	26.09	13.05	3.13	.05*
Within Groups	147	611.3	4.16		
Total	149	637.39			

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	6.44	1.75
2	7.00*	2.29
3	5.98*	2.04
Total	6.47	2.07

*Significant at the .05 level.

Table 11

Mid-life Concern Scale for Interpersonal Relationships

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Thinking Positively about Relationships with People

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	6%	10%
Most of the Time	46%	58%
More Often than Not	26%	20%
Occasionally	20%	10%
Rarely	-	2%
Never	2%	-

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Being Pleased with Relationships with People

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	4%	4%
Most of the Time	44%	66%
More Often than Not	34%	26%
Occasionally	16%	4%
Rarely	-	-
Never	2%	-

Table 11 (continued)

Percentage of Responses Indicating Frequency of Thinking about New Ways to Deal with Relationships with People

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	2%	2%
Most of the Time	2%	4%
More Often than Not	20%	18%
Occasionally	66%	50%
Rarely	10%	26%
Never	-	-

Percentages of Response Indicating Frequency of Considering Relationships with People to be a Problem

Response	Group 2	Group 3
All of the Time	2%	-
Most of the Time	-	-
More Often than Not	4%	4%
Occasionally	34%	34%
Rarely	52%	46%
Never	8%	16%

The greatest difference between the groups appeared in the frequency with which the men reported being pleased with their relationships with other people. Twenty percent more men in Group 3 than Group 2 indicated that they were pleased with their relationships with others "most of the time." The least difference between groups appeared in the frequency with which the men considered their relationships with others to be a problem for them.

Moderate differences between the two groups appeared for the other two items. The men in Group 2 were somewhat less likely to think positively about their interpersonal relationships than the men in Group 3. In other words, the older men (46-51) were more likely to think positively "most of the time" about their relationships with others than were the younger men (40-45).

In response to the frequency with which they were likely to explore other ways to deal with interpersonal relationships, men in Group 2 were more likely to "occasionally" think about new ways to deal with their friends and associates than men in Group 3. Furthermore, more men in Group 3 reported that they "rarely" explored new ways of relating to others than men in Group 2.

Examination of Selected Descriptive Variables

Physical Condition

Descriptive data on the men's physical condition can be seen in Table 12. In an evaluation of their general health,

Table 12

Selected Descriptive Variables for Physical Condition
of Mid-life Males

Percentage of Responses for Self-Rated Health Description

Description	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No Health Problem	84%	80%	68%	77%
Health Problem That Does Not Affect Behavior	16%	14%	26%	19%
Health Problem That Affects Behavior	-	6%	6%	4%

Percentage of Responses for Self-Rated Comparisons of Health
with Others of the Same Age

Description	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Excellent	50%	70%	60%	60%
Good	42%	30%	34%	35%
Fair	8%	-	6%	5%
Poor	-	-	-	-

only 4% of the total sample reported that they had a health problem that affected their behavior. Of the total sample, 77% reported that they did not have a health problem, and 19% stated that they had a health problem that did not affect their behavior.

When asked to compare themselves to others their age, 95% of all the men considered their health to be "excellent" or "good." Only 5% considered their health to be "fair" and none evaluated their health to be "poor." Further indication of the men's physical well-being was found in their accounting of the number of days they missed work in the past year. Almost 60% reported no absences, and only about 12% missed three or more work days because of health reasons. Interestingly enough, the oldest age group reported the least amount of absenteeism due to health.

Career Issues

Percentages for measures concerning job satisfaction, job stress, and financial satisfaction are contained in Table 13. What was most striking about these tables was the homogeneity of the three groups. For example, in response to the item on occupational satisfaction, 60% of Group 1, 68% of Group 2, and 62% of Group 3 indicated that they were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their current job.

A similar pattern emerged in a measure of job stress: 62% of Group 1, 54% of Group 2, and 64% of Group 3 reported

Table 13

Selected Descriptive Variables for Career Issues
of Mid-life Males

Percentages of Responses Indicating Degree of Satisfaction
with Current Job

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Satisfied	20%	28%	30%	26%
Somewhat Satisfied	40%	40%	32%	37%
Mixed Feelings	24%	20%	28%	24%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	14%	8%	4%	9%
Very Dissatisfied	2%	4%	6%	4%

Percentages of Responses Indicating Extent of Job Stress

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Great Extent	-	6%	4%	3%
Great Extent	28%	16%	12%	19%
Some Extent	62%	54%	64%	60%
Little Extent	4%	14%	8%	9%
Very Little Extent	6%	10%	10%	9%
Not at All	-	-	2%	1%

Percentages of Responses Indicating Personal and Familial
Financial Satisfaction

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Satisfied	10%	20%	10%	13%
Pretty Well Satisfied	40%	34%	50%	41%
Satisfied	32%	36%	20%	26%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	18%	18%	18%	18%
Very Dissatisfied	-	2%	2%	1%

that their job was stressful to "some extent." Furthermore, very low percentages of men in each group reported that their job was stressful to a "very great extent" or "not at all."

In an evaluation of financial satisfaction, approximately 80% of the men in all three groups expressed some degree of satisfaction with their financial status. Eighteen percent of each group were "somewhat dissatisfied" and 0% of Group 1, 2% of Group 2, and 2% of Group 3 were "very dissatisfied."

Family Relationships

Selected descriptive data on the subjects' relationship with their wives, children, and parents and in-laws can be seen in Table 14. High percentages of satisfaction with the companionship with their wives were found in all groups: 78% in Group 1, 62% in Group 2, and 78% in Group 3 indicated that their companionship with their spouse was "very good." Group 2 men, however, reported lower levels of satisfaction with their marital companionship than the men in the other groups. Eighteen percent of Group 1, 36% of Group 2, and 18% of Group 3 selected the "OK" response.

The vast majority of the men were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their relationship with their children (90%). A higher percentage of men in Group 2 (48%) than Group 1 (26%) or Group 3 (38%) were "somewhat satisfied." Although overall levels of reported conflict with children were low (69%), a higher percentage of Group 2 men reported "moderate" levels of conflict than Group 1 or Group 3 men (Group 1--20%, Group 2--46%, Group 3--20%).

Table 14

Selected Descriptive Variables for Family Relationships
of Mid-life Males

Percentage of Responses Indicating Feelings about Companionship
with Wife

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Good	78%	62%	78%	73%
OK	18%	36%	18%	24%
Not so Good	4%	2%	4%	3%

Percentage of Responses Indicating Degree of Satisfaction
with Relationship with Children

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Satisfied	66%	48%	54%	56%
Somewhat Satisfied	26%	48%	38%	34%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	8	8%	6%	7%
Dissatisfied	-	6%	2%	3%

Percentage of Responses Indicating Level of Conflict Between
Subject and Children

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
High	-	2%	4%	2%
Moderate	20%	46%	20%	29%
Low	80%	52%	74%	69%

Percentage of Responses Indicating Degree Parents and In-laws
a Burden to Subject

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Not at All	64.3%	69%	52.9%	62%
Very Little	26.2%	26.2%	29.4%	27%
Somewhat	7.1%	4.8%	17.6%	10%
Very Much	2.4%	-	-	1%

The men were asked the degree to which they considered their parents and in-laws to be a burden to them. Sixty-two percent of the total sample indicated that they were "not at all" a burden. A lower percentage of Group 3 men (53%) selected this response than Group 1 (64%) or Group 2 (69%) men. Similarly, a higher percentage of Group 3 men indicated that parents or in-laws were "somewhat" of a burden than Group 1 or Group 2 men.

Interpersonal Relationships

The interview schedule included a question that asked subjects about their satisfaction with their friendships. Almost twice as many men in Group 3 (32%) as Group 2 (18%) reported that they were "very satisfied" with their friendships (see Table 15).

Table 15

Descriptive Variables for Interpersonal Relationships
of Mid-life Males

Percentage of Responses Indicating Degree of Satisfaction
with Friendships

Response	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Very Satisfied	26%	18%	32%	25%
Satisfied	50%	44%	40%	45%
Somewhat Satisfied	16%	32%	26%	25%
Not Too Satisfied	4%	4%	2%	3%
Not At All Satisfied	4%	2%	-	2%

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to examine morale and concern about physical condition, psychological themes, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships for men in age groupings 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. Six hypotheses were tested. Four of the hypotheses were supported and two were not supported. No differences were found between men in morale and concern about their physical condition, career issues, and family relationships. Significant differences were found, however, in men's concern about interpersonal relationships and psychological themes related to aging.

Morale

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no significant differences in morale between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51, and this hypothesis was supported. This study found the middle years to be a time of uniformly high morale for the sample of middle-class men.

A comparison of morale scores from this study with morale scores from Lowenthal et al.'s (1975) research illustrates the high scores reported by these men (see Table 16). The morale measure used in both investigations was the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale. Lowenthal et al.'s (1975) work

Table 16

Comparison of Morale Scores with Lowenthal,
Thurnher, and Chiriboga^a

	<u>Group 1</u> (age 34-39)		<u>Group 2</u> (age 40-45)		<u>Group 3</u> (age 46-51)		<u>Total</u>	
This Study	15.3		15.8		15.6		15.6 ^b	
	<u>High School</u> Men Women		<u>Newlyweds</u> Men Women		<u>Middle-Aged</u> Men Women		<u>Pre-Retirement</u> Men Women	
Lowenthal et al.'s Study	13.7	13.7	15.1	15.7	14.8	15.1	15.5	16

^aHigher scores imply higher morale. A constant of 13 has been added to all scores in order to make all scores positive.

^bThe average morale score for the total sample was higher than all of Lowenthal's age grouping, except for pre-retirement women who had the highest score.

provided data on the morale of men and women at four pre-transitional life stages: high school seniors, young newlyweds, middle-aged parents, and preretirement couples.

The mean morale score for the total sample of this study was higher than all but one of the eight groups studied by Lowenthal et al. Only preretirement women, the highest morale group in Lowenthal et al.'s sample, reported higher scores than the men in this investigation. It was also noteworthy that the mean morale score for each of the three groups in this study was higher than Lowenthal et al.'s sample of middle-aged men.

Research on the morale of mid-life men is characterized by inconsistent findings. Campbell et al. (1976), Levinson (1978), Lowenthal et al. (1975), and Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) reported varying degrees of dissatisfaction and unhappiness in the middle years. Lowenthal et al. (1975) found middle-aged men to be among the least satisfied age group studied. Campbell et al. (1976) and Mason and Faulkenberry (1978) reported a curvilinear relationship between life satisfaction and age with the mid-years reflecting a downward trend.

In contrast, Glenn (1975), Harry (1976), Hayes and Stinnett (1971), Vaillant, (1977), and Neugarten (1964) found the mid-years generally to be a time of happiness and satisfaction for men. Neugarten (1964) found no relationship between age and life satisfaction but did find personality

type to be related to life satisfaction. Vaillant's (1977) work suggested that general happiness for mid-life men was a function of personal adaptive style.

The data from this investigation supported the research that found the middle years to be characterized by generally high morale for middle-class men (Glenn, 1975; Harry, 1976; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Neugarten, 1964; Vaillant, 1977). The data obtained in this study suggested that morale was a function of factors other than age or life cycle stage. Previous research has demonstrated a positive relationship between physical health, financial satisfaction, occupational satisfaction, social class, and life satisfaction (Bharadwaj & Wilkening, 1980; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Spreitzer, Snyder, & Larson, 1980). It appears that the generally high levels of health, financial satisfaction, and social class of this sample may have influenced the morale levels reported.

Several empirical studies have shown that physical health and financial adequacy were the strongest predictors of life satisfaction regardless of the age stratum of the subjects (Spreitzer et al., 1980). Research (Spreitzer & Snyder, 1974) has also indicated that both health and income were stronger predictors of life satisfaction than a variety of other background characteristics.

Clearly, the men in this study perceived that they were in good physical condition--95% judged themselves to be in "excellent" or "good" health. The majority of men were

financially satisfied. Fifty-five percent reported that they were "very" or "pretty well" satisfied. When the "satisfied" response category was included, 81% of the sample indicated some level of financial satisfaction. Only 19% reported that they were "somewhat" or "very" dissatisfied.

The importance of financial adequacy in influencing morale or life satisfaction was demonstrated by a recent study by Spreitzer et al. (1980). They found the relative effect of financial adequacy on life satisfaction to be slightly stronger than the impact of physical health conditions for persons under 65.

Some studies have found life satisfaction to be significantly more favorable at higher income and social class levels (Deutscher, 1964; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Neugarten, 1964). Hayes and Stinnett (1971) suggested that high degrees of life satisfaction among the higher social levels may simply reflect a greater command of resources with which to cope with problems and achieve goals. Further, greater success in attaining life goals would seem to contribute to a more optimistic view of life and to higher morale.

A relationship between occupational satisfaction and life satisfaction has been noted by some investigators (Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Mason & Faulkenberry, 1978). Descriptive data on job-related concerns indicated that the majority of the men were "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their job.

The overall high levels of morale for the three groups of men in this investigation suggest that mid-life is a time of general satisfaction. Further, morale seemed to be more strongly influenced by the men's financial satisfaction, physical well-being, job satisfaction, and social class than by age or life cycle stage.

Physical Condition

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no significant differences in concern about physical condition between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. This hypothesis was supported by the data.

Some studies have reported rather high incidences of various physical disorders among mid-life males (Berland, 1970; McQuade, 1972; Moon & Palton, 1963; Rosenberg & Farrell, 1976; Verbrugge, 1975). For example, Berland (1970) reported that mid-life males are prime targets for cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other ills. Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) noted that heart attacks, ulcers, and back problems were likely to be problems.

Other researchers, however, have found that physical conditions were not a major concern for most middle-aged men (Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Levinson, 1978; Rogers, 1979). Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found that health was a major worry for only 9% of their middle-aged respondents. Levinson (1978) stated that although most mid-life males experienced some changes and decline in bodily powers, the decline was

generally moderate, leaving ample physical capacities for living. The findings of this study were consistent with these studies.

The lack of significant differences in concern about physical conditions seems most likely to be a reflection of the general good health of most of the men in the sample. The descriptive data from the interview schedule was consistent with these findings (see Table 9, Chapter IV). These data supported the fact that very few men had a health problem.

As one would expect, many of the men were experiencing the normal physical changes related to aging--greying hair, loss of hair, declining stamina, change of vision, and a tendency to gain weight. Although the older men were more likely to experience such changes, this was not reflected in an increased level of concern about physical condition. This suggests that as a group the men were not particularly concerned about physical changes related to aging.

Several factors may be related to the physical well-being of this sample. First of all, these men were all married, and an extremely high percentage were in their first marriage (92%). Statistics indicate that single men are more prone to physical problems than married men (Stein, 1975). Further, the fact that these men had established long-term marital relationships suggests that they had avoided many of the stresses connected with divorce transitions and singlehood.

Another factor was the high socioeconomic status of these men. As a whole, they were well educated and moderately to highly salaried. Consequently, one would expect them to be reasonably well informed about good health practices and to have adequate finances to pursue optimum physical well-being. Finally, the company had a comprehensive medical staff on location. Regular physical exams and medical treatment were a benefit for all employees. This may have contributed to a high level of physical care as well as a high level of awareness of the importance of good health maintenance.

Psychological Themes

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be no significant differences in concern about psychological themes between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. The data did not support this hypothesis. Significant differences were found between men in age groups 40-45 and 46-51. Men between the ages of 40-45 were found to have higher levels of concern about psychological themes related to aging. Psychological themes referred to bodily changes, the aging process, years to live, personal mortality, and life evaluation.

An examination of the items of the Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes revealed similarities and differences between the two groups of men (see Table 8, Chapter IV). Although neither group considered psychological themes related to aging to be a problem for them, men in

Group 2 showed significantly more concern about these psychological issues. In comparison to Group 2 men, the Group 3 men tended more frequently to think positively and be pleased about psychological themes related to the aging process. Furthermore, men in Group 2 were more likely to think about new ways to deal with psychological issues related to aging. Thus, a higher percentage of men aged 40-45 thought more negatively and were more displeased with psychological issues related to aging than men aged 46-51.

What do these data suggest? First of all, Group 2 men experienced greater concern and awareness of psychological themes related to aging than Group 3 men. These men thought more negatively about such themes in general than the older men. Group 2 men also were more dissatisfied with issues related to their own aging and more interested in finding ways to cope with themes related to aging than Group 3 men. This suggests that Group 2 men may have experienced various psychological changes and shifts in their perceptions of aging. Group 3 men, in contrast, were intellectually more positive and emotionally more pleased with psychological themes related to aging, being less likely to focus on new ways to deal with age-related issues.

Some of the qualitative data from the interviews were especially interesting because they provided additional insights about the thinking of the two groups of men. These data came from comments made during the interview and recorded

on the interview schedule. An examination of these written reports revealed several common themes in the Group 2 men's negative perceptions of psychological themes related to aging.

At least 10 of these men indicated that they were generally questioning their past, wondering what they might have done differently. Following are selected comments that illustrate this:

I question what I have done in the past. Could the results that I am living with now have been avoided if I'd done things differently? I question how I've raised my kids. Have I made mistakes? On the job-- I can see my past mistakes.

I keep wondering if I've done the right thing . . . wondering if there is anything more I should be doing or have done.

Another theme expressed was a general awareness of aging and death. The following statement aptly captured this theme:

There is a change in the way you see life. You realize you don't have forever left. I go back and think about what I wanted to be. What I am is not that far off . . . I'm not 20 but 40. I have a general feeling that I can see 60 and 70 more clearly than when I was 20. You have the realization that you won't live forever and things have to get done. I need to prepare my family for when I'm no longer here.

The analysis of the Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes showed the Group 2 men were significantly more likely than Group 3 men to be displeased or dissatisfied with psychological issues related to the aging process. Following are some comments from the interview schedule that reflected troublesome feelings connected with aging:

Disturbing--the realization of getting older is disturbing.

It bothers me that I have to question myself about my life and self. I had higher goals for myself than I have been able to attain.

I never have gone through anything like this. It's a hard time. I question my effectiveness as a parent. I recognize my fallibility on the job. I feel I am more fallible on the job. I have a reduced energy level. . . . Parenthood causes me sleeping trouble. Parenthood is more emotionally charged than generally.

These men were all dealing with their awareness of aging and general life questioning and readily expressed a troublesome emotional quality that accompanied their awareness of these processes.

Group 2 men were also more likely to explore issues related to aging than Group 3 men. One man said,

It's more intellectual than emotional. Nothing is driving me. I'm trying to think out the logic of the future. Should I retire early and teach in college? Should I retire early or work until I'm 70? If I retire early, what kind of leisure activities would I get into? I was just recently thinking about a retirement home. Would I want a ranch house in case I got infirm?

The qualitative data from the study also provided some suggestion of why Group 3 men were less negative and displeased about psychological themes related to aging than Group 2 men. One theme was that these men appeared to be comfortable with the reality of aging, being either resigned to it or simply not bothered by the process. Some of the responses to the question, "How do you feel about your body showing signs of aging?" illustrate this theme. These comments reflect an attitude of acceptance of an aging body:

It comes with the territory.

I recognize it as part of the aging process.

I'm resigned to a certain degree.

Another theme that emerged was a genuine appreciation of some of the good things connected with aging. One man from this study said, "I'm more capable brain-wise and less capable physically." Another man said,

I don't think I'd want to be younger. I'm happier now than when I was 20. I know the world a lot better now than then. I had a lot of questions then. There's a lot you don't know from lack of experience.

The findings from this investigation are generally consistent with much of the literature concerning the impact of aging on mid-life men, but there are some important qualifications and additions. Research has generally indicated that mid-life men experience various psychological changes and shifts related to the experience of aging (Brim, 1976; Cohen, 1979; Gould, 1978; Grunebaum, 1979; Jaques, 1965; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968b).

The quantitative data revealed age frames that were more specific than most research has indicated, with the exception of Levinson (1978). This study indicated that men aged 40-45 were significantly more concerned about psychological issues related to aging than men aged 46-51. At first glance, this appears to support Levinson's work. Levinson (1978) found that many men between the approximate ages of 40 to 45 experienced a mid-life transition that

involved a highly emotional life reassessment, awareness of aging, and confrontation with personal mortality.

This study reported similar results with one important qualifier. Very few men aged 40 to 45 in this study considered psychological issues related to aging to be a problem for them, as indicated by frequency data on the Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes. Levinson, in contrast, reported that most of his sample experienced "tumultuous struggles within the self" and a time of moderate to severe reappraisal. The men in this study appeared to be dealing with psychological themes related to aging, but there was little evidence that this was a major problem for them.

The fact that Group 3 men were not highly concerned with psychological issues was consistent with Levinson's work. Levinson found that many of the older men in his sample were unperplexed by aging issues. It is noteworthy that the men in Group 3 in this study were significantly less concerned about psychological issues than Group 2 men. The theme of appreciation for the good aspects of aging was also reported in the research of Vaillant (1977) and Neugarten (1968a).

Thus, men in Group 2 were found to be significantly more concerned about psychological issues related to aging. Group 3 men, in contrast, were found to be significantly less concerned about these issues.

Career Issues

Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be no significant differences in concern about career issues between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. This hypothesis was supported by the data. The data indicated that there were no differences between the three groups of men in the degree of their concern about career issues.

The literature on mid-life men and career issues yields mixed results, except in underscoring the centrality of a man's occupational status to his life (Brim, 1976; Kimmel, 1980). Gould (1972), Lowenthal et al. (1975), and Levinson (1978) all emphasized the frustration and stress often associated with work for mid-life men. Carroll (1970) summarized several previous studies and reported that age had a U-shaped relationship with job satisfaction. Levinson (1978) speculated that men between 40-45 were likely to experience life and career-related upheavals. However, reports from the research of Vaillant (1977), Neugarten (1968a), and Gibson and Klein (1970) indicated a positive monotonic relationship between age and job satisfaction.

Certainly, the data from this study did not support a relationship between age and career stress or dissatisfaction. Selected descriptive and demographic data provided some possible explanation for the lack of age group differences for these men.

Descriptive data related to career issues was reported in Table 10 in Chapter IV. What was most striking about

these items was the homogeneity of the three groups of men. Approximately the same percentage of men in each group reported similar levels of job satisfaction, job stress, and financial satisfaction. The items indicated that the large majority of men in all age groups expressed relatively high levels of job satisfaction and financial satisfaction and experienced a moderate amount of job stress. Thus, these men were remarkably similar in terms of their general satisfaction with their job and financial status and their experience of moderate job-related stress.

The demographic data presented in Chapter III also reflected the homogeneity of this high status sample. Briefly, the sample was characterized by high levels of education, high status occupational groups, high income, and long-term employment with the same company.

The selected descriptive data indicated that the men in all three groups were very similar in their attitudes toward their work. The demographic data also showed that the men were highly similar in factors related to career issues. It seems that this homogeneity was reflected in their degree of career concerns. There were no observable differences found in the frequency with which the men thought positively about their career, were pleased with their career, thought about new ways to deal with their career, and considered their career to be a problem.

Several other factors may have influenced the similarity of career concerns and relatively high levels of occupational satisfaction. First of all, the men were exceptionally well paid and were generally satisfied with their earnings. It is possible that this factor was reflected in job-related measures. Hall (1971) and Hall and Foster (1977) contended that income may serve as feedback regarding performance which affects psychological success/failure. It may be, therefore, that income may have had an impact on career concerns and satisfaction, tending to influence these areas in a positive direction.

A second factor that may have been related to the subjects' career attitudes was their overall life satisfaction or morale. Research on the correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction has strongly suggested a positive relationship. In their review of literature, Bamundo and Kopelman (1980) found 16 studies reporting correlations between job and life satisfaction. The data from this study indicated that the men had very high morale.

The men in this study seemed to resemble the successful businessmen and professionals described by Vaillant (1977) and Neugarten (1968a). Most of the men in this study had achieved relatively high professional and managerial levels. There was no evidence to support Levinson's (1978) or Brim's (1976) suggestion that career concerns contributed to or caused a crisis or turning point in mid-life. Rather, these

men were remarkably similar in their attitudes and feelings toward career issues.

Family Relationships

Hypothesis 5 stated that there would be no significant differences in concern about family relationships between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. This hypothesis was supported by the data.

Much of the literature on family relationships has indicated that the family is likely to undergo many pressures in mid-life (Brim, 1976; Chilman, 1968; Cohen, 1979; Vincent, 1972). Research has found that the mid-life male is likely to undergo some changing role relationships with his wife, adolescent children, and aging parents and in-laws and that this is often a stressful period (Grunebaum, 1979; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1979; Vaillant, 1977).

Some studies have reported that middle age is characterized by low levels of marital satisfaction (Burr, 1970; George, 1980; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Troll, 1971). Much of the literature has indicated that the parenting of adolescent children is a particularly stressful experience (Chilman, 1968; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Vaillant, 1977). Studies also have reported that caring for aging parents is often a major problem for people in mid-life (Adams, 1968; Firth et al., 1970; Lieberman, 1978).

There is, however, some research that has indicated that the mid-life family is not a major source of stress and unhappiness for many mid-life men. Some researchers have not found low levels of marital satisfaction in mid-life (Burr, 1970; Hayes & Stinnett, 1971; Spanier et al., 1975; Vaillant, 1977). Hayes and Stinnett (1971) found mid-life males and females to rate marital relations as the area of greatest satisfaction. Burr (1970) reported that there was no systematic decrease over the life cycle in marriage satisfaction and that in some areas of marriage there was an increase in satisfaction during the middle years.

Some researchers have pointed out that adolescent children and parents and/or in-laws may not contribute to male mid-life stress as much as to female mid-life stress. Thurnher (1976) found that feelings toward children did not influence the psychological well-being of men but did influence that of women. Lieberman (1978) reported that women were more preoccupied and bothered by the changes in aging parents than men were.

The findings of this study lend support to research indicating that the family is not a major source of mid-life stress for men. There are several factors to consider in understanding some of the reasons for the lack of statistical differences in the men's level of concern about their family relationships. First of all, descriptive data indicated a

uniformly high level of positive feelings about the men's companionship with their wives. The majority of men in all age groups rated their marital companionship as "very good." These marriages were also extraordinarily stable. Ninety-two percent were in their first marriage; the mean years married was 18.6 years.

The study lends support to Thurnher's (1976) finding that the psychological well-being of men was not strongly influenced by their children. Interestingly, the men in Group 2 had the highest percentage of teenage children living in the home, yet they did not show evidence of greater concern about family relationships. Apparently the presence of many adolescent children did not exert enough of a strain on Group 2 men to be reflected in higher levels of concern.

Descriptive data on the men's relationships with their children and parents and in-laws were presented in Table 11, Chapter IV. Uniformly high degrees of satisfaction with their relationship with their children were found in all age groups. Over 90% of the men expressed some degree of satisfaction with their relationship with their children. Group 2 men reported higher levels of conflict with their children than men in the other groups did, but apparently this was not reflected in their level of concern.

Descriptive data indicated that the majority of men did not find their parents or in-laws to be a burden to them. Frequencies for all the groups were remarkably similar.

This information suggests support for Lieberman's (1978) findings that men were less preoccupied with aging parents than were women.

One reminder needs to be made in the interpretation of these results. The fact that there were no significant differences in the men's level of concern about family relationships does not mean that the nature of the men's relationship with family members remained constant in the middle years. It must be remembered that the questions on the Mid-life Concern Scale on Family Relationships referred to a combination of family members--"wife, children, parents, and in-laws." Statistically, the study indicated that there was no difference in overall level of concern for these family relationships taken as a whole. There may, however, have been differences in the relative importance of each.

Interpersonal Relationships

Hypothesis 6 stated that there would be no significant differences in concern about interpersonal relationships between men in age groups 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Significant differences were found between men in age groups 40-45 and 46-51. The study found that 40-45-year-old men were significantly more concerned about their relationships with other people than were 46-51-year-old men.

An examination of subjects' responses on the Mid-life Concern Scale for Interpersonal Relationships revealed some

interesting differences and similarities between the two groups (Table 8, Chapter IV). Some striking differences between the two groups of men appeared. Men in Group 2 were considerably less likely to be pleased with their relationships with others than men in Group 3. Moreover, in comparison to Group 3, men in Group 2 were somewhat less likely to think positively about their relationships with others and somewhat more likely to think about new ways to deal with their interpersonal relationships.

However, there were virtually no differences between the groups in terms of how often they considered their relationships with others to be a problem. Approximately half of the men in both groups "rarely" considered their interpersonal relationships to be a problem for them, and about a third of the men in both groups "occasionally" found their relationships to be a problem.

The interview schedule also included a general question on friendship satisfaction, and the responses were generally consistent with the Mid-life Concern Scale for Interpersonal Relationships (see Table 12, Chapter IV). Almost twice as many men in Group 3 as Group 2 indicated that they were "very satisfied" with their friendships. Also more men in Group 2 than in Group 3 indicated that they were only "somewhat satisfied" with their friendships. Thus, the men in Group 2 appeared to be generally less satisfied with their friendship patterns than the men in Group 3 on this item.

Although little research attention has been given to the area of interpersonal relationships for mid-life men, investigators have found that mid-life men turn increasingly to other people for fulfillment, seeking better friendships and relationships with their colleagues (Grunebaum, 1979). Friends have been found to become increasingly important for mid-life men as they tend to become increasingly concerned with affiliation (Gould, 1972; Gutmann, 1977). Establishing quality friendships may become an important priority for many mid-life men as they move away from a mainly instrumental orientation (Grunebaum, 1979; Gutmann, 1977).

The findings of this study were generally consistent with previous studies on mid-life males' interpersonal relationships. However, the data from this study suggested a linkage between age and friendship orientation that previous research has not generally specified. The fact that Group 2 men were more concerned about their interpersonal relationships than Group 3 men could suggest that Group 2 men may have been in a transitional period with regard to their interpersonal relationships. The data indicated that these men wanted things to be different in their relationships with others. Group 2 men were also less satisfied with their interpersonal relationships and more likely to explore new ways of relating than the Group 3 men. Considering the findings of previous research (Gould, 1972; Grunebaum, 1979; Gutmann, 1977), it is possible that many of these 40- to 45-year-old

men were in the process of wanting to become more affiliative but were unable to translate their impulses for affiliation into effective behavior or relationships.

The fact that the older men were generally more satisfied with their friendships could suggest that their desires in relationships were more closely meshed with their patterns of friendship. They apparently had interpersonal relationships that generated low levels of concern.

Selected qualitative data from the interview schedule provided further insight into the nature of some of the men's feelings and thoughts about their friendships. These data came from comments made to the interviewers and recorded on the interview schedule. Comments from some of the men in Group 2 who had high concern scores contained information about some of the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

One of the themes that appeared was a desire for more friends but a lack of the relational skills needed to achieve satisfying friendships. In response to being asked how often he was pleased with his relationships with people, one man said,

I'm working on it. I haven't gotten as far as I want. I want to be able to relate and listen better to people.

The poignancy of the desire for closer relationships and the inability to develop them was aptly expressed by one man:

I've never had anybody I could really talk to all that personal. I'd sort of like to though. I've developed a habit of not really confiding. It would have

been nice to have had someone to have helped me along. It's probably my fault--I mean my inability to get close to anyone. It's hard to get close.

Several men indicated a sense of dissatisfaction with aspects of their relationships along with a sense of satisfaction:

I feel I should have more friends but I am satisfied with the friends I have. I'd like to be better liked by people I'd like to be friends with.

Comments from men with low concern scores from Group 3 indicated several themes. Some men with little concern about their interpersonal relationships were very satisfied with their rich friendship patterns. Others, however, lacked concern about relationships and expressed little desire or need for friends. Generally, the men in Group 3 experienced little concern about interpersonal relationships despite the variance in their patterns of friendship.

One man who had a very low concern score indicated that he had more friends than he could handle. He said, "I would be a better friend if I had more time. People feel they can discuss things with me." Another man stated that friendship was his greatest satisfaction; he said "being able to confide in friends is what keeps me going."

In contrast, some men did not particularly want friendships. One man expressed this clearly,

I could care less about pleasing someone. I don't need any friends. My wife is my friend. Earlier I felt friends were needed for my career. I don't care about my career now so I don't care about friends.

This aptly expressed a loss of instrumental motivations for friendships and an increase in affiliation which was focused on his wife.

Other men also expressed the same pattern of being generally satisfied with their friendships even though their wife was their only close friend. A variation of this same theme was found in other men who expressed satisfaction with their friendship even though they had few friends. One man expressed this theme clearly,

I'm a very self-dependent person. I don't use friendships to discuss my problems and do not expect friendship to be used for that.

Although neither group considered interpersonal relationships to be a problem for them, Group 2 men were significantly less satisfied with their interactions with others. Group 3 men were more content with their relational patterns although they varied considerably and were less likely to explore new ways of relating to others.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicated that there were no significant differences between the three groups of men in morale and in concern about physical condition, career issues, and family relationships. Therefore, Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 were confirmed. No significant differences were found in morale and concern about physical condition, career issues, and family relationships between men in the following three age groups: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51.

Significant differences were found between the groups in concern about psychological themes related to aging and interpersonal relationships. Men in Group 2 (40-45) were found to be significantly more concerned about psychological themes and interpersonal relationships than men in Group 3 (46-51) according to Scheffé's test. No significant differences were found between men in Groups 1 (34-39) and 2 (40-45) and Groups 1 and 3 (46-51). Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 6 were not supported.

Some of the literature on mid-life has indicated that age was a major variable in the study of mid-life males. The age groupings for this investigation were suggested by Levinson's (1978) assertion that most men experienced a period of moderate to severe reappraisal and struggle between the ages of 40 to 45.

Other researchers, however, have not supported Levinson's linkage of mid-life transitions to such specific age ranges. Vaillant (1977) and Gould (1972, 1978) found that mid-life changes tended to take place over a wider age span. Neugarten's (1976, 1979) work, on the other hand, indicated that mid-life was generally not a time of upheaval for most men but a period of normal adaptation.

It was expected that evidence of mid-life upheaval would be reflected in low morale scores and/or high level of concern scores in the various life domains. Moreover, support for Levinson's assertions would be suggested if the men

in Group 2 (40-45) had had significantly lower morale scores and higher level of concern scores than the men in Group 1 (34-39) and Group 3 (46-51).

The findings of this investigation did not support Levinson's assertion of a tumultuous mid-life transition for most men between the ages of 40 and 45. Although there were significant differences in two domains between men 40-45 and 46-51, it is noteworthy that the differences were not reflected in morale. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed, indicating that there were no significant differences in morale between the men in the three age groups. This suggests that although men in Group 2 were more concerned about their relationships with people and psychological themes related to aging than men in Group 3, their degree of concern was not sufficiently great to be reflected in lower morale scores.

Overall the findings of this investigation did not suggest that mid-life is a time of upheaval or transition that is related to the selected age groupings. Although age ranges differ, much of the literature suggested that mid-life males are particularly prone to experience stress because of physical changes, career issues, and family relationships. This study did not support this perspective.

Although the interviews found that men between 40 and 45 were more concerned about interpersonal relationships and psychological themes than men 46-51, there were no differences in their overall sense of well-being (morale) when

compared to the other groups. For these men, no single age period appeared to be a time of emotional upheaval or turmoil.

Thus, rather than suggesting that mid-life is an age-related time of crisis or transition, the data suggested that mid-life is not a time of upheaval related to age groupings 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. In general, the study lends support to Neugarten's contention that mid-life has normal turning points and changes that most men adapt to with little evidence of crisis or emotional upheaval.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The mid-life period for middle-class men has been variously characterized by researchers as being a time of crisis, transition, or predictable adaptation. Although there are different theoretical frameworks about this period of adult development for men, so little empirical research exists that it is premature to seek agreement on which perspective is most accurate.

The purpose of this study was to examine mid-life males' concerns about major life areas and to determine if there were differences in concern that were related to age. To accomplish this goal, a Mid-life Concern Scale was developed and a measure of morale was selected. The Mid-life Concern Scale was designed to assess men's level of concern in five life domains--physical condition, psychological themes related to aging, career issues, family relationships, and interpersonal relationships. The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale was used to measure morale. Age groupings suggested by previous research were selected to organize the research and testable hypotheses were formulated for empirical analysis.

The data for the study were collected from personal interviews from a stratified random sample of 150 men from a large corporation in Greensboro, North Carolina. Fifty men were randomly selected from the following age groupings: 34-39, 40-45, and 46-51. All the interviews were conducted by professionally trained interviewers in complete privacy at the corporate work site. Ninety-four percent of the men initially selected for the study agreed to participate.

The results of the study indicated that men in the three age groups did not differ significantly in their morale or concern about their physical condition, career, or family relationships. Significant differences in concern about psychological themes related to aging and interpersonal relationships were found. In both areas, men aged 40-45 were more concerned than men aged 46-51.

Overall, the findings did not support any assertions that mid-life consists of an age-related "crisis" or "transition" period for middle-class males. Although men between the ages of 40 and 45 were found to be especially concerned about aging issues and interpersonal relationships, they did not differ significantly from the other groups in their morale or concern about their physical condition, career, or family. The results of this study lend support to the theoretical perspective that views mid-life for most middle-class males as a time of successful and predictable adaptation.

Conclusions

On the basis of this study, the major conclusion suggested is that mid-life for middle-class corporate America tends to be characterized by successful adaptation and adjustment. The significance of this study is that it does not support the impression given by most of the research and literature on mid-life.

Rather than suggesting that mid-life men are preoccupied with stresses related to bodily decline, career stagnation, family discord, and aging, this study indicated that at least one segment of American males experienced general well-being and successful adaptation as they dealt with the many aspects of living. Generally, too much has been made of the notion of a mid-life crisis or transition. In this study, as in Vaillant's (1977), crisis was the exception and not the rule.

A second conclusion suggested by the results of this study is that age or life stage are not as important an influence on mid-life males as some writers have proposed, and that other variables exert a considerable impact. The findings supported what Brim (1976) suspected some years ago:

Certainly, the evidence does not justify linkage of crisis either to stages or specific ages, during the mid-life period. (p. 7)

Granted, there were men in the study who experienced job disenchantment, had severe problems with adolescent

children, coped with dying parents, and wanted a divorce. However, as Neugarten (1968) contended, crisis in mid-life is not normative, is random in its occurrence, and is limited in impact on the individual. The data of this study did not point to any age period in which crisis tended to occur. Rather, major upheavals seemed to occur with equal frequency throughout the mid-life period.

In this study other factors appeared to be more important than age in influencing the life course. As previously discussed, high levels of health, financial satisfaction, job satisfaction, and social class seemed to have had more bearing on morale than age.

It is worth noting that in many respects the men in this sample were similar to the men in Vaillant's (1977) study. Many of the men in both groups had high status jobs, earned an adequate to large income, had excellent health, enjoyed long-term stable marriages, and considered themselves to be "happy." There was one important difference, however. The men in Vaillant's sample were chosen with extreme care in order to select the most privileged men in every respect. In contrast, the men in this sample were randomly selected from approximately 3,000 men in a large corporation. Although these men were advantaged, they can be considered to be more representative of a larger population of men than Vaillant's elite group. Thus, the study strongly suggested that a much larger group of mid-life men are doing well without age-related crises than much of the literature has indicated.

A third conclusion to be made from the study relates to the Levinson research. Levinson (1978) has presented the strongest and most specific case for mid-life transitions and upheavals, contending that most men undergo "moderate or severe crisis" between ages 40 to 45. The findings of this study did not support Levinson's speculations. In this study, men aged 40-45 were significantly more concerned about psychological themes related to aging and interpersonal relationships than men aged 46-51. However, this higher level of concern was not reflected in their morale scores. If Levinson's contentions applied, one would have expected the 40- to 45-year-old men to have had lower morale scores than the other groups. However, these men had the highest mean morale scores in the sample. They also were found to be no different from the other age groups in terms of their concern about their career, family, and physical condition--areas that Levinson discussed as contributing extensively to mid-life turmoil and reappraisal. Thus, Levinson's assertion of a mid-life transition between 40-45 was not supported by the data from this study. The men in this study showed no evidence of the kind of "tumultuous struggle" within themselves and the external world that Levinson reported.

A reminder about the differences in sampling procedures used in the two studies is useful in comparing the results of the investigations. Levinson's sample consisted of 40 men purposively selected, whereas this sample contained 150 men randomly selected.

A final conclusion suggested by this study relates to theories of human development in general and mid-life men in particular. Two fundamentally different theoretical models exist in the field of adult development, and they are particularly relevant to mid-life. In Model 1, adult development is seen as a consequence of normative crises, and the mid-life period focuses on the existence and resolution of crisis. Model 2 views crisis as the consequence of asynchrony, and mid-life development occurs as one adapts to expected life events. Crisis occurs in this model when events interrupt the sequence and rhythm of the life cycle as conceived by the individual.

The data from this study lend support to Model 2 and Neugarten's contention that normative changes that are expected to occur do not bring emotional upheaval for most people. Certainly the men in this study experienced changes in their physical being, their thoughts about aging, their perceptions of their career, and their relationships with family and friends. However, there was no evidence of general emotional upheaval for most of the men. This suggests that for the majority, their lives were proceeding in accord with their own sense of timing, and they were able to make the necessary adaptations and changes without great turmoil.

The men experienced life events much like any other group of married men in mid-life: their children entered the often turbulent period of adolescence, their parents got

older and sometimes became ill and died, many of their wives returned to the work force, most faced career decisions because of promotion or lack of promotion, and most experienced signs of physical aging. Yet, the morale scores remained consistently high across all three age groups. This indeed points to mid-life as generally being characterized by adaptation and adjustment.

Data showed the occurrence of "crisis" for some men, for indeed some did experience a full-blown "mid-life crisis." Following are brief details of the experiences of some of these men:

A 34-year-old father of three young children recently learned his wife had cancer.

A 49-year-old man's 22-year-old son was killed in an automobile accident two weeks before the interview.

A 47-year-old man was faced with problems about the placement of his retarded son and treatment of his psychologically disturbed wife.

A 36-year-old man's wife unexpectedly announced that she wanted a divorce.

Several threads appeared in these cases: they appeared to be random as far as age was concerned, they dealt with unanticipated life events, and the upsetting events demanded solutions in many areas. However, no evidence pointed to any age-related crisis. Rather, these crises generally occurred because of unanticipated life events.

It would be premature to draw any firm conclusions about the nature of male adult development in mid-life because not enough empirical research exists. This study contributes to

needed research in the field and lends support to Model 2-- crisis is not inherent and imperative in adult development. Further, this study provided no evidence for age-linked mid-life transitions or crises. Rather, the majority of men experienced high morale and adapted well to mid-life.

Implications

Based upon the procedures, findings, and conclusions of this investigation, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. Future research should be done that tests the generalizability of these findings to other populations. A more varied sample of middle-class men needs to be studied. Men from diverse professions and industries as well as unmarried and childless men need to be studied. Also, data on the mid-life concerns of working-class men are needed. Comparison of the present findings with more diverse samples of men is especially recommended.
2. Future research should focus more on understanding the influences on successful mid-life adaptation and less on mid-life crisis orientations.
3. Investigators are advised to focus on defining and researching the variables that influence male mid-life adaptation. It is strongly recommended that researchers look beyond age or life stage and consider other influences on adult development.

Several areas merit further exploration. We need to examine the interaction between specific external conditions and the individual's response. Looking at specific life events and the individual's adaptation style appears to be more fruitful than looking at chronological age.

4. Future research attention to the measurement of mid-life concerns is advisable. Studies that test the reliability and validity of the Mid-life Concern Scale are needed. Also the scale on family relationships should be constructed so that level of concern for various family relationships can be more accurately assessed--i.e., spouses, children, parents, and in-laws.
5. Further research needs to be done on men who are experiencing high stress in mid-life, with particular attention being given to life events and individual styles of adaptation.

The findings of this study also have implications for various professionals who deal with mid-life men and their families. Counselors, marriage and family therapists, and family life educators can apply the knowledge gained from this study in many ways. Several implications for application are suggested:

1. Men between the ages of 40 to 45 may be especially receptive to information, counseling, and/or

training in areas related to the aging process and interpersonal relationships.

2. Men who do not show indications of great emotional upheaval in mid-life may nevertheless be receptive to various efforts that assist them in dealing with changes in family relationships, career issues, physical conditions, interpersonal skills, and general life reappraisal.
3. Industries may be well advised to provide programs and counseling services for mid-life men, and especially for those who are coping with difficult life events.

FOOTNOTES

¹These books are Transformations: Growth and Change in Adult Life (Gould, 1978); The Seasons of a Man's Life (Levinson, 1978); Four Stages of Life: A Comparative Study of Women and Men Facing Transitions (Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chiriboga, 1975); The Male Mid-life Crisis (Mayer, 1978); Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life (Sheehy, 1976); Adaptation to Life (Vaillant, 1977).

²The titles of current popular books on the subject illustrate this phenomenon: The Middle Age Crisis (Fried, 1967); The Wonderful Crisis of Middle Age (LeShan, 1973); Issues and Crises During Middlescence (Stevenson, 1977); Men in Mid-life Crisis (Conway, 1978); The Male Mid-life Crisis: Fresh Starts After Forty (Mayer, 1978). Books such as Making It From 40 to 50 (Davitz & Davitz, 1976); The Gray Itch: The Male Metapause Syndrome (Hallberg, 1977); and The 40 to 60 Year Old Male (McGil, 1980) also highlight the crisis perspective in the "practical" guides provided for helping people deal with their mid-life crisis.

³Vaillant defined mature defenses as sublimation, altruism, suppression, anticipation, and humor, and immature defenses as acting out, passive-aggression, hypochondriasis, fantasy, and projection.

⁴These surveys were the 1972, 1973, 1974 General Social Surveys on the National Opinion Research Center.

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APPENDIX A
MAJOR STUDIES OF THE MID-LIFE MALE

Gould

Gould's (1972, 1978) writings were based on two studies. The first study examined 14 outpatient therapy groups organized by the following age groups: 16-17, 18-21, 22-28, 29-36, 37-43, 44-50, 51-60+ (Gould, 1972). During 1968, all of the patients at UCLA Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic who were in group therapy were assigned to homogeneous age groups. These groups were observed for several months and rated by observers on characteristics for each age group. Age groups, not individual subjects, were studied. It should be noted that all group members felt a need for therapy.

In Study II, the sample was composed of 524 white middle-class persons between the ages of 16 and 60 who were not in psychotherapy (Gould, 1972). They were selected through the friendship networks of eight medical students and hospital staff. The sample was approximately half male and half female.

The selected nonpatient population was administered a questionnaire based on characteristic statements from Study 1's "phase of life" groups consisting of 160 questions on 10 different areas of life. Average scores on each questionnaire statement were used to graph characteristics that were visually examined to determine "unstable periods." The age periods identified were similar to those originally predetermined groups in Study 1. No statistical tests were reported.

Gould's recent book, Transformations: Growth and Changes in Adult Life (1978), was based on data from the two 1972 studies. Transformations provided no information about sample, design, or method. The age periods in the 1978 report differed somewhat from the 1972 report.

Levinson

Levinson and his researchers (1974, 1976, 1977, 1978) studied 40 men between 35 and 45 years of age from the Northeastern United States. Respondents were taken from four occupational groups representing diverse sectors of society. The sample consisted of 10 hourly workers from two companies, 10 executives from two companies, 10 novelists who had published at least two books, and 10 Ph.D. biologists from two universities.

The diversity of the sample was further reflected in the men's social class origins, racial-ethnic-religious origins, educational background, and marital status. The men came from varied social class backgrounds: poor urban or rural environments, stable working-class or lower middle-class families, middle-class origins, and upper middle- or upper-class backgrounds. The sample was also diverse in terms of racial-ethnic-religious origins. Five (12%) black participants were studied. Fifty percent of the men were from Protestant families, 20% from Catholic, 18% from Jewish, and 12% from families of mixed religious or ethnic parentage. Other relevant facts about the sample were that 70% had

completed college, all had married at least once, 80% had children, 20% were divorced, and 80% were in their first marriage.

Levinson also drew upon a secondary sample of famous persons about whom biographical or literary information was available. Included were such people as Dante, Shakespeare, Luther, Gandhi, Freud, Jung, and Gauguin as well as such fictional figures as King Lear and Herzog.

The essential method of study used by Levinson was the "biographical interview," which combined aspects of a research interview, a clinical interview, and a conversation between friends. The goal of the interview was the portrayal of an individual life as it evolved over the years. Tape-recorded interviews of 1 to 2 hours at weekly intervals for 5 to 10 weeks over a 2 to 3 month period were conducted. A follow-up interview was done 2 years later for most of the men. Only one interviewer saw each respondent, and he/she visited the respondent in both his home and office. TAT pictures were used in the interview process in an effort to bring up personal experiences and interests that might otherwise have been overlooked. Data were also collected from the wives, most of whom were interviewed once.

The resultant biographical information from the 40 men studied was used to develop generalizations and construct a theory of adult development. No empirical data or statistical tests were reported.

Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chiriboga

Lowenthal et al.'s (1975) study provided empirical data on mid-life males although the study was designed to investigate people as they experienced a particular pretransitional period. The subjects of the study were men and women at four pretransitional life stages: high school seniors, young newlyweds, middle-aged parents, and a preretirement group. The major objective of the study was "to delineate the parameters and identify concepts useful for the study of adaptation to the inevitable changes that occur across the adult life course" (p. ix).

The sample consisted of 216 men and women from the central city of a large metropolitan area and was selected to be as homogeneous and representative of the middle and lower middle class as possible. Twenty-seven middle-aged men were studied. They were mainly blue-collar, white-collar, and middle-range professionals or managerial workers who had succeeded economically. Generally, they were not leaders of the community but in an important way represented its center--policemen, firemen, small businessmen and minor executives, civil servants, craftsmen, and sales personnel. Most of the men had some education beyond high school but usually not to the completion of a bachelor's degree.

The participants of the study were interviewed for an average of 8½ hours, usually divided into 3 sessions. The interview schedule consisted of several structured instruments

and a focused interview (Merton, Fiske [Lowenthal], and Kendall, [1948], 1956), "intended to elicit the respondent's own frame of reference and subjective perspectives" (Lowenthal et al., 1975, p. 247). The interview produced data in the following areas: demographic and sociostructural; health history; the behavioral domain; values and goals; family, social networks, and social perceptions; evaluation of life; the psychological domain; and the interview experience.

This study was an in-depth sociopsychological field study. The information gathered from the combination of pre-structured and qualitative data was quantitatively analyzed and reported.

Neugarten

Neugarten's research on middle age is the most extensive in the literature, covering a variety of issues and employing various research strategies (Perun & Bielby, 1979). Neugarten, in conjunction with the Committee of Human Development of the University of Chicago, undertook large-scale investigations of the social and psychological aspects of middle age and aging in the years 1952 to 1962. Large field studies were conducted in Kansas City that addressed the basic research question: "What are the changes in personality that are associated with chronological age in the second half of life?" (Neugarten, 1968b, p. xvi).

There were two major groups of studies conducted. In the early years of the project, a large field staff gathered cross-sectional data on more than 700 men and women from all social-status levels in Kansas City. Sample I was designed so that it would be representative, in so far as possible, of "the noninstitutionalized people between the ages of forty and seventy who resided in the metropolitan area of Kansas City" (Neugarten, 1968b, p. 202). The major focus was on middle age and "the variations that occur in life style and in social-psychological patterns of behavior with age, sex, and social status" (Neugarten, 1968b, p. vii). The sample was studied by interview and projective test schedules.

The second group of studies looked at changes that occurred over time in middle-aged and older persons. A panel of men and women from age 49 to 69 and a group of older persons from 70 to 90 were interviewed at intervals over a 6-year period. Nearly 300 subjects were studied. Neugarten (1964) noted that the Sample II panel and the Sample II quasi panel were to varying degrees representative of the population of Kansas City residents between the ages of 40 and 90 in the mid-1950's. Psychological data of various types were collected by interview and projective test schedules. Appropriate and extensive statistical treatments were conducted and reported for both series of studies.

Neugarten and her associates have published a broad and representative collection of studies. Perun and Bielby

(1979) indicated that it is the testing of clinical impressions with nonclinical samples that distinguishes Neugarten's work. The large number of publications based on these studies deal with such topics as social role performance, leisure patterns, age status, social status, social mobility, personality change, attitudes toward aging, and life satisfaction (Neugarten, 1964, 1965, 1968a, 1968b, 1969, 1972, 1973, 1976, 1979; Neugarten & Datan, 1974; Neugarten & Garron, 1959; Neugarten & Gutmann, 1968; Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961).

Vaillant

Vaillant's book, Adaptation to Life (1977), described the developmental progression of 94 male graduates from several elite northeastern universities. The major focus of the study was on mechanisms of adaptation, most particularly on psychological defenses, and on patterns of development. The book was of particular interest because of its rich and extensive data base and its longitudinal methodology.

The men that Vaillant studied were taken from an original sample of 168 men selected for the Grant Study of Adult Development in 1938. At the time of Vaillant's research, the average age of the men was 47, and they "had the income and social standing of a successful businessman or professional and had the political outlook, intellectual tastes, and life-style of a college professor" (p. 35). Their average income was \$30,000; 71% viewed themselves as "liberal";

95% had been married; 15% were divorced; and 25% were lawyers and doctors.

The original selection process of men for the Grant Study was not particularly systematic and was not intended to be representative of most Americans. "Rather the net was cast in such a fashion as to have a high likelihood of retrieving a large group of boys who would lead successful lives--regardless of the observer's bias" (p. 31).

The men were chosen for their sound physical and psychological health, their capacity to equal or exceed their natural intellectual ability, their tendency to rely on themselves rather than others, their stable family backgrounds, their socioeconomic security, and their desire to participate in the study. The sample was drawn from a narrow spectrum of the population because the purpose of the study was to observe the "best possible."

Vaillant contended that it was precisely their position of relative privilege that made these men suitable for a study of human development and adaptation: "The growth of flowers can best be studied under optimum conditions; humans can reveal themselves in their full power only when they have free choice" (p. 40).

Vaillant's study offered a particularly valuable perspective on mid-life males because of its longitudinal design and use of multiple research methods. During the subjects' college years, extensive physical, physiological, and

psychological examinations were conducted, and a social history of each subject's childhood was collected from the parents in their home. After graduation, a yearly questionnaire was sent to each man until 1955. After 1955, a questionnaire was sent every two years. A social anthropologist interviewed all respondents in their homes during 1950-1952.

In 1969, Vaillant reviewed all previous data on the Grant Study sample and interviewed the men, usually in their homes. The same interview questionnaire was used for each respondent. Although the interview took a minimum of two hours, Vaillant often took much more time with the subjects, sometimes including a meal and conversation.

Raters developed empirical data from selected study records while kept "blind" to other ratings for childhood environment, objective physical health, adult adjustment, marital happiness, maturity of psychological defenses, and overall outcome of the respondents' children. Statistical tests were performed to compare men in a variety of areas (i.e., adjustment of men with good and bad marriages, differences in men with best and worst outcomes).

APPENDIX B
LETTERS TO PROSPECTIVE SUBJECTS

The Family Life Center of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro has asked our cooperation in a study they are conducting of "the satisfactions and stresses of men between the ages of 34 and 51." They will be sampling men in that age range with the purpose of asking them to complete a personal interview questionnaire. The interview would run approximately one hour.

I hope you will participate in this study if your name should be selected in the sample. Very little quality research exists, they say, that considers this period of life for men. Therefore, your cooperation will be in a most worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely,

FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER

Department of Child Development and Family Relations

University of North Carolina

GREENSBORO, N. C. 27412

Dear

A study of men in the corporate setting is being conducted by the Family Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The purpose of the study is to understand the satisfactions and stresses of men between the ages of 34 and 51. Very little quality research, however, exists that considers this period of life for men. This study focuses on factors that may influence various aspects of your life: career, family, friends, health, and personal well-being.

_____ has agreed to permit employees to voluntarily participate in this study during regular working hours. Your name has been selected by means of a random sampling procedure for possible participation in the study. Your participation is very important in assuring that the information collected represents an accurate picture of men in the selected age range.

We ask that you meet with us for a one-hour period to complete an interview questionnaire. Let me assure you that your replies will be completely confidential. Your privacy is assured.

You will be contacted by phone in the next several days to arrange a convenient appointment time. Questions that you may have will be gladly answered at that time.

At the conclusion of the study, you will receive a summary of the findings of the project.

I truly hope you will participate in this most important undertaking. I believe you will find the experience personally rewarding, and your participation will be a valuable contribution.

Sincerely yours,

Elaine Weller
Research Coordinator

APPENDIX C
BRADBURN AFFECT BALANCE SCALE

Bradburn Affect Balance Scale

Please Circle the response that best tells how often during the last week you had the following feelings.

	Not Felt	Felt Once	Felt Several Times	Felt Often
<hr/>				
How often during the last week did you feel				
1. On top of the world?	1	2	3	4
2. Very lonely or remote from other people?	1	2	3	4
3. Particularly excited or interested in something?	1	2	3	4
4. Depressed or very unhappy?	1	2	3	4
5. Pleased about having accomplished something?	1	2	3	4
6. Bored?	1	2	3	4
7. Proud because someone complimented you on something?	1	2	3	4
8. So restless you couldn't sit long in a chair?	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D
MID-LIFE CONCERN SCALES

Mid-life Concern Scale for Physical Condition

Now I want to ask you some general questions about your physical condition. By physical condition, I mean your general bodily health and fitness. Please refer to this card and tell me the phrase that best indicates how often you generally have the following thoughts or feelings.

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
a) How often do you think positively about your physical condition?	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) How often are you pleased with your physical condition?	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) How often do you think about new ways to deal with your physical condition?	5	4	3	2	1	0
d) How often do you consider your physical condition to be a problem for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0

Mid-life Concern Scale for Psychological Themes

Now I want to ask you some general questions about issues related to aging. By issues related to aging, I mean bodily changes, the aging process, years to live, personal mortality, and life evaluation. I want you to think of these all together as issues related to aging. Please refer to this card and tell me the phrase that best indicates how often you generally have the following thoughts or feelings.

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
a) How often do you think positively about issues related to aging?	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) How often are you pleased with issues related to your aging?	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) How often do you think about new ways to deal with issues related to aging?	5	4	3	2	1	0
d) How often do you consider issues related to aging to be a problem for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0

Mid-life Concern Scale for Career Issues

Now I want to ask you some general questions about your career. By career, I mean the work, economic, and personal aspects of your occupation. Please refer to this card and tell me the phrase that best indicates how often you generally have the following thoughts or feelings.

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
a) How often do you think positively about your career?	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) How often are you pleased with your career?	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) How often do you think about new ways to deal with your career?	5	4	3	2	1	0
d) How often do you consider your career to be a problem for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0

Mid-life Concern Scale for Family Relationships

Now I want to ask you some general questions about your family relationships. By family, I mean your wife, children, parents, and in-laws. Please refer to this card and tell me the phrase that best indicates how often you generally have the following thoughts or feelings.

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
a) How often do you think positively about your relationships with your family?	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) How often are you pleased with your relationships with your family?	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) How often do you think about new ways to deal with your relationships with your family?	5	4	3	2	1	0
d) How often do you consider your relationships with your family to be a problem for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0

Mid-life Concern Scale for Interpersonal Relationships

Now I want to ask you some general questions about your relationships with people. I want you to think about the people you consider to be significant acquaintances, friends, and business associates. Please refer to this card and tell me the phrase that best indicates how often you generally have the following thoughts or feelings.

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
a) How often do you think positively about your relationships with people?	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) How often are you pleased with your relationships with people?	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) How often do you think about new ways to deal with your relationships with people?	5	4	3	2	1	0
d) How often do you consider your relationships with people to be a problem for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0

APPENDIX E
MEASURES FOR SELECTED DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES

Measures for Physical Condition

Which of the following statements best describes your health?

- a. I do not have a health problem.
 - b. I have a health problem that does not affect my behavior.
 - c. I have a health problem that affects my behavior.
-

Compared to other people your age, would you say that your health is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
-

Measures for Career Issues

All in all, how satisfied are you with your current job?
Are you

Very Satisfied	5
Somewhat Satisfied	4
Mixed Feelings	3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Very Dissatisfied	1

To what extent is your job stressful for you? Is it
stressful to a

Very Great Extent	6
Great Extent	5
Some Extent	4
Little Extent	3
Very Little Extent	2
Not at All	1

We are interested in how people are getting along financially
these days. So far as you and your family are concerned,
would you say that you are

Very Satisfied	5
Pretty Well Satisfied	4
Satisfied	3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Very Dissatisfied	1

Measures for Family Relationships

How do you feel about the companionship that you and your wife have? Do you feel the companionship is very good, OK, or not so good?

Very Good	3
OK	2
Not So Good	1

In general, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your children? Would you say that you are

Very Satisfied	4
Somewhat Satisfied	3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Dissatisfied	1

Most parents experience some conflict with their children. Would you say that the level of conflict between you and your children is high, moderate, or low?

High	3
Moderate	2
Low	1

How much are your parents or in-laws a burden to you? Would you say very much, somewhat, very little, or not at all?

Very Much	4
Somewhat	3
Very Little	2
Not At All	1

Measure for Interpersonal Relationships

All in all, how satisfied are you with your friendships?

Very Satisfied	5
Satisfied	4
Somewhat Satisfied	3
Not Too Satisfied	2
Not At All Satisfied	1
