

EXPLORING AGE DIFFERENCES IN RESPONSES TO DISRESPECT AMONG  
YOUNG AND OLDER ADULTS

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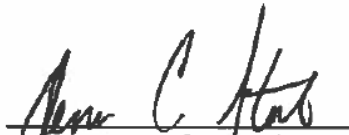
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# REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

## Abstract

Disrespectful actions have many negative repercussions, as disrespect can foster hostility, prompt violence, and negatively impact relationships (Hawkins, 2015; Miller, 2001). Emotional responses to disrespect tend to be negative, although more research is needed to investigate overall reactions to disrespectful experiences across the lifespan. In the current study, we investigated how different age groups respond to being disrespected. Young and older adult participants completed a measurement of sensitivity to ignored disrespect. Within the items on the measure, the relationship with the disrespect perpetrator varied from very close to distant. The participants reported their emotional response and overall sensitivity to being disrespected. Preliminary analyses revealed that there were significant gender differences in responses to disrespect, with females reporting more sensitivity and a stronger emotional reaction than males. Therefore, the researchers controlled for gender for the remaining analyses. The findings were that young adults did not have a stronger response to disrespect than older adults, which was unexpected. However, as expected, participants felt more disrespected when the perpetrator was someone very close to them. Although more research on disrespect is needed, especially on possible age differences, our study indicates that females may be more heavily impacted by disrespect and also that the negative impact of disrespect varies by the degree of closeness to the perpetrator.

*Keywords:* disrespect, emotion, older adults, gender, relationship closeness

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

Respect and disrespect are relevant to and understood in everyday communication (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006a). Hawkins (2015) described how the feeling of disrespect is considered a universal living experience and is deeply interconnected with respect. Respect and disrespect influence how people feel about themselves, others, and the world in which they live. The concept of disrespect is often considered simply a lack of respect. Disrespect can further be defined as showing a low regard or low esteem for someone or something. Respect and disrespect are similar and share a negative relationship, but, ultimately, respect and disrespect are viewed in the current study as two separate constructs. If children and adolescents are respectful, then they tend to become respectful, civil, and tolerant adults (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006b). However, disrespect is often equated with incivility, and disrespectful behavior can have many negative repercussions. Being disrespectful to another person can harm that person's sense of inclusion or status (Blincoe & Harris, 2011). Disrespect can also negatively impact relationships and foster hostility and cynicism (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006b). It can prompt anger or violence and implies that an interaction between at least two people possibly violated a norm (Moule & Wallace, 2017). In sum, there are implications regarding emotional well-being and interpersonal factors when studying disrespect. Research on disrespect is additionally applicable across a variety of contexts, such as health care settings, the classroom, the workplace, and within households. Possible interventions to discourage disrespect in these settings could stem from additional research on this topic.

Currently, there is no theoretical model to describe disrespect and few studies have investigated the negative consequences associated with disrespect (Blincoe & Chappell, 2017). There is, however, one theory on the concept of respect. Huo, Binning, and Molina (2010)

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constructed the Dual Pathway Model of Respect, which includes two core social motives: the need to feel included within a social group and the need to attain a desired status (role or position) within that group. The model illustrates how a group can influence whether or not an individual feels respected, which in turn shapes his or her social engagement within the group and overall well-being. This model can be adapted to the concept of disrespect, as disrespect should challenge both status and inclusion (Blincoe, 2012). One application of the Dual Pathway Model of Respect to the concept of disrespect includes Blincoe and Harris' (2011) explanation that respect and disrespect convey information about an individual's social image: Respect tends to enhance social image, while disrespect blemishes social image.

When exploring emotional responses to disrespect, Blincoe and Harris (2011) found that young adult participants responded with more sadness to being disrespected than to being disliked. Blincoe and Harris (2011) also noted that it is clear that disrespect creates emotional damage, but the extent of this damage may be different between men and women. Although there have been few empirical investigations of the specific emotional responses to respectful and disrespectful experiences, the emotions associated with disrespect are consistently negative (Miller, 2001). Emotions that may accompany disrespect include shame and uncertainty, and also feeling disregarded, devalued, and degraded (Hawkins, 2015). Miller (2001) specifically discussed an associated link between disrespect and anger. In agreement with this idea, Blincoe and Harris (2011) also found that anger and sadness are observable emotional responses for young adults when disrespected. More specifically with this finding, Blincoe and Harris (2011) found that young adults, both males and females, tended to react to disrespectful incidents more with anger than sadness overall. Although, comparatively, women tended to report more sadness across all conditions in their study than men did. When considering the Dual Pathway Model of

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Respect, distinct emotional responses would be expected to be connected to exclusion and status losses. It may be expected that there would be more sadness when excluded within a group, which may include not feeling welcome within a group, and more anger may be associated with status loss, which could include being demoted from leadership within a group (Blincoe & Harris, 2011).

The way a person experiences disrespect and the type of disrespect inflicted by a perpetrator may vary across the lifespan. The evidence for this stems from a study conducted by Blincoe and Harris (2011) where college students wrote narrative descriptions of a time he or she experienced disrespect. Within these narratives, five particular types of disrespect emerged, including verbal (being insulted or made fun of), betrayal (being cheated on in a romantic relationship or falsely accused of misbehavior), rudeness (unkind behavior, such as being disturbed while sleeping), physical (being attacked or hurt), and ignored (being left out or shunned from a group). Young adults in this study reported verbal disrespect, betrayal, and rudeness as the three most common types of disrespect. In a similar study conducted with a child sample, the children reported physical disrespect as the most common type of disrespect, whereas the young adult sample reported physical disrespect as the least common (Blincoe & Chappell, 2017). At this time, there is no comparison group for the type of disrespect older adults most often experience. Out of the five types of disrespect listed, the current study explored being disrespected through being ignored and how this may be experienced differently across the lifespan. Ignored disrespect was operationalized in the current study as physically excluding someone from an event, ignoring someone's feelings, and ignoring what someone is saying. Ignored disrespect was selected because it is likely to be experienced throughout the lifespan even though the form it takes may change based on the age group.

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One aspect of ignored disrespect, as defined by the current researchers, is physically excluding someone from an event. One reason ignored disrespect was chosen over the other identified types is because exclusion occurs across the lifespan, beginning in childhood. In early adulthood, a person may be physically excluded based on having poor labor market experience, for having depression, early parenting, or poor housing (Bynner & Parsons, 2002). Dahlberg and McKee (2018) noted that older adults are particularly at risk for exclusion, compared to other age groups. Older adults may face physical exclusion based on many age-related characteristics, such as presence of a disability, cognitive decline, low income, widowhood, and living in elderly care facilities (Jose & Cherayi, 2017). Abrams and Killen (2014) claimed that social exclusion is just as damaging at the beginning of the lifespan as it is for grown adults. In adulthood, social exclusion can lead to relationship difficulties, lack of social participation, poor mental health, drug abuse, and criminality (Bynner & Parsons, 2002). Social exclusion, at any age, can threaten fundamental psychological needs (Abrams & Killen, 2014; Williams, 2009).

In addition to physical exclusion to an event, ignored disrespect encompasses ignoring someone's feelings and what an individual says. Geller, Goodstein, Siler, and Sternberg (1974) explained that being ignored can be defined as being excluded when physically present. However, being ignored encompasses more than simply not being looked at or spoken to (Williams, 2009). When someone enters a conversation, he or she expects certain reactions from others, including looking at him or her while he or she is speaking and also active listening on behalf of the conversation partner(s) (i.e., maintaining eye contact, nodding, smiling) (Geller et al., 1974). Ignoring what someone is saying can be exemplified by brief responses to someone else's comments, interrupting, or introducing a new subject altogether. If someone is ignored, he or she may reconsider his or her worth as a conversation partner and how he or she also feels

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about the person ignoring him or her. When one is ignored, he or she assumes that his or her opinions, comments, and approval are unwanted and unneeded. Sometimes, people ignore what others are saying altogether and intentionally choose to not respond at all, which is known as “the silent treatment.” Williams and Gerber (2005) described how many people admit to ignoring people by giving them the silent treatment. Similarly, ignoring someone else’s feelings can also take many forms. For example, people may not pick up on emotional reactions of other conversation partners and continue talking about something that is visibly upsetting someone else. Another example is that a person may also ignore how someone feels about a particular place and insist on going to that place anyway.

Although it is unknown which type of disrespect older adults would experience most often in everyday life, ignored disrespect may be more prevalent in this population than in a young adult or child population. One reason for this is because older adults are more often the targets of ageist attitudes compared to other age groups. Ageism is the stereotyping and discrimination of individuals or groups based on their age (Butler, 1969). Ageist attitudes can take many different forms and can influence how respected (or disrespected) an individual feels. In fact, Carstensen (1991) posited that the likelihood of receiving condescending, hostile, or indifferent replies in a conversation with a stranger increases with age. Furthermore, research conducted with Implicit Association Tasks illustrates that young people are generally preferred over older people (Levy, 2003). Older adults also often face age stereotypes about their ability to perform in a workplace (Hooyman & Kiyak, 1992; Levy, 2003) and about their usage of social media (Levy, Chung, Bedford, & Navarazhina, 2013). Older adults are also often ignored simply because of their age. McGuire, Klein, and Chen (2008) described how ageism includes discriminating and stereotyping based on age and how some people have negative attitudes



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towards people who are older. In their sample, 40% of older adult participants reported being ignored specifically because of their age. This may be an issue that is experienced more by older adults than young adults. In fact, Levy (2003) claimed that future researchers still need to determine the extent to which young adults are influenced by aging stereotypes.

Older adults often face age discrimination and, therefore, may internalize what other people think about them. In fact, aging stereotypes are reinforced throughout the aging process and eventually become self-stereotypes (Levy, 2003). Negative age stereotypes are especially perpetuated on social media (Levy, 2013). The reason for this may be because social media platforms, such as Facebook, consider many personal characteristics worth protecting from hate speech, including race, ethnicity, and national origin, and yet, there is no mention of a protection based on age. Older adults, compared to young adults, have an increased awareness of age discrimination and may therefore perceive their own aging more negatively (Giasson, Queen, Larkina, & Smith, 2017). This can have an impact on an older adult's overall reaction to experiences of disrespect. The negative aging self-stereotypes can cause stress to older individuals and influence how they respond to social situations. These self-perceptions can also impact an individual's well-being, health, and longevity (Giasson et al., 2017). Although there are negative age stereotypes over the lifespan, the stigmatization experienced becomes particularly impactful to individuals in later stages of life (Giasson et al., 2017; Levy, 2009).

Although there is a lack of literature on how older adults respond to disrespect, it is reasonable to extend the emotions experienced by young adults (anger and sadness) to them when they are disrespected. However, overall reactions to a disrespect perpetrator and also the intensity of their reactions may differ between generations. Socioemotional selectivity theory posits that perceptions of limited time horizons influence the goals that older adults pursue and

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the relationships they seek (Carstensen, 1991). Older adults tend to choose to interact with close social partners who will be emotionally satisfying to engage with and avoid those who will not (English & Carstensen, 2014; Fiori et al., 2012). Older adults specifically will limit their social interactions to include only supportive social partners that they can count on to maximize positive outcomes and minimize negative outcomes (Carstensen, 1991). Socioemotional selectivity theory illustrates that the intentional choices older adults make in social partners will reduce the amount of social contact they have with people who are just not important to them (Carstensen, 1992). In the context of disrespect, degree of relationship is likely to be an important factor in overall reaction to disrespectful behavior. Older adults may be more upset (i.e., react with more negative affect and more sensitivity) when disrespected by a close relative than young adults would be, for instance.

It is unclear at this point whether instances of disrespect are less common for older adults than younger adults. Furthermore, it is also unknown whether older adults have more emotional protection against disrespectful experiences, or if they are perhaps more deeply affected by disrespect than young adults. This is most likely also influenced by how close a person is to a disrespect perpetrator. Older adults may not react as negatively to instances of disrespect overall compared to young adults because older adults are better at regulating their emotions, leading to positive influences in well-being (Carstensen, 1991; English & Carstensen, 2014; Thomsen, Lind, & Pillemer, 2017). However, on the other hand, older adults may react more negatively because they prefer positive stimuli over negative stimuli. Regardless, reactions to disrespect are likely to be influenced by the relationship with the perpetrator, especially for older adults.

The degree of closeness with a disrespect perpetrator was a key variable in this study. Degree of closeness within a relationship was operationalized by use of the Social Convoy

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Model (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). This model includes only personal relationships, which connects to the Dual Pathway Model of Respect, as it is required within this model that a person has an established relationship with the person who is acting disrespectfully. Kahn and Antonucci (1980) described how over the life course, people have different convoys, or networks of family, friends, and other people, which are essentially role-dependent (as a parent, spouse, child, friend, etc.). The model is represented by four circles (please see Appendix B). The innermost and smallest circle represents the person in question (i.e., the participant). The first concentric circle around that consists of people who are very close to the person. Examples of the first concentric circle include close friends (“best friends”) and close family, such as a sibling, parent, or spouse. Kahn and Antonucci (1980) described this circle as including the people that someone cannot live without. The second concentric circle consists of people who are close, but not as close as those in the first concentric circle and may include family and friends. The outermost concentric circle represents convoy members less close to the person than the first or second circles, but who still provide some form of social support. Examples of the outermost circle include neighbors, co-workers, supervisors, and distant family. This model was used in the current study in order for participants to identify someone they know in their own lives to serve as the perpetrator of disrespect described in the ignored disrespect items. Also, note that the circles described can include multiple people, but, for the purpose of this study, the participant chose the one person who best represented a given circle, as well as a person who lives in close proximity to the participant.

The limited research that has been conducted on the topic of disrespect has involved young adult and child samples. Almost no research is available on how older adults experience disrespect. The current study utilized an experimental design and investigated several different

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perspectives of disrespect that had not previously been studied, resulting in a direct comparison between two different age populations across the lifespan. In the current study, participants (older and young adults) read six different items that described the concept of ignored disrespect, and two items for each component of the operational definition for ignored disrespect (i.e., thoughts, feelings, actions). The researchers actively manipulated the relationship distance (close vs. distant) of the perpetrator within the items. However, the perpetrator was identified as someone the participant actually knows. The participants completed items intended to assess their overall sensitivity to the disrespect and their level of negative affect to the ignored disrespect items. Although items can only imitate “real life,” they enable researchers to manipulate elements of a situation and for participants to respond to that situation without having to actually be in it (Moule & Wallace, 2017). This also allowed the researchers to avoid any ethical concerns or discomfort if the participants were actually disrespected in an experimental setting.

Past researchers have studied disrespect by using hypothetical statements, just like the current study. However, researchers in the past had difficulty creating items to measure sensitivity to disrespect. Moule and Wallace (2017), for instance, manipulated six elements of disrespect within scenarios they generated, which resulted in a combination of almost 1,500 different vignettes. Their participants responded on an 11-point scale, which ranged from “very disrespectful” to “very respectful.” Moule and Wallace (2017) found that the disrespect perpetrators were seen as moderately respectful across the vignettes, while the victims of the disrespect were seen as more disrespectful than the perpetrators. In the current study, the researchers wanted to ensure that participants were aware that the items were to specifically measure their impression of disrespectful actions. The researchers attempted to navigate some of

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the problems with creating items by operationalizing the manipulations to be as specific as possible. One way the researchers did this was by using a specific response prompt for the dependent variable item, which only mentioned the likelihood that the participant felt disrespected, leaving out the concept of respect altogether. Ignored disrespect has been strictly defined for the current study, which is based on the fact that there are three instances that would ignite the feeling of ignored disrespect: being physically excluded from an event, ignoring someone's feelings, and ignoring what someone is saying. Additionally, degree of relationship has been concisely defined in the current study through the use of the Social Convoy Model.

The current study comprised a quasi-experimental design. The two independent variables were age (young and older adult) and relationship with the disrespect perpetrator in the ignored disrespect items (close and distant). The two dependent measures included sensitivity to disrespect and emotional reaction. To the researcher's knowledge, this was the first study to compare two age groups in how they respond to disrespect. There is much to be discovered about the concept of disrespect. Major goals of this study include defining ignored disrespect, beginning to validate the ignored disrespect measurement created for this study, analyzing possible age differences in reactions to disrespect, and contributing knowledge about disrespect that may lead to a theoretical model to describe disrespect.

### **Primary Hypotheses**

Based on past literature, the following hypotheses were developed to predict the effects of age and relationship with the disrespect perpetrator on sensitivity and emotional reaction:

H1a: It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for age on the dependent variable of negative affect, such that young adults would report stronger negative emotions to the ignored disrespect items than older adults.

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H1b: It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for age on the dependent variable of sensitivity to disrespect, such that young adults would report more sensitivity to disrespect for the ignored disrespect items than older adults.

Rationale: Older adults are more resilient and have more emotional protection against negative experiences than young adults. Older adults are also better at regulating their emotions and are attracted to situations that will maximize positive emotions, compared to young adults (Carstensen, 1991; English & Carstensen, 2014; Thomsen et al., 2017). With this information considered, it is likely that older adults would have more protection than young adults against disrespectful incidents.

H2a: It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for degree of closeness (with perpetrator) on the dependent variable of negative affect, such that participants would report stronger negative emotions to the ignored disrespect items when the disrespect perpetrator was someone close to them compared to someone not as close to them.

H2b: It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for degree of closeness (with perpetrator) on the dependent variable of sensitivity to disrespect, such that participants would report more sensitivity to disrespect for the ignored disrespect items when the disrespect perpetrator was someone close to them compared to someone not as close to them.

Rationale: According to the Social Convoy Model, people have different convoys or networks of people that have value to them (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). The innermost convoy is described as a person someone cannot live without. It makes intuitive sense that participants would be more upset when disrespected by someone they are very close to, compared to someone who is not and who only provides minimal social support. However, this had not previously been explicitly tested in the disrespect research.

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H3a: It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction between degree of closeness (with perpetrator) and age, such that older adults would report more negative affect to disrespect for the items when disrespected by someone close to them compared to someone not as close. For younger adults, this difference in negative affect based on a close or distant perpetrator was predicted to be significantly smaller than it would be for the older adults.

H3b: It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction between degree of closeness (with perpetrator) and age, such that older adults would report more sensitivity to being disrespected within the ignored disrespect items by someone close to them compared to someone not as close. For younger adults, this difference in sensitivity based on a close or distant perpetrator was predicted to be significantly smaller than it would be for the older adults.

Rationale: The Socioemotional Selectivity Theory suggests that since older adults have limited time left in life, they choose to interact with people who will be emotionally satisfying and avoid those who will cause them to become upset (Carstensen, 1991; Carstensen, 1992; English & Carstensen, 2014; Fiori et al., 2012). Older adults reduce the amount of contact that they have with people who just are not as supportive, while young adults may not always be able to do so. Since older adults value close relationships, they would likely be more upset by being disrespected by someone very close to them, compared to young adults.

## Chapter 2 – Method

### Participants

The participants from this study comprised two different populations, a young adult population and an older adult population. There were 286 participants total, and all participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. The qualifications for the participants were a specific age group and also based on gender, which were options selected by the researchers on Amazon Mechanical Turk. The reason gender was included as a qualification is because a pilot test with 10 participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk revealed that nine out of the 10 participants who elected to take this study were male. Participants also had to be from the United States in order to participate. In the first sample, the participants included 137 young adults (67 females, 70 males, age range: 19-32 years). The second sample consisted of 149 older adults (76 females, 73 males, age range: 50-77 years). The total sample included a majority of participants who identify as White (80.1%), and also 9.8% African American, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.8% Asian, 5.9% Hispanic or Latino, and 1% identified as other. There was a variety of education level attained by participants – 11.5% high school, 1.4% GED, 24.5% some college, 3.1% vocational school, 13.3% associate degree, 36% bachelor's degree, and 10% with a graduate degree. The majority of participants identified as living in an urban area (66.1%), as opposed to a rural area (32.9%).

For compensation, all participants received \$2 for completing the study, which took approximately 20 minutes. This sample was a convenience sample collected through nonprobability sampling methods. All participation in the study was voluntary. The researcher abided by the guidelines set by the Radford University Institutional Review Board. Before the



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participants began the study, he or she completed an informed consent process (please see Appendix A).

### **Design**

The current study comprised a 2 (age – young adults, older adults) X 2 (degree of relationship of disrespect perpetrator – close versus distant) quasi-experimental, between-subjects, factorial design. All participants ( $N = 286$ ) reported their sensitivity to the same six ignored disrespect items. The only variable that changed for the items was the degree of the relationship of the perpetrator. Half of the older adult participants ( $n = 73$ ) responded to the six items where the perpetrator was close to them, and the other half of the older adult participants ( $n = 76$ ) responded to the same items where the perpetrator was distant. Likewise, half of the young adult participants ( $n = 69$ ) responded to the six items where the perpetrator was close to them, and the other half of the young adult participants ( $n = 68$ ) responded to the same items where the perpetrator was distant.

### **Measures**

**Social Convoy Task** (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). Participants received a brief description and example of the Social Convoy Model (see Appendix B). Participants then chose people in their lives that represented the different levels of their convoys. Participants identified someone who they are the closest to and could not live without (Person A) and entered the name of that person into a blank, as well as their relationship with that person into another blank. Participants identified someone who is close to them but not as close as Person A (person B) and entered the name of that person into a blank, as well as their relationship with that person into another blank. Lastly, participants identified someone who they know but are not close to (person C) and entered the name of that person into a blank, as well as their relationship with that person into

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another blank. Although the participant listed someone for A, B, and C, they responded to the items with only either Person A or Person C in mind. All three people that the participants chose needed to be people in their immediate environment. This was necessary, as the items were unlikely to make much of an impact or to seem realistic if the participant rarely ever sees the person he or she chose. For each person chosen, the participants also answered one item about how close they are to the person they chose on a 1 (“not at all close”) to 7 (“extremely close”) response scale.

**Measure of Ignored Disrespect Sensitivity.** The participants read six items of ignored disrespect (please see Appendix C). In two items, the participant imagined that he or she was physically excluded from an event by someone. In another two items, the participant imagined that what he or she was saying was ignored by someone. Finally, in the remaining two items, the participant imagined that his or her feelings were ignored by someone. The perpetrator of the disrespect incident described in the item was the person that the participant chose in the Social Convoy Task (either Person A or Person C, depending on which group the participant was assigned to). Prior to data collection, the researchers pilot tested the items within the lab and also with 22 volunteers outside of the lab. For more information on the results of the pilot test, please see Tables 2 (information about the participants) and 3 (pilot test data results).

Participants responded to each item with a brief measure of sensitivity to disrespect (Blincoe & Harris, 2011; see Appendix D). Participants answered the following question: “What is the likelihood you would feel disrespected by the incident described above?” Participants responded on a scale of 1 to 5, with the anchors of 1 representing “not at all,” to 5 representing “extremely,” with 2, 3, and 4 representing “a little,” “moderately,” and “quite a bit,” respectively. For the total score of sensitivity to disrespect, the responses from this item were

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averaged across the first three items as Factor 1 ( $\alpha = .71$ ) and averaged across the last three items as Factor 2 ( $\alpha = .82$ ) (see factor analysis in the results). Before conducting the factor analyses, the sensitivity to disrespect for the six items resulted in a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .81.

**Emotional Response.** Part of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegan, 1988) was utilized for this study (see Appendix E). After reading each of the six items, the participants rated their emotional response to the disrespect situation as if the situation described in the item actually happened to them. The participants rated how they would emotionally respond to the disrespect incident on three items of negative affect from the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988). The negative affect scale of the PANAS includes various feelings, such as “upset” and “hostile,” which participants rated from 1 to 5 (1 = “very slightly or not at all,” 2 = “a little,” 3 = “moderately,” 4 = “quite a bit,” and 5 = “extremely”). The words chosen from the negative affect scale of the PANAS for this study include “distressed,” “upset,” and “irritable,” as many of the other negative affect words were redundant or unlikely to apply to the items. The researchers also selected these words from the PANAS because prior research established these as common emotions experienced when someone is disrespected. The researchers also added three negative emotion words (“sad,” “anxious,” and “angry”) that are reflected within the research on disrespect (Blincoe & Harris, 2011; Miller, 2001; Moule & Wallace, 2017). Scores were averaged as a total for all six items. Therefore, scores ranged from 1-5, with higher scores representing a stronger negative emotional response. The internal consistency reliability for the six affect words used in this study was good ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Manipulation Check.** The participants answered a brief question to ensure that they noticed the manipulation of the degree of relationship to the perpetrator (see Appendix F). The participants responded to the question, “Remind us again: Who disrespected you in each of the

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scenarios?” The answer choices included either “your closest relationship” or “a more distant relationship.” Within the Qualtrics survey, the names the participant had entered previously for both Person A and Person C were automatically inserted beside these labels. The correct answer for this question differed, based on which condition the participant was in.

**Demographic Survey.** Lastly, there were several demographic questions to collect demographic information from the participants about age, ethnicity, gender, level of education, and location of hometown (see Appendix G).

### **Procedure**

Prior to data collection, the researchers pilot tested the ignored disrespect items within the lab and also with a small sample outside of the lab ( $N = 22$ ), which included both young adults ( $n = 12$ ) and older adults ( $n = 10$ ). Initially, there were nine items, but after considering the responses from the pilot testing, the items were narrowed down to six. The researchers included the one item to gauge sensitivity to disrespect within the pilot study and also the six negative affect items. Participants were asked two other sets of questions for each item – if the item was realistic and also which category they believed the item best described (exclusion, ignoring what someone says, ignoring someone’s feelings), based on the operational definition. Based on the feedback provided by the volunteers in the pilot testing, the researchers were able to modify the items and also the instructions of the survey.

The researchers (also known as “requesters” on Amazon Mechanical Turk) added the current study to Amazon Mechanical Turk (commonly referred to as MTurk). When requesters put a new study on MTurk, this is referred to as creating a “HIT” or a call for participants (who are referred to as “workers”). The researchers added four HITs to the platform, which differed in the qualifications required to access this study. The first HIT included the qualifications of

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identifying as a female and also required participants to be at least 55 years old in order to participate. The next HIT included the qualifications of identifying as a female and being within the age range of 18-25. The third HIT required the participants to identify as male and had the age restriction of 55+. The last HIT required the participants to identify as male and to be within the ages of 18-25.

The participants accessed the Qualtrics (Qualtrics Inc., Provo, UT) survey through their MTurk accounts and completed the study online. Before any survey tasks, the researcher provided a written description of the nature of the study and obtained informed consent from the participants. All participants completed the Social Convoy Task and identified the people who would later represent the perpetrator in the disrespect items. All participants were told that they would first report on three people for the Social Convoy Task and then would be randomly assigned to a particular person who would serve as the perpetrator in the disrespect items. All participants responded to all six items of ignored disrespect, which again pertained to being physically excluded from an event, ignoring their feelings, and ignoring what they were saying. The young and older adults were randomly assigned to respond to the disrespect items based on whether someone close to them disrespects them (Person A) or if someone they are not as close to disrespects them (Person C). Person A or Person C remained the same throughout all six items. The participants were prompted to imagine that the disrespectful scenario was happening to them and then read the scenario, which automatically inserted the name of the person the participant previously identified as Person A or Person C.

Participants read two items of ignored disrespect, which emphasized being physically left out or excluded from an event. Next, participants rated their sensitivity to the disrespect items described and their emotional response to the disrespect incidents using the negative affect items

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of the PANAS scale and the additional negative affect items. The participants then read two items of ignored disrespect, which emphasized someone ignoring important information they have told that person. Participants again rated their sensitivity to the disrespect and their emotional response to the disrespect. Lastly, participants read two more items, which described a time where someone ignored the participants' feelings in a situation. The participants rated their sensitivity to the disrespect and their emotional response to the disrespect again. Each item was available for as much time as the participant needed, and each item remained available as the participants completed the sensitivity and emotional response items.

After the participants responded to each of the items, the participants answered the manipulation check item to ensure that the participant paid attention to the degree of relationship he or she had with the perpetrator in the items. Then, the participants completed demographic information. Lastly, the participants were debriefed (see Appendix H) and were dismissed from the study. The approximate time to complete all components of this study was about twenty minutes. Participants received compensation of \$2 within 48 hours of completion of the survey.

### Chapter 3 – Results

The researchers performed data cleaning and verified that participants responded correctly to the manipulation check. One participant failed the manipulation check, and his or her data was removed from the dataset. The researchers also deleted participant data from those who completed the survey in under 4 minutes. In total, 14 participants were removed from the dataset. After data cleaning, there were 286 participants remaining. For specific descriptive statistics of the participants, please see Table 1. The researcher conducted a preliminary analysis to ensure that the manipulation for the relationship closeness with the disrespect perpetrator worked. A repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences in the reporting of the closeness to each person identified,  $F(2, 582) = 1102.73, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .79$ , and also revealed a very large effect size. An LSD post hoc test revealed that the closeness for Person A ( $M = 6.80, SD = 0.59$ ) was significantly different from Person B ( $M = 5.38, SD = 0.92$ ) and Person C ( $M = 3.64, SD = 1.32$ ),  $p < .001$ . Closeness to Person B was also significantly different from Person C,  $p < .001$ . Please see Table 4 and also Figure 1 for more information.

Initially, the researchers proposed that the items would result in three factors (ignoring feelings, ignoring someone's words, and exclusion). Therefore, the researchers conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the responses to the six ignored disrespect items by using Principal Component Analysis to determine if participants reported similar sensitivity to disrespect throughout all six items. A Direct-Oblimin factor analysis was conducted and the scale converged within five iterations. The factor analysis revealed that there were two factors within the disrespect items, accounting for 67.21% of the variance,  $KMO = .80$ , chi-square = 527.70,  $p < .001$ . None of the items cross-loaded onto another factor. Factor 1 is comprised of items 1, 2, and 3 ( $\alpha = .71; M = 3.03, SD = 0.91; Eigenvalue = 2.97$ ). These items most accurately reflect

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being disrespected by being ignored, in general, without being more specific than that. This factor accounted for 49.53% of the variance. The factor loadings for Factor 1 ranged from .63 to .84. Factor 2 is comprised of items 4, 5, and 6 ( $\alpha = .82$ ;  $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ; Eigenvalue = 1.06). These items most accurately reflect being disrespected by exclusion. This factor accounted for 17.67% of the variance. The factor loadings for Factor 2 ranged from .80 to .89. Please see Table 5 for more information about the factor loadings. The researchers conducted an additional Direct-Oblimin factor analysis to determine if participants reported a similar emotional reactivity to the six items. There were no differences in their emotional responses to the items. The emotional responses to all six items did not vary and exist in one factor ( $\alpha = .88$ ;  $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ; Eigenvalue = 3.74), accounting for 62.38% of the variance,  $KMO = .85$ , chi square = 927.40,  $p < .001$ . These findings suggest that when conducting analyses, the researcher should collapse the first three items and the last three items for sensitivity to disrespect. However, for considering emotional response, all six items should be analyzed as one unit.

In order to determine convergent validity with the ignored disrespect measurement scale, the researchers conducted a bivariate correlation between many of the variables. Sensitivity to disrespect in Factor 1 was positively correlated with sensitivity to disrespect in Factor 2,  $r = .49$ ,  $p < .001$ . Factor 1 sensitivity was positively correlated with emotional response to the items,  $r = .68$ ,  $p < .001$ . Factor 1 sensitivity was positively correlated with gender (which was coded as 1 = male, 2 = female),  $r = .13$ ,  $p = .03$ . Factor 2 was positively correlated with emotional response,  $r = .79$ ,  $p < .001$ . There was a significant negative correlation between sensitivity to disrespect on Factor 2 and the relationship category (which was coded as 1 = close, 2 = distant),  $r = -.49$ ,  $p < .001$ . Sensitivity to Factor 2 was also positively correlated with gender,  $r = .18$ ,  $p = .002$ . Emotional response was negatively correlated with the relationship category,  $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,



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and was positively correlated with gender,  $r = .19$ ,  $p = .001$ . Please see Table 6 for more information.

Next, the researchers conducted an independent samples  $t$ -test to determine if there were gender differences on the dependent variables. There were gender differences for Factor 1, as female participants ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) responded with significantly more sensitivity to disrespect than male participants ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ),  $t(283) = -2.19$ ,  $p = .03$ , Cohen's  $d = .25$ . There were also gender differences for Factor 2, as female participants ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) reported significantly more sensitivity to disrespect than male participants ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ )  $t(283) = -3.07$ ,  $p = .002$ , Cohen's  $d = .36$ . Lastly, there were gender differences for the emotional responses to the items, as female participants ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) reported a more negative emotional response across the six items than male participants ( $M = 2.19$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ),  $t(283) = -3.26$ ,  $p = .001$ , Cohen's  $d = .38$ .

Since there were gender differences, the researchers controlled for gender when conducting the planned primary analyses. The researchers conducted a 2 X 2 Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effects of age and degree of relationship on Factor 1 sensitivity, controlling for gender. For Factor 1, there was not a significant main effect for age,  $F(1, 281) = 0.26$ ,  $p = .61$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .00$ , which did not support hypothesis 1b. There was also not a significant main effect for relationship,  $F(1, 281) = 2.64$ ,  $p = .11$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ , which did not support hypothesis 2b. The interaction was also not significant,  $F(1, 281) = 0.08$ ,  $p = .78$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .00$ , which did not support hypothesis 3b. Please see Figure 2 for further information. Next, the researchers conducted an additional ANCOVA to determine the effects of age and relationship on Factor 2 sensitivity. There was no significant main effect for age,  $F(1, 281) = 0.51$ ,  $p = .48$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .00$ , which did not support hypothesis 1b. However, there was a

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significant main effect for degree of relationship,  $F(1, 281) = 83.73, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .24$ , which supported hypothesis 2b. Participants who were disrespected by someone close to them ( $M = 3.29, SD = 1.13$ ) were more sensitive than those disrespected by someone distant ( $M = 2.13, SD = 0.97$ ). The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 281) = 0.15, p = .70, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ . This finding did not support hypothesis 3b. Please see Figure 3 for more information.

Lastly, the researchers conducted a third ANCOVA to determine the effects of age and relationship on emotional response to all six items. There was no significant main effect for age,  $F(1, 281) = 0.97, p = .33, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ , which did not support hypothesis 1a. However, there was a significant main effect for degree of relationship,  $F(1, 281) = 46.38, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .14$ , which supported hypothesis 2a. Participants who were disrespected by someone close to them ( $M = 2.65, SD = 0.89$ ) had a stronger emotional reaction than those disrespected by someone distant ( $M = 2.03, SD = 0.63$ ). The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 281) = 0.44, p = .51, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ , which did not support hypothesis 3a. Please see Figure 4.

\*Note. The trend for the results of the three ANCOVAS was the same if gender was removed. Without gender, a 2 X 2 ANOVA revealed that for Factor 1 Sensitivity, there are no significant main effects or interactions. For Factor 2 Sensitivity, there was a significant main effect only for relationship degree. For emotional reaction to all six scenarios, there was a significant main effect only for relationship degree.

### Chapter 4 – Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to determine if reactions to ignored disrespect differ based on age and relationship with a disrespect perpetrator. This study was the first to attempt to define ignored disrespect (Blincoe & Harris, 2011) and to capture this concept with a measurement scale. Although there is currently no theoretical model to describe disrespect, the Dual Pathway Model of Respect influenced the creation of the ignored disrespect items. When considering the Dual Pathway Model of Respect, the researchers were able to actively manipulate one part of the theory, which is the need to feel included within a group (Huo et al., 2010). The researchers were not, however, able to necessarily capture attaining a desired status, which is the second part included in the model of respect.

For the first set of hypotheses, the researchers expected there to be a main effect for age, such that young adults would have a stronger reaction to ignored disrespect than older adults. The rationale for this hypothesis was that older adults are more resilient, better able to regulate their emotions, and possibly have more protection against negative experiences, compared to young adults (Carstensen, 1991; English & Carstensen, 2014; Thomsen et al., 2017). The second set of hypotheses included that participants would be more upset if disrespected by someone close to them, rather than someone distant. The rationale for this and the manipulation for this were both based on the Social Convoy Model (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980), which states that people have relationships that vary in closeness over the lifespan. Lastly, the third set of hypotheses included that relationship distance would matter more for older adults than it does for young adults. The rationale for this set of hypotheses stemmed from the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, which states that as people age, and time left in life perspective is truncated, they tend to value their close relationships more than distant or negative relationships.

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As previously described, the first hypothesis was there would be a main effect for age on both sensitivity to disrespect and emotional reaction to disrespect. This hypothesis was not supported. The young adults and older adults did not differ in how they responded to the items in Factor 1 (items 1, 2, and 3) or Factor 2 (items 4, 5, and 6) in their sensitivity to disrespect, and they also did not differ in their emotional response to the six items. Hypothesis 2 expected a main effect for degree of closeness on both sensitivity to disrespect and emotional reaction to disrespect. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Participants reported more sensitivity to disrespect for the three items in Factor 2 when the disrespect perpetrator was someone close, rather than someone identified by the participant as distant. Participants also reported a stronger emotional reaction for all six items when disrespected by someone close, rather than someone distant. In addition to the significant differences based on degree of closeness, the effect size was very large for the relationship manipulation, which is a major strength of the study. The final hypothesis included that there would be an interaction between age and degree of closeness on both dependent variables of sensitivity and emotional reaction to disrespect. Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Older adult participants did not report significantly more sensitivity or a stronger emotional reaction to being disrespected by someone close rather than someone distant, when specifically compared to the young adults.

The main theory to support the hypotheses based on age differences was the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (Carstensen, 1991). It does not appear, however, that the relationship degree with a perpetrator in disrespect items mattered any more for the older adults than it did for the young adults. No researchers, to the knowledge of the current researchers, have specifically used the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory to explain why there may be age differences in reactions to disrespect. A main focus of the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory is

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the idea of a limited time horizon (i.e., 10 or fewer years to live). It is possible that older adults who elect to take studies on MTurk still see themselves as active and do not see themselves as having limited time left in life. This restricted age range of a special sample of older adults who are also proficient computer users could have been a reason that the results of the current study did not suggest age differences. Future researchers could possibly include a screener for perceptions of a time perspective. It is unusual that older adults in this study did not have more emotional protection against the ignored disrespect items than young adults, considering previous research (Carstensen, 1991; English & Carstensen, 2014; Thomsen et al., 2017). Regardless of one's age, however, it is evident that disrespect can be hurtful and emotionally damaging and can occur across the lifespan, as noted by the means on the scales of sensitivity to disrespect and affect items, indicating that participants were indeed negatively impacted by the ignored disrespect items.

There may not have been any age differences because the reaction was based on an immediate impression of the incident described in the items. One possible explanation for this may be that there are age differences regarding impressions of or reactions to disrespect over time. With this in mind, it may be possible that older adults are able to recover from perceived disrespectful situations more quickly than young adults, as older adults are more resilient and better able to regulate their emotions (Carstensen, 1991; English & Carstensen, 2014; Thomsen et al., 2017). In order to test this, future researchers would need to include a question about how long the participant would be upset about the incident or to provide an open-ended opportunity where participants could report how they think they would respond to that situation. Another way to capture this may be to ask participants how willing they would be to forgive a disrespect

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perpetrator, as there may be age differences in willingness to forgive, based on the findings of previous research (Cheng & Yim, 2008; Steiner, Allemand, & McCullough, 2011).

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The six disrespect items used in this study were created by the researchers and, therefore, had never been validated prior to this study. The researchers first went through the process of defining ignored disrespect and attempting to distinguish it from similar concepts, such as ostracism and incivility. The researchers expected that the six items could either be analyzed together as one factor due to their similarity in content or that there would be three factors based on the operational definition. After conducting a factor analysis on the six items, it was determined that participants responded to the first three items in a similar way when reporting their sensitivity. Additionally, the participants responded similar sensitivity to the last three items. For emotional response, however, participants responded in a similar way to all six of the items. The operational definition still needs to be refined in future studies, and future researchers should include additional measures on topics such as ostracism within the survey in order to validate the factors found in this study.

Items or scenarios are limited in their ability to capture real life and people will often respond differently to a scenario than in a more realistic situation. Kim and Jang (2014) described how scenarios allow for tight control, but also that scenarios must be carefully crafted in order to adequately evoke a similar emotional response as one would experience in real life. They also reported that their findings suggest that although self-reports of negative emotions tend to be consistent between hypothetical reporting and a real-life comparison, reporting of positive emotions and behavioral intentions were not as consistent. Warshaw and Davis (1984) described how responding to scenarios is based on a concept known as behavioral expectation,

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which is a participant's report of the likelihood of performing a particular behavior based on an evaluation of his or her beliefs, attitudes, social norms, and situational factors. These researchers claimed that if a participant does not have a good sense of self-understanding, he or she will likely struggle to accurately report expected behavior. Because of the potential emotional damage of disrespect in real life, scenarios provide a way to test predicted reactions, but there is the potential that these reactions are an inaccurate portrayal.

Although the researchers did not expect significant gender differences, those differences were consistent throughout the data. Only one study suggested that there might be gender differences in reactions to disrespect. The study conducted by Blincoe and Harris (2011) illustrates that disrespect does create emotional damage, but also suggests that the damage likely differs for men and women. Blincoe and Harris (2011) specifically found that young women reported more sadness than men when they are disrespected, which the current researchers also found when looking at only the affect items of anger and sadness. Blincoe and Harris (2011) also found that participants report more anger than sadness overall. However, for this study, the difference for this finding only approached significance and had a small effect size. Other research findings within psychology, on average, tend to indicate that females report more intense emotions than males, which may explain the gender differences found in this study.

One strength, and potential limitation, of this study was the use of a convenience sample through Amazon Mechanical Turk. MTurk has become a major source of data collection in experimental research, mostly because of the convenience of collecting all needed data within just a few hours, as was the case for the current study (Mortensen & Hughes, 2018; Schmidt & Jettinghoff, 2016). It is possible that this is a unique population, and that it may be hard to generalize the results to the majority of adults in the United States (Mortensen & Hughes, 2018).

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Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema (2013) found some differences when comparing Amazon Mechanical Turk workers with the general United States population, including some personality differences (workers are lower on extraversion and self-esteem) and also demographic differences (workers are slightly younger on average and have fewer children). However, it could also be considered a strength that the researchers used Amazon Mechanical Turk. Research in the field of psychology is typically collected from college-aged participants at universities, which can produce misleading results (Sears, 1986). Amazon Mechanical Turk, instead, provided a way to collect a relatively diverse sample of both young and older adults that live in many different places across the United States. One specific benefit of using this platform includes tools that can be used to restrict who can take the survey, as the current researchers did (Schmidt & Jettinghoff, 2016). In general, many researchers have concluded that Amazon Mechanical Turk is reliable, statistically equivalent to data from other samples, more representative than other online survey platforms, and that work performance quality is comparable to in-person participants (Mortensen & Hughes, 2018; Schmidt & Jettinghoff, 2016).

Another strength of the current study is that the manipulation of relationship degree using the Social Convoy Model (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980) truly seemed to work with the disrespect items. The participants reported that they were closer to Person A than they were to Person C, which was the goal. Also, when reacting to the items, participants were significantly more upset when the disrespect perpetrator was someone close to them. For future research on disrespect, the Social Convoy Model can be used to identify disrespect perpetrators that will be based on actual people who are meaningful to the participants. The researchers were also able to test the sensitivity to disrespect item in the current study. Although the sensitivity to disrespect was only measured with one question, the fact that sensitivity is significantly correlated with emotional



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reaction helped provide validity and illustrate the appropriateness of the sensitivity question. The more sensitive participants were, the more emotional they were, as well. Both of the dependent variables successfully captured that disrespect is a negative experience.

This study was likely low in mundane realism, as responding to hypothetical statements of disrespect is not a common real-world task. However, the study is likely high in experimental realism, as the participants were able to pick the names of people in their personal lives and also because of the feature of automatic insertion of names into the items. These unique features of the current study were designed to increase participant interest and attention to the study. The current study is high in internal validity, due to the precautions that the researchers took when designing the study. The researchers crafted the items very carefully and revised the materials many times. The data also revealed that the independent variable was very noticeable to participants—only one participant failed the manipulation check. For the survey as a whole, the researchers used standardized instructions that were pilot tested in both the lab and with a small convenience sample of about twenty people. The instructions and items both were reconstructed each time the research lab received feedback so that the actual participants of this study on MTurk would be certain of what was expected of them, especially as the researchers were not present to answer any questions participants might have. The items were crafted to hopefully be meaningful and relevant to participants. The researchers created the subject for each item separately and then converged them through multiple discussions by looking for common themes. As an extra precaution, the researchers also counter-balanced the presentation of the items.

This is the first study, to the researchers' knowledge, that directly compares how two different age groups respond to disrespect. It is also the first study to examine the types of

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disrespect identified by Blincoe and Harris (2011) and to attempt to define ignored disrespect. The researchers specifically defined ignored disrespect as being physically excluded from an event, ignoring someone's feelings, and ignoring what someone is saying. The six items were based on these three parts of the definition—two items each. The factor analysis, however, revealed that more research may be needed to truly define ignored disrespect and the factors it captures. It appears in this study that ignored disrespect may encompass being excluded and simply being ignored, rather than breaking it down into ignoring feelings versus ignoring what someone says; but again, more research is needed.

### **Future Directions and Implications**

Research on disrespect is relevant for many different settings, including schools, in the workplace, and at home. Disrespect is a particularly relevant topic to study today, especially as parents and educators have concerns about disrespect as a growing trend and the increase in disrespect and incivility towards authority figures and seniors (Shwalb & Shwalb, 2006b). In a real-world application, studying disrespect could lead to improvements in the delivery of health care (Hawkins, 2015). Sokol-Hessner, Folcarelli, and Sands (2015), for example, asked future researchers to focus on identifying the prevalence of different types of disrespect in order to avoid any emotional harm to patients and to help establish rapport between doctors/nurses and patients.

Our study suggests that it is more hurtful when disrespected by someone close. The researchers also noted that females may be more sensitive to disrespect than males. Although the current data suggest that young and older adults seem to have similar reactions to disrespect, more research investigating the role of age in disrespect is needed. The items created for this study should be utilized in future studies to validate them. The items also need to be examined

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with different populations, particularly a population outside of the United States. Future researchers could extend the work of Blincoe and Harris (2011) by exploring the other identified types of disrespect. There is a need for the different types of disrespect to be operationally defined and explored, potentially by extending the methodology used in the current study. Future researchers should also consider utilizing scripted interactions involving the different types of disrespect with confederates to examine themes of disrespect in a more realistic way. Although there is a paucity of research regarding the concept of disrespect, the current study contributes to the present body of knowledge in a meaningful and impactful way. The current research hopefully will contribute to the establishment of a theoretical model to describe and help us understand the concept of disrespect even more.

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## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

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REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Demographic	Subsections	<i>n</i>	%
Age	18-29	136	47.6
	30-39	1	.3
	40-49	0	0
	50-59	38	13.3
	60-69	87	30.4
	70-79	24	8.4
Ethnicity	White	229	80.1
	African American	28	9.8
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.3
	Asian	8	2.8
	Hispanic or Latino	17	5.9
	Other	3	1.0
Schooling Completed	High school	33	11.5
	GED	4	1.4
	Some college	70	24.5
	Vocational school	9	3.1
	Associates degree	38	13.3
	Bachelor's degree	103	36
	Graduate degree	29	10.1
Gender	Female	143	50
	Male	143	50
Area	Urban	189	66.1
	Rural	94	32.9
	Not sure	3	1

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Table 2

*Pilot Test Data - Participants*

---

Age	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>
Young adult (below 30)	12	
Older adult (above 30)	10	
Total		22

---

REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Table 3

*Pilot Test Data - Results*

Measures	Subsections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Sensitivity to disrespect	Not at all	1	6	1	1	2	1	7	3	7
	A little	9	6	8	4	6	1	5	7	10
	Moderately	2	6	5	3	3	1	5	4	3
	Quite a bit	5	4	6	5	6	4	3	6	1
	Extremely	5	0	2	9	5	15	2	2	1
Manipulation Check	Pass	9	13	16	12	17	20	18	9	17
	Fail	12	8	5	9	4	1	3	13	4
Realistic	Yes	18	21	19	12	13	6	14	7	17
	No	4	1	3	10	9	16	8	15	5

*Note.* At the time of conducting the pilot test, there were nine items. After receiving feedback, the researchers decided to remove three of the items for the final study. Items 7, 8, and 9 in the table were the items that were discarded.

Table 4

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### *Degree of Relationship Closeness*

---

Closeness	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Person A	6.80	0.59
Person B	5.38	0.92
Person C	3.64	1.32

---

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Table 5

*Factor Loadings*

Scenario item	Factor 1:	Factor 2:
(1) You told (someone) about an important upcoming appointment. (Someone) offers to give you a ride to that appointment, but (Someone) does not pick you up early enough and now, you will miss it.		.809
(2) You are in the middle of talking to (Someone) about the difficult day that you had. (Someone) keeps looking down at the phone and checks social media.		.627
(3) You try to give advice to (Someone). While you are trying to give advice, (Someone) talks over you.		.840
(4) You tell (Someone) that you really want to see a particular movie that is coming out. (Someone) goes to the movie without you.	.843	
(5) (Someone) goes out to dinner with a group of people that are also your friends. (Someone) did not invite you or ask if you wanted to come.	.797	
(6) Today is your birthday. (Someone) did not say anything to you all day.	.886	

REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Table 6

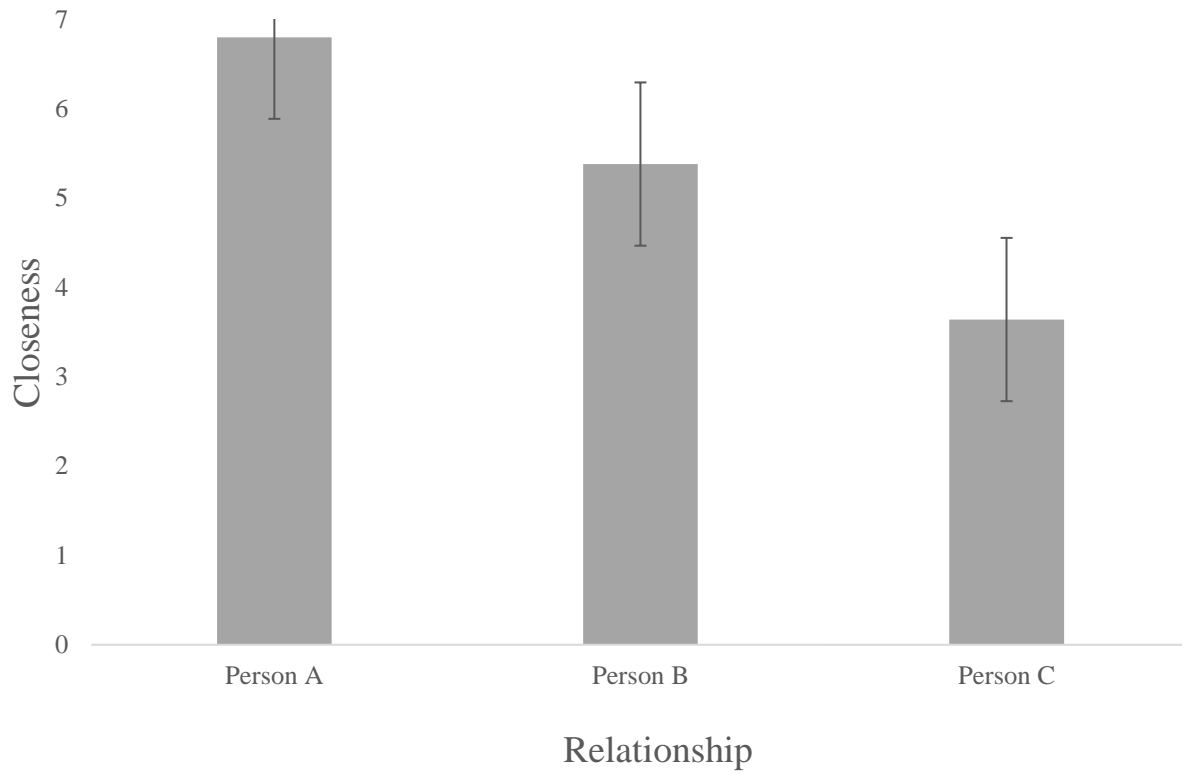
*Correlations among variables*

Measures	Sensitivity in Factor 1	Sensitivity in Factor 2	Emotional Reaction	Age	Relationship degree	Gender
Sensitivity in Factor 1	-	.486**	.680**	.029	-.100	.129*
Sensitivity in Factor 2	-	-	.788**	-.042	-.486**	.179**
Emotional Reaction	-	-	-	-.058	-.377**	.190**
Age	-	-	-	-	.014	.011
Relationship degree	-	-	-	-	-	-.060
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-

\*\*  $p < .01$

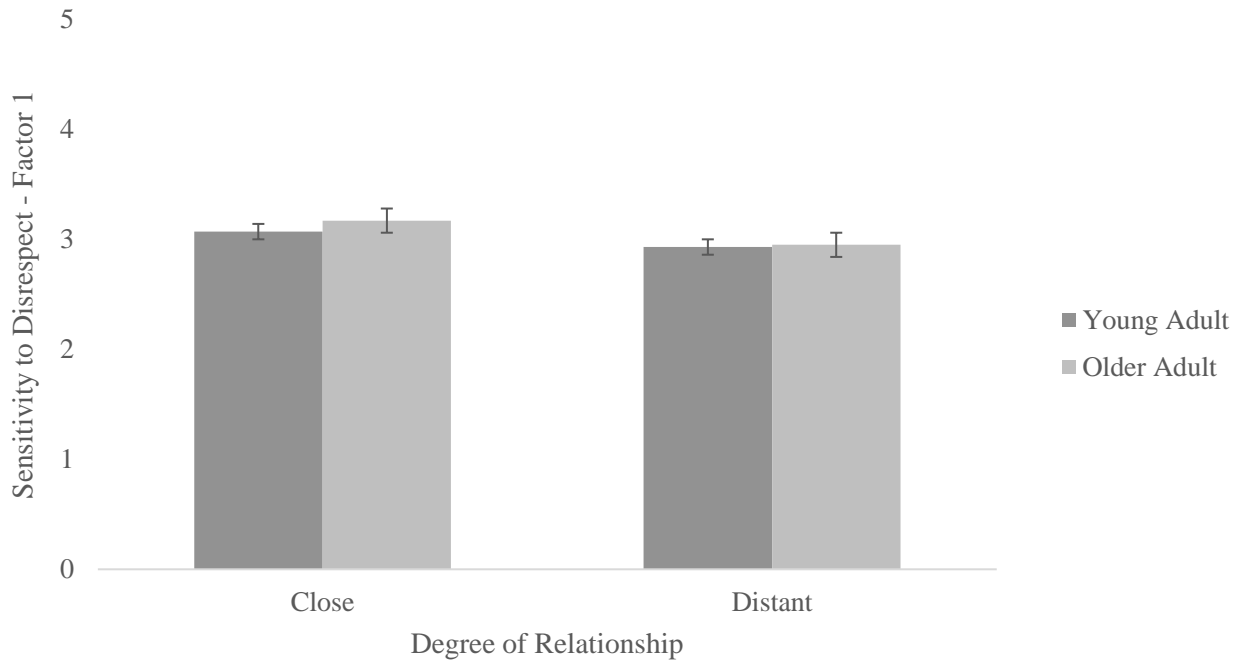
\*  $p < .05$

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS



*Figure 1.* This provides an illustration of the differences in closeness that participants reported for Person A, Person B, and Person C.

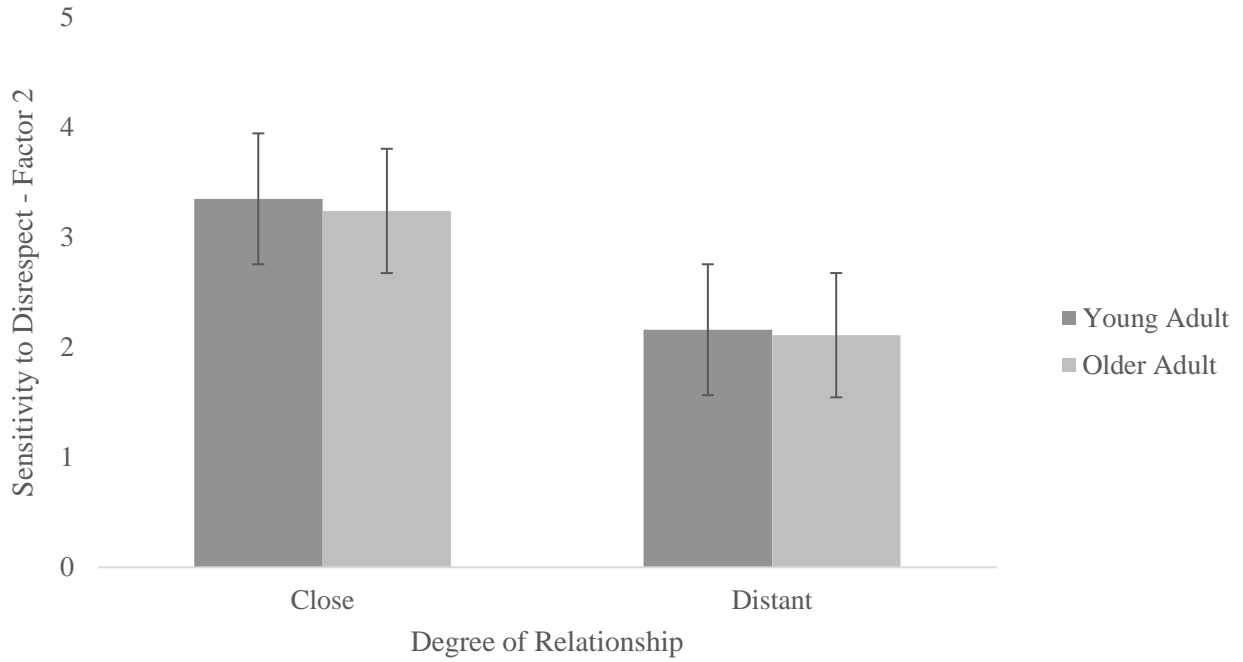
## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS



*Figure 2.* For the first three items, there were no significant differences in sensitivity based on participant age or relationship degree, nor on a combination of the two variables.

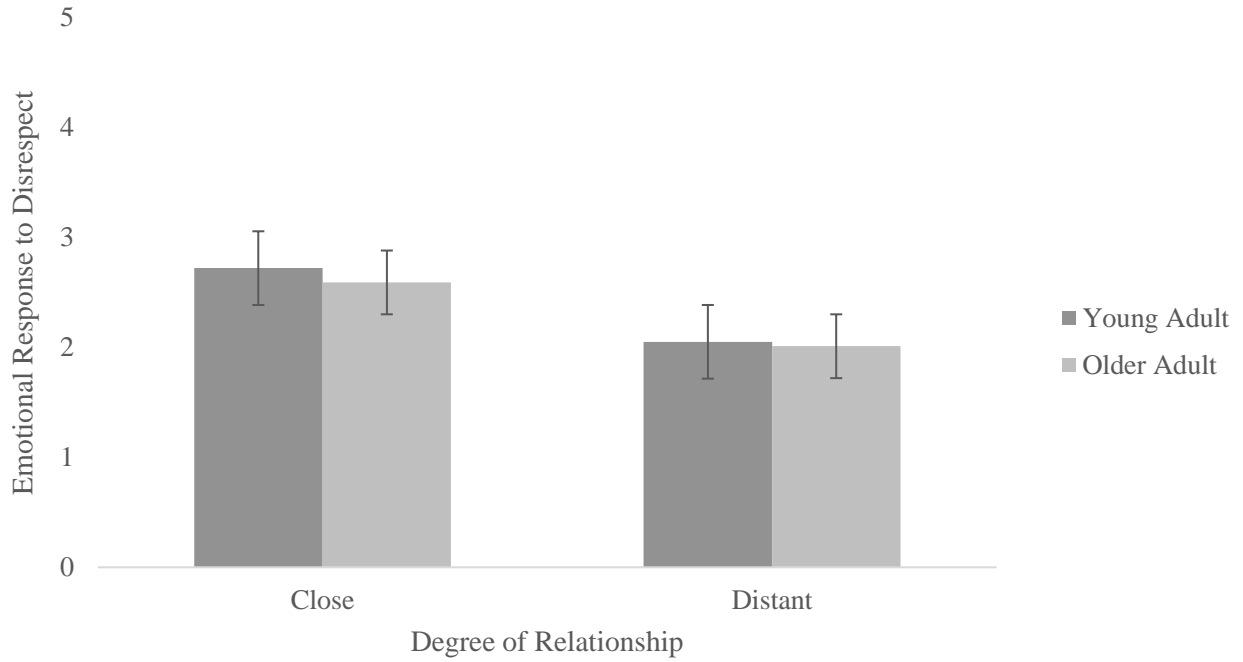


## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS



*Figure 3.* On the last three items, participants reported a stronger sensitivity when disrespected by a perpetrator they are close to rather than distant. Age and the combination of age with relationship resulted in no significant differences.

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS



*Figure 4.* Participants reported a stronger emotional response to all six items when disrespected by a perpetrator they are close to rather than distant. Age and the combination of age with relationship resulted in no significant differences.

# REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

## Appendix A – Informed Consent

*College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences  
Department of Psychology*

**RADFORD  
UNIVERSITY**

Date 2/7/19

P.O. Box 6946  
Radford, VA 24142

To whom it may concern:

(540) 831-5361  
(540) 831-6113 FAX  
[www.radford.edu](http://www.radford.edu)

You are invited to participate in a research survey, entitled “Exploring Age Differences in Responses to Disrespect Among Young and Older Adults.” The study is being conducted by Dr. Jenessa Steele and the students in her research lab (Amanda Chappell, Rachel Scott, Sofia Martinez) from the Psychology Department of Radford University.

*Criminal Justice  
English  
Foreign Languages  
and Literatures  
History  
Military Science  
Philosophy and  
Religious Studies  
Political Science  
Psychology  
School of Communication  
Sociology*

5108 CHBS Building  
Radford University  
P.O. Box 6946  
Radford, VA 24142  
1-540-831-5361  
[jcsteele@radford.edu](mailto:jcsteele@radford.edu)

The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes towards the topic of disrespect. Your participation in the survey will contribute to a better understanding of how different generations perceive disrespect. We estimate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. You are free to contact the investigator at the above address and phone number to discuss the survey.

Risks to participants are considered minimal. There will be no costs for participating, and you will be compensated with \$2 for participating. IP addresses will not be recorded. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the study or have any questions, contact the investigator listed above.

If you have any questions, please call The Department of Psychology at 1-540-831-5361 or send an email to [jcsteele@radford.edu](mailto:jcsteele@radford.edu). You may also request a hard copy of the survey from the contact information above.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Orion Rogers, Interim Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, Radford University, [jorogers@radford.edu](mailto:jorogers@radford.edu), 1-540-831-5958.

If you agree to participate, please press the arrow button at the bottom right of the screen giving your informed consent. Otherwise use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect.

Thank you.

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

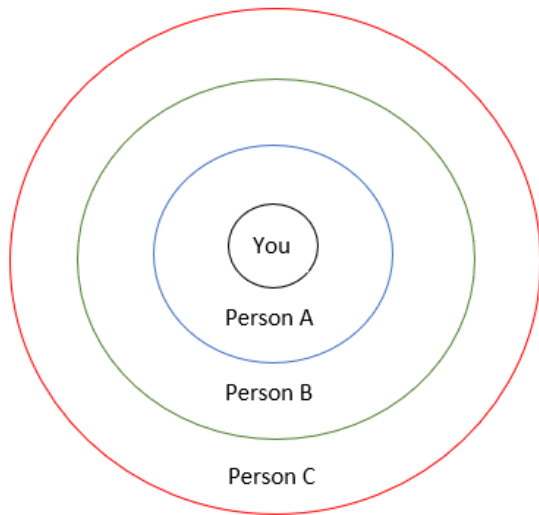
### Appendix B – Social Convoy Task

**Social Convoy Task:** For this task, you will identify three people in your life who range in closeness of relationship. You, the participant of this survey, are represented in the innermost circle pictured below, labeled “you.” The circles surrounding this include people in your life. In life, you often have multiple people who fit in each of these circles but for this task, you will only select one person for each circle.

Person A is someone who is very close to you, someone you cannot live without. Examples of Person A might include a best friend or a close family member like a sibling, parent, or spouse. As you choose someone who could represent Person A, please choose someone who lives relatively close to you.

Person B is less close to you than Person A. Examples of Person B might include family or friends. As you choose someone who could represent Person B, please choose someone who lives relatively close to you.

Person C is even less close to you than Person A or B. Examples of Person C might include neighbors, co-workers, supervisors, and not immediate family members like cousins. As you choose someone who could represent Person C, please choose someone who lives relatively close to you.



Although you could have multiple people fit in the circle for Person A, please identify just one person in your life who could represent Person A. Please choose someone who lives relatively close to you. Type this person’s name in the blank provided below.

Reminder: Person A is someone who is very close to you, someone you cannot live without. Examples of Person A might include a best friend or a close family member like a sibling, parent, or spouse.

---

What is your relationship with Person A? Type your answer in the blank provided below.

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

---

How close are you to Person A?

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very close)

Although you could have multiple people fit in the circle for person B, please identify just one person in your life who could represent Person B. Please choose someone who lives relatively close to you. Type this person's name in the blank provided below.

Reminder: Person B is less close to you than Person A. Examples of Person B might include family or friends.

---

What is your relationship with Person B? Type your answer in the blank provided below.

---

How close are you to Person B?

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very close)

Although you could have multiple people fit in the circle for person C, please identify just one person in your life who could represent Person C. Please choose someone who lives relatively close to you. Type this person's name in the blank provided below.

Person C is even less close to you than Person A or B. Examples of Person C might include neighbors, co-workers, supervisors, and not immediate family members like cousins.

---

What is your relationship with Person C? Type your answer in the blank provided below.

---

How close are you to Person C?

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very close)

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### Appendix C – Disrespect Items

Next, you will read brief items of disrespect. For each scenario, imagine that this situation is actually happening to you even if you don't think it actually would in real life. One of the names you listed on the previous page will appear in the scenario. You will only see the name of one person you identified - either A, B, or C. You will only respond for that one person throughout all six items in this survey.

#### Scenario 1

You told Person A (or C) about an important upcoming appointment. Person A (or C) offers to give you a ride to that appointment, but Person A (or C) does not pick you up early enough, and now, you will miss it.

#### Scenario 2

You are in the middle of talking to Person A (or C) about the difficult day that you had. Person A (or C) keeps looking down at their phone and checks their social media.

#### Scenario 3

You try to give advice to Person A (or C). While you are trying to give advice, Person A (or C) talks over you.

#### Scenario 4

You tell Person A (or C) that you really want to see a particular movie that is coming out. Person A (or C) goes to the movie without you.

#### Scenario 5

Person A (or C) goes out to dinner with a group of people that are also your friends. Person A (or C) did not invite you or ask if you wanted to come.

#### Scenario 6

Today is your birthday. Person A (or C) did not say anything to you all day.

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### Appendix D – Sensitivity to Disrespect Measure

What is the likelihood you would feel disrespected by the incident described above?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

Appendix E – Emotional Response

What is the likelihood you would experience the following emotions if the incident described above happened to you?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly or Not at all	A Little	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely

_____ 1. Distressed
_____ 2. Upset
_____ 3. Irritable
_____ 4. Sad
_____ 5. Anxious
_____ 6. Angry



## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### Appendix F – Manipulation Check

Remind us again: Who disrespected you in each of the scenarios?

- a) Your closest relationship (Person A)
- b) Your least close relationship (Person C)

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### Appendix G – Demographic Survey

You will answer some demographic questions. Please select the answer that most applies to you.

1. What gender do you identify with?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

2. Please type your age on the blank below.

---

3. What is your ethnicity?

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. American Indian or Alaska Native
- d. Asian
- e. Hispanic or Latino
- f. Other

4. In the blank below, please indicate the state you call “home.” If you live outside of the United States, please indicate that and provide the name of the province or region you are from instead.

---

5. Please indicate your highest level of schooling complete.

- a. High school
- b. GED
- c. Some College
- d. Vocational School
- e. Associates Degree
- f. Bachelor’s Degree
- g. Graduate Degree
- h. Other

6. Do you live in a rural or urban area?

- a. Urban
- b. Rural
- c. I’m not sure

## REACTION TO DISRESPECT BASED ON AGE AND CLOSENESS

### Appendix H – Debriefing Statement

Thank you for participating in this study. We appreciate your time and effort while completing all questionnaires.

If you found a part of this study upsetting, or have any questions regarding the research being conducted, you can contact the principal investigator, Dr. Jenessa Steele at [jcsteele@radford.edu](mailto:jcsteele@radford.edu), or the main graduate assistant, Amanda Chappell at [achappell3@radford.edu](mailto:achappell3@radford.edu).

We want to remind you that all of your information, including answers to the questionnaires, will be kept confidential. This information will never be linked to you in any way. Also, all researchers are bound by confidentiality and will never discuss your participation. Your participation and that of other people will contribute to a greater understanding of how different generations respond to incidents of disrespect

You will be compensated with \$2 for participating. If you have any questions, feel free to ask us. Thank you again for your time and participation.