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Close Relationships across the Life Span: Toward a Theory of Relationship Types

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In this chapter I discuss how to conceptualize and study individual patterns of close relationships consisting of multiple significant others. The discussion consists of three parts. First, I review previous research on close relationships to clarify which aspects of social relationships have already been studied and which have not been fully understood. Then I use the affective relationships model to examine how the important, but not sufficiently studied, aspects of social relationships from young childhood to old age can be conceptualized. Finally, I discuss the effectiveness of the typological analysis of this model and future directions of this research.

THE NATURE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

From the time they are born into society, humans are exposed to a variety of social relationships, and are naturally directed toward having interactions with multiple significant others for their survival, safety, and well-being. However, most researchers have focused on dyadic relationships, such as with the mother in infancy (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bretherton & Waters, 1985; Cassidy & Shaver, 1999; Kobak & Hazan, 1991), with a friend in childhood (Dodge, Pettit, McClasky, & Brown, 1986; Jones & Vaughan, 1990; Parker & Gottman, 1989; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, Tolson, & Halliday-Scher, 1995), and with a romantic partner in adolescence and adulthood (Hazen & Shaver, 1987, 1990; Shaver, Hazen, & Bradshaw, 1988).

In the last few decades, some researchers have moved beyond this traditional dyadic paradigm and asserted that each individual, from infancy to old age, of both genders, and in every culture, has social relationships consisting of multiple significant others, including their parents, siblings, spouse, children, relatives, peers, friends and others who are close to them (Belle, 1989; Hinde, 1981; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980; Lang & Carstensen, 1994; Lewis, 1982, 1984; Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1996; Takahashi, 1974,

1990a). If we accept the fact that each person has multiple significant others concurrently, we can reasonably extract at least the following three assumptions regarding social relationships: (1) individuals assign different social roles to each of the multiple figures; (2) individuals have their own representation of the framework of social relationships consisting of the multiple social figures; and (3) because individuals select appropriate figures for themselves, there must be individual patterns of the internal framework of social relationships. In the section that follows, we will briefly review to what extent these three assumptions of social relationships have been examined by theories and the empirical evidence.

Articulations of Psychological Functions among Multiple Significant Others

The main goals of having close relationships are to maintain one's survival and feeling of safety, and to enhance one's well-being. In conceptualizing close relationships, researchers have differentiated several sub-goals in terms of functions following Murray's need functions (Lewis, 1982), the key elements of interpersonal transactions (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980), or the categories of relational provisions (Weiss, 1974) through which people achieve their main goals. In addition, researchers have assumed that the psychological functions are assigned to multiple significant figures differently.

If we look at the matter from a different angle, it is assumed that, because of these functional differentiations among figures, a person is able to possess multiple relationships simultaneously. When we consider the mental cost, the distribution of psychological functions among limited numbers of significant others is essential to insure that there will be appropriate and available figures for every expected situation. When a person attaches to only one figure or attaches to everybody, he or she may be overly dependent on or easily influenced by the others accordingly, and this will impair his or her ability to live as an autonomous adult. Thus, it is necessary to describe the whole relationship profile for an individual, in which the psychological functions of each figure must be related to or vary with the assignments of functions of other figures. We should treat all the figures as a related whole in each individual's set of social relationships. In other words, we should conceptualize social relationships by considering both psychological functions and social figures.

There have been the following innovations that promote the conceptualization of multiple social relationships. In studies using a rubric of social support networks, researchers have delineated various categories of social support, such as emotional, informational, and instrumental, and found that many different people supply social support to the recipient in a manner that is cooperative and in which the supporters compensate

for each other (Barrera, 1986; Barrera & Ainslay, 1983; Hinde, 1981; Rook, 1987; Weiss, 1974).

Lewis and his colleagues (Feiring & Lewis, 1989, 1991; Lewis, 1982; Lewis & Feiring, 1979) viewed a social space as consisting of many people who fulfill many kinds of social functions. They defined various functions as important; for example, for infants, protection, caregiving, feeding, play, exploration/learning, and social control are considered important. Given these categories, they proposed to describe the entire social map of a child in terms of a matrix of figure by function: a large lattice on which the Y axis represents an array of figures and the X axis represents a variety of psychological functions. Studies applying this device successfully indicated that each child has a variety of social figures that fulfill different psychological functions.

Antonucci and her colleagues conceptualized social relationships as individuals' hierarchical social support networks, using the image of a convoy that surrounds a person over time, in which supporters are distinguished by the degree of importance they have to the individual (Antonucci, 1985; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). Specifically, these investigators first asked their subjects to map important persons in their lives and to classify them into three concentric circles. Each of the circles was considered to represent a different level of importance to the target person. They then interviewed the subjects as to the functions provided by the designated figures. Their (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987; Antonucci, Fuhrer, & Dartigues, 1997; Antonucci & Jackson, 1987) and others' studies (Lang & Carstensen, 1994; Lang, Staudinger, & Carstensen, 1998; Levitt, Guacci-Franco, & Levitt, 1993; Levitt, Weber, & Guacci, 1993) revealed features of social relationships more clearly than had previous conventional research. They found that adults nominated eight or nine figures on average and, of these, three or four were placed into the inner circle of people who provided higher proportions of all kinds of support, such as confiding, reassurance, respect, care when sick, and talk when upset, whereas the middle-circle figures provided respect and care when sick, and outer-circle members only provided respect (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987). This sophisticated research has clearly indicated the existence of the articulations of psychological functions among significant others.

Internal Framework of Close Relationships

It is well documented that humans as young as toddlers have the ability to construct and use mental models that serve to interpret immediate situations, and to select or plan actual and appropriate behaviors in a given context (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980; Bretherton, 1993; Nelson, 1986; Piaget, 1954; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Because of this ability, it is reasonably assumed that social interactions and relationships are *not* synonymous

(Lewis, 1982). We can observe social interactions, but such observation does not necessarily lead to the understanding of close relationships as an integrated system. For this we must somehow access the mental models of social relationships.

Some researchers have posited such mental models of social relationships as relational schema (Baldwin, 1992; Yee, Santoro, Paul, & Rosenbaum, 1996), attachment style (Davila, Burge, & Hammen, 1997; Hazan & Shaver, 1987, 1990; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994), or trust (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Most typical theoretical innovations in the mental models of social relationships may be identified in the attachment theory, although this theory primarily concerns the mother-child, dyadic relationship. These researchers have extended the attachment theory beyond toddlerhood by "a move to the level of representation" (Bretherton, 1985; Main, 1994; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985), based on the internal working model proposed by Bowlby (1969/1982, 1973, 1980). They extend the theory by focusing on mental representations of the "current state of mind with respect to attachment experiences," mainly with the mother in childhood (e.g., George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996; Hesse, 1999; Main & Goldwyn, 1998). These devices suggest that we can conceptualize social relationships as representations of actual interactive relationships.

The internal framework provides us not only with the experiences of social figures but also with beliefs about how each figure fulfills each function, by considering what the figure thinks of us and how the figure will respond, in other words, beliefs that come from inferring the figure's mind. Thus, we can hypothesize that the representational framework of close relationships controls the everyday social interactions of each person, although the representations are influenced and changed by the actual interactions.

Individual Patterns of Close Relationships

As individuals select appropriate figures for themselves and assign one or more psychological functions to each of them, it is assumed that there are individual differences in the configurations of a person's framework of close relationships. Some innovative researchers have proposed ways to summarize the detailed information gained from their interviewees about their relationships, beyond the conventional descriptions of normative tendencies.

For example, Antonucci and her colleagues have proposed the total network size or the composition of a network (family vs. friends ratio) as indicators of individual differences in social relationships (Antonucci, Fuhrer, & Dartigues, 1997). Wenger (1991, 1996) and Litwin (2000, 2001) have identified individual network types among elderly citizens based on the frequency of contact with children, friends, or neighbors and their

attendance of social activities. Although a quantitative summary of social frameworks is convenient, its use might result in the loss of the essential nature of social relationships represented by the relationship between figures and functions. I believe that indicators based on the quantitative aspects of social relationships are too general and abstract to depict the complexly organized representational framework. Rather, the unique nature of the social relationships of each individual needs to be condensed.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

As thus far reviewed, the three assumptions about close relationships have been partly examined and embodied in the recent innovative research described above. The most critical problem that now confronts us is how densely to describe how figures and functions are related to each other in each individual's personal network. In other words, we must take into account the outstanding qualitative characteristics of the individual framework, which consists of multiple figures among which psychological functions are shared, articulated, and divided. At the same time, the detailed, qualitative descriptions of individuals should be categorizable into groups or types for the purpose of understanding general rules in social relationships.

Next, I will discuss the affective relationships model (Takahashi, 1973, 1986, 1990a; Takahashi & Sakamoto, 2000) as an example of an attempt to integrate all three of the assumptions together into one model. This model was constructed in Japan and has been applied not only among the Japanese but also among other Eastern and Western participants (Heo, 2000; Levitt, 2001; Shulman & Scharf, 2000; Takahashi, Ohara, Antonucci, & Akiyama, in press).

Affective Relationships Model

The notion of affective relationships focuses on the core and relatively stable close relationships that are assumed to be important for the survival and well-being of human beings. The affective relationships are defined as those interpersonal relationships that satisfy our needs for emotional interactions with significant others; they include the need for emotional support, exchanging warm attention, and giving nurture. Thus, the affective relationships include a variety of intimate relationships that have been studied under such rubrics as attachment, trust, love, close relationships, and romantic relationships. Because previous research has indicated that purely instrumental supports, such as financial supports and those that provide help in urgent situations, are sometimes unaccompanied by any positive affection (e.g., Iida, 2000; Takahashi & Ohara, 1997), these kinds of support are excluded.

The affective relationships model allows us to conceptualize the important features of close relationships that have been identified only partially by previous research as stated above. More specifically, the following three features characterize the framework of affective relationships in this model.

1. The framework consists of multiple figures that have been chosen by each individual, who assigns to them each of the psychological functions. We can distinguish a variety of psychological functions, from the critical (e.g., asking for emotional support) to the peripheral (e.g., sharing emotional experiences and information) that provide support for an individual's survival and well-being; these figures and functions have been identified in previous studies (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Furman, Simon, Shaffer, & Bouchey, 2002; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980; Weiss, 1974).

2. The framework has a clear hierarchical structure, as in the convoy model (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). That is, there are focal figures that satisfy almost all of the psychological functions, and provide the scaffolding of being for each person by fulfilling the most critical functions. In addition to the focal figures, there is a limited but sufficient number of significant others to satisfy a variety of psychological functions for a stable and autonomous life, so that the focal figures' influence could be reduced by the influence of the others. This structured framework serves to construe the core and relatively stable social relationships. However, it is also assumed that the framework will be transformed through encounters with new and appropriate figures, the loss of figures by separation or death, aging, or development. Thus, it is reasonably hypothesized that each person continuously constructs and reconstructs her or his own framework of affective relationships throughout life.

3. There are individual differences in frameworks, because each person chooses the figures that are most appropriate and available to them to fulfill each of the functions. To highlight these individualities, it is useful to evaluate the importance of a limited number of significant others, in light of their roles in providing a few generally important psychological functions. To summarize the individual nature of social relationships that is captured by these figure-function pairs, we adopt typological classifications. The typological analysis falls midway between case descriptions of individuals and normative descriptions of groups. Such conventional analyses of social relationships are not always appropriate: the former is too concrete and the latter lures us into missing individualities. In the affective relationships model, we use typology and tentatively discern types of frameworks.

Measuring Affective Relationships

The Affective Relationships Scale (ARS). To better define the affective relationships model, a new self-report type of assessment instrument, the Affective Relationships Scale (ARS), was proposed (Takahashi, 1974, 1990a;

Takahashi & Sakamoto, 2000). The ARS is constructed to assess subjective representations of close relationships as a complex set of figure-function pairs, using the same set of questions to ask about supposedly major social figures.

More concretely, the ARS describes multiple close relationships in terms of representations of multiple interpersonal relationships. The ARS requires a subject to give separate ratings on the same set of items, which describes each of six psychological functions. That is, the ARS consists of statements describing concrete affective behaviors that are grouped according to the following six functions: (1) seeking proximity; (2) receiving emotional support; (3) receiving reassurance for behavior and/or being; (4) receiving encouragement and help; (5) sharing information and experience; and (6) giving nurture. Participants are asked to give separate ratings of the 12 items (i.e., 6 functions × 2 items), as shown in Table 6.1, for each of their five to eight figures using a five-point scale from 5 (I agree) to 1 (I disagree). The figures are selected from several social categories based on preliminary studies identifying the most important persons for adults. In most cases, participants are asked to rate the mother, the father, the closest sibling, the closest same-gender friend, the most favored opposite-gender friend or romantic partner, and a respected person, in that order. For married people, the spouse (instead of a romantic partner) and the closest child are included. Thus, the ARS can be flexibly adjusted to different populations by including or excluding figures, depending on the respondents' social and societal conditions and the aims of the research. The ARS is designed to yield two kinds of score: the total score for all twelve items

TABLE 6.1. *Items of the Affective Relationships Scale*

The first series of statements are about your relationship with your mother. For each of the statements, please choose one of the alternatives that best describes how much you agree. (Alternatives and score: 5, Agree; 4, Agree somewhat; 3, Neither agree nor disagree; 2, Disagree somewhat; or 1, Disagree.)

1. I would like to be emotionally supported by my mother.
2. I would miss my mother if she were away.
3. I would like to be with my mother when I feel sad.
4. I would like to be understood by my mother when I have a hard time.
5. I would like my mother and me to share our difficulties.
6. I would like to encourage my mother when she has difficulties.
7. I would like to be with my mother when I need a boost in my self-confidence.
8. I would like my mother and me to share each other's happiness.
9. I would like to be encouraged by my mother when I do something.
10. I would like to be with my mother if possible.
11. I would like my mother to agree with me if I am doing the right thing.
12. I would like my mother to ask me to help when she has difficulties.

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for each major figure, and a set of subscores for each of the six functions for each figure. The former reflects the strength of the subject's need for affective behaviors from each figure, and the latter the major functions of that figure.

The Picture Affective Relationships Test (PART). For subjects who have difficulty responding to the ARS, that is, young children, elementary schoolchildren, and very elderly people, a series of picture-type instruments (the Picture Affective Relationships Test, PART) was constructed based on the affective relationships model. The PART consists of two sets of eighteen cards, one for females and one for males. Each card illustrates a daily life situation in which affective behaviors toward another person may be induced. As shown in Figure 6.1, each pair of cards depicts imaginary situations representing each of the same six functions that are in the ARS. During the test session, a subject is instructed to suppose the major figure in the picture was her or himself, then is shown each card and asked to answer the question pertaining to each picture with the name of a person and that person's relationship to the subject (Takahashi, 1978/2000; Takahashi, 2002). Thus, using both the ARS and the PART, we can assess affective relationships over the course of life, from young children to elderly people, based on the same theory.

Affective Relationships Types: Condensing the Individual Patterns of Relationships Described by the ARS and the PART. To condense the rich information obtained for each individual by the ARS or the PART, we have proposed typological classifications as intermediate descriptions of the data between live case depictions and normative summaries of the whole data, because previous findings suggest that there are three groups of people. First, previous studies indicate that one group of individuals includes people who are dominantly concerned with family members and another group includes people who are more concerned with nonfamily members (Antonucci, Fuhrer, & Dartigues, 1997; Litwin, 2000, 2001; Wenger, 1991, 1996). The former conventionally includes the natural family members, i.e., parents, siblings, and children, and the latter typically includes friends of both genders. In fact, correlations of the ARS scores for the various figures indicated that the rs among either family or nonfamily members were significantly greater than those between family and nonfamily members (Takahashi & Sakamoto, 2000; Takahashi et al., in press). Moreover, for instance, college students who gave the highest ARS scores for the mother reported that they had no friends of the opposite gender, in contrast to their friend-dominant type counterparts who reported having active interactions with friends including romantic partners (Takahashi, 1974, 1986). However, the differentiation of family members from outsiders will depend on one's subjective definitions of "family." In particular,

"If you got hurt, who would you want to be with?"
   (A card for girls)
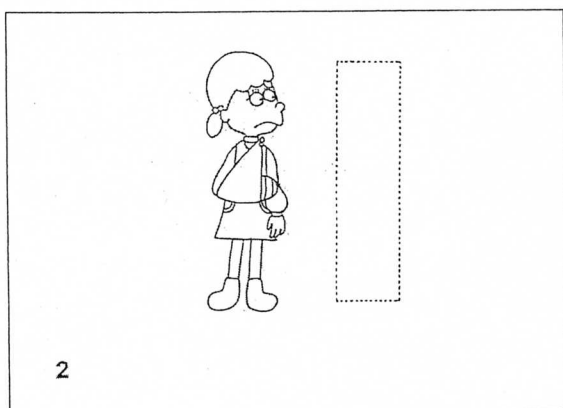
"If something pleasant happened to you, who would you
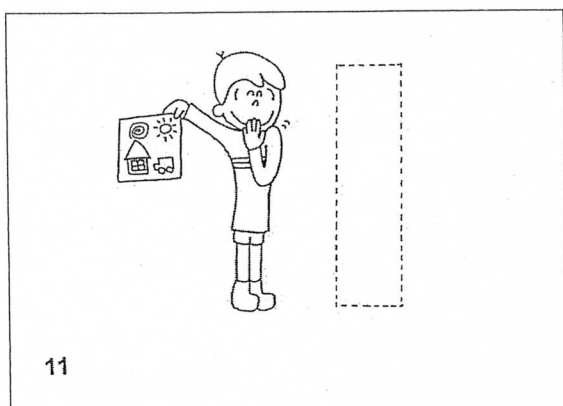   like to share it with?" (A card for boys)

FIGURE 6.1. Sample Cards of the PART for Young Children.

the classification of romantic partners or the spouse into the family or
nonfamily cluster will be arbitrary. A romantic partner is initially consid-
ered a nonfamily member, but will often, but not always, be considered a
family member after marriage. For the sake of convenience, we will clas-
sify the romantic partner as a family member among married participants
hereafter.

   In addition to the above-mentioned people who are interested in others,
a third group is made up of persons who are not very interested in other
human beings. Members of this group have been identified in the previous

literature under rubrics such as isolation, withdrawal, loneliness, and attachment disorganization (Main & Solomon, 1990; Rotenberg & Hymel, 1999; Solomon & George, 1999). Respondents to the ARS or the PART can easily be classified into one of these three groups (Family, Nonfamily, and "Lone Wolf") of social relationships.

Moreover, if we look at each detailed description of individuals' close relationships, we find that people have preferences among the most important social figures. For instance, some Family group students express a preference for the mother over other family members. Among Nonfamily group adolescents, we could discriminate two types: same-gender friend dominant and opposite-gender friend dominant students. Thus, we can identify specific types in terms of a dominant, focal figure in both the Family and Nonfamily groups.

After various statistical trials aimed at defining the focal figure, we have tentatively concluded that the most highly scored figure by the ARS or the PART can be regarded as a useful, though simple, indicator of each personal framework. We have described the analytical process in detail elsewhere (Takahashi & Sakamoto, 2000). By identifying the top figure, we can classify respondents into several types, such as Mother type, Child type, Spouse type, and Friend type. These types are also classified into the two major groups, i.e., the Family or Nonfamily group.

Thus, similar to other elaborate measurements such as Antonucci's and Lewis's, the ARS and the PART describe close relationships throughout the life course in considering which figure fulfills which functions, but differ from them in the following respects: (1) the ARS and the PART focus on close relationships with a limited number of significant others, whereas the others ask subjects to nominate all significant figures; (2) they assess mentally represented relationships and not actual interactions, whereas the others do not clearly discriminate the needs of a close relationship from the behaviors associated with it; and (3) they summarize an individual's configuration of personal relationships in terms of a focal figure who fills most of the psychological functions and inevitably provides the most critical function for survival or well-being (Takahashi, 1974). Antonucci has only proposed quantitative norms of individualities, and Lewis has not yet proposed any indices of the patterns of close relationships.

TYPOLOGY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

In this section, I will examine the empirical evidence for our ability to differentiate individualities by typological classifications. First, by this typology, we found normative distributions of types according to ages and genders that were consistent with previous findings. At the same time, under the normative trends, that is, the changes and expansions of close relationships from the family to nonfamily members, we found all kinds

of types throughout the life course. As expected, every significant figure had the potential to be chosen as the focal figure according to individuals' preferences. Second, each group showed different social interactions and narratives that could be theoretically explained based on the results of the test. That is, Family group participants more easily and comfortably interacted with family members and voiced life stories and future plans that mostly focused on family members. In contrast, Nonfamily group individuals showed more ease in interacting with friends of both genders and narrated nonfamily-centered life stories. However, there were no qualitative differences in social adjustment between the two groups of social relationships, probably because each individual possessed a type of psychological scaffolding. In addition to these groups, Lone Wolf type participants were identified across the life span. Operationally, these are people who report a very low affective need for all figures in the ARS, or who don't report a sufficient number of social figures in the PART, saying, "I don't need others because I can do anything by myself," "I am an independent person," or "I have no particular persons." These Lone Wolf types were suffering from loneliness, depression, or low life satisfaction. In the following sections, we examine all these findings in more detail.

Frequencies of Affective Relationships Types across the Life Span

Figure 6.2 shows the proportion of affective relationships types from 3.6-year-old children to elderly people in Japan (Inoue & Takahashi, 2000, 2001; Nagata & Suzuki, 1983; Takahashi & Majima, 1994; Takahashi & Sakamoto, 2000; Takahashi, Tamura, & Tokoro, 1997; Takahashi & Yokosuka, 1997). The types were identified by the ARS for adolescents (junior high school students) to elderly citizens, and by the PART for children, based on the same principle. As the figure indicates, we can discern different types even among three-year-old children.

As Figure 6.2 shows, we found a prominent type for each age group: among very young children, such as three-year-olds, the mother is the dominant figure; as children grow, especially at the elementary school ages, friends of the same gender are very important for many of them; among adolescents, a romantic partner occupies the most significant status; and after marriage, the spouse is reported as an important figure. In addition, we found gender differences in the frequencies of types: among females, there are more Mother types across all ages; among males after high school age, a larger number of Romantic partner or Spouse types were found.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that under these normative developmental trends, that is, the changes of focal figures from family to nonfamily members, each individual constructed her or his own subjective representation of affective relationships. These data suggest that through negotiating with the cultural expectations according to age and/or gender,
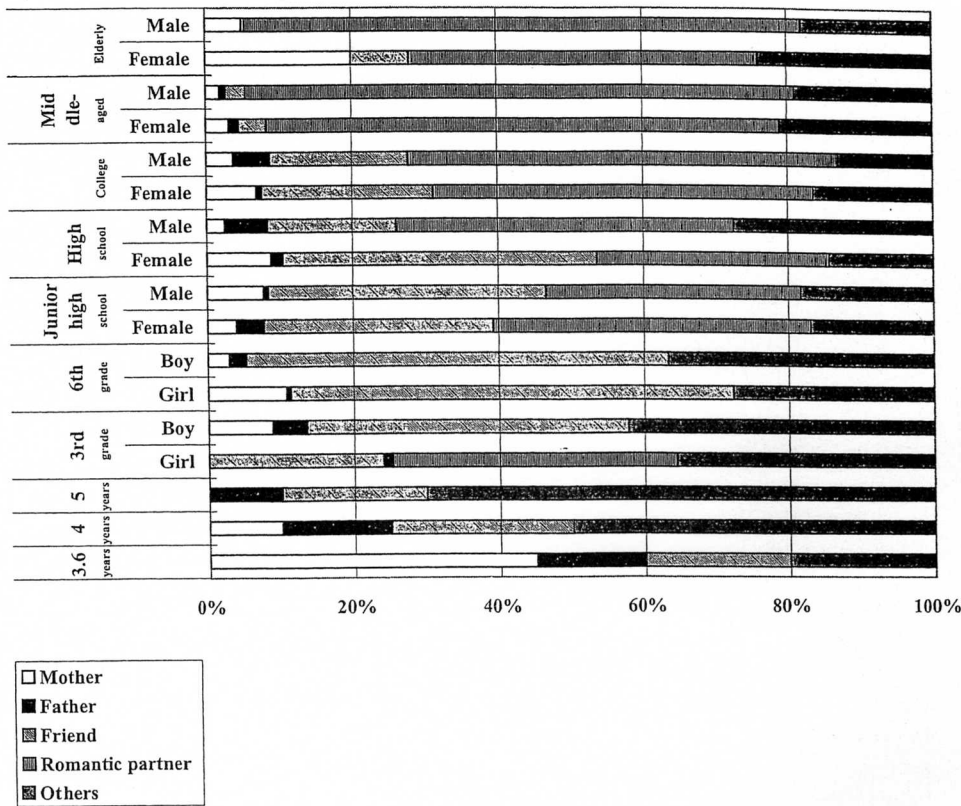
FIGURE 6.2. Distributions of Affective Relationship Types across the Life Span.

individuals voluntarily select suitable social figures for themselves and as-sign appropriate psychological functions to each of them.

It is also assumed that the framework will change as a result of an indi-vidual's encounters with various social experiences, development, and/or aging. The stability of and changes in framework types will be best ob-served in longitudinal studies.

A total of 66 female sophomores (19–21 years old) were assessed for their affective relationships types twice with an interval of seven months. Almost 80% of them were coherently classified into the same group at both assessments. Of the rest, all but 5% reported what they believed to be the causes of the score change for each of the figures. That is, they reported that the occurrence of ordinary contacts (via dating, calling, and writing to) and quarrelling with the figure tended to reduce the score of the target figure; on the other hand, deprivation of contact with the figure, and also special events such as being cared for when sick or having a lengthy conversation leading to deepened understanding or renewed feelings of love, were identified as the reason for increasing the ARS score and changes in the focal figure (Takahashi, 1990b).

Moreover, among 38 middle-aged adults (aged 34–54 years) who were investigated with respect to their social relationships for two years, 7% changed from being in the Family group to the Nonfamily group; these individuals reported a variety of reasons for changing the need strength of affective relationships toward each figure, such as bereavement, the independence of a child, participation in social activities, and aging (Hamanoue, 1999). Twenty-three cancer patients (aged 36–65 years) reported that after an operation, they had a different view of their social networks (Fukui, 1999). Most of these patients said that they were acutely aware of the importance of a focal figure, and changed (either included or excluded) some other figures.

Differences in Behaviors among Affective Relationships Types

Differences among the Types in Social Activities. First, we examined whether the two major groups among kindergarten children, the Family group (i.e., Mother type) and Nonfamily group (i.e., Friend type) children, would interact differently with two different kinds of partners, an age-mate and a female adult (Takahashi, 1997). It was hypothesized that children would more actively and effectively collaborate with the kind of partner who belonged to the same social category as the focal figure in her or his own framework of relationships. That is, we examined whether a Friend type child would show an advantage in interactions with an age-mate stranger, because the friend-dominant framework would help the child anticipate various activities of age-mates and would motivate the child to cooperate with them, and in contrast, whether a Mother type child would show an advantage in interactions with a mother-like adult stranger, because the framework would help the child interact with a female adult. We expected to see a significant interaction effect between the types of affective relationships a child possessed and the kind of partner the child was paired with for a task.

Using the PART for kindergarten children, 20 Friend type, 23 Mother type children, and 43 children who had named both an age-mate and the mother a few times each and served as controls or "neutral" partners to the two identified types of children, were selected from 210 kindergarten children (5–6 years old). The target (Friend type and Mother type) children were asked to participate in two joint problem-solving sessions: one "with-child" and one "with-adult" session. In the with-child session, each same-sex pair of children, one "neutral" partner and the other of either the Friend or Mother type, was asked to build a house together using a 40-piece set of colored blocks. In the with-adult session, the children were asked to accomplish a 42-piece jigsaw puzzle task, and they were told that the puzzle was for elementary schoolchildren and might be a little bit

difficult for them, so they were encouraged to ask for help from their adult, female partner. The transcripts of the video recordings were coded with respect to nine indexical behaviors of the target child in interactions with her or his partner. The analysis revealed that four out of the nine Type × Session interaction effects were significant: the Friend type children exhibited more frequent collaborative talk, complimentary behavior, and social referencing, and less frequent noninteractive behavior in the with-child session than in the with-adult session. In contrast, the Mother type children more frequently showed collaborative talk, complimentary behavior, and social referencing, as well as less frequent noninteractive behavior, in the with-adult session than in the with-child session.

Thus, the Friend type children more actively and skillfully interacted with a child stranger than did the Mother type children, but this was not true with the adult partner. These children were more competent in collaborations with child partners than their Mother type counterparts. However, those children who actively interacted with their child partner did not necessarily actively interact with their adult partner, and they were quiet or shy in the with-adult situation. They did not speak to the adult and often ignored her suggestions; all they did was give her a slight nod. In contrast, the Mother type children showed that they were at an advantage in the with-adult session but not in the with-child session. They actively responded to the adult partner's proposals and effectively used her suggestions, to which they did not always respond verbally.

As expected, this study indicates that the preestablished personal framework mediates and affects ongoing social interactions. A study among college students replicates the results. Using 26-week longitudinal data from female first-year college students, we examined how the preestablished framework of affective relationships of an individual student would affect her adjustment to the transition from home to college dormitory and campus life (Takahashi & Majima, 1994). By the ARS we identified 23 Nonfamily group (i.e., Friend type) and 14 Family group students at the time of entrance to college. These two groups were compared with respect to how well they established new social relationships and resolved social conflicts in dormitory and college life during the following 26 weeks. They were asked to report psychological and physical difficulties in adjusting, both in questionnaires and interviews at the 10th and the 27th weeks. The results indicate that Friend type students developed relationships with new fellow students more easily and reported fewer difficulties in making the transition than their Family group counterparts. It is assumed that the Friend types possessed rich representations of relationships with age-mates, and thus had an advantage in adjusting to such age-mate dominant situations as attending a college and living in a dormitory. That is, a Friend type framework fits the transitional circumstance of going to college, whereas

the Family group student will show superiority over the Friend type in situations where social interactions are characterized as family-like or intergenerational transactions.

Differences in Social Adjustment. Another line of research has focused on the relationships between the affective relationships types and psychological adjustment and general well-being. In this conceptualization of close relationships, it is hypothesized that humans voluntarily select suitable figures for themselves and assign appropriate psychological functions to each of them. This implies that there should be no differences in the quality of psychological adjustment among individuals displaying different patterns of affective relationships, irrespective of who the focal figure is. It is plausible that each person has a personal framework that will support her or his well-being. However, it is assumed that the Lone Wolf types, who do not have sufficient social resources, would suffer from difficulties in psychological adjustment, as suggested by previous research (Antonucci & Jackson, 1987; Krause, 1987; Lang & Carstensen, 1994; Main & Solomon, 1990; Solomon & George, 1999).

Elementary schoolchildren were investigated to test our hypotheses that there would be no differences in psychological adjustment between children who had the Mother type and Friend type of affective relationships, because in either case their framework would support their well-being, but that Lone Wolf type children would have difficulties in attaining and maintaining such adjustment (Inoue & Takahashi, 2000). A total of 689 elementary schoolchildren of both genders participated in this study: 358 third-graders and 331 sixth-graders. The children were given the PART for elementary schoolchildren and then, based on the results, classified into affective types in terms of the dominant figure. Operationally, a child who answered "self," "anybody," or "nobody" for more than half the cards was designated as a Lone Wolf-type. Among the remaining subjects, the figure who was nominated most frequently was designated as the dominant figure, and the children were classified into types in terms of the dominant figure. If a child did not name any particular figure for as many as three cards, or nominated two or more figures in the same number of cards, she or he was identified as unclassifiable, because it was difficult to identify the primary figure in such cases. For 75% of the participants, one of the figures was identified as being dominant. Among all the children, 11% and 50% were identified as Mother and Friend types, respectively. Consistent with our previous findings among older generations, the dominant figure was assigned most of the psychological functions, especially the functions of emotional support, receiving reassurance for behavior and/or being, and seeking proximity. Twelve percent of the total participants fell into the Lone Wolf type category (17% of the boys and 6% of the girls). The percentage of appearance of Lone Wolves was similar to our samples of college students

(Takahashi & Majima, 1994) and elderly people (Takahashi & Yokosuka, 1997).

After responding to the PART, children were analyzed with respect to three psychological adjustment scales: The loneliness scale for children (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984), the self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and the self-efficacy scale for children (Sherer et al., 1982). As expected, Lone Wolf type children felt significantly stronger loneliness, were lower in their self-esteem score, and were less confident in their self-efficacy than their Mother type and Friend type counterparts. However, there were no clear differences between Mother type and Friend type children in adjustment scores. This tendency for the Lone Wolf type children to show a higher loneliness score was found for children of both grades and of both genders. The tendency toward lower self-esteem was unquestionable among the third-grade boys and sixth-grade girls. The tendency toward a lower self-efficacy scale was obvious among all the third-graders and the sixth-grade girls.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Antonucci & Jackson, 1987; Krause, 1987; Lang & Carstensen, 1994), Lone Wolf types in every age group consistently expressed difficulties in social adjustment (Inoue & Takahashi, 1999; Takahashi & Inoue, 2001; Takahashi, Tamura, & Tokoro, 1997; Takahashi, & Yokosuka, 1997). However, we found some but often not statistically significant differences between Family group and Nonfamily group participants in each age group. For example, among college students, Nonfamily group students reported higher psychological adjustment scores and satisfaction in college life than their Family group counterparts (Inoue & Takahashi, 1999). In contrast, among elderly people, Family group people, especially Spouse types, were more highly satisfied with their life than people of the Nonfamily group (Takahashi, Tamura, & Tokoro, 1997). These differences can be attributed to people's social representations within each generation (Moscovici, 1983, 2001). For example, if elderly people tend to have a social representation that ordinary citizens of her or his generation must have a family, then Nonfamily group people would underestimate their own life satisfaction as they lack close relationships with family members. In contrast, if college students have the cultural representation that many of their age-mates have a friend of the opposite gender, Family group youngsters would report lower life satisfaction if they have no such age-mate.

Differences in Life Stories. Another set of studies suggests that the framework of affective relationships functions as a filter both when people retrieve past experiences and when they anticipate their future life. In some of these studies among college students and elderly persons, we aimed to examine how the present framework served to encode and retrieve past experiences of social relationships when the participants narrated their life

stories. It is hypothesized that an individual's framework serves to interpret her or his experiences of social interactions and induces the person to reconstruct and make sense of her or his life stories in ways that are consonant with the contents of the present representation of relationships. In short, we sought to test whether happy people would narrate happy life histories whereas unhappy persons would construct sad stories (Ochs & Capps, 1996, 2001; Ross & Buehler, 1994).

Specifically, we tested the following three hypotheses among elderly participants: a total of 134 (79 females and 55 males) over the age of 65. No one had any severe mental or physical disorders and all subjects were literate. The hypotheses were: (1) Lone Wolf type people who were living isolated from other people would focus less frequently on the positive and pleasant and more frequently on conflicts or difficulties in social interactions in their narratives than people who had a sufficient number of social relationships with family members and friends. This was because a Lone Wolf type framework would mostly highlight the negative side of one's life history; (2) in recounting their lives, elderly adults would mostly highlight their relationships with the focal figure at each stage from young childhood to the present; and (3) people would seldom refer to landmark events or turning points that had pushed them onto their pathways of life, because people would tend to construct their life stories in light of, and coherent with, their present framework.

The participants were individually assessed for their affective relationships types by the PART for elderly people, using the same procedure we had used with children. The participants were encouraged to tell their life stories with a focus on their social interactions from young childhood to the present. The narratives of the three types of elderly people, in this case 46 Spouse, 27 Friend, and 17 Lone Wolf types, were analyzed to determine whether each of 14 elements, such as the relationships with each of the family and nonfamily members, the life satisfaction, and the everyday feelings, were touched upon at least once in each life story.

We tested whether the Lone Wolf type participants narrated stories less frequently that concerned the positive and pleasant, and more frequently concerned conflicts or difficulties in social interactions with others, than their Spouse type and Friend type counterparts. The analyses indicate clear differences in the descriptions of the life stories between the Lone Wolf type and other types of participants. That is, Lone Wolf type people described social interactions, with every person both in the present and the past, more negatively and less positively than their Spouse type or Friend type counterparts. In addition, Lone Wolf type individuals often reported that they were not satisfied with their life, not self-confident, and not happy. In fact, 82% of the Lone Wolf types stated that they were not satisfied with their present lives. Most of them said that they felt sad and lonely every day. Moreover, 65% of them were identified as lacking trust in people.

They said that they could not believe other people and they were afraid of being cheated by them, and thus they did not try to develop close relationships with others. In contrast, 56–78% of the Spouse type and Friend type participants reported self-confidence, life-satisfaction, a happy everyday mood, or trust in human beings. In addition, as expected, the Spouse type and Friend type people more often reported pleasant interactions with others and especially with their focal figure. That is, 82–91% voiced positive current feelings and 82–83% did so in relating past experiences toward the focal figure. When we looked at negative descriptions of social interactions, a majority of the Lone Wolf types brought up conflicts, difficulties, or detachment in their present and past interactions with children, friends, and/or others. In contrast, the Spouse type participants did not often cite negative interactions with others, especially with family members, but Friend type people complained of problematic experiences with their children and spouse.

Finally, only 29–41% of the participants referred to landmark events or turning points that might be assumed to have constrained their developmental pathways to the way they experience present social relationships. Rather, the data suggested that each person coped with each life event in a way that reflected her or his individual framework. For example, regarding the same traumatic event, the loss of a child, a Lone Wolf type person said that he was too sad to recover from the separation even today, insisting that nobody could understand how bitter the experience had been. However, a Spouse type participant similarly expressed his sadness over his daughter's death, but at the same time referred to his wife's mental situation: "to the mother as she was, it must be even more heartaching than to me." He reported that after the death of their daughter, he and his wife regularly visited many temples together for a memorial service. He also added, "We appreciate and feel that our daughter is still with us."

In sum, the Lone Wolf type elderly people reported difficulties in maintaining well-being in their life stories. From young childhood to the present, their life stories highlighted mostly negative aspects of social relationships or human nature in the past, the present, and even the future. In contrast, Spouse type and Friend type participants highlighted their stories, both past and present, with pleasant, peaceful, and happy events, especially those involving the focal figure. Thus, the results suggest clear differences in narrations about their life among the types, although we have no evidence whether each type of the narrators interacted differently with those figures in the past and the present.

Similarly, Family group college students included in their life stories interactions with family members, whereas Nonfamily group (i.e., Friend type students) highlighted theirs with interactions with age-mates from young childhood to the present (Takahashi, 1989). Moreover, students of the two groups, especially male students, reported different strategies for

coping with hypothetical future life events such as promotions, unemployment, marriage, childbirth, and illness. A greater proportion of Family group students anticipated that their parents would share life events with them; in contrast, Nonfamily group students preferred age-mates as supporters in their future life rather than family members (Kobayashi, 1993).

Thus, each affective relationships type can summarize and anticipate behaviors in a given social context. So far, our studies indicate that individuals' frameworks of affective relationships take very important roles in their interactions with new figures, adjustment to new environments, and narrations of their life stories.

Culture and Close Relationships

A popular conceptual framework, individualism versus collectivism, has often highlighted differences in human relationships between cultures. The individualism versus collectivism concept proposes to plot the various nations on a single continuum, with the two extremes, individualistic and collectivistic, at each end (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000; Triandis, 1995). In this framework, most Western nations are placed close to the individualistic end and Eastern nations near the collectivistic end. Many researchers are accustomed to this global framework of cross-cultural comparisons, although empirical studies and discussions have emerged that challenge this conceptualization of cultures (e.g., Befu, 1980; Gjerde & Onishi, 2000; Hirai, 1999; Hirai & Takahashi, 2000; Matsumoto, 1999; Takano & Osaka, 1999).

Our comparative study of close relationships between Americans and the Japanese, people who have often been considered as representative of individualistic and collectivistic nations, respectively, indicate that this popular framework may offer a heuristic comparative framework but doesn't do any more than that. In particular, when we performed a detailed comparison of the two cultural groups by the ARS, both commonalities and differences in close relationships across the cultures were found. Our findings indicated that nearly half of hypotheses that had been extracted from the individualism versus collectivism concept were true and the others were not only not true, but the people from the two countries were significantly different in the opposite direction (Takahashi et al., in press). These findings suggest that real characteristics of the cultural elements of close relationships are too complicated to describe or explain by the global dichotomous view of cultures.

Furthermore, there is disagreement among researchers about how to compare cultures. Cultural psychologists who are unsatisfied with the traditional cross-cultural comparisons accuse the conventional, direct comparisons of mean scores between cultures of being "methodological behaviorism" (e.g., Greenfield, 1997). In fact, it is from the direct comparisons

of scores or frequencies that researchers have established the popular premise, "The Americans are more independent than their Japanese counterparts" (Cousins, 1989; Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, Choi, Gelfand, & Yuki, 1995; Triandis, 1989). However, this premise has not always been supported by other studies based on the same or similar questionnaires (Takano & Osaka, 1999). In fact, against the popular expectation, Americans expressed affective need more strongly toward all of the significant others than their Japanese counterparts in our study (Takahashi et al., in press).

Affective Relationships Types in Various Cultural Contexts

Cross-cultural comparisons by the affective relationships types, that is, comparisons of the relative status of each social figure in a personal framework, not the direct comparisons of means, have highlighted differences between the Japanese and American cultures. In this study, American ($N = 547$) and Japanese ($N = 808$) people 20 to 64 years of age were compared. Because the Americans rated significantly and highly as to most of significant others than their Japanese counterparts, we compared the combinations of the first two or three figures, instead of the distributions of the top figure, between the cultures. We found that the combinations of the top figures were very different between the two cultures. That is, among the Americans, the top two figures tended to be nonfamily members: 68% of females and 31% of males include a closest same-gender friend. Among the top three figures, 82% of females and 76% of males included a same-gender friend. In contrast, among the Japanese, a majority of the top two figures were composed of the spouse and a child (46% for females and 51% for males). Eighty-two percent of the top two figures and 60% of the top three figures consisted of only family members, including natural parents and children, and the spouse (Takahashi et al., in press).

These results suggest that the Japanese share a custom of being more concerned with biological, ascribed relationships than their American counterparts. Among the Japanese, the spouse, while not biologically related and initially an outsider, essentially becomes an organic part of the biological family. In contrast, the preference of same-gender friends among the Americans, especially among females, suggests that they are more free from the conventional family concept and more flexible in their selections of social figures than the Japanese, because it is assumed that friends are the most changeable social figures in that they can be added and subtracted at will. We can reasonably assume that sociocultural changes in the United States, urged by women's economic autonomy, the women's movement, and feminist theories, must have an effect on people's definition of family and on their selections of social figures.

Another cross-cultural comparison, between Korean and Japanese college students, indicates differences in the proportion of the appearances of

types. That is, a larger number of the Korean students agreed with a tra-
ditional patriarchy than their Japanese counterparts. Consistent with their
family-oriented beliefs, there was a larger number of Family group and a
smaller number of Nonfamily group students (Friend types and Romantic
partner types) in Korea than in Japan (Heo, 2000).

TOWARD A THEORY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Recent research in close relationships is making advances toward a theory
that describes three aspects of the essential nature of human relationships
across the life span: (1) humans have multiple significant others to whom
they assign different psychological roles; (2) individuals have their own
representation of a framework of close relationships consisting of multiple
social figures; and (3) there are individual patterns of the internal frame-
work. However, to date, researchers have focused on one or two aspects
of the nature of human relationships and have been limited to theorizing
about how they are manifested in reality. We propose that social relation-
ships should be conceptualized by integrating all three of the characteristics
together. We have examined the ability of the affective relationships model
to achieve this goal.

Typology of Close Relationships

To conceptualize an individual's close relationships, a typological analysis
was performed. It may be controversial whether we can always identify the
individuality of a person's relationships by their focal figures. However,
to date, empirical research supports the idea that a typological analysis
of affective relationships in terms of the focal figures is effective for un-
derstanding the following three groups of people possessing individual
differences in social interactions throughout the life span.

First, we can differentiate the subjective representations of the social
world held by Family group versus Nonfamily group people. In a given
social context that requires certain kinds of social interactions, participants
whose focal figures fit the appropriate context show advantages. For ex-
ample, Nonfamily group (i.e., Friend type) students adjusted to college
dormitory life where everyday interactions with age-mates are dominant
more easily than their Family group counterparts, because their age-mate
dominant framework helped them adjust to the context. Moreover, Friend
type children skillfully interacted with an age-mate stranger, whereas Fam-
ily group (i.e., Mother type) children did well with an adult stranger. Sim-
ilarly, Family group and Nonfamily group participants retrieved their life
experiences differently in centering on their focal figures, and anticipated
their future life discriminately, based on their present frameworks. This
view shares much in common with the goodness-of-fit model elaborated

by Lerner, Baker, and Lerner (1985). Considering the observed match between a given social context and an individual's framework, typological analysis of the affective relationships model seems to be effective in helping us understand the superiority of different types in different situations.

Moreover, we can identify Lone Wolf type individuals using this analysis. The Lone Wolves, who lack sufficient social resources, from childhood to old age more often report maladjustment and dissatisfaction in their life than their Family group and Nonfamily group counterparts.

Universality and Cultural Specificity of the Theory and Assessment Instruments

Is the affective relationships model applicable to cultures other than the Japanese? Are the assessment instruments, the ARS and series of PARTs, useful for subjects in other cultures?

I definitely agree with others that theories and measurements are culture-bound to a large extent. In this vein, we believe that the theory and measurements developed by a Japanese female researcher will highlight different aspects of social relationships than those that have been emphasized using conventional male-dominant and Western-dominant devices. So far, based on the variety of the above-mentioned studies, I can claim that the theory and the assessment instruments of the affective relationships model clearly shed light upon both universal and specific aspects of close relationships across ages, genders, and nations.

It is universal that (1) humans have affective needs for others; (2) there are three major groups of affective relationship frameworks consisting of multiple significant others across cultures, that is, Family, Nonfamily, and Lone Wolf; and (3) the typological analyses can be used to differentiate the social interactions and representations of close relationships. The ARS and PARTs used in different cultures and subcultures will show that the frequencies of certain groups and also specific types vary with cultural conditions. Furthermore, if researchers consider broadening the ARS and the PARTs to include other potentially important social figures and functions for their own subjects who live in different social environments than Japan, they can find facts that are specific to their own culture.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The typological analyses shed new light on social relationships but also suggest important tasks for the future. First, we need to look deeper into the methodology for typological analyses; in particular, we need to understand how to identify types both qualitatively and statistically. I agree with others that the focal figures do not always necessarily represent the nature of an individual's framework. At present, we propose the top figure to be useful

as a simple and heuristic indicator. Second, we need sufficient data of the ARS and the PARTs from various cultures and subcultures. These data must be indispensable for validating the theory and assessment instruments.

For this purpose, I will draw researchers' attention to the fact that they can flexibly apply the assessment instruments to their cultures by including important figures and functions for their own subjects. Such modifications of both figures and functions will widen the cultural applicability of these measurements to other cultures, and show how close relationships are constrained by sociocultural factors. Third, we cannot yet fully explain why each person constructs one type of affective relationships framework but not another. In particular, we are not sure why nearly 10% of persons across all ages are not very interested in humans, identified here as the Lone Wolf type, against the basic assumption that humans are social. We hope that our ongoing longitudinal research focusing on development of affective relationships and various kinds of developmental niches finds some answers to the questions. Endeavors in these tasks will advance our understanding of the nature of social relationships.

Author's Note

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