

Gendered Expressions of Filial Piety in Adult-Child Caregiving: The Role of Parent-Child Relationship Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines how adult-child caregivers' satisfaction with the parent-child relationship relates to two dimensions of filial piety: pragmatic obligation and compassionate reverence, while considering caregiver gender as a moderating factor. As population aging increases reliance on adult children for caregiving, filial piety provides a valuable lens for understanding caregiving motivations; however, little research has explored how relationship satisfaction and gender interact in shaping filial piety. A convenience sample of 387 Israeli adult-child caregivers aged 40 and older completed an online questionnaire assessing relationship satisfaction and both filial piety dimensions. Moderation analyses indicated that women reported higher levels of pragmatic obligation and compassionate reverence. In both genders, higher relationship satisfaction was associated with higher filial piety, but these associations were stronger among men. Interpreted through intergenerational solidarity theory and gender role theory, the findings suggest gendered caregiving motivations: among men, filial piety is more closely linked to relational quality, whereas among women, it is more strongly shaped by internalized normative expectations. These results underscore the need for gender-sensitive caregiving support. Interventions should address the emotional foundations of filial piety among men and the influence of internalized caregiving norms among women by providing tailored psychological, practical, and structural resources.

Keywords: Filial piety; Caregiving motivations; Parent-child relationship satisfaction; Gender differences; Adult-child caregivers