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Social Functioning in Older Adults with
High Levels of Off-Target Verbosity

Paul Basevitz

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Psychology

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Social Functioning in Older Adults with High Levels of Off-Target Verbosity

Paul Basevitz

This study examined social behaviour and social relations among older adults who exhibited high levels of Off-Target Verbosity (OTV), a conversational style that is characterized by an abundance of unfocussed speech. It was hypothesized that such individuals would tend to exhibit socially maladaptive behaviour and that the pattern of excessive and unfocussed speech would have a negative effect on their maintenance and development of social relationships. Findings showed that during "get acquainted" conversations with previously unfamiliar age-matched peers, high OTV individuals showed a greater tendency to dominate conversational talk time and tended to ask fewer questions of their conversational partners, relative to "normal" talkers. After "getting acquainted" with their conversational partners, subjects were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the conversation. Those with higher levels of OTV and those who talked for a greater share of the conversation were rated as less satisfying to talk with. The hypothesis that higher levels of OTV would be associated with diminished responsiveness to nonverbal cues signaling boredom was not supported, although higher levels of OTV were associated with increased responsiveness to

nonverbal cues signaling interest. OTV was not associated with the social skills questionnaires of Emotional Control, Emotional Sensitivity, Reciprocity or Conflict in social relationships. Counter to prediction, OTV was not associated with greater reductions in and fewer new additions to social networks of family and friends.

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SOCIAL FUNCTIONING IN OLDER ADULTS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF OFF-TARGET VERBOSITY

Psychologists have argued that unskilled social behaviour may adversely affect the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships (Ralph & Lee, 1994). The presence of meaningful social relationships have consistently been shown to be associated with general well being (Baldassare, Rosenfield, & Rook, 1984; Gupta & Korte, 1994), and are believed to be an essential requirement for a satisfactory quality of life (Ralph & Lee, 1994). Cohen, Teresi, and Holmes (1985), for example, have found that social networks exert a direct influence on how older adults function and meet their physical, psychological and social needs. Similarly, social support has been associated with improved life satisfaction (Strain & Chappell, 1982) and better physical health (Ferraro, Mutran, & Barresi, 1984) among older adults. These findings emphasize the importance of studying factors that may negatively affect the development and maintenance of meaningful social relationships.

Although the presence of social relationships benefits people throughout the life cycle, some research has found that this effect is more marked later in life. O'Conner (1995), for example, noted that although quality of social relationships was a significant predictor of life satisfaction for both younger and older adults, the effect

was stronger for older adults.

The benefits of meaningful social relations are clear. Nonetheless, some studies have been criticized for ignoring the more negative aspects of relationships with friends and family. In one study that did investigate these, Morgan (1989) found that many of the widows he interviewed reported feeling physically and emotionally drained due having to meet family obligations. Others reported that family members and friends did not listen to them and were not responsive to their needs. Rook (1994) has found that problematic social relationships were associated with reduced psychological well being.

Off-Target Verbosity

One phenomenon that may adversely affect social functioning later in life is a pattern of speech found in a minority of older adults, which Gold, Andres, Arbuckle, and Schwartzman (1988) have labelled Off Target Verbosity (OTV). OTV is characterized by an overabundance of speech, that lacks focus and continuously strays from the major topic of conversation. Such speech essentially becomes a monologue, without apparent consideration for the interactive nature of conversation, and often consists of a disjointed series of reminiscences about the speakers past (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994). Because conversational topics seem to be generated internally, OTV appears to reflect an inner preoccupation, in which diminished responsiveness to the

external stimuli of the conversational interaction occurs (Gold et al., 1988). It is important to note that OTV appears in only a minority of older adults and is not a dominant pattern of speech.

Previous studies have shown that OTV is a stable construct that can be reliably measured. For example, Gold et al. (1988) measured OTV during a structured interview and during incidental speech which occurred as subjects completed a questionnaire. Ratings across these two situations were significantly correlated, providing some indication that OTV is stable across various situations. Moreover, Gold and Arbuckle (1995) have shown that quantitative OTV ratings remained stable over a 15 month period. Further evidence for the stability of OTV was obtained from a follow-up of a sub-sample of subjects from the Gold et al. (1988) study. In that study, subjects were interviewed and then classified into one of three categories (Non-talker, Controlled talker, Extreme talker). Follow-up interviews and subsequent reclassification of a sub-sample from this group 6.5 years later indicated that the majority of subjects were classified into the same category (Gold et al., 1994).

In terms of validity of OTV measurement, Gold, Andres, Arbuckle, and Zieren (1993) have shown that ratings of talkativeness which were obtained from peers and professional workers who were well acquainted with the

subjects were positively correlated with OTV ratings. This provided some indication that OTV ratings measure a pattern of speech that generalizes to the subjects' natural environments. Moreover, the finding that OTV scores correlated positively with the duration of testing sessions (Gold et al., 1988), provides another indication of the validity of OTV ratings.

Studies examining conversational behaviour typically involve observations of subject pairs having a conversation with each other (e.g., Firth, Conger, Kuhlenschmidt, & Dorcey, 1986; Kuhlenschmidt & Conger, 1988; Segrin, 1994; Warner, 1992). In obtaining OTV ratings, however, there is a need for a more controlled situation whereby the duration of subjects' speech is not influenced by the behaviour of different conversational partners. Consequently, OTV ratings have typically been obtained via structured interviews, with research assistants asking subjects questions about their work and family history and then remaining silent while the subjects respond (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold et al., 1988; Gold et al., 1993, Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). Although the aforementioned findings suggest that this is a reliable and valid method of measuring OTV, the naturally occurring conversational behaviour of high OTV individuals has not been directly observed in previous studies. Such observations are necessary as they would help determine the extent to which OTV ratings generalize to more naturally

occurring conversations.

Several studies have begun to elucidate the underlying nature and correlates of OTV. Off-Target Verbosity has been shown to be associated with extroverted personality styles (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold et al., 1988), and with increased involvement in social activity (Gold et al., 1988). Individuals with high OTV scores have also tended to report that they had experienced an increased incidence of stressful life events in the last year. More specifically, higher levels of OTV have been associated with specific difficulties such as financial troubles, in addition to more general stress associated with life changes (Gold et al., 1988). Additionally, higher levels of OTV have been associated with a greater incidence of illnesses (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993) and with less desirable quality of life changes over a 15 month period (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). Other correlates of OTV have included lesser concern with self presentation and increased willingness to depend on others (Gold et al., 1988).

Gender and education do not predict OTV. The only demographic variable that has consistently been associated with OTV has been age, showing a positive association (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold & Arbuckle, 1995; Gold et al., 1988, 1993). Nonetheless, this association appears to be relatively low in magnitude and longitudinal data have indicated that OTV scores do not change significantly over a

15 month period (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). Consequently, drastic increases in OTV over a relatively short period of time appear to be unlikely.

Although findings have been mixed, it has generally been shown that older adults do not normally produce a greater quantity of speech than do younger adults (e.g., Cooper, 1990; Kemper, Kynette, Rash & Sprott, 1989). Nonetheless, Obler and Albert (1981) have argued that some older adults exhibit a high incidence of speech dysfluencies as reflected by more interjections, filler syllables and incomplete phrases. Obler and Albert have also noted that some elderly individuals tend to frequently add evaluative and modificatory items to their discourse, which are presumably unnecessary. Such speech is similar to OTV, which may be distinguished from everyday talkativeness due to its lack of focus and higher incidence of irrelevant material. Using ratings of everyday talkativeness obtained from peers and professionals who were familiar with subjects, Gold et al. (1993) factor analyzed OTV ratings and the everyday talkativeness ratings in order to understand whether OTV and everyday talkativeness are distinct constructs. The findings of this study showed that OTV scores and everyday talkativeness ratings loaded onto two distinct factors, which were correlated with each other. This finding provides evidence that OTV and everyday talkativeness are two distinct, but related processes. The results of this study

also showed that OTV was positively associated with age, whereas normal talkativeness was not.

In addition to the age and psychosocial correlates of OTV, research also reveals the influence of cognitive processes on such patterns of speech. Recent findings have supported the hypothesis that some older adults experience declines in inhibitory processes, resulting in irrelevant information entering working memory (e.g., Gerard, Zacks, Hasher, & Radvansky, 1991; Hartman & Hasher, 1991; McDowd & Fillion, 1992). Based on the apparent lack of focus and intrusion of irrelevant information that is proposed to characterize OTV speech, Arbuckle and Gold (1993) have suggested that OTV is associated with poor performance on measures of inhibitory control, presumably reflecting frontal lobe functioning. In fact, two studies showed that OTV was associated with difficulty in suppressing irrelevant information and in clearing working memory of information that was no longer significant, processes that are believed to reflect frontal lobe functioning (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). In contrast, performance on measures of verbal skills and visual memory, which are believed to be related to temporal-hippocampal functioning, were not related to OTV, providing further validation for the idea that OTV seems to be specifically related to cognitive deficits of the frontal lobe. Moreover, when measures of inhibitory control were entered before age into regression

equations, the effect of age in predicting OTV was greatly diminished (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). This suggests that it is poor inhibitory control per se and not age that is related to the expression of OTV.

The model put forth by Gold and Arbuckle (1995) proposes that attentional deficits resulting in the inability to inhibit irrelevant information from entering working memory are causally related to the expression of OTV. Such inhibitory deficits reduce the cognitive capacity available to inhibit irrelevant speech, especially when faced with increased arousal. Consequently, experiences of recent stressful life events, which had previously been shown to be associated with OTV (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold & Arbuckle, 1995; Gold et al., 1988), could lead to increased levels of arousal and are believed to facilitate OTV. Additionally, it is proposed that other correlates of OTV such as extroverted personality styles may further facilitate the expression of OTV. It is important to note, however, that the causal relationships proposed by this model have not yet been empirically evaluated.

Gold and Arbuckle's (1995) model also suggests that the inhibition-based deficits that are purported to underlie OTV could interfere with the daily functioning of individuals displaying this pattern of speech. For example, a high incidence of irrelevant talk might elicit negative reactions from others. Such difficulties may be particularly marked in

time controlled situations such as doing banking, obtaining health care (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995), or in other situations where the recipient of such speech has limited patience. The finding that high OTV individuals are not particularly aware of their incessant talking (Gold et al., 1993), indicates that it is unlikely that such individuals would learn to control their speech in such situations. Assuming that high OTV individuals accurately perceive the reactions of others, the stress induced by such negative reactions could further exacerbate off-target speech, thus stimulating a maladaptive pattern of behaviour.

Social Skills, Conversational Behaviour, and Verbosity

To date, the social behaviour of high OTV individuals has not been subject to formal study. Clearly this important area warrants attention. Based on the overabundance of uncontrolled and unfocused speech, without apparent regard for the interest of the listener, it is proposed that high OTV individuals lack social skills and exhibit maladaptive patterns of social interaction.

There is a relative paucity of research on social skills in older adults. Among the few studies that have been conducted in this area, Furnham and Pendleton (1983) found some evidence suggesting that older adults experience more difficulties in a variety of social situations and are less assertive than are younger adults. Nonetheless, more extensive research which examined self reports,

conversational partner reports, third party observations, and behavioural assessments suggests that older and younger adults do not generally differ in terms of social skills (Segrin, 1994). Consequently, the social skills deficits that are believed to be associated with OTV may not simply be attributed to the aging process.

Social skill is a multidimensional construct, and has no single adequate definition (Riggio, 1986). Dimensions of social skill which are believed to be associated with OTV include: attentiveness to nonverbal behaviours, sensitivity to and the ability to decode the emotional states of others, the ability to control emotional displays, reciprocity in social relationships, and adherence to culturally sanctioned norms and rules governing conversational behaviour.

Attentiveness to Nonverbal Cues

An integral part of social interaction is the ability to accurately gauge a conversational partner's state and to convey one's level of interest (Fichten, Tagalakakis, Judd, Wright, & Amsel, 1992). Indeed, the cognitive processes of receiving, perceiving and interpreting incoming stimuli from other people is essential to interpersonal competence (McFall, 1982). Such processes require attentiveness, a skill which is believed to be deficient among high OTV individuals (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995). Poor attentiveness to nonverbal cues during conversation such as boredom or restlessness could help explain the incessant speech that is

characteristic of verbosity. Fichten et al. (1992) have found that people monitor others' behaviour for a variety of nonverbal cues signalling disinterest. Such cues include: looking away, fidgeting, lack of expression and slouching. It is hypothesized that high OTV individuals attend poorly to such cues and consequently do not respond in an appropriate manner. Indeed, associations between social perception skills and maladaptive interpersonal responding have been suggested in the literature (Morrison & Bellack, 1981). If high OTV individuals continue to talk despite the apparent disinterest of a conversational partner, they risk reducing their attractiveness for future interaction.

Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Control, Reciprocity and Conflict

In addition to the poor attentiveness to nonverbal cues, there are several other areas of social skills which may be pertinent to the study of OTV. Riggio (1986) has described two such social skills: Emotional Sensitivity, and Emotional Control. Emotional Sensitivity refers to the general ability to receive and understand the nonverbal communication of others. It involves skill at decoding others' emotions, beliefs, and attitudes. People who are high in Emotional Sensitivity are highly vigilant observers of nonverbal emotional cues and consequently, may be more capable of sympathetically or vicariously experiencing the emotional states of others. As was outlined above, based on

the one-sided nature of conversation that is characteristic of verbosity, and based on the attentional deficits that are purported to underlie OTV, it is believed that verbose individuals may be lacking in this skill.

Emotional Control refers to the ability to regulate emotional and nonverbal displays. A person who is high in emotional control is capable of masking experienced emotions when they become inappropriate to display. As a result of their poor inhibitory processes and attentional control, high OTV individuals may have difficulty hiding such emotions in a given social situation and may be likely to exhibit extreme and spontaneous emotional states.

The inhibition based attentional deficits that are hypothesized to underlie OTV may influence the interpersonal relations of verbose individuals. This hypothesis is derived from the idea that high OTV individuals attend poorly in their social interactions and consequently may not adhere to the rules that govern social situations. Their social relations may be characterized by limited Reciprocity, defined as the perceived availability or exchange of emotional or tangible goods and services (Tilden, Nelson, & May, 1990). Such behaviour may result in social relations that are characterized by heightened conflict, defined as perceived discord or stress in relationships caused by the behaviours of others or by the lack of involvement of others (Tilden et al., 1990)

Conversational Behaviour and Off-Target Verbosity

There are culturally sanctioned norms and rules which generally guide behaviour during face to face encounters. Although adherence to such rules is often subtle and partially dependent on the situation, Wieman (1977) has described some of the rules that are believed to relate most strongly to communicative competence. These rules include: one person talks at a time, speaker turns should interchange, and interactants should devote full attention to an encounter. One is said to be skillful if s/he is able to manage these behaviours in a manner that is mutually satisfactory. Indeed, Wieman (1977) found that individuals who exhibited fewer interruptions by synchronizing speaking turns and people who avoided unilateral topic changes, were rated as more competent communicators. Similarly, Warner (1992) found that when conversational interactants alternated regularly between mostly talking and mostly listening, they were viewed more positively.

Another variable which appears to be an important component of mutually satisfying communicative behaviour is expressing interest in a conversational partner. For example, Spitzberg and Hecht (1984) have found that attentiveness to one's conversational partner was predictive of the partner's satisfaction with the conversation. Similarly, Millbrook, Farrell & Curran (1986) found that question asking among conversational interactants was

associated with more positive social evaluation. Finally, Ralph and Lee (1994) found that making requests for information about a conversational partner was associated with socially competent communicative behaviour.

Based on these findings it appears that important aspects of socially satisfying conversational behaviour follow a principle of reciprocal attention sharing including: 1) not monopolizing the conversation 2) showing interest in the conversational partner, and 3) taking turns at talking so as not to interrupt conversational partners.

Talkativeness. There is a considerable amount of research which indicates that talkativeness in conversations is positively associated with favourable social impressions (Firth, Conger, Kuhlenschmidt, & Dorcey, 1986; Kuhlenschmidt & Conger, 1988; Millbrook et al., 1986; Warner, 1992). Additionally, some studies have found that those interactants who were most actively involved in conversations tended to be received more positively (Shrout and Fiske, 1981). This makes intuitive sense since conversational participants who are more actively involved and talkative are likely to be viewed as more friendly and sociable. Nonetheless, it has been noted that such findings may not generalize to excessive levels of activity (Shrout & Fiske, 1981). Indeed, there is some evidence suggesting that excessive speech tends to be viewed negatively (Hayes & Sievers, 1972). Since it is believed that high OTV

individuals tend to monopolize conversational talk-time, thus breaking the social rule of reciprocity, it is predicted that such a pattern of speech would be viewed unfavourably.

Interest in conversational partners. The conversational behaviour of high OTV individuals seems to be characterized by a focus on self, with topics of conversation being internally driven. Based on this observation, it is believed that high OTV individuals have a greater interest in their own agendas than in listening to what conversational partners say and establishing mutually arrived at conversational agendas. When interacting with an unfamiliar person, such self-absorption could become apparent by the minimal number of questions about the conversational partner that high OTV individuals are predicted to ask. As was outlined above, expressing interest in others seems to affect how one is viewed socially (Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984; Ralph, Lee 1994). As such, poor attentiveness to others could have detrimental effects on the social development of such individuals.

Intrusive interruptions. The study of interruptions is complex and its defining features are not clear (Hawkins, 1991; West & Zimmerman, 1978). Murata (1994) highlights the importance of differentiating between overlaps and interruptions. Overlaps tend to occur at transition relevant places in conversations, where the interactants

unintentionally misproject their turn to speak (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Interruptions, on the other hand are usually intentional attempts at taking the conversational floor or at changing topics (Murata, 1994). Murata (1994) further divides interruptions into two categories: intrusive interruptions and cooperative interruptions. Intrusive interruptions typically involve the interrupter changing topics or taking the floor when it is not yet that person's turn. Conversely, cooperative interruptions often convey interest or listenership and take place when a conversational partner joins the speaker's utterance by completing a thought or supplying a word.

Based on the poor inhibitory control and the attentional problems that seem to underlie OTV (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995), and due to the minimal interest in conversational partners that is hypothesized to be associated with verbosity, it is believed that high OTV individuals tend to violate the social rule of turn-taking by exhibiting a greater frequency of intrusive interruptions. Such interruptions could have negative effects on how people are perceived interpersonally. For example, individuals who interrupt frequently have been viewed as less attractive (Hawkins, 1991), and less sociable (Robinson & Reis, 1989) than those who do not interrupt.

Social Behaviour and Interpersonal Relationships

The social behaviour that is believed to be associated

with OTV suggests that interactions with high OTV individuals are likely to be unsatisfying. Several researchers have linked socially unskilled communication styles with interpersonal rejection and diminished social support. For example, Segrin (1994) showed that conversational partner ratings of others' communication competence were predictive of rejection by that conversational partner. Similarly, Querry, Parry, and Flint (1991) have shown that people who rated themselves as less competent communicators tended to have fewer members in their social support networks and were less satisfied with their social support than were those who rated themselves as more competent communicators. Querry and James (1989) have reported similar findings with a sample of older adults. Finally, positive relationships between other dimensions of social skills and social support have consistently been reported in the literature (Cole & Milstead, 1989; Riggio, Watring & Throckmorton, 1993; Sarason, Sarason, Hacker & Basham, 1985).

Age-Related Changes in Social Networks

The terms social network and social support network have often been confused in the literature (Query & James, 1989; Weinberg & Marlow, 1983). Broadly, a social network refers to the group of people with whom one interacts (Weinberg & Marlow, 1983). A social support network forms part of a social network, but is qualitatively distinct in

that members of one's social support network necessarily provide material, informational or emotional resources that are perceived as beneficial (Weinberg & Marlow, 1983). Although the benefits of strong social support networks are clear (Strain & Chappell, 1982), the broader group of people included in one's social network of family and friends also serve instrumental functions. For example, participating in social activities with others helps to fill a need for companionship. Lack of companionship has consistently been associated with unhappiness among older adults (Baldassare et al., 1984). Furthermore, maintaining a peer group of social companions appears to be equally important as having a confidant, in accounting for levels of psychological well being among older adults (Gupta & Korte, 1994).

Age related changes in social networks have often been reported in the literature. For example, Adams (1987) found that elderly women who maintained casual friendships during middle age, tended to drop such friends later in life. Similarly, those who had felt tied down to their local community or job, used their new found freedom from such responsibilities to explore new friendships outside their local community (Adams, 1987). In addition to these changes in the type of social interactions age related reductions in involvement in social activity have also been documented (Field & Minkler, 1988).

One possible explanation for such reduction in social

activity has been put forth by Carstenson (1987). According to Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST; Carstenson, 1987), age related reductions in social activities are self instigated, rather than imposed. SST proposes that throughout the life cycle, we become more selective in choosing with whom to interact. Due to the greater need to conserve energy later in life, older adults focus more on those relationships that are most rewarding, and avoid relationships that are more aversive (Carstensen, 1987; Fredrickson & Carstensen, 1990).

Several studies have found support for this theory. For example, Fredrickson and Carstenson (1990) found that compared to younger people, older adults placed greater importance on anticipated affect in their social interactions and showed a stronger preference for familiar versus novel social interactions, presumably due to greater potential for social rewards. Fundamental to Socioemotional Selectivity Theory is the suggestion that although older adults are more selective in choosing their social partners, their remaining relationships are characterized by emotional closeness. Empirical findings have supported this (Carstensen, 1992; Lang & Carstensen, 1994).

Social Relations and Off-Target Verbosity

If older adults do indeed become more selective in choosing with whom to interact, then it seems likely that those relationships that have become less enjoyable, would

be dropped. High OTV individuals may become a burden due to their attention demanding and socially unskilled conversational style. Over time, such individuals may be in danger of social rejection. This seems even more plausible in light of the previously mentioned findings linking poor interpersonal communication styles with rejection (Segrin, 1994), and with diminished quantity and quality of social support (Querry, Parry & Flint, 1991). Additionally, the socially inappropriate behaviours which are believed to be associated with verbosity (ie. monopolizing conversations, poor attentiveness, diminished interest in conversational partners) may impede the development of new relationships. This could become particularly problematic as such individuals begin to lose members of their social networks of family and friends due to death or illness.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between OTV and social support, but results have been inconclusive. For example, although availability of social support has not entered the regression equation as a significant predictor of verbosity, these two variables have consistently been shown to be negatively correlated (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994). Similarly, when subjects from an earlier study were reassessed five years later, highly verbose individuals had significantly fewer family members whom they could count on for social support (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994). Satisfaction with social support has also been shown to be

predictive of OTV, indicating that higher levels of OTV were associated with less social support satisfaction (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993). Finally, OTV has been shown to be negatively correlated with telephone contacts with and visits from family members (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994).

High OTV individuals do not appear to be socially isolated nor do they appear to have diminished life satisfaction (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994). Consequently, it seems more logical to conceive of any impairments in social functioning as resulting from OTV rather than viewing OTV as a response to increased loneliness (Gold, Arbuckle, & Andres, 1994). Clearly, the study of social relations and changes thereof among high OTV individuals warrants more detailed attention.

The Present Study

This study investigates the social behaviour of high OTV older adults and examines the extent to which such behaviour exhibits socially maladaptive qualities. Additionally, this study examines whether high OTV older adults experience negative changes in their social networks of friends and family. Finally, links between maladaptive social behaviour and social relations among verbose older adults are investigated.

Hypothesis 1: OTV and Social Behaviour

OTV speech has been associated with poor control over attentional and inhibitory processes, and is characterized

by an overabundance of unfocussed speech without apparent regard for the listener. Consequently hypothesis 1 proposes that high OTV individuals lack social skills, and will tend to exhibit socially maladaptive behaviour. More specifically:

Hypothesis 1.A predicts that high OTV individuals will tend to dominate conversational talk time, show less interest in conversational partners, and will intrusively interrupt more frequently, relative to "normal" talkers.

Hypothesis 1.B proposes that high OTV individuals are less attentive to nonverbal cues during conversation, and will consequently be less responsive to cues signalling disinterest or boredom.

Hypothesis 1.C proposes that high OTV individuals will be lacking in Emotional Control and Emotional Sensitivity.

Hypothesis 1.D predicts that high OTV individuals will report having social relationships that are characterized by limited reciprocity and by heightened conflict.

Hypothesis 2: Partners' Perceptions of Conversations

Due to the socially maladaptive conversational behaviour that is believed to be associated with OTV, it is hypothesized that the conversational partners of high OTV individuals will tend to be less satisfied with their conversations, relative to conversational partners of "normal" talkers.

Hypothesis 3: Changes in Social Networks of Family and

Friends

High OTV individuals may be perceived as less enjoyable to be with. As described above, older adults may become more selective in choosing with whom they interact. Additionally, previous research has indicated that less competent communication styles are associated with a greater likelihood of rejection (Segrin, 1994). Based on these findings, it is hypothesized that high OTV individuals will tend to endure greater losses and fewer new additions to their social networks of family and friends, relative to "normal" talkers.

Hypothesis 4: Reasons for Reductions in Social Networks

If social relations are reduced among high OTV individuals, it is helpful to understand why such reductions occur. It is hypothesized that verbose individuals will tend to indicate such non-specific reasons as "we have nothing in common anymore" in response to inquiries as to why they are no longer close with a particular individual. That is, it is proposed that the reasons for social network reductions provided by high OTV individuals will tend to involve factors where they may have had an influence and could have resulted from relational problems (e.g., a fight, drifting apart), as opposed to reasons beyond their control (e.g., death, moving away).

Hypothesis 5: Extent and Satisfaction with Social Support

Previous studies in the area of OTV have indicated that

higher levels of OTV are associated with reduced extent of and satisfaction with social support. These associations were verified with the present sample in order to determine the replicability of such findings.

Exploratory Hypothesis: Associations Between Conversational Behaviour and Social Relations

As was mentioned above, poor communication competence has been associated with peer rejection (Segrin, 1994), and with diminished social support (Querry, Parry, & Flint, 1991). Consequently, associations were explored between measures of social relations (extent / satisfaction with social support and changes in social networks) and indices of conversational behaviour (e.g., proportion of talk time, interest in conversational partners, and partner satisfaction with conversation).

Method

The data for this study were collected in two phases between June, 1996 and April, 1997, as part of a larger study on Off-Target Verbosity.

Phase I

Phase I was devoted to screening large numbers of subjects for Off-Target Verbosity. Several psychosocial measures were also administered during this initial phase of study.

Subjects

In total, 256 community dwelling older adults were

recruited from various seniors agencies, from articles in local newspapers, from lists of subjects who had previously participated in studies, and via word of mouth. Only those subjects aged 65 and older were included in this study. A total of 179 subjects met the OTV criteria for inclusion in the study.

The mean age of the sample was 74.36 years (range 65 - 93). Subjects had a mean of 13.49 years of formal education (range 3.5 - 21 years). Sixty-eight percent of the sample were female and 32% were male. Because subjects were recruited from both the English and French communities of Montreal, they were each tested in their preferred language. Eighty-eight percent of subjects were tested in English while 12% were tested in French. Generally, this group reported having few financial problems. For example, 28% of subjects reported that they could afford all necessities, 40% of subjects reported that they could afford everything they needed as well as some luxuries, and 13% of the sample reported that they could afford everything that they needed or wanted. Forty-five percent of the sample were married, 16% were single, 12% were either separated or divorced and 1% were co-habiting. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic profile of the sample.

Procedure

Subjects were contacted by telephone and were asked if they would be interested in participating in a study on

Table 1

Demographic Overview of Phase 1 Sample (N=179)

Age:

Mean = 74.36
SD = 5.51
Range = 65 - 93

Education:

Mean = 13.49 (years)
SD = 3.37
Range = 3.5 - 21 (years)

Gender:

Female: 68%
Male: 32%

Language of Testing:

English = 88%
French = 12%

Financial Worries:

How would you describe your financial situation?

I can't manage	0%
Can't afford some necessities	1%
Can't afford many luxuries	7%
I can manage	10%
Can afford all necessities	28%
Can afford some luxuries	40%
Can afford everything need or want	13%
Missing data (1%)	

Marital Status

Married	45%
Single	16%
Separated / Divorced	12%
Widowed	26%
Co-habiting	1%

conversational style and social well being. After explaining the nature and requirements of the study, the subjects were told that this initial session would last approximately one hour and a half and that they might be asked to return for a later phase of the study in the months to come. Subjects who had difficulty coming to the Adult Development and Aging Laboratory at Concordia University, were given the option of having a research assistant visit them at home.

The subjects were tested individually by an examiner who was either an undergraduate or graduate student in psychology. Prior to testing, the subjects were given an explanation of the study procedures and were given a consent form to sign. The consent form for Phase 1 of the study is presented in Appendix A. The first portion of the testing session consisted of a structured demographics, work and family history interview (which was used to derive OTV ratings). A series of questionnaires and cognitive tests were then administered. Following testing, subjects were thanked, and were given \$10.00 as a token of appreciation for their time.

Measures

OTV ratings. OTV ratings were obtained via audiotaped structured interviews about subjects' work and family backgrounds, using a scoring procedure which had been used in previous studies on OTV (e.g., Arbuckle & Pushkar Gold, 1993). Interviews were conducted and subsequently scored for

verbosity by one of three female undergraduate psychology students or by one male graduate student in psychology. Interviewers were instructed to maintain a neutral affect and presentation style while subjects responded to questions in order not to influence the length of speech. The structured work and family history interview which was used to obtain OTV ratings is presented in Appendix B.

The response to each interview question was scored for 1) the presence of off-target speech in answering a particular question (Item Verbosity), and when OTV was present, 2) the extent to which subjects strayed off-topic (Extent Verbosity). Answers containing any information irrelevant for the purpose of answering the question were scored as off-topic. Examples of responses that were considered on and off topic are presented in Appendix C. Item Verbosity scores were defined as the number of responses containing off-topic material, expressed as a proportion of the number of questions asked.

Once an answer was scored as off-target, it was rated for Extent Verbosity on a scale of 1 to 9 for each item. Extent ratings were counted as a function of 1) topic changes and 2) length of off-target speech. For example, two off-target topics that were only briefly mentioned counted as one extent rating, whereas an abundance of speech in one particular off-target topic area would count as one or more extent ratings, depending on the amount of speech. For each

off topic response, "Extents" were counted until the subject stopped talking or until a maximum extent rating of nine was attained. Extent Verbosity scores were defined as the total number of extent ratings given throughout the interview, divided by the total number of questions asked. Sample transcripts exemplifying different levels of extent OTV ratings are presented in Appendix D.

Group training sessions were conducted by a team of researchers who had developed and used this scoring system in previous studies on OTV. Interview tapes were scored as a group and ratings were compared in order to establish agreement. Group scoring sessions continued on a regular basis throughout the Phase 1 testing in order to prevent rater drifting. Reliability of verbosity ratings was verified by having a second rater independently score 15% of the tapes (39 interviews), which were randomly selected. Using Pearson correlation coefficients, inter-rater reliability was .84 for Item Verbosity and .96 for Extent Verbosity ratings. Because Item and Extent verbosity scores were highly correlated ($r=.85$), a principal components analysis was used to combine these into one factor score. This OTV factor score was used in all subsequent analyses.

It is possible that OTV ratings at both the extreme high and extreme low end of the distribution depict maladaptive conversational styles. Those at the extreme low end of the distribution tend to exhibit very taciturn

conversational styles, whereas those at the extreme high end of the distribution show high rates of OTV. For this study, the intended sample was older adults exhibiting conversational styles ranging from "normal" to highly verbose. Because it is believed that a moderate amount of OTV is socially necessary and adaptive, "normal" talkers were operationally defined as those with OTV scores at the mid range of the distribution (30th to 70th percentile on the OTV factor score). In order to ensure that taciturn subjects were not included in the sample, those subjects with OTV factor scores below the 30th percentile were excluded from the study.

Social support. An abbreviated version of the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ; Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983) was used to measure Extent and Satisfaction with social support networks. There are two parts to this questionnaire. First, respondents are asked to list the people in their lives who would provide them with social support in different life situations. Subjects are then asked to provide the initials and relationship for each person indicated. Then, for each item, respondents are asked to rate on a Likert-type scale how satisfied they are with the social support that they receive in the area described.

The SSQ has shown good psychometric properties with internal consistency coefficients of .97 for Extent of social support and .94 for Satisfaction with social support

(Sarason et al., 1983). After a four week interval the SSQ showed test-retest correlations of .90 and .83 for Extent and Satisfaction with social support respectively (Sarason et al., 1983). In terms of validity, higher social support on the SSQ correlated negatively with depression and anxiety, and greater social support scores correlated positively with extroverted personality styles (Sarason et al., 1983). Sarason, Shearin, and Pierce (1987) have shown that the SSQ correlates highly with other self report measures of social support. The abbreviated version of the SSQ is presented in Appendix E.

Social network changes. Following administration of the SSQ, a list of individuals who had appeared at least once on the questionnaire was compiled by the interviewer, providing a list reflecting the social support network of each respondent. Although the SSQ provides an indication of the social support networks of respondents, it does not necessarily provide a comprehensive list of the subjects' entire social network of family and friends. For example, friends with whom respondents share social activities but who are not depended upon for emotional comforting may not have appeared on the SSQ. In order to generate a clear understanding of ones' social environment and changes thereof, it is important to study such social contacts. As was mentioned above, the broader group of people included in one's social network of family and friends serve

instrumental functions, such as filling a need for companionship. Consequently, three questions designed to generate a list of individuals with whom subjects share social activities, phone contact, and common interests were added. These questions followed the same format as the SSQ and are presented in Appendix F. Any names listed on these questions that had not been listed on the SSQ were added to the social support network list, presumably providing a comprehensive list of all significant individuals in respondents' social environments.

Subjects were presented with this list and were asked to think about their social environments as they were five years ago. They were then asked if there was anyone who would have appeared on this list five years ago, but who was no longer an important part of their lives and was consequently not on the current list. Any such social network reductions were noted and respondents were subsequently asked for the reason why that person was no longer considered to be an important part of their lives. Reasons for the reductions were divided into two categories: 1) social network losses due to factors where the subjects may have had an influence and which could have resulted from relational problems (e.g., a fight, drifting apart), and 2) social network losses due to factors that were clearly outside of the respondents' control (e.g., death, a move to another city).

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether any of the people on their current social network list had come into their lives in the last five years. These newer members of their social networks were also noted.

Emotional Sensitivity and Emotional Control. The Social Skills Inventory (SSI; Riggio, 1986) is a self report measure of several dimensions that are believed to underlie social skill. The Emotional Sensitivity (ES) scale of the SSI measures the subjects' self reported ability to perceive and decode others' emotions, beliefs, and attitudes based on their nonverbal behaviours. People who are high in emotional sensitivity are highly vigilant observers of nonverbal emotional cues, and consequently, may be more capable of sympathetically experiencing the emotional states of others. The ES scale of the SSI has been shown to have adequate reliability, with a test-retest coefficient of .90, and an internal consistency coefficient of .78 (Riggio, 1986). In terms of validity, individuals who scored highly on the ES scale tended to be more tender-minded (sensitive), and tended to attain higher scores on other measures of skill in decoding nonverbal communication (Riggio, 1986). Higher scores on the ES scale have also been associated with having a greater number of close friendships and with a greater awareness of felt emotional states (Riggio, 1986). In the present study, this scale has shown an internal consistency coefficient of .81.

The Emotional Control (EC) scale of the SSI measures one's self reported ability to regulate emotional and nonverbal displays. A person who is high in emotional control is capable of masking felt emotions if they become socially inappropriate. In the past, the EC scale of the SSI has been shown to be fairly reliable, with a test retest coefficient of .88, and an internal consistency coefficient of .76. In terms of validity, the EC scale has been shown to be positively correlated with emotional stability, self assuredness, and controlled personality styles (Riggio, 1986). The EC scale has also been associated with more self monitoring behaviour (Riggio, 1989).

For unknown reasons, the EC scale showed poor internal consistency in the present study ($\alpha=.53$). This is consistent with the observation that subjects in this study generally reported difficulty with this measure, and indicates that the findings should be interpreted cautiously. The Emotional Sensitivity and Emotional Control scales of the Social Skills Inventory are presented in Appendix G. Scores on these scales were computed so that high scores indicate more Emotional Sensitivity and more Emotional Control.

Phase II

The purpose of the second phase of the study was to provide a more thorough examination of the social functioning of a select group of subjects whose OTV

behaviour was of greatest interest.

Subjects

Seventy-six subjects were brought back for further study, an average of 4.79 months after they were initially screened at Phase 1. Only those subjects who were classified as "normal" talkers or as measuring high in OTV were recruited for this phase of the study. As was outlined above, subjects were classified as "normal" talkers if their Verbosity Factor Score fell between the 30th and 70th percentile of the distribution for the entire sample (N=256). Subjects were classified as measuring high in OTV if their Verbosity Factor Score was above the 80th percentile of the distribution for the entire sample. Of the 76 phase II subjects, 55 were classified as "normal talkers" and 20 were classified as highly verbose. In actual fact, 19 of the 20 subjects who were classified as highly verbose, were far above the minimal cut off, and had verbosity factor scores above the 85th percentile. Consequently, those in the high OTV group truly reflect the upper limit of the OTV continuum.

One subject, whose verbosity factor score fell at the 75th percentile of the distribution, was mistakenly brought back for Phase 2 testing. This subject was classified as a "normal" talker.

The demographic profile for the Phase II subjects did not differ markedly from that of Phase I subjects. The mean

age of the Phase II sample was 73.61 years (range 65 - 89) and the subjects had a mean of 14.13 years of education. Seventy-six percent of the sample were female, whereas 24% were male. Due to the fact that some Phase II measures were not available in French, all Phase II participants were either Anglophones or bilingual. Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the Phase II sample.

Procedure

The subjects who met the criteria outlined above were contacted by telephone and were asked to participate in Phase II of the study. They were told that this second session would last approximately 3 hours and that they would be interacting with another participant in the study for part of the time. Because this phase of the study required pairs of subjects to interact with each other, all testing was carried out at the Adult Development and Aging Laboratory of Concordia University.

Each member of a subject pair was instructed to go to a separate room so that they would not meet each other before the study began. Subjects were greeted by a research assistant who briefed them about what they would be doing and gave them a consent form to sign. The Phase 2 consent form is presented in Appendix H. The instructions for the first task, the "get acquainted" conversation, were then read. Subjects were told that they were going to meet another participant in the study, with whom they were to get

Table 2

Demographic Overview of Phase 2 Sample (N=76).

Age:

Mean = 73.61
SD = 4.82
Range = 65 - 89

Education:

Mean = 14.13 (years)
SD = 3.03
Range = 3.5 - 19 (years)

Gender

Female: 76%
Male: 24%

Language of Testing:

English = 100%

Financial Worries:

How would you describe your financial situation?

I can't manage:	0%
Can't afford some necessities:	0%
Can't afford many luxuries:	7%
I can manage:	5%
Can afford all necessities:	28%
Can afford some luxuries:	47%
Can afford everything need or want:	12%
Missing data (1%)	

Marital Status

Married	42%
Single	14%
Separated / Divorced	16%
Widowed	28%
Cohabiting	0%

acquainted for 10 minutes. Some suggestions were given as to the type of topics that they might want to talk about with their conversational partners. Subjects were also asked for permission to videotape the conversations and were instructed not to start speaking to their partners until the research assistants left the room. The instructions that were read to subjects before the "get acquainted" conversation are provided in Appendix I.

Subject pairs were then brought together in a room with two armchairs and a video camera. After reminding them of the instructions, the camera was turned on and the research assistants left the room for 10 minutes. After this task, subjects were taken to separate rooms where they completed a battery of questionnaires and participated in other tasks. At the end of the session, subjects were given \$25.00 as a token of appreciation for their time.

Subject Pairings for the "Get Acquainted" Conversation

Partner pairings for the 10 minute "get acquainted conversation" were done according to OTV ratings. Each member of the conversational dyad was given the designation of "target" or "conversational partner". "Targets" were the members of the pair who were the major focus of study, and were either high OTV individuals or a comparison group of "normal" talkers. In order to maintain consistency, all conversational partners were subjects who had been classified as "normal talkers". The 76 Phase II participants

yielded 38 conversational dyads (38 targets and 38 conversational partners). Twenty "targets" were subjects who had met the aforementioned criteria for high levels of OTV, whereas the remaining 18 "targets" were subjects who had been classified as "normal" talkers. This procedure resulted in two groups of paired subjects: 1) 18 "normal" talkers who were paired with "normal" talkers, and 2) 20 high OTV subjects who were paired with "normal" talkers. For the 18 "normal" talkers who were paired with "normal" talkers, designation of "target" or "conversational partner" were done randomly.

Based on the mean age of the larger Phase I sample (before the low OTV group was dropped), subjects were divided into two age categories: those above the mean age of 72, and those below it. Subjects were matched with a conversational partner in their same age category in order to minimize the age discrepancy within each pair. Moreover, subjects were always paired with a conversational partner who was of the same sex. The "normal" talker target group and the high OTV target group were of approximately the same age and had similar proportions of males and females. Table 3 provides a summary of the mean Item and Extent OTV ratings, mean ages, and gender distribution for each of the "get acquainted" conversation groups.

Measures

Talk time. The "get acquainted" conversation tapes were

Table 3

Item and Extent OTV Ratings, Ages, and Gender Distribution
for each of the "Get Acquainted" Conversation Groups

<u>TARGETS:</u>	<u>CONVERSATIONAL PARTNERS:</u> (all "Normal" Talkers)
<u>"Normal" Talkers</u>	<u>Paired with</u> <u>"Normal" Talkers</u>
N=18	N=18
5 Males, 13 Females	5 Males, 13 Females
Mean Age: 73.75	Mean Age: 73.88
Item Verbosity Mean: .45	Item Verbosity Mean: .45
Extent Verbosity Mean: .72	Extent Verbosity Mean: .76
<hr/>	
<u>High OTV Group</u>	<u>Paired with</u> <u>"Normal" Talkers</u>
N=20	N=20
4 Males, 16 Females	4 Males, 16 Females
Mean Age: 75.15	Mean Age: 74.20
Item Verbosity Mean: .69	Item Verbosity Mean: .40
Extent Verbosity Mean: 2.52	Extent Verbosity Mean: .64

used to calculate the proportion of time that each member of the conversational pair spent talking. A stop-watch was used to time the total number of seconds that each person spoke. Subject speech was timed only when it was clear that the subject in question had the conversational floor. Overlapping speech, and vocal back-channels (vocalizations used to encourage the other's speech) were not counted as talk time. The proportion of time spent talking was calculated by dividing the number of seconds of speech for a given subject by the total number of seconds of speech for both members of the conversational dyad. A second rater independently timed the conversational tapes for 25% of the sample. The measurement of conversational talk-time was found to be highly reliable, yielding an inter-rater Pearson correlation coefficient of .99.

Questions asked of conversational partners. The "get acquainted" conversations were used to count the frequency of questions that each conversational partner asked of the other, presumably measuring interest in the other person. Questions were counted only if they were inquiries about the conversational partner or about something that the conversational partner had said. A second rater independently scored the frequency of questions asked by 29% of the subjects. The inter-rater Pearson correlation coefficient was .97.

Interruptions. The "get acquainted" conversation tapes

were used to calculate the frequency of interruptions emitted by each subject during the conversation.

Interruptions were defined as "deep" incursions that had the potential to disrupt a speaker's turn (West & Zimmerman, 1973), and were identified as a function of both the content of interjections and their placement within a speaker's utterance. In accordance with the recommendations of West and Zimmerman (1983), incursions were considered to be "deep" if they were initiated more than two syllables away from the initial or terminal boundary of a phrase. This served to differentiate intrusive interruptions from speech overlaps, which tend to occur as a result of timing errors during speaker transitions. Furthermore, "cooperative interruptions" and other encouraging vocalizations were not included since these display active listening and interest (Murata, 1993; West & Zimmerman, 1973). Interruptions were counted if they served to change the topic of conversation or took over the conversational floor. Although unsuccessful attempts at interrupting did not meet these criteria, they qualified as interruptions if they were initiated more than two syllables from the initial or terminal boundary of a speaker's phrase. The behavioural measure of interest was the target's frequency of interruptions.

In order to establish reliability, a second rater independently scored interruptions for 29% of the sample. The correlation coefficient between raters ($r=.58$), revealed

a low-moderate level of inter-rater reliability. Given this finding, analyses proceeded but were interpreted cautiously.

Partner ratings of satisfaction with the conversation.

After "getting acquainted" with their conversational partners, subjects were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the conversation by completing an adapted version of the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (ICSI; Hecht, 1978). The original version of the ICSI has been shown to be a reliable instrument, with a split half reliability coefficient of .97. In order to establish convergent validity, the scale was correlated with non-verbal ratings of satisfaction with a conversation. This yielded a validity coefficient of .87. Furthermore, Spitzberg and Hecht (1984) have shown that conversational partner ratings on the ICSI were positively associated with one's conversational skills, as reflected by measures of other orientation, interaction management (e.g., turn-taking, eye-contact, personal attention), and nonverbal immediacy (e.g., postural openness, reinforcement behaviour, and gestures).

For the present study, 13 of the original 19 items on this scale were retained. The remaining six items were removed because they did not draw upon areas of communication satisfaction that are likely to be affected by OTV. These were replaced with three other items that were believed to be pertinent to the study of OTV. These items

were: "I would like to see this person again", "The other person changed the topic to what she wanted to talk about", and "This person was a good communicator". The adapted version of the ICSI that was used in the present study yielded an internal consistency coefficient of .88. Items on the scale were coded so that higher scores indicated greater conversational dissatisfaction. This scale is presented in Appendix J.

Attentiveness to nonverbal cues. An experimental procedure was used to test the hypothesis that highly verbose individuals are less responsive to nonverbal cues. Subjects, who were seated alone in a room with a research assistant, were asked to name two topics that they would like to speak about. Subjects were asked to speak about each of these topics alone, without asking the research assistant any questions for whatever length of time they wished. While the subjects spoke about each of these topics, the research assistant manipulated the nonverbal cues that were being displayed. During the first topic, the research assistant appeared interested by maintaining eye contact, smiling, and by nodding her/his head while uttering a vocalization of encouragement every 10 seconds. A clock located behind each subject provided an indication of the 10 second intervals. During the second topic, the research assistant responded as s/he had done previously for the first 20 seconds, and then purposefully changed the cues being displayed in order to

appear disinterested. Some of the non-verbal cues that Fichten et al. (1990) have shown to be associated with boredom were used to depict disinterest. For example, the research assistant frowned, leaned back in his/her chair, looked either at the floor or at the wall, and repeatedly checked his/her watch. More specifically, the research assistant looked at the floor for 15 seconds, then looked at the wall for 10 seconds, and looked at his/her watch every 50 seconds, repeating this procedure over and over, until then subject stopped talking or commented on the research assistant's behaviour.

Before executing this experimental manipulation, the research assistants (one male and two females) rehearsed these procedures together. Although no independent verification of the experimental manipulation was done, the scripted behaviours were highly structured and the research assistants were trained to a degree of competence.

The variable of interest in this experiment was how long each subject talked during the positive and negative cue conditions. This experiment was taped so that the length of speech could be listened to and timed. When the subjects were asked to name two conversational topics before beginning this experiment, it is possible that they mentioned their preferred topics first. It was therefore important to ensure that the duration of speech during either of the experimental conditions could not be

attributed to topic preferences (as reflected by their order of mention). Consequently, half the subjects were asked to talk about the topic that they had mentioned first during the positive cue condition, whereas the other half were asked to talk about the topic they had mentioned first during the negative cue condition. After completing this experimental manipulation, the subjects were asked whether or not they noticed anything about the examiners behaviour. Responses were recorded. The subjects were then debriefed about the nature and purpose of this experimental manipulation.

Reciprocity and Conflict. The Interpersonal Relationship Inventory (IPRI; Tilden, Nelson & May, 1990) is a self report measure with scales measuring Reciprocity (the perceived availability or exchange of emotional or tangible goods and services), and Conflict (perceived discord or stress in relationships caused by the behaviours of others or by the lack of involvement of others).

Tilden et al. (1990) have found evidence for the reliability and validity of these scales. Both the Reciprocity and the Conflict scales showed good reliability, with internal consistency, and test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .81 to .91 (Tilden, Nelson & May, 1990). In terms of validity, higher scores on the Reciprocity scale were found to correlate with measures of social support, and were associated with more cohesive

family relationships (Tilden et al., 1990). Furthermore, higher scores on the Conflict scale correlated with other measures of Conflict in social relationships, and were associated with less cohesive family relationships. Additionally, higher scores on the Conflict scale were associated with poorer mental health (Tilden et al., 1990). Finally, the Reciprocity and Conflict scales showed a negative association (Tilden et al., 1990), providing further evidence for their construct validity.

In the present study, the internal consistency coefficients were .79 and .86 for the Reciprocity and Conflict scales respectively. The items on these scales were coded so that higher scores indicate greater Reciprocity and more Conflict. The Reciprocity and Conflict scales of the IPRI are presented in Appendix K.

Results

Data Screening

Before the principal analyses of this study were conducted, the data were examined for missing data, potential outliers, and for violations of the assumption of univariate normality.

Measures of Social Behaviour, Social Skills, Social Relations and Demographic Variables

Missing data. When data were missing from questionnaires, the mean score of the remaining items were used, provided that at least 80% of the scale items were

answered. Otherwise, cases were dropped. Accordingly, one case was removed from each of the Conflict, Reciprocity, Emotional Sensitivity, and Emotional Control scales, and two cases were removed from the SSQ-Satisfaction scale.

The procedure for assessing changes in social networks of family and friends changed after the initial few weeks of the study. Consequently, data on social network changes for those subjects who were tested using the older procedure were not included. Additionally, due to various reasons, data on social network changes were missing in a few cases. Consequently, of the 179 Phase 1 subjects, data on social network reductions were available for 155 subjects. Similarly, data on the reason for social network losses were available for 154 subjects, and data on newer members of social networks were available for 156 subjects. One case lacked information on years of education. The mean years of education for the group as a whole was substituted.

Outliers. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) suggest that cases with standardized scores in excess of 3.29 are potential outliers. Using this criteria, one outlying case was found on the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory, and two outliers were found on each of the following variables: SSQ-satisfaction, talk time during both positive and negative social cues, and newer additions to social support networks. In order to reduce their impact, all outlying scores were adjusted so that their standardized

scores were equal to (or slightly below) 3.29. For variables with more than one outlier, the most extreme case was placed at the upper limit of the acceptable range and the scores of less extreme outliers were adjusted so that proportional differences between them were maintained.

For multivariate analyses, Mahalanobis distance was analyzed to detect the presence of multivariate outliers. Analyses of Cook's distance revealed that no multivariate outliers had a significant impact on findings.

Univariate normality. Univariate normality was verified by assessing the skewness of each variable's distribution. The distributions of five variables were found to be skewed. The variable SSQ-Satisfaction showed skewness in the negative direction, whereas talk time during positive and negative social cues, reductions in social networks and newer additions to social networks all showed skewness in the positive direction. Square root or reflected square root transformations were applied to these variables to reduce the impact of skewness. One variable (reduction in social networks due to reasons that may have been influenced by subjects) was so severely skewed that transformations were not helpful. This skewness was due to the fact that 65% of subjects indicated that no such reductions had occurred, while smaller proportions of the sample indicated that anywhere from 1 to 8 members of social networks had been lost in this manner. In order to alleviate this problem,

this distribution was divided into two groups: those who reported no such reductions (65%) and those who reported at least one such reduction (35%).

Screening of OTV Ratings

As was mentioned above, Item and Extent OTV Scores were combined to form an OTV Factor Score. Before combining these two measures, Item and Extent OTV scores were screened and adjusted separately. Three different OTV score distributions were assessed: first for Phase 1 analyses (N=179), then for the subset of subjects who were brought back for Phase 2 analyses (N=76), and finally, for the subjects who served as target members of the "get acquainted" conversational dyads (N=38).

Once again, in accordance with Tabachnick and Fidell (1996), OTV ratings with standard scores in excess of 3.29 were considered significant outliers. For Phase 1 (N=179) and Phase 2 (N=76) data, one outlier was found for Item OTV. This outlier was brought within acceptable limits. For Extent OTV, four outliers were found. A square root transformation brought the outliers within acceptable limits. This square root transformation also served to reduce the impact of this positively skewed distribution. There were no outlying OTV scores for the sub-sample of Phase 2 subjects who served as "target" members of "Get Acquainted" conversation pairs.

Item and Extent verbosity measures combined to form

stable OTV Factor Scores that were strongly associated. More specifically, the OTV factor accounted for 92% of the variance in Item and Extent OTV scores. Consequently, these OTV Factor Scores (hereafter referred to as OTV scores) were used in all analyses. After making the aforementioned adjustments on the separate OTV scores, one outlier was still found on the Phase 1 OTV factor score. This score was adjusted so that its standardized score equalled 3.29. All analyses were carried out using SPSS software.

Phase 1 Analyses

Table 4 presents the correlations between all Phase 1 measures. Because subjects' age correlated positively with OTV, age effects were covaried out from all Phase 1 analyses by entering them at step 1 of regression analyses. Because OTV showed no relationship with gender or with years of education in Phase 1 analyses, these demographic variables were not entered into regression equations. As was apparent from the Method section, only Hypotheses 1.C, 3, 4, and 5 were tested during Phase 1 of the study. Consequently, these results are presented first. The results from Phase II analyses are presented in the next section.

Emotional Control and Emotional Sensitivity

Hypothesis 1.C predicted that OTV would be associated with lower Emotional Control and Emotional Sensitivity. To test this hypothesis, a hierarchical multiple regression was employed, with Emotional Control and Emotional Sensitivity

Table 4

Correlation Matrix of Phase 1 Variables

<u>Variables</u>	Age	Educ	Gender ^a	Soc. Supp. #	Soc. Supp. Satis. ^b
OTV	.22**	-.03	.03	-.17*	.03
Age		-.18*	.11	-.08	.17*
Educ ation			.09	.28***	.01
Gender ^a				.01	.05
Social Support (Number)					.27***
Social Support (Satis- faction)					
Social Network Reductions					
Network Reductions (Subjects Could Have Influenced)					
Newer Friends & Family					
Emotional Sensitivity					
Emotional Control					

^a Coded so that higher values indicate male gender.

^b Coded so that higher values indicate more satisfaction.

*p<.05

** P<.01

*** p<.001

Table 4 (Continued)

Correlation Matrix of Phase 1 Variables

<u>Variables</u>	Soc. Net. Reduc.	Net. Red. (Subj. Infl.)	New Frds. & Fam.	Emot. Sens.	Emot. Contrl.
OTV	-.02	.03	.06	-.01	.02
Age	.12	-.10	-.05	-.01	.04
Educ ation	.13	.09	.16*	.03	-.07
Gender ^a	-.15	.04	-.10	-.13	.12
Social Support (Number)	.07	-.06	.01	.12	-.06
Social Support (Satis- faction) ^b	.01	.15	.06	.09	.01
Social Network Reductions		.39***	.09	-.07	-.01
Network Reductions (Subjects Could Have Influenced)			.03	-.02	-.01
Newer Friends & Family				.10	-.04
Emotional Sensitivity					.07
Emotional Control					

^a Coded so that higher values indicate male gender^b Coded so that higher values indicate more satisfaction.

* p < .05

***p<.001

as predictors of OTV, after accounting for variability due to subjects' age. At the first step, with only age entered into the regression equation, age accounted for 4.8% of the variance of OTV scores. The addition of Emotional Control and Emotional Sensitivity at step 2 of the regression equation did not contribute significantly to the predicted variability in OTV scores. Table 5 summarizes the results of this analysis.

Changes in Social Networks of Family and Friends

Hypothesis 3 predicted that OTV would be associated with greater reductions in social networks of family and friends, and with fewer newer members of such networks. A multiple regression was performed to determine whether OTV was predictive of reductions in social networks of family and friends. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6. On the first step, age did not enter as a significant predictor of reductions in social networks. On the second step, OTV scores were not significantly predictive of reductions in social networks.

A second hierarchical multiple regression was performed to determine whether OTV was associated with having fewer newer members in social networks of family and friends. Neither age (step 1), nor OTV scores (step 2) were predictive of the number of newer members in social networks. This analysis is summarized in Table 7.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the reasons for social

Table 5

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Emotional Sensitivity and Emotional Control as Predictors of OTV (N=177)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.048	.048	8.89**
Age	.22**	.22**			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.048	.000	.027
Emotional Sensitivity	-.01	-.01			
Emotional Control	.02	.01			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .048, <u>F</u> = 2.95*					
* p<.05 ** p<.01					

Table 6

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age and OTV as Predictors of Reductions in Social Networks (N=155).

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.014	.014	2.23
Age	.12	.12			
 <u>Step 2:</u>			.017	.003	.39
OTV	-.02	-.05			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .017, F = 1.31					

Table 7

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age and OTV
as Predictors of Number of New Members in Social Networks
(N=156).

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.002	.002	.38
Age	-.05	-.05			
 <u>Step 2:</u>			.008	.005	.80
OTV	.06	.07			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .008, <u>F</u> = .59					

network reductions provided by high OTV individuals would tend to involve factors where they may have had an influence and could have resulted from relational problems (e.g., a fight, drifting apart). A hierarchical multiple regression with age entered on the first step and OTV scores entered on the second step revealed that neither age nor OTV scores contributed significantly to the predicted variability in the number of social network losses due to factors that may have been influenced by the subjects. Table 8 summarizes this analysis.

Extent of and Satisfaction with Social Support

Hypothesis 5 predicted that OTV would be associated with fewer members in social support networks. This analysis is summarized in Table 9. On the first step, age did not enter as a significant predictor of social support network size. On the second step, when OTV scores were entered, the overall F was still not significant, although OTV scores did add a small, but significant increment (2.4%) in the predicted direction, to the variability in social support network size.

Hypothesis 5 also predicted that OTV scores would be predictive of reduced Satisfaction with social support. As was done in the previous analysis, the subjects' ages were entered at step 1 of a hierarchical regression, and OTV scores were entered at step 2. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 10. The findings showed that at step

Table 8

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age and OTV as Predictors of Social Network Losses Due to Reasons that May Have Been Influenced by Subjects' Behaviour (N=154).

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.010	.010	1.59
Age	-.10	-.10			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.013	.003	.427
OTV	.03	.05			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .013, <u>F</u> = 1.01					

Table 9

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age and OTV
as Predictors of Social Support Network Size (N=179)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.005	.005	1.01
Age	-.08	.08			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.029	.024	4.26*
OTV	-.17*	-.15*			
<hr/>					

Overall R² = .029, \underline{F} = 2.64, $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

Table 10

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age and OTV
as Predictors of Satisfaction with Social Support (N=177)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<u>Step 1:</u>			.028	.028	5.11*
Age	.17*	.17*			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.028	.000	.022
OTV	.03	-.01			

Overall R² = .028, \underline{F} = 2.55, $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

1, age significantly accounted for 2.8% of the variance in Satisfaction with social support. The direction of this finding indicated that older age was associated with more Satisfaction with social support. The addition of OTV scores to the regression equation at step 2 did not contribute to the predicted variability in Satisfaction with social support.

Phase 2 Analyses

Table 11 presents the correlations between all Phase 2 variables. Because education correlated negatively with OTV scores, and because age showed an association with OTV scores (although not quite significant), these variables were entered on the first step of all regression analyses.

Gender correlated with several variables that were analyzed during Phase 2. Nonetheless, the following rationale explains why subjects' gender was not considered in any analyses: 1) gender showed no relation with OTV scores, 2) 76% of the Phase 2 sample were female, and 3) only 4 of the 20 high OTV subjects were male.

Get Acquainted Conversation

Behavioural measures. Hypothesis 1.A predicted that high OTV subjects would tend to dominate conversations by talking for a disproportionately high proportion of "get acquainted" conversations. Hypothesis 1.A also predicted that high OTV individuals would tend to show less interest in conversational partners (as measured by the frequency of

Table 11

Correlation Matrix of Phase 2 Variables

<u>Variables</u>	Age	Educ	Gender ^a	Recipro ^a	Conflict ^a	% Red.	Noticed Cues? ^a
OTV	.21	-.23*	.03	-.14	.10	.14	-.08
Age		-.08	.21	-.02	.22	-.07	.06
Educ ation			.08	.14	.04	.03	-.06
Gender ^a				-.18	.16	.02	-.08
Recipro city ^a					.12	.13	.29*
Conflict ^a						.22	.14
%Reduction Talk time							.33**
Noticed Cues? ^a							
Talk Time: Pos. Cues							
Talk Time: Neg. Cues							
Proportion Talk Time ^b							
Questions Asked ^b							
Inter- ruptions ^b							
Partner Ratings							

^a Coded so that higher values indicate male gender, more Reciprocity, more conflict, and noticing the cues.

^b Based on the 38 "target" members of conversational pairs.

*p<.05

** P<.01

*** p<.001

Table 11 (continued)

Correlation Matrix of Phase 2 Variables

<u>Variables</u>	Pos. Cues	Neg. Cues	Prop. Talk ^b	Quest. Asked ^b	Inter- rupt ^b	Partner ^a Ratings
OTV	.31**	.17	.46**	-.35*	.20	.24*
Age	-.06	.13	.24	-.41*	.18	.12
Educ	.08	.14	-.27	.06	.07	-.16
Gender ^a	.28*	.35**	.07	-.41*	-.13	.22
Reciprocity ^a	.01	-.07	-.20	.45**	-.13	-.04
Conflict ^a	.19	.09	.13	.04	.38*	.12
%Reduction Talk time	.54***	-.35**	-.26	-.08	-.02	-.07
Noticed Cues? ^a	.23	-.02	-.19	.32	-.16	-.15
Talk Time: Pos. Cues		.46***	-.40*	-.08	.18	-.02
Talk Time: Neg. Cues			-.10	-.15	.12	.07
Proportion Talk Time ^b				-.14	.03	.41*
Questions Asked ^b					-.04	-.09
Inter- ruptions ^b						.01
Partner Ratings ^a						

^a Coded so that higher values indicate male gender, more Reciprocity, more Conflict, noticing cues, and more conversational dissatisfaction (partner ratings).

^b Based on the 38 "target" members of conversational pairs.

*p<.05

** P<.01

*** p<.001

questions asked) and would intrusively interrupt their conversational partners more than would "normal" talkers. Such behaviour in one member of a conversational pair would likely affect that of the other. For example, if one member of a conversational pair talked excessively, the other would obviously not have been able to talk as much. Consequently, only the speech behaviour of one member of each conversational pair (the target member) was considered. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to measure differences between "normal" talkers and high OTV individuals for the following dependent variables (DVs): proportion of talk time, frequency of question asking, and frequency of interruptions. Although these variables were not inter-correlated (see table 11), a MANOVA was deemed appropriate in order to reduce the possibility of inflated alpha, and because these behavioural indices are theoretically related.

Overall, Wilks Lamda test of multivariate significance revealed a significant difference between "normal" talkers and high OTV subjects on these combined DVs, $F(3,34)=2.93$, $p<.05$. Follow-up univariate analyses revealed that proportion of talk time was the only variable that differed between these two groups, $F(1,36)=4.68$, $p<.05$. As was predicted by hypothesis 1.A, this univariate analysis showed that high OTV subjects talked more than did "normal" subjects. Table 12 presents the univariate comparisons

Table 12

Comparison Between Target High OTV Subjects (N=20) and Target "Normal" Talkers (N=18) on Proportion of Talk Time, Questions Asked, and Interruptions During "Get Acquainted" Conversations

Behavioural Measure	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Univariate F
<hr/>				
<u>Proportion Talk Time</u>				4.68*
High OTV Group	.59	.17	.36 - .90	
"Normal" Talkers	.49	.12	.27 - .72	
<u>Questions</u>				2.26
High OTV Group	6.4	3.7	0 - 14	
"Normal" Talkers	8.8	6.1	1 - 22	
<u>Interruptions</u>				2.29
High OTV Group	2.6	2.0	0 - 6	
"Normal" Talkers	1.7	1.5	0 - 5	

* $p < .05$

between high OTV individuals and "normal" talkers on proportion of talk time, number of questions asked and frequency of interruptions.

As was evident from Table 3, the Item and Extent OTV ratings of the high OTV subjects' conversational partners were lower than those of the "normal" talkers' conversational partners. This was potentially problematic since the high OTV group's proportion of talk time could have been artificially inflated due to their having less verbose conversational partners. In order to verify that this did not affect the previous analyses, a second MANOVA was performed, with conversational partners' OTV scores as covariates. The results of this MANOVA paralleled those of the first.

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was undertaken to further understand the extent to which OTV scores predicted the proportion of talk time in an actual conversation. A summary of this regression analysis is presented in Table 13. On the first step, the demographic variables age and education did not contribute significantly to the predicted variance of proportion of talk time. OTV scores, which were added at the second step, significantly added 11.1% to the predicted variability.

Although the difference between high OTV subjects and "normal" talkers in the frequency of questions asked was not statistically significant, Table 12 revealed that there was

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age, Education, and OTV as Predictors of Proportion of Talk Time During the "Get Acquainted" Conversation (N=38)

68

a substantial difference in the mean number of questions asked by these two groups. A statistically significant difference may have been suppressed due to low statistical power associated with the small sample size (18 "normal" talkers, and 20 high OTV). Consequently, this variable was studied further to determine whether OTV scores related to asking questions of an individual with whom subjects were supposed to be "getting acquainted". Indeed, OTV scores correlated with question asking behaviour. The direction of the correlation coefficient ($r = -.35$, $p < .05$), indicated that OTV was associated with asking fewer questions of conversational partners.

Partner ratings of satisfaction with the conversation.

After "getting acquainted", both members of the conversational dyad rated their satisfaction with the conversation. Before conducting analyses using this variable, it was important to first determine whether subjects' ratings were associated with the equivalent ratings made by their partners. If such a relationship existed, then the satisfaction ratings of only one member of the pair would have been included in analyses. Because subjects' ratings were not correlated with those of their conversational partners ($r = -.07$), both members of conversational dyads were included in these analyses.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that OTV would be associated with poorer ratings of conversational satisfaction from

partners. As predicted, OTV scores correlated with partner ratings of satisfaction with the conversation ($r=.24$, $p<.05$). The direction of this effect indicated that higher levels of OTV were associated with more conversational partner dissatisfaction. A hierarchical multiple regression was carried out to further assess the relationship between OTV and partner satisfaction with the conversation. Table 14 summarizes this analysis. As may be seen in Table 14, the demographic variables (age, education) were entered at the first step, but did not significantly predict conversational satisfaction. When OTV was entered on the second step, the added variance explained (3.7%, $p<.10$) revealed a trend. It appears that the previously mentioned correlation between OTV scores and partner satisfaction was affected by the demographic variables which were entered on the first step.

As was mentioned above, higher levels of OTV were shown to be associated with talking for a proportionately larger share of conversations. A hierarchical multiple regression was carried out to determine whether such behaviour was predictive of partner satisfaction with the conversation. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 15. The demographic variables (age, education) which were entered on the first step showed no predictive value. Proportion of talk time, which was entered on the second step, significantly added 10.6% to the predicted variance in partner ratings of satisfaction with the conversation. The

Table 14

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age, Education, and OTV as Predictors of Partner Ratings of Satisfaction with the Conversation (N=76)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.037	.037	1.38
Age	.12	.11			
Education	-.16	-.15			
<hr/>					
<u>Step 2:</u>			.074	.037	2.91 (p<.10)
OTV	.24*	.19			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .074, <u>F</u> = 1.92					
* p<.05					

Table 15

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age, Education, and Proportion of Talk Time as Predictors of Partner Ratings of Satisfaction with the Conversation (N=38)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.105	.105	2.06
Age	.30	.28			
Education	-.16	-.13			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.212	.106	4.57*
Proportion of Talk Time	.41*	.33*			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .212, F = 3.04*					
* p<.05					

direction of this effect indicated that talking for a greater proportion of the talk time was associated with more conversational partner dissatisfaction.

Attentiveness to Nonverbal Cues

Prior to conducting any analyses on the experimental manipulation which was used to measure responsiveness to nonverbal cues, a t-test was employed to ensure that there were no effects on speech duration due to the order by which the subjects mentioned their topics. No such effects were found. Due to various problems, seven experimental interactions were deemed invalid and were consequently dropped. As may be recalled from the method section, the Phase 2 sample consisted of 56 "normal" talkers and 20 high OTV subjects. The seven subjects who were dropped from these experimental interactions were all "normal" talkers. Consequently, 49 "normal" talkers and 20 High OTV subjects were included.

The first series of analyses examined subjects' talk time during positive social cues as a baseline and utilized the percentage of talk time reduction during the negative cues as the variable of interest. Hypothesis 1.B predicted that high OTV subjects would tend to be less responsive to nonverbal cues signalling disinterest and would consequently exhibit less marked talk-time reductions. Twenty percent of subjects actually increased their talk time during the negative cues, although most of these represented very

slight increases. These subjects were coded as having had a 0% reduction in talk time. To test the hypothesis that high OTV individuals would tend to be less responsive to nonverbal cues signalling disinterest, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with age and education entered on the first step, whether or not subjects noticed the negative cues entered on the second step, and OTV scores entered on the third step. Table 16 summarizes this analysis. On step 1, age and education did not contribute significantly to the predicted variance in reduction of talk-time. On step 2, the item measuring whether subjects noticed the negative cues added 11.9% to the predicted variance in reduction time, indicating that noticing the cues was associated with greater reductions in talk-time. When OTV scores were entered on the third step, the change in the predicted variance (4.4%) approached significance $F_{inc}(1,64)=3.36$, $p<.10$. Surprisingly, the direction of this trend indicated that higher levels of OTV were associated with greater reductions in talk time. Table 17 presents the amount of time that "normal" talkers and high OTV subjects spoke during the positive and negative social cue conditions, and provides a possible explanation for these findings. As may be seen from this table, high OTV subjects tended to talk considerably more than did "normal" talkers during the positive social cue condition. Consequently, when measured as a function of this initially elevated baseline,

Table 16

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression for Variables
Predicting Percentage Reduction in Talk Time During the
Experimental Manipulation of Nonverbal Cues (N=69)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<u>Step 1:</u>			.005	.005	.17
Age	-.07	-.06			
Education	.03	.02			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.119	.114	8.42**
Noticed Cues?	.33**	.34**			
<u>Step 3:</u>			.163	.044	3.36 (p<.10)
OTV	.14	.21			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .163, <u>F</u> = 3.12*					

**p<.01

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics of Talk Time (Seconds) During
Positive and Negative Social Cues for High OTV Subjects
(N=20) and Normal Talkers (N=49).

	Mean Talk Time (seconds)	Standard Deviation	Range	N
<u>Positive Cues</u>				
High OTV Group	436	387	24 - 1487	20
"Normal" Talkers	223	169	31 - 862	49
<u>Negative Cues</u>				
High OTV Group	196	165	44 - 648	20
"Normal" Talkers	138	108	34 - 503	49

their percentage of reduction time was inflated. In fact, when looking at the actual talk time in the negative cue condition, the high OTV subjects talked longer than the "normal" talkers. It is also important to note that OTV scores showed no association with the item measuring whether or not subjects noticed the negative cues ($r = -.08$, $p = .52$).

Based on these findings, it seemed more appropriate to analyze actual talk time during each condition as opposed to percentages of reductions in talk time. Two Hierarchical multiple regressions were employed to determine how predictive OTV scores were of talk time during positive social cues and negative social cues.

Table 18 summarizes the hierarchical multiple regression with talk time during positive cues as the dependent measure. Age and education, which were entered at the first step, had no predictive value. The addition of OTV scores at step 2 added 13.4% to the predicted variability. The direction of this effect indicated that higher OTV scores were predictive of a longer duration of speech during positive social cues.

A second hierarchical multiple regression was carried out to determine the nature of the relationship between OTV scores and talk time during negative social cues. This analysis is summarized in Table 19. For this regression, age and education were entered on the first step, the item measuring whether subjects noticed the negative cues was

Table 18

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression for Variables
Predicting Talk Time During Positive Cues (N=69)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.008	.008	.29
Age	-.06	-.05			
Education	.08	.07			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.134	.125	9.38**
OTV	.31**	.35**			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .134, F = 3.35*					
* p<.05 ** p<.01					

Table 19

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression for Variables
Predicting Talk Time During Negative Cues (N=69)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.039	.039	1.35
Age	.13	.14			
Education	.14	.15			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.039	.000	.00
Noticed Cues?	-.02	-.02			
<u>Step 3:</u>			.072	.032	2.22
OTV	.17	.18			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .072, F = 1.24					

entered on the second step, and OTV scores were entered on the third step. None of these variables were significantly predictive of talk time during the negative social cues condition.

Reciprocity and Conflict

Hypothesis 1.D predicted that social relationships among high OTV individuals would tend to be associated with less reciprocity and by heightened conflict. Table 20 summarizes this analysis. A hierarchical multiple regression with age, education, reciprocity, and conflict as predictors of OTV assessed this hypothesis. Neither age and education (step 1), nor reciprocity and conflict (step 2) were significantly predictive of OTV scores.

Exploratory Hypothesis

Exploratory analyses assessed the relationship between the social indices that were found to be associated with OTV, and social network variables. More specifically, OTV scores have shown some, albeit modest, association with reduced partner satisfaction with the conversation, talking for a greater proportion of the conversation time, reduced question asking, presumably reflecting less interest in the other person, and a greater response to social cues signalling interest. It is important to assess whether such behavioural indices have generalized to their regular social interactions and have had an impact on their social relations. Although this data set provides no information as

Table 20

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Age, Education, Reciprocity, and Conflict as Predictors of OTV (N=75)

	r	sr	R ²	R ² change	F change
<hr/>					
<u>Step 1:</u>			.077	.077	3.01
Age	.20	.19			
Education	-.21	-.19			
<u>Step 2:</u>			.096	.019	.731
Reciprocity	-.14	-.12			
Conflict	.10	.08			
<hr/>					
Overall R ² = .096, <u>F</u> = 1.86					

to the extent to which these behavioural indices generalize to subjects' regular social interactions, it does contain information on subjects' quantity and quality of social support systems as well as self reported changes in social networks.

Table 21 shows the correlations of proportion of talk time, questions asked, partner ratings, and talk time during positive social cues with measures of social support and social network changes. Question asking was found to be significantly correlated with social support network size ($r=.35$, $p<.05$), indicating that asking more questions of conversational partners was associated with larger social support networks. Asking more questions of conversational partners was also significantly associated with having a greater number of newer members in social networks of family and friends ($r=.38$, $p<.05$). Finally, talking for a greater proportion of the conversation was associated with smaller social support network size ($r=-.37$, $p<.01$). Partner ratings of satisfaction with the conversational interaction and talk time during positive social cues showed no significant association with measures of social relations.

Discussion

This study examined the social behaviour and social skills of older adults exhibiting high levels of OTV. The study also assessed whether this pattern of speech was associated with any reductions and negative changes in

Table 21

Correlations Between Indices of Conversational Behaviour and Measures of Social Relations

Variables

	Proportion Talk Time ^a	Questions Asked ^a	Conv. Partner Ratings	Talk Time: Positive Cues
Social Support (Number)	-.37*	.35*	-.06	-.04
Social Support (Satis- faction)	-.03	.16	-.07	.00
Social Network Reductions	-.27	.07	-.12	-.01
Reductions Within Control	-.07	.17	.09	.00
Newer Friends & Family	.04	.38*	-.21	.02

^a Based on the 38 "target" members of conversational pairs.

*p<.05

networks of friends and family.

Social Behaviour, Social Skills and Partner Ratings of
Conversational Satisfaction

Hypothesis 1 proposed that high OTV individuals lack social skills and would exhibit socially maladaptive behavioural patterns. More specifically, proportion of talk time, interest in conversational partners (as reflected by frequency of questions), frequency of intrusive interruptions, attentiveness to nonverbal cues, Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Control, and Reciprocity were all measured in addition to a measure of conflict in interpersonal relationships. Hypothesis 2 predicted that the conversational partners of high OTV individuals would rate them as less satisfying to communicate with than would the conversational partners of "normal" talkers.

"Get Acquainted" conversation. Time spent talking in a social conversation situation was measured in order to assess whether high OTV individuals tended to control a disproportionately high amount of the conversational talk time. Findings showed that higher levels of OTV were associated with talking more, with high OTV individuals talking for an average of 59% of the talk time and "normal talkers" talking for an average of 49% of the conversational talk time. Clark and Schaefer (1989) conceptualize conversations as: "highly coordinated activities in which the current speaker tries to make sure he or she is being

attended to, heard, and understood by the other participants" (p. 259). Such a conceptualization of a conversation would require mutual sharing of the conversational floor. Conversations among "normal" talkers were characterized by mutual sharing of the conversational floor, with each participant talking for an approximately equal share of the conversation. In contrast, the conversations with high OTV individuals tended to show an imbalance in conversational talk time, with high OTV subjects talking for a greater share. This could indicate that high OTV individuals are more interested in their own conversational agendas, possibly reflecting a greater preoccupation with themselves. A more qualitative analysis of the content of these conversations is necessary in order to determine whether high OTV individuals do indeed contributed more self focused material to conversations. Alternatively, given that higher levels of OTV have been associated with extroverted personality styles (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold et al., 1988), high OTV subjects' greater proportion of talk time could be reflective of more extroverted and friendly personality styles.

Although high OTV individuals did talk for a proportionally larger share of the conversations than did "normal talkers", the mean proportion of the talk time for high OTV subjects (59%) indicated that these conversations were not entirely one sided. Furthermore, the proportions of

talk time varied among high OTV subjects and ranged from a low of 36% to a high of 90%. Consequently, it was important to assess whether there was a substantial group of high OTV subjects who had in fact monopolized the talk time in their conversations. Maintaining the conversational floor for at least 65% of the conversation was arbitrarily selected as the criterion for monopolization. Using this criterion, 30% (6 of 20) of the high OTV subjects monopolized conversational talk time, whereas only 11% (2 of 18) of the "normal talkers" did so. It appears that high OTV subjects are more likely than "normal talkers" to monopolize the conversational talk time. Nonetheless, monopolizing the conversation is not characteristic of the majority of high OTV subjects.

In addition to the implications that these findings have for the social behaviour of high OTV individuals, these results also help support the conceptualization of OTV as a stable and valid construct. This was the first study to directly measure speech patterns of high OTV individuals, as they occur in actual conversations. Although OTV is conceptualized as speech that is not only excessive, but also lacks focus, the finding that high OTV individuals talk more than do "normal" talkers is important and indicates that at least part of this conceptualization (ie. characterized by excessive speech) generalizes to everyday conversations. Even more impressive is the finding that high

OTV individuals exhibited an abundance of speech not only across situations (ie. from structured interviews to actual conversations), but also after an average of five months from the time that they were initially assessed. This is consistent with Gold and Arbuckle's (1995) finding that OTV remains stable over time.

The frequency of questions asked of conversational partners was measured in order to determine whether high OTV individuals asked fewer questions, presumably reflecting less interest in conversational partners. Although differences between high OTV subjects and "normal" talkers in number of questions asked were not statistically significant, the significant negative correlation between these variables indicated that higher levels of OTV were associated with asking fewer questions of conversational partners. The lack of a significant difference between high OTV subjects and "normal" talkers may have been due to low statistical power associated with a small sample size. Consequently, it is believed that the negative correlation between these variables is noteworthy. Before "getting acquainted", subjects were instructed to learn about the lives of their conversational partners. The finding that higher levels of OTV were associated with asking fewer questions could indicate that high OTV individuals tended to be less interested in fulfilling this mandate. This finding is even more interesting in light of the finding that high

OTV subjects maintained the conversational floor for longer periods of time, indicating that theoretically, they should have had even more time to ask questions. This result could indicate that high OTV subjects are more interested in their own conversational agendas than in attending to and learning about conversational partners. Nonetheless, as was mentioned above, confirmation of this would require a qualitative analysis of the conversational content.

It must be emphasized that counting the frequency of questions that were asked is not a direct measure of interest in conversational partners. It is possible that high OTV individuals do not differ from "normal" talkers in their interest in conversational partners, but express this interest via other modalities.

Measurement of intrusive interruptions revealed only a low moderate level of inter-rater agreement. Consequently, due to poor reliability, the lack of an association between OTV and the frequency of intrusive interruptions was not surprising. Given the relatively poor level of inter-rater reliability however, findings associated with this variable should be interpreted tentatively. Nonetheless, reliability issues aside, the lack of a relationship between OTV and intrusive interruptions indicates that although high OTV individuals may be more interested in their own conversational agendas than in learning about their conversational partners, they appear to respect the rule of

turn-taking and do not intrude upon the talk time of their partners. This is an important finding and indicates that high OTV individuals are capable of controlling one aspect of their speech, waiting their turn, which is a skill that appears to be important in making a favourable impression on others (Hawkins, 1991; Robinson & Reis, 1989).

Partner ratings of conversational satisfaction showed a modest but significant relationship with OTV scores ($r=.24$, $p<.05$), indicating that higher levels of OTV were associated with conversational dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, a hierarchical multiple regression indicated that after accounting for the shared variance between OTV scores and the demographic variables age and years of education, the predicted variability in partner ratings of conversational satisfaction from OTV scores revealed only a trend (3.7% of the variance predicted, $p<.10$). This was surprising since neither age nor education showed a significant association with partner ratings of conversational satisfaction. Furthermore, partners were matched with a conversational partner of approximately the same age, indicating that this finding may not be attributed to previous research which showed that people have negative biases in their perceptions of elders (Ryan & Laurie, 1990).

One possible explanation for this finding is that older adults who are less educated, may tend to exhibit patterns of speech that are most consistent with the description of

the phenomenon of OTV, and consequently may be perceived as more aversive. A more likely explanation is that the statistically significant association between OTV and partner ratings may not have been maintained in the hierarchical multiple regression because the bivariate association between these variables was not very strong. It seems reasonable to conclude that higher levels of OTV do have a negative impact on partner ratings of conversational satisfaction, although this association is not very strong.

OTV ratings were obtained an average of five months before the "get acquainted" conversations. Although OTV ratings have been shown to be stable over time (Gold & Arbuckle, 1995), it is likely that there were individual differences in mood between Phase 1 and Phase 2 which would have affected the amount of OTV exhibited during the "get acquainted" conversations. Although calculating the proportion of talk time during the conversation measured only one dimension of OTV (ie. abundance of speech), this measure served as a useful indicator of the relationship between OTV and conversational partner perceptions due to its greater proximity to the partner rating situation. Proportion of talk time during the conversation showed a strong association with partner ratings of conversational satisfaction, indicating that more abundant speech was associated with more conversational dissatisfaction. Furthermore, proportion of talk time predicted a significant

amount of variability (10.6%) in partner ratings of conversational satisfaction even after accounting for the association between proportion of talk time and the demographic variables (age and education).

These findings have some important implications for the social relations of high OTV individuals. It has been suggested that the first stage of a social interaction is important because it is during this stage that people form impressions of others and decide whether or not they would like to pursue further social contact (Spence, Godfrey, Knight & Bishara, 1993). In this study, the initial impressions of high OTV individuals and subjects who produced an abundance of speech, tended to be negative. Consequently, those who produce such patterns of speech may be at risk for social rejection.

There is one other possible area of interest pertaining to conversational partner ratings that is noteworthy. As was mentioned in the method section, subjects' ratings were not correlated with those of their conversational partners ($r=.07$). This relationship however, differed between "normal" talker-"normal" talker pairs and high OTV-"normal" talker pairs. For dyads in which both members were "normal" talkers, the direction of this nonsignificant correlation was positive ($r=.13$, $p=.60$), whereas for dyads in which one member measured high in OTV, the direction of this nonsignificant correlation was negative ($r=-.19$, $p=.43$).

This should be examined in future research with a larger sample size. If a significant pattern does emerge, then it may indicate that high OTV individuals tend to leave social conversations feeling satisfied and may be oblivious to their conversational partners' dissatisfaction. This would be consistent with previous findings showing that high OTV individuals do not appear to be aware of their excessive speech (Gold et al., 1993).

Attentiveness to nonverbal cues. Hypothesis 1 also predicted that high OTV individuals would be less likely to notice and respond appropriately to nonverbal cues signalling disinterest or boredom. Contrary to this hypothesis, the item measuring whether subjects noticed the nonverbal cues signalling disinterest was not significantly associated with OTV. Furthermore, the amount of time that subjects spoke while the research assistant emitted nonverbal cues signalling disinterest showed no association with OTV. Although these results seemingly indicate that high OTV individuals are not deficient in their attentiveness to nonverbal cues, the findings should be interpreted within the framework of Nonverbal Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). According to this theory, conversational interactants develop expectations about the nonverbal behaviour of others. When these expectancies are violated in a noticeable manner, an orienting response is produced and attention is diverted to

the unexpected behaviour. In the experimental interaction used in this study, the nonverbal cues signalling disinterest were intended to be highly salient, and occurred suddenly after the research assistant had been producing cues signalling interest. The finding that the vast majority of subjects (75% of high OTV subjects and 82% of "normal" talkers) accurately perceived the negative cues, supports the notion that these cues were conspicuous. It is likely that attention was quickly diverted to this unexpected and obvious change. Consequently, the only conclusion that may be drawn from this experiment is that high OTV individuals attend and adapt their behaviour to nonverbal cues signalling disinterest in the same way that "normal" talkers do, when these cues are made salient. While this was an important first step in understanding how well high OTV individuals attend to nonverbal cues, it does not preclude the possibility that high OTV individuals do not respond to more subtle nonverbal cues. In fact, due to the need to be polite, cues signalling disinterest in everyday conversations are likely to be subtle.

The finding that high OTV individuals tended to talk more than did "normal" talkers when they were encouraged (ie. received nonverbal cues signalling interest) helps to support the construct validity of OTV. Nonetheless, contrary to what was hypothesized, this finding indicates that high OTV individuals are attentive to some nonverbal cues. This

finding does however, have some important implications. It appears that high OTV individuals are highly responsive to positive cues from a conversational partner. In fact, during the positive nonverbal cues, the average length of speech for the high OTV individuals was nearly double that of the normal talkers. During a social interaction, conversational participants may provide positive feedback in accordance with general social etiquette and politeness. The finding that high OTV individuals are highly responsive to these cues indicates that they may produce an overabundance of speech in response to positive cues, and may eventually irritate their conversational partners. Nonetheless, the extent to which high OTV individuals respond to the positive cues that are more characteristic of everyday conversations must be assessed empirically.

The original analysis for this experimental interaction focused on the percentage of reduction in talk time from the positive to the negative cues. Not surprisingly, the item measuring whether or not subjects noticed the negative cues contributed significantly to the predicted variability in the percentage of reduction in talk time. This indicated that the experimental manipulation had in fact worked. After controlling for variability due to the demographic variables (age and education), and whether or not subjects had noticed the nonverbal cues, OTV scores contributed to the predicted variance in the percentage of reduction in talk time,

although this was only a trend ($p < .10$). As was mentioned in the Results section, this appears to have been due to elevations among high OTV individuals in the amount of speech produced during the positive cues, and did not reflect a difference between high OTV subjects and "normal" talkers in their responsiveness to nonverbal cues signalling disinterest.

Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Control, Reciprocity, and Conflict. It was hypothesized that high OTV individuals are socially unskilled in the areas of Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Control, and Reciprocity. Furthermore, based on the hypothesis that high OTV individuals exhibit socially maladaptive behaviour, it was hypothesized that their social relations would be characterized by heightened conflict. Contrary to these predictions, self reports of these dimensions of social skill showed no association with OTV. Although these findings seem to indicate that high OTV individuals do not experience deficiencies in these areas, the validity of this self reported information must also be considered. High OTV individuals do not seem to consider themselves to be particularly talkative (Gold et al., 1993). Consequently, they appear to be poor reporters of their own self observed behaviour. More objective measures of these constructs are required in order to properly assess whether high OTV individuals are deficient in these areas. If more

objective data indicate that high OTV individuals are in fact deficient in these areas, the aforementioned findings indicate that they are unaware of these problems and may be less likely to change such unskilled behavioural patterns.

Changes in Social Networks of Friends and Family

Hypothesis 3 predicted that high OTV individuals would endure greater losses and have fewer new additions to their social networks of friends and family. Furthermore, hypothesis 4 predicted that high OTV individuals would tend to indicate that social network losses were due to reasons that could have been within their control (e.g., a fight, drifting apart), as opposed to reasons that were likely beyond their control (e.g., death, moving away). Neither of these hypotheses were supported. It seems that negative changes in social networks are not associated with higher levels of OTV. Although this finding is hopeful in that it indicates that high OTV individuals are able to maintain and develop new social relationships, there are other considerations which must be assessed.

First, subjects were asked to think back five years and to use this as a baseline for measuring changes in social networks. This seemed to be difficult for many of the subjects, indicating that this technique may not have been very reliable. A longitudinal study is required in order to assess these changes in social networks more accurately. Some longitudinal data have already indicated that high OTV

individuals do experience negative changes in their networks of social support (Gold et al., 1994).

Hanson and Carpenter's (1994) account of social relations later in life provides another possible explanation for these findings. According to their theoretical perspective, the social behaviour of older adults may become less "socially consequential" as they become less involved in institutionalized roles. Specifically, "their inclusion and interaction in the social group might become dependent more on protocol, tradition, and good will rather than on their potential to contribute or exercise influence in a meaningful way" (Hanson & Carpenter, 1994, p.32). Accordingly, family and close friends of high OTV individuals may have simply become more tolerant of their behaviour.

Extent and Satisfaction with Social Support

Previous studies have found associations between OTV and diminished extent and satisfaction with social support (Gold et al., 1994). These findings however, have not been consistent and required replication. Accordingly, Hypothesis 5 predicted that higher levels of OTV would be associated with reductions in social support network size and in satisfaction with social support. Social support network size did show a negative association with OTV, although the correlation coefficient was not very strong ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, after accounting for the association between

OTV and age, OTV still contributed a small, but significant amount to the predicted variability in social network size (2.3% of the variance accounted for). It is important to note however, that with both age and OTV entered into the regression equation, the overall variance accounted for revealed only a trend ($p < .10$).

The conclusion that may be drawn from these data is that higher levels of OTV are associated with lower social support network sizes, although this association is not very strong. This relatively weak association is consistent with previous findings (Gold et al., 1994).

The finding that OTV showed no association with satisfaction with social support was surprising as it was inconsistent with previous research findings (Arbuckle & Gold, 1993; Gold et al., 1994). Examination of the data revealed that 70% of the sample gave an average satisfaction rating of 5 or more on a 6-point Likert type scale (where a rating of 6 indicates an optimal level of satisfaction). Consequently, the possibility of a social desirability bias should be considered. Nonetheless, these results indicate that previous findings associating OTV with diminished social support satisfaction are not very reliable and should be interpreted cautiously.

Although high OTV individuals do not appear to be less satisfied with their social support networks, they do tend to have a reduced number of individuals whom they could

count on for social support. This reduction in extent of social support could eventually translate into diminished social support satisfaction as members of current networks become ill or die, leaving fewer people for them to count on. The importance of social support networks later in life have already been outlined. A diminished amount of social support could have a substantial negative impact on the quality of life of such individuals.

Association Between Indices of Social Behaviour and Measures of Social Relations

Despite the paucity of data linking OTV with social support and changes in social networks, it was important to assess whether there were any associations between the behavioural indices that were associated with OTV and the social network related variables. Although OTV did not show a relationship with changes in social networks and only showed a weak association with social support network size, some of the behavioural indices that were associated with OTV related to these variables. More specifically, talking for a proportionately longer period of time was associated with having fewer social support network members. Furthermore, asking more questions was associated with: having larger social support networks and developing a greater number of newer relationships.

These findings indicate that although OTV scores per se did not show a strong, direct association with social

network variables, high OTV individuals displayed behavioural patterns that were characteristic of maladaptive social relations (ie. talking more, asking fewer questions of conversational partners). Assuming that these behavioural patterns generalize to their everyday lives, these behaviours could eventually exert a cumulative negative effect on their social functioning.

Taken together, the findings of this study indicate that high OTV individuals show some signs of maladaptive behavioural patterns. Specifically, they tend to talk for larger portions of conversations, ask fewer questions of conversational partners, and are rated as less satisfying to communicate with. Although OTV did not show a direct and strong association with measures of social support and changes in social networks, some of the behavioural patterns associated with OTV were associated with measures of social networks. Consequently, some of these behavioural patterns may eventually lead to rejection.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This study has several limitations which should be noted. First, the "get acquainted" conversations that were assessed were somewhat contrived in that they did not occur in the subjects' natural environments. Consequently, it is not clear whether these conversation samples are representative of subjects' conversational behaviour outside of the laboratory. Second, the experimental interaction

designed to measure attentiveness to nonverbal cues was not typical of a regular conversation since the subjects were asked to do all of the talking. Furthermore, the cues that were emitted during this experiment were exaggerated and were not representative of the nonverbal cues that occur naturally. Third, although this study showed that high OTV individuals tended to talk more during actual conversational interactions, it did not examine the extent to which such speech lacked focus. Fourth, interest in conversational partners was only measured via the frequency of questions that were asked. Although this behaviour may reflect a conversational participant's level of interest in the other, it is not a direct measure of this construct. Finally, because high OTV individuals do not seem to be accurate observers of their own behaviour (Gold et al., 1993), the use of self report measures of several social skills dimensions may not have produced valid data.

Future studies should qualitatively analyze the conversational content exhibited by high OTV individuals in order to determine whether their naturally occurring speech lacks coherence and reflects a greater focus on themselves. Furthermore, future research should use direct measures to test the hypothesis that high OTV individuals are more self absorbed and express less interest in conversational partners. Additionally, future investigations should manipulate conversational situations to determine whether

there are circumstances in which high OTV individuals exhibit more socially adaptive speech patterns. For example, one such manipulation could involve telling subjects that their conversational partner is very shy and that s/he may need some encouragement. Finally, more longitudinal research is needed in order to assess changes in social networks more reliably.

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Appendix A
Consent Form for Phase 1

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, consent to participate in the study of how conversational behaviour related to personality, social factors, feelings of well-being and measures of attention, which is being conducted by Drs. Pushkar and Arbuckle-Maag, of the Centre for Research in Human Development of Concordia University. The research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

A. With respect to the study itself, I understand that:

1. It will involve answering a number of questions and tests, some of which will be audiotaped so that responses may be reliably scored. I understand that in appreciation for my time and efforts, I will receive a payment of \$10, or at my request it may be donated to any charity I choose.
2. I understand that I will likely be contacted in the future and asked to participate in additional studies that focus more specifically on particular kinds of social and conversational behaviour. For example, I may be asked to participate in conversations with people of different ages. If I am asked to participate in these studies, I will be given a complete description of what would be involved at that time.

B. With respect to my participation in the study, I understand that:

1. Any information learned about me or anyone else through my participation in the study will be confidential. The results of the study will be available only to the investigators, who may use the results for scientific purposes such as publication in a scientific journal or presentation at a scientific meeting as long as I am not identified as a participant in the study.
2. I will receive a full explanation of the findings of the study when they become available.
3. Participation is completely voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time.
4. My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my eligibility to participate in any future studies.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix B

Structured Interview about Subjects'
Work and Family Backgrounds

Work and Family Interview

In this part of the session, I will be asking you some questions about your personal history and your life experiences. I'm interested particularly in your education, your employment history, and in learning a bit about your family.

I. Education

Let's start with your education.

1. How much education did you get?

OUTS EX

2. What year did you finish your education?

3. What did you study in school?

4. What special training did you have, if any?

5. What did you do immediately after you finished or graduated?

(NB: DON'T FORGET TO MARK THE NUMBER OF THE QUESTION)

6. What job did you do?

OUTS EX

7. What did you do in your job?

8. Did you get promoted?

9. How long did you stay there?

10. How old were you when you left? (Repeat these work questions as many times as necessary until you reach retirement or present time).

11. Did you do that kind of work until you retired or did you change your work?

III. Family

Now, I'd like to know a bit about your family life.

NOTE: IF SUBJECT HAS BEEN MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE, IE. IF FIRST SPOUSE DIED, OR THEY ARE DIVORCED/SEPARATED, ASK QUESTIONS 17 - 22 (THOSE WITH ASTERISKS) FOR EACH SPOUSE THE SUBJECT REPORTS.

	OUTS	EX
16. Are you married?	_____	_____
*17. When did you get married?	_____	_____
*18. How old were you when you got married?	_____	_____
*19. If married, how long have you been married? (If widowed or divorced, how long were you married?)	_____	_____
*20. What kind of work did your husband/wife do?	_____	_____
*21. How far did your husband/wife go in school?	_____	_____
*22. If widowed, when did your husband/wife die? (If divorced, when did you divorce?)	_____	_____
*23. What did he/she die of?	_____	_____
24. Do you have any children?	_____	_____
25. How many children do you have?	_____	_____
26. How many sons do you have?	_____	_____
27. How many daughters do you have?	_____	_____
(NB: DON'T FORGET TO WRITE DOWN THE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

28. How old are your sons?

OUTS EX

29. How old are your daughters?

30. How old were you when your first child was born?

(If children are adopted, how old were you when you adopted your first child?)

31. You mention that you have _____ children. Where does your oldest child live?
(Repeat for each child)

How often are you in touch with your children?

(For each child, indicate whether he/she sees the child, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Person

type of contact

frequency

32.

33.

34.

35.

36.

Any other members of your family that you are in touch with? Sisters, brothers, cousins? For each person, named, indicate the amount of time as above.

Person	type of contact	frequency	OUTS	E
37.				
38.				
39.				
40.				
41.				
42. How many people live with you at home?				

Appendix C

Examples of Interview Responses

Scored as On and Off Topic

Examples of Interview Responses

Scored as On and Off Topic

Question 1: How much education did you get?

On topic: Number of years of education, level of education, title of the degree, number of years toward a degree.

Off topic: What they studied, when they studied, name of the institution where they studied.

Question 6: What job did you do?

On topic: Title of the job or brief description of it.

Off topic: Where the job was, details of what the job entailed, details about the company.

Question 8: Did you get promoted?

On topic: What the promotion was, any additional promotions in the same job.

Off-topic: Reasons why they were not promoted, lengthy explanations of how promotions were not possible.

Question 9: How much is money a concern for you?

On topic: "of course it's a concern", "a big one" "not at all"

Off topic: Any explanations of why it is or is not a concern, descriptions of sources of income.

Appendix D

Sample Transcripts Exemplifying Different Levels of OTV Extent Ratings

Sample Transcripts Exemplifying Different
Levels of OTV Extent Ratings

Question: **How much education did you get?**

Answers:

1) **Extent OTV rating = 0**

"I have grade 5."

2) **Extent OTV rating = 1**

"High school, I have a B.Com from _____, I got a degree in Chartered Accountancy. I'm a fellow charter to the secretaries. I guess that's about it."

3) **Extent OTV Rating = 4**

"I got a lot. I had a commercial start which was the fashion in those days in the town where I came from. And, then I got a science diploma at _____, which was a college...in preparation for university. We were accepted from the French college to _____ University, without an exam if we pass properly...you know, good marks. Nothing extraordinary, but we didn't have to write entry exams or anything, so it made it a lot easier. And then I went to _____, in the faculty of _____, from where I graduated from in 1953 (in case you're interested)."

4) **Extent OTV Rating = 9**

"Well, I had public school education and then I decided to take a _____ course. I went to _____ University. Part way through the course I learned that I could not take the _____ course unless I worked in a _____ office. So I spoke to Dean _____ and he said to me, "Well, you have no high school education, if you could show us in your first year that you could do college grade work we will consider you to enter the faculty of _____". So that's what I did. At the end of the first year, they accepted me into the faculty of _____ and the aim was a _____ degree, which they gave at that time. This was back in 1939. They don't give it any more. That was...they accepted me into the...in the evening. It took four years. I was in the evening division because again, I lived out of town and I had to stay in town for the nights that I had courses, go home on the midnight train, get up and come back to work...work all day. So that's what I did for four years, and in 1941 I graduated as an _____ which was...for that particular...My diploma was worded exactly the same as those who took the bachelors..."entitled

exactly the same as those who took the bachelors..."entitled to all the privileges" etc. But later on, the school decided to drop this degree. Because they dropped it, my company wouldn't recognize it. So although I had put in four years of work and got my degree, the company looked at it as a half course. Yes, that's only half a bachelors course, but it was a full course for an _____ degree. Anyway, I got that. Usually during the summer I used to have time to recuperate from the hours of studying and travelling. But in 1941...at that time we were in the war and the company that I worked for was starting to become involved in manufacturing tanks and they were taking people away from...senior people...Those who were left had to carry a double load. So O.K...I started, and by November, my doctor kept saying "look, you're going to crack if you keep this up". Sure enough I did. I got sick. My doctor said "Ok you have to stay home for two months". So I stayed home for two months and when I went back to the company (by this time they were doing purchasing for the military and were providing supplies to soldiers in areas of war) was looking for someone to take over in _____ and my boss recommended I be given the chance. So I took that job and designed the_____. I was there from 1941 to 1946."

Appendix E

Abbreviated version of the Social Support Questionnaire

Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason (1983)

INSTRUCTIONS:

The following questions ask about people in your environment who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts:

For the first part, list all the people you know, excluding yourself, whom you can count on for help or support in the manner described. Give the person's initials and their relationship to you. Do not list more than one person next to each of the letters beneath the question.

For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the overall support that you have in the area described.

If you have no support for a question, put a check mark next to the words "No one", but still rate your level of satisfaction.

Please answer all questions as best you can. All your responses will be kept confidential.

Example:

Whom do you know whom you trust with information that could get you in trouble?

No One ()

a) T.N. (brother)

d) R.B. (daughter)

g) _____

b) L.M. (friend)

e) P.S. (employer)

h) _____

c) R.S. (friend)

f) _____

i) _____

How Satisfied?

very
satisfied
6

fairly
satisfied
5

a little
satisfied
4

a little
dissatisfied
3

fairly
dissatisfied
2

very
dissatisfied
1

1. Whom can you really count on to listen to you when you need to talk?

No one ()

a)

d)

g)

b)

e)

h)

c)

f)

i)

How satisfied?

very
satisfied
6

fairly
satisfied
5

a little
satisfied
4

a little
dissatisfied
3

fairly
dissatisfied
2

very
dissatisfied
1

2. Whose lives do you feel that you are an important part of?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

3. Whom do you feel would help you if you were married and had just separated from your spouse?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

4. Whom could you really count on to help you out in a crisis situation even though they would have to go out of their way to do so?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

5. Whom can you talk with frankly, without having to watch what you say?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

Can you really count on to be dependable when you need help?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

7. Whom can you really count on to give useful suggestions that help you avoid making mistakes?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

8. Who will comfort you when you need it by holding you in their arms?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

9. Whom do you feel would help you if a good friend of yours had been in a car accident and was hospitalized in a serious condition?

No one () a) d) g)
b) e) h)
c) f) i)

How satisfied?

very fairly a little a little fairly very
satisfied satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied
6 5 4 3 2 1

10. Whom do you feel would help if a family member very close to you died?

No one ()

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

g)

h)

i)

How satisfied?

very
satisfied
6

fairly
satisfied
5

a little
satisfied
4

a little
dissatisfied
3

fairly
dissatisfied
2

very
dissatisfied
1

Appendix F

Questions Measuring Extent of and Satisfaction with Social Contacts

The previous questions asked about the people in your life who provide you with help or support. These questions will now ask about the people in your life with whom you share social activities.

For the first part, list all the people with whom you share social relations in the manner described. Give the person's initials and their relationship to you.

For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the overall social relations that you have in the area described.

If you have no one for a particular social activity, put a checkmark next to the words "No One", but still rate your level of satisfaction.

1) Who accompanies you when you do recreational activities outside the home? (e.g., playing cards, golfing, shopping, going out for coffee etc.)

no one ()	a)	d)	g)
	b)	e)	h)
	c)	f)	i)

How Satisfied?

very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
6	5	4	3	2	1

2) Who do you speak with on the phone regularly (at least once a week)?

no one ()	a)	d)	g)
	b)	e)	h)
	c)	f)	i)

How Satisfied?

very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
6	5	4	3	2	1

(next page)

3) With whom do you discuss common interests such as reading, movies gardening, television etc.?

no one ()	a)	d)	g)
	b)	e)	h)
	c)	f)	i)

How Satisfied?

very	fairly	a little	a little	fairly	very
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied	dissatisfied
6	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix G

Emotional Sensitivity and Emotional Control Scales
of the Social Skills Inventory

Riggio (1986)

Self Description Inventory

The following statements indicate an attitude or behaviour that may or may not be characteristic or descriptive of yourself. Read each statement carefully. Then, using the scale shown below, circle the response that most accurately describes yourself.

1= Not at all like me

2= A little like me

3= Like me

4= very much like me

5= Exactly like me

1. When people are speaking, I spend as much time watching their movements as I do listening to them.

1 2 3 4 5
2. People can always tell when I dislike them no matter how hard I try to hide my feelings.

1 2 3 4 5
3. Few people are as sensitive and understanding as I am.

1 2 3 4 5
4. At parties I can immediately tell when someone is interested in me.

1 2 3 4 5
5. It is often hard for me to keep a "straight face" when telling a joke or humorous story.

1 2 3 4 5
6. I am interested in knowing what makes people tick.

1 2 3 4 5
7. People can always tell when I am embarrassed by the expression on my face.

1 2 3 4 5

- 1= Not at all like me
- 2= A little like me
- 3= Like me
- 4= very much like me
- 5= Exactly like me

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. I can easily tell what a person's character is by watching his or her interactions with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am not very skilled in controlling my emotions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I always seem to know what peoples' true feelings are no matter how hard they try to conceal them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I can accurately tell what a person's character is upon first meeting him or her. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I am able to conceal my true feelings from just about anyone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. One of my greatest pleasures in life is being with other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I can keep a straight face even when friends try to make me laugh or smile. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I can instantly spot a "phony" the minute I meet him or her. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I dislike it when other people tell me their problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- 1= Not at all like me
- 2= A little like me
- 3= Like me
- 4= very much like me
- 5= Exactly like me

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. It is very hard for me to control my emotions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I sometimes cry at sad movies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I am easily able to make myself look happy one minute and sad the next. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I am very good at maintaining a calm exterior even if I am upset. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I am easily able to give a comforting hug or touch to someone who is distressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I usually adapt my ideas and behavior to the group I happen to be with at the time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. I can spend hours just watching other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. People can always "read" my feelings even when I am trying to hide them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I am often told that I am a sensitive, understanding person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. While I may be nervous on the inside, I can disguise it very well from others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- 1= Not at all like me
- 2= A little like me
- 3= Like me
- 4= very much like me
- 5= Exactly like me

27. I can make myself look as if I'm having a good time at a social function even if I'm not really enjoying myself at all.

1 2 3 4 5

28. When my friends are angry or upset, they seek me out to help calm them down.

1 2 3 4 5

29. I am rarely able to hide a strong emotion.

1 2 3 4 5

30. I can easily pretend to be mad even when I am really feeling happy.

1 2 3 4 5

Emotional Sensitivity and Emotional Control Scales
of the Social Skills Inventory

Scoring Information

- 1) Emotional Sensitivity Scale: Items 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28.
- 2) Emotional Control Scale: Items 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30.

Appendix H
Consent Form for Phase 2

CONSENT FORM (Phase 2)

I, _____, consent to participate in the study of how conversational behaviour is related to personality, social factors, feelings of well-being and measures of attention, which is being conducted by Drs. Pushkar and Arbuckle-Maag, of the Centre for Research in Human Development of Concordia University. The research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

A. With respect to this phase of the study itself, I understand that:

1. It will involve answering a number of questions and measures, some of which will be audiotaped so that responses may be reliably scored. I also understand that I will be asked to participate in conversations with others. I understand that in appreciation for my time and efforts, I will receive a payment of \$ 25.00.
2. I understand that I may be contacted again in the future and asked to participate in additional studies that focus more specifically on particular kinds of social and conversational behaviour. For example, I may be asked to participate in conversations with people of different ages. If I am asked to participate in these studies, I will be given a complete description of what would be involved at that time.

B. With respect to my participation in this stage of the study, I understand that:

1. Any information learned about me or anyone else through my participation in the study will be confidential. The results of the study will be available only to the investigators, who may use the results for scientific purposes such as publication in a scientific journal or presentation at a scientific meeting as long as I am not identified as a participant in the study.
2. I will receive a full explanation of the findings of the study when they become available.
3. Participation is completely voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time.
4. My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my eligibility to participate in any future studies.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix I

Instructions for the "Get Acquainted" Conversation

Instructions for the "Get Acquainted" Conversation

"As you know, we are working on a study on conversation. In this part of the session, we would like you to engage in a conversation with a stranger and to get to know each other a little the same way you would if you met at a party or any other social situation. Typically, the things that people talk and learn about in a social conversation like this are: your name, where you live, what you do, where you were born, things about your family, your hobbies, your travels, and about your health. We would like you and your partner to try and learn this kind of information about each other. We will be videotaping your conversation so that we can understand how people get acquainted with each other. You will be talking to your partner for 10 minutes. Please don't start until I leave the room. I will be back when the 10 minutes are up. Do you have any questions?"

Appendix J

Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory

Hecht (1978)

Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate your reactions to the conversation you just had. Please use the scale shown below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- 1 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Moderately Agree
 3 = Slightly Agree
 4 = Neutral
 5 = Slightly Disagree
 6 = Moderately Disagree
 7 = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) I would like to have another conversation like this one. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) The other person genuinely wanted to get to know me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) I was dissatisfied with the conversation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) I felt that during the conversation I was able to present myself as I wanted the other person to view me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5) The other person showed me that she understood what I said. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6) I was very satisfied with the conversation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7) The other person expressed a lot of interest in what I had to say. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(turn)

- 1 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Moderately Agree
 3 = Slightly Agree
 4 = Neutral
 5 = Slightly Disagree
 6 = Moderately Disagree
 7 = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8) I did not enjoy the conversation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9) I felt I could talk about anything with the other person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10) We each got to say what we wanted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11) I would like to see this person again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12) The conversation flowed smoothly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13) The other person changed the topic to what she wanted to talk about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14) The other person frequently said things which did not add very much to the conversation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15) We talked about something I was <u>not</u> interested in. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16) This person was a good communicator. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Appendix K

Reciprocity and Conflict Scales of the
Interpersonal Relationship Inventory

Tilden, Nelson & May (1990)

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

Most relationships with people we feel close to are both helpful and stressful. Below are statements that describe close personal relationships. Please read each statement and indicate which response best fits your situation. There are no right or wrong answers.

These first statements ask you to disagree or agree.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) Within my circle of friends,
I get as much as I give. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) I'm available to my friends
when they need to talk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3) When I have helpful information,
I try to pass it on to somebody who
could use it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4) I think I put more effort into my
friends than they put into me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5) I don't mind loaning money if a
person I care about needs it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6) I'm satisfied with the give and take
between me and people I care about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7) Some people in my life are too pushy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8) I'm happy with the balance of how
much I do for others and how much
they do for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9) When I need help, I get it from my
friends, and when they need help,
I give it back. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10) There is someone in my life who gets
mad if we have different opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1 = Strongly Disagree
 2 = Disagree
 3 = Neutral
 4 = Agree
 5 = Strongly Agree

11) There is someone I care about that I can't count on. 1 2 3 4 5

These next statements ask you how often something happens

1 = Never
 2 = Almost Never
 3 = Sometimes
 4 = Fairly Often
 5 = Very Often

12) I spend time doing things for others when I'd really rather not. 1 2 3 4 5

13) Some people I care about invade my privacy. 1 2 3 4 5

14) I let people I care about know that I appreciate them. 1 2 3 4 5

15) I am embarrassed by what someone I care about does. 1 2 3 4 5

16) Some people come to me for a boost in their spirits. 1 2 3 4 5

17) Someone I care about tends to take advantage of me. 1 2 3 4 5

18) Some people I care about are a burden to me. 1 2 3 4 5

19) I tell others when I think they're great. 1 2 3 4 5

20) I wish some people I care about were more sensitive to my needs. 1 2 3 4 5

21) People I care about make me do things I don't want to do. 1 2 3 4 5

1 = Never
 2 = Almost Never
 3 = Sometimes
 4 = Fairly Often
 5 = Very Often

22) Some people I care about come to me for advice.	1	2	3	4	5
23) There is tension between me and someone I care about.	1	2	3	4	5
24) I have trouble pleasing some people I care about.	1	2	3	4	5
25) Some people I feel close to expect too much of me.	1	2	3	4	5
26) I let others know I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5

Interpersonal Relationship Inventory

Scoring Information

- 1) Reciprocity Scale: Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 19, 22, 26.
- 2) Conflict Scale: Items 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25.