Personality Judgments in Adolescents' Families: The Perceiver, the Target, Their Relationship, and the Family

Susan J. T. Branje
University of Nijmegen
Marcel A. G. van Aken
Utrecht University
Cornelis F. M. van Lieshout
University of Nijmegen
Jolanda J. J. P. Mathijssen
University of Nijmegen

ABSTRACT The present study investigated whether personality judgments involve different processes in a family setting than in a nonfamily setting. We used the Social Relations Model to distinguish the effects of perceiver, target, perceiver-target relationship, and family on personality judgments. Family members of families with adolescents judged their own and the other members' Big Five factors. Judgments were found to depend on the relevance of personality factors within the family setting: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness were judged most consistently. Large relationship variance indicated that parents adjust

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Susan J. T. Branje, Department of Child and Adolescent Studies, Utrecht University, Post box 80140, 3508TC Urecht, The Netherlands, Tel.: +31-30-2534039, Fax: +31-30-2537731, E-mail: s.branje@fss.uu.nl.

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their judgments to the target family member; large perceiver variance indicated that adolescents judge family members' personalities rather similarly. However, a comparison of self- and other-judgments showed adolescents' judgments to be no more related to their self-perceptions than parents' judgments. We concluded that the relevance of personality factors may differ on specific tasks within a setting.

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Research has sought to explain how individuals judge the personalities of others and just which variables appear to influence these judgments (for an overview, see Kenny, 1994; Kenrick & Funder, 1988). Studies on self-other agreement and interjudge consensus show judges to agree largely on a target's personality, even when the judge and target are unacquainted (e.g., Albright, Kenny, & Malloy, 1988; Funder & Dobroth, 1987; John & Robins, 1993; Kenrick & Funder; Levesque & Kenny, 1993; Paulhus & Reynolds, 1995). Different judges may, nevertheless, systematically vary in their judgments. Both agreement and variation among judges may provide information on the process behind personality judgment (Funder, 1995; Hampson, 1997).

Personality judgments in "real life" often take place within meaningful settings involving close relationships. Although personality is generally thought to be stable and consistent across settings, personality traits may nevertheless express themselves more easily in some settings than in others (Kenrick & Funder, 1988). Because many studies of personality in adolescence rely on judgments by family members, the influence of the family setting on these judgments deserves special attention.

The family setting is characterized by a unique combination of features. While the members of a family are very familiar with each other, families consist of rather heterogeneous relationships. Some dyadic family relationships are voluntary (e.g., partner relationship) but most are biologically determined and less voluntary (e.g., parent-child and sibling relationships). Some family relationships are more egalitarian and symmetric (e.g., partner and sibling relationship), while others are more asymmetric (e.g., parent-child relationship). Family members also have distinct roles or positions

that imply specific interests and experiences (Davies & Harré, 1995). These characteristics of the family setting and interests and experiences may differentially affect people's judgments of personality within the family (cf. Kanfer & Tanaka, 1993).

The present study is concerned with judgments of personality within families with adolescent children. Study 1 focuses on how family members judge each other's personalities. Study 2 focuses on how self-judgments relate to judgments of other members of the family.

STUDY 1

Just as judges of personality in general, family members have been found not only to agree but also differ to some extent in their judgments of a target's personality (Mervielde & Pot, 1989). Personality judgments within the family may be a function of four different sources of influence. The source of influence most related to interjudge agreement is the *target effect*, which is the degree to which characteristics of the target influence personality judgments and thus the agreement in the judgments provided by different family members.

A *perceiver effect* is a general tendency for a family member to judge or perceive all other family members as similar. The perceiver effect indicates the extent to which characteristics of the perceiver influence his or her judgments and may reflect a particular response set. The perceiver effect can also reflect certain expectations or stereotypes with regard to what the members of a particular group (e.g., the family) should be like (Kenny, 1994). Several studies have indeed reported significant overlap in a perceiver's judgments of different target personalities (e.g., Dornbush, Hastorf, Richardson, Muzzy, & Vreeland, 1965; Mervielde & Pot, 1989).

A perceiver can also have a unique judgment of a target (Malloy & Kenny, 1986), which represents a *relationship effect*. In this case, one family member views a specific family member differently from other members and differently from how other family members see that specific member.

Finally, it is possible that all family members judge the personalities of all other family members as very similar. This indicates a group or *family effect*. These variations in judgments across families as a whole could be due to differences across families

in the personality characteristics that all members of a family have in common but also to differences in a "family myth" shared by the members (e.g., Fiese et al., 1999).

Using the Social Relations Model (SRM, Kenny & La Voie, 1984), the variance in the personality judgments provided by family members can be partitioned into variance due to the perceiver, the target, the specific relationship of the perceiver to the target, and the family. In the present study, we investigated the extent to which the variance in judgments of the Big Five personality factors provided by the members of families with adolescent children could be explained by these four sources of influence. The Big Five factor Extraversion is mainly related to one's general (social) activity level or the degree to which individuals are activated versus inhibited. Agreeableness concerns the interrelatedness of one's interests with those of others at the interpersonal domain. Conscientiousness refers to the attainment of achievement or obligation standards. Emotional Stability is related to the regulation of emotions and self-esteem, and Openness concerns the flexibility of information processing and is related to intellectual, artistic, emotional and creative excellence (Van Lieshout, 2000).

Most SRM studies are concentrated on determining just how much of the variance in personality judgments can indeed be accounted for by different sources. Kenny (1994) summarized several studies investigating the relative contributions of these sources of influence to personality judgments and concluded that 15% of the variance could be attributed to the target, 20% to the perceiver, and 20% to the relationship. The remaining 45% consisted of unexplained variance. In a study of consensus in groups of family members, friends, and coworkers, about 30% of the variance was due to the target (Malloy, Albright, Kenny, Agatstein, & Winquist, 1997). Variance due to the group was not assessed in these studies.

Varying levels of interjudge consensus have been reported for the Big Five personality factors. The greatest interjudge consensus is generally reported for Extraversion and Conscientiousness, while Emotional Stability generally has poor interjudge consensus (Borkenau & Liebler, 1992; Funder & Dobroth, 1987; John & Robins, 1993; Kenny, Albright, Malloy, & Kashy, 1994; Malloy et al., 1997). These differences in consensus have been related to either differences in the visibility of the personality factors (Funder,

1980, 1995; Funder & Dobroth) or the situational relevance of the different factors (Funder & Colvin, 1991). It is easier to accurately and consistently judge someone on a personality factor with the behaviors related to the factor clearly visible or generally relevant across settings as opposed to less visible or only relevant to particular settings. For example, the high consensus produced for judgments of Extraversion and Conscientiousness may be related to the visibility of these characteristics. Emotional Stability, in contrast, is an internal state and must be inferred. John and Robins reported low consensus for judgments of Agreeableness in a sample of college students. This low consensus was not explained by low visibility but presumably reflected differences in the extent to which the judges liked the target.

The Influence of the Family Setting on Judgments of Different Personality Factors

Evidence for effects of personality characteristics on relationships has been reported for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and incidentally for Openness (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998; Cutrona, Hessling, & Suhr, 1997; Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Lakey, Ross, Butler, & Bentler, 1996; McCrae, Stone, Fagan, & Costa, 1998; Russell, Booth, Reed, & Laughlin, 1997; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000). Individuals who are more extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable reported more perceived relational support or relationship satisfaction and are also perceived by others as more supportive. These relations between personality and relationship processes are studied mainly in marital relationships. Jensen-Campbell and Graziano reported Agreeableness and Conscientiousness to be related to adolescents' interpersonal conflicts with parents, siblings, and peers.

We expect the relevance of different personality factors in the family setting to be related to the contribution of the individual family members to family functioning. Families with adolescents can be described by the extent to which family relationships are warm and responsive (Holmbeck, Paikoff, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Bloom, 1985; Olson, 1986). Both Extraversion and Agreeableness deal with social interaction, but the social behavior associated with Extraversion differs from the social behavior associated with

Agreeableness (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Whereas Extraversion deals with social impact, Agreeableness deals with motives for maintaining positive relations with others. Agreeableness may be more relevant in the family setting than in settings with peers and larger groups. Agreeableness reflects whether someone is considerate of others or acts without consideration of the others' interests (Van Lieshout, 2000), and judgments of Agreeableness may reflect the quality of the interpersonal relationships in the family.

Another important aspect of family functioning is task performance and demandingness. Adolescents are thought to learn individual and social responsibility through their involvement in household tasks (Bowes, Flanagan, & Taylor, 2001), and parent-adolescent conflicts often center on day-to-day issues such as responsibilities and chores (Laursen, 1995). Conscientiousness is related to the performance of tasks and fulfillment of mutual obligations and is therefore critical for effective family functioning. It enhances the extent to which family members keep their promises, stick to agreements, and attend to their chores and reflects the efficiency of family functioning. In sum, family functioning can be mainly described in terms of the quality of the close relationships as reflected in Agreeableness and efficient family functioning or system maintenance as reflected in Conscientiousness.

We therefore expect that family members judge each other more consistently on those personality factors whose functions are particularly relevant within the family setting, such as Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and that the extent of the consistency differs from that for the nonfamily groups studied to date. Consistency may be the result of consensus—reflected in target variance—but also the result of the other sources of influence. Differences in judgments of family members on these factors will presumably be more related to differences in the individual family members, their relationships, or the family climate, and produce a higher level of explained variance than personality factors with a less relevant function.

We expect those factors that are generally more visible, such as Extraversion and Conscientiousness, to produce greater consensus (reflected in target variance) among the judges. However, as the relevance of these factors within the family setting may differ from their relevance in other settings, the degree of consensus may still differ. Conscientiousness may have an even more relevant function

within the family and thus produce even greater consensus within the family setting than in other settings. Although we consider Agreeableness to be important for close family relationships, family members need not necessarily agree in their judgments of this factor because relationship aspects might be important. Sources of influence other than the target, such as the perceiver and specific perceiver-target relationships, are hypothesized to be the most important influences to judgments of Agreeableness.

In light of the fact that families are long-lasting groups, all members of a family may judge the people within the family quite similarly. In some families, for example, the members may judge each other as highly sociable and enterprising. In other families, the members may judge each other as less sociable but hard-working and obedient. Shared meaning or the extent to which various judges interpret the same behaviors similarly, has been found to positively influence interjudge consensus (Chaplin & Panter, 1993; Kenny, 1994). Fiese et al. (1999) have also suggested that the members of a family coconstruct a family narrative and often reach at least partial consensus on it. Such a narrative may also concern personality, suggesting that the characteristics of the family can influence the way personality is judged within that family. We therefore expect to find a significant degree of variance in personality judgments at the family level as well, reflecting between-family differences.

Personality Judgments of Parents Versus Adolescents

As already mentioned, family members have access to extensive and often similar information, but at the same time their different positions and goals within the family may result in the use of different types of information to judge the personalities of family members and produce different judgments of target family members (McCrae et al., 1998).

In families, the parental generation can be distinguished from the adolescent generation, and differences in how these two generations judge the personalities of family members may stem from differences in their goals within the family. The parental generation is primarily concerned with the proper functioning of the family, their relationships with each of their children and their spouse, and the

well-being of individual family members (e.g., Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Nurmi, 1992). Parents therefore tend to focus on specific family members, not only on how they fulfil their family obligations and contribute to proper family functioning but also how they function as individuals.

The adolescent generation is also strongly involved in family relationships, but their involvement in these relationships may concern very different goals. During the process of separation-individuation, adolescents become increasingly concerned with their functioning in intimate relationships and groups outside the family (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Cooper, 1994; Lapsley, 1993). The need to develop an identity and autonomy may orient adolescents towards life outside the family. Adolescents are also thought to engage in object-relational ideation: they daydream about the self in interpersonal interactions and can thereby maintain a feeling of connectedness as they renegotiate relationships with their family members (Vartanian, 2000). They may be concerned with the family primarily insofar as this helps promote life outside the family and not be concerned with specific individuals or specific relationships within the family. Also, adolescents have a high self-awareness (Adams, Abraham, & Markstrom, 1987), and they tend to focus on themselves as the center of other people's attention. Adolescents (as well as younger children) are found to make references to themselves when describing the personality of others (Damon & Hart, 1988). Given this self-focus, adolescents' perceptions of family relationships may easily generalize into a "one-of-a-kind" or "generalized other." Just as adults, early adolescents are able to use "psychological comparisons" such as "he is more friendly than she" when describing others although they do not yet use this ability as often as adults do (Barenboim, 1981). Particularly in the family context, adolescents may not compare others when judging them.

For these reasons, we hypothesize that the different sources of variance in the SRM model contribute differently to the judgments of different personality factors made by parents versus adolescents. Parents are expected to make finer distinctions than adolescents because they are more likely to compare the personality characteristics of specific family members and consider specific relationships. Adolescents, in contrast, can be expected to base their personality judgments on less well-integrated information and to generalize

more across family members. We therefore expect differences in parents' judgments across families to be more specific to the target family members and their relationships to the targets, while differences in adolescents' judgments across families may be more related to the characteristics of the adolescents themselves. This should produce greater target or relationship variances for parents and greater perceiver variances for adolescents.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 288 Dutch two-parent families with two adolescent children. Participants were recruited for a larger study, the Family and Personality Research Project (Haselager & van Aken, 1999). A representative selection of 23 municipalities throughout the Netherlands provided lists of families with two adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15 years. After a mailing announcing the study, interviewers contacted families, inviting them to participate, until the required number of participants was attained. In the end, 50% of the families contacted agreed to participate. Some frequent reasons for not wanting to participate were that the family was not interested in the theme of the project, or a family member did not want to cooperate. Two parents and two adolescents from each family participated in the study. The two adolescents were distinguished as the older and the younger adolescent. The average ages for the fathers ($n = 288$) and mothers ($n = 288$) were 43.9 and 41.7 years (ranging from 34.0 to 56.1 and 34.0 to 51.2 respectively). The older adolescents (144 boys, 144 girls) were 14.5 years of age on average (ranging from 11.4 to 16.0); the younger adolescents (136 boys, 152 girls) were 12.4 years of age on average (ranging from 11.0 to 14.8).

Procedure

An interviewer visited the families at home and asked the mother, the father, and each of the two target adolescents to fill out some questionnaires. The presence of the interviewer encouraged complete responding and prevented collaboration among the family members as they completed the questionnaire. All of the participating family members evaluated themselves and all of the other participating family members on the Big Five personality factors. The two adolescents in the family were given a CD gift certificate after completion of the questionnaire.

Measures

A Dutch adaptation (Gerris et al., 1998) of 30 adjective Big Five personality markers selected from Goldberg (1992) was used to have family members judge their own personalities and the personalities of the other three participating family members. The participants rated the 30 adjectives along a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *very untrue of this person* to (4) *sometimes untrue, sometimes true of this person* to (7) *very true of this person*. Five personality characteristics were rated: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness. The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) for the different dimensions of personality ranged from .81 to .92 for fathers, from .76 to .93 for mothers, from .68 to .90 for older adolescents, and from .63 to .87 for younger adolescents.

Analyses

For each Big Five personality factor, each person's judgments of the other three family members' personality were analyzed using the SRM. The purpose of these analyses was to determine the extent to which the judgments of personality provided by family members reflect the characteristics of the perceiver, the target, the perceiver-target relationship, or the family. Different variances were simultaneously estimated using structural equation modeling (LISREL 8.3) (see Kashy & Kenny, 1990; Cook, 1994; Van Aken, Oud, Mathijssen, & Koot, 2001, for a complete description of the model and estimation procedure).

The four perceivers, four targets, 12 dyadic relationships, and the family constitute technically separate factors or latent variables within a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, cf. Cook, 1994). The factor loadings (i.e., paths from the latent variables to the observed variables) are all fixed at 1.0, and the factor variances then estimated. In a four-person family, there are 12 dyadic personality judgments (four persons each rating three other persons). Figure 1 shows how these 12 observed variables loaded on the different components of the SRM.[1]

1. The 12 dyadic judgments for each Big Five personality factor per family would constitute only a single indicator for each dyadic judgment. Another indicator of each judgment is needed to distinguish relationship variance from unexplained variance (see Cook, 1994). Each Big Five factor was therefore randomly split into two random subsets of items, and the two random subsets per factor were taken as separate indicators to produce 24 (instead of 12) observed variables for each Big Five factor. Figure 1 only displays how the parameters for a single indicator are specified. For indicator 2, the parameters are specified in the same way as for indicator 1.

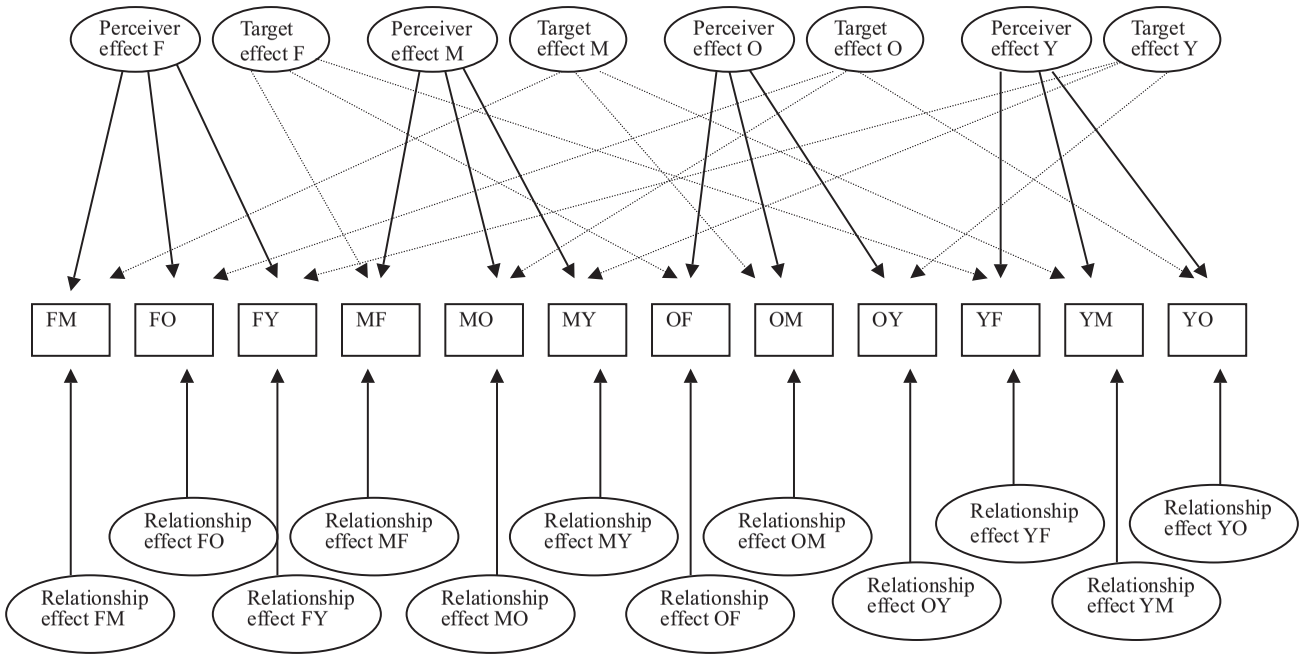

Figure 1
Parameters of the LISREL model.

Note. F = father, M = mother, O = older adolescent, Y = younger adolescent; FM = father's judgment of mother, FO = father's judgment of the older child, FY = father's judgment of the younger child, MF = mother's judgment of father, etc. Rectangles represent the observed measures; ellipses represent the latent SRM components. All of the observed variables loaded on the latent SRM component "family variance," which is not included in the figure.

Table 1
Goodness of Fit Indices for the SRM Analyses of the Big Five Personality Factors

Personality factor	*n*	Chi^2	*df*	RMSEA	NNFI
Extraversion	268	322.16	226	.04	.96
Agreeableness	271	294.71	227	.03	.98
Conscientiousness	273	345.65	227	.04	.96
Emotional Stability	272	338.47	229	.04	.94
Openness	263	376.24	226	.05	.93

RESULTS

Separate SRM analyses were performed for each Big Five factor to partition the variance in the personality judgments into perceiver variance, target variance, relationship variance, and family variance. We allowed for correlations among measurement errors for each indicator per rating family member (e.g., for each indicator of Extraversion, we allowed father's measurement errors for their judgment of mother, older adolescent, and younger adolescent to correlate). Individual and dyadic reciprocity correlations were also estimated (see Kashy & Kenny, 1990). Missing cases were deleted listwise within each analysis. Maximum likelihood estimation procedures were used.

The goodness-of-fit indices are presented in Table 1. These indices showed that the fit of these models was fairly acceptable. A NNFI value above .90 is acceptable, and above .95 is good. RMSEA values up to .05 represent a close fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1989; Kenny, 2001).

The results of the SRM analyses are presented in Table 2. For each of the 12 dyadic personality judgments, the percentage of the variance explained by the SRM components was calculated. For example, the total variance in fathers' judgments of mothers' Extraversion consists of: the perceiver variance among the fathers (see Table 2, .23); the target variance due to the mothers (.02); the father → mother relationship variance (.73); the family variance (.09); and any remaining unexplained variance (.64, not in Table 2). The relative perceiver

Table 2
SRM Variance Estimates for the Big Five Personality Factors

		Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness
Perceiver variance F		.23**	.16**	.15**	.34**	.17**
Perceiver variance M		.15**	.16**	.09*	.14**	.33**
Perceiver variance O		.26**	.39**	.19**	.32**	.30**
Perceiver variance Y		.33**	.29**	.21**	.28**	.33**
Target variance F		.24**	.07**	.40**	.17**	.22**
Target variance M		.02	.02	.16**	.12**	.12**
Target variance O		.17**	.10**	.52**	.06	.14**
Target variance Y		.33**	.14**	.66**	.17**	.12**
Relationship variance	FM	.73**	.13**	.91**	.28**	.47**
	FO	.60**	.14**	.79**	.32**	.35**
	FY	.45**	.12**	.67**	.08	.26**
	MF	.85**	.13**	.88**	.23**	.34**
	MO	.83**	.20**	1.05**	.65**	.55**
	MY	.57**	.11**	.92**	.45**	.41**
	OF	.17**	.20**	.51**	.06	.06
	OM	.22**	.06**	.40**	.25**	.20**
	OY	.26**	.34**	.46**	.13*	.06
	YF	.07	.06*	.28**	.02	.01
	YM	.07	.09**	.19**	.07	.06
	YO	.22**	.40**	.43**	.17**	.15
Family variance		.09**	.05**	.00	.09**	.06**

Note. F = father, M = mother, O = older adolescent, Y = younger adolescent; FM = father's personality judgment of mother, FO = father's personality judgment of the older child, FY = father's personality judgment of the younger child, MF = mother's personality judgment of father, etc.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

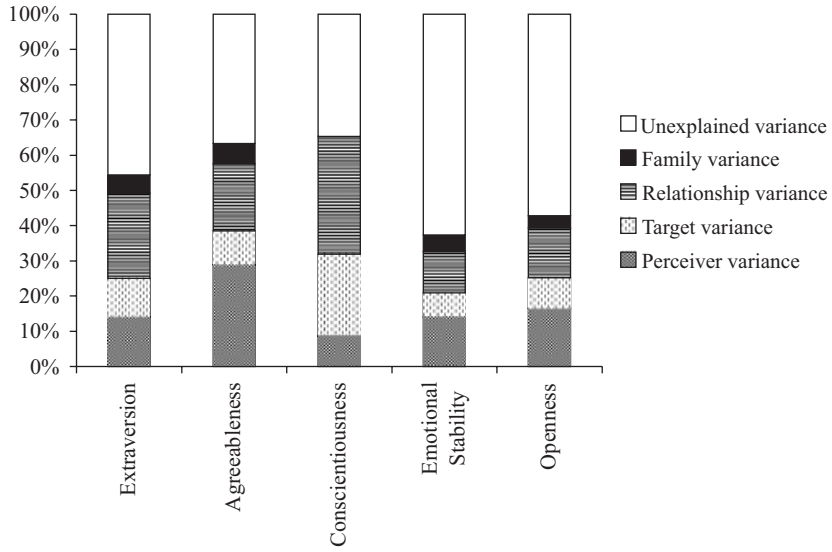

Figure 2
Percentage of variance in each of the Big Five personality factors explained by different components of SRM.

variance in fathers' judgments of mothers' Extraversion is computed by dividing the fathers' perceiver variance by the total variance in fathers' judgments of mothers' Extraversion (i.e., .23/1.71 = .13 = 13%). The contributions of the different SRM components to the variance in the dyadic personality judgments were next averaged for these 12 dyadic judgments. In Figure 2, the relative amounts of variance accounted for by the four SRM components are presented. The mean relative perceiver variance, target variance, relationship variance, family variance, and unexplained variance for each of the Big Five personality factors are presented separately.

Differences in Personality Judgments for Different Personality Factors

The percentage of the total variance explained was smallest for Emotional Stability (M across parents and adolescents = 38%), and largest for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (M = 65%). As expected, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are judged most

consistently within the family. However, different SRM components contributed to this consistency.

Perceiver variance, which indicates the extent to which between-family differences in personality judgments can be attributed to differences in how individual perceivers generally judge other family members, explained the most variance for Agreeableness ($M = 29\%$) and the least for Conscientiousness ($M = 9\%$). This means that individual family members tend to judge all other family members rather similarly and that they do this in particular for Agreeableness, which is clearly related to the quality of family interactions and relationships. Consistency in perceivers contributed most to consistency in judgments of Agreeableness.

In contrast, the variance in the judgments of Conscientiousness, which is related to the fulfillment of tasks, was found to be primarily explained by variance due to the target. Target variance explained equal amounts of variance for each personality factor (about 10%) with the exception of Conscientiousness, for which target variance explained a larger amount of the variance ($M = 24\%$). For Conscientiousness, the target variance explained more of the variance than the perceiver variance. For the other factors, the target variance contributed less to the variance than the perceiver variance. That is, between-family differences in judgments of Conscientiousness can be primarily attributed to differences in the personality that all family members perceive of a particular family member. Consistency in judgments of Conscientiousness appears to depend primarily on consistency in judgments of a specific target.

Relationship variance indicates the extent to which between-family differences in judgments of personality can be attributed to differences among specific dyadic relationships. Relationship variance was found to explain the least amount of variance for Emotional Stability ($M = 12\%$) and the largest amount of variance for Conscientiousness ($M = 33\%$). This means that of all the personality factors, judgments of Conscientiousness are most influenced by the characteristics of the specific relationship and the mutual obligations existing between the perceiver and the target. For Emotional Stability, this is least the case.

Family variance addresses the extent to which between-family differences in personality judgments can be attributed to different mean family judgments—that is, systematic differences between families as a whole. Family variance explained the least amount of

variance for all personality factors and ranged from 0% for Conscientiousness to 6% for Agreeableness, with an average of 4%. In other words, there are very few differences in the personality judgments provided by families as a whole.

Differences in Personality Judgments by Parents Versus Adolescents

The total explained variance was larger for parents' judgments (M across all personality factors = 60%) than for adolescents' judgments ($M = 46\%$) for each personality factor. The amount of the total variance accounted for by perceiver variance, relationship variance, and unexplained variance also differed for the judgments made by parents versus adolescents. Figure 3 presents the average absolute amounts of perceiver variance, relationship variance, and unexplained variance for the Six judgments involving the parents as judge and for the remaining Six judgments involving the adolescents

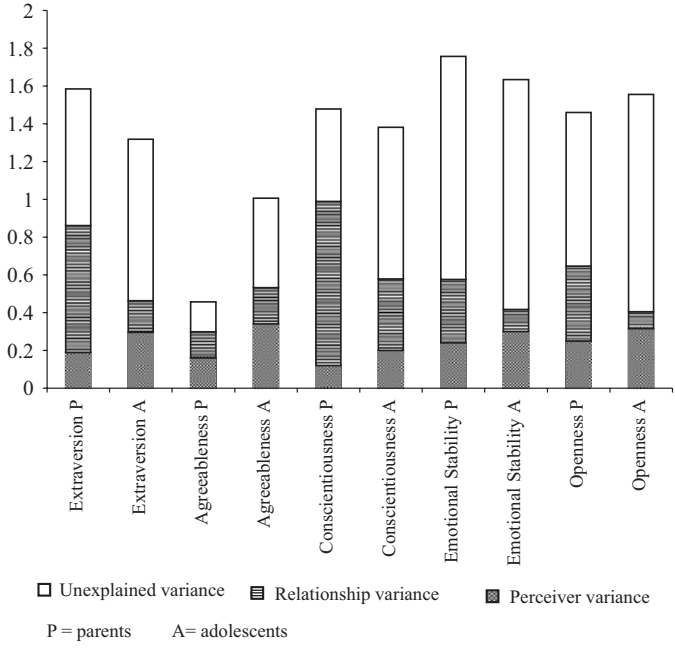

Figure 3
Perceiver, relationship, and unexplained variance in each of the Big Five personality factors for parents versus adolescents.

as judge. Thus, these mean absolute variances for each of the Big Five personality factors are presented separately for the parents versus the adolescents. Perceiver variance contributed to the variance in the judgments of all of the Big Five personality factors by both parents and adolescents. However, for each of the Big Five factors, perceiver variance explained more of the adolescents' judgments than of the parents' judgments. Some 19% of the variance in the adolescents' judgments was explained by perceiver variance (with a range of 11 to 30%), while 14% of the variance in the parents' judgments was explained (with a range of 6 to 27%). Between-family differences in personality judgments provided by adolescents relate mostly to differences in the way adolescents generally judge the other family members for all personality factors with the exception of Conscientiousness. Thus, when compared to parents, adolescents are more likely to judge other family members as very similar.

Target variance explained about the same amount of the total variance for both the parents and adolescents. The difference in the contributions of target variance for the parents versus adolescents was largest for Agreeableness (16% for parents, 6% for adolescents). This means that the parents' and adolescents' judgments were equally influenced by characteristics of the target, with the exception of Agreeableness, for which target characteristics more heavily influenced the parents' judgments than the adolescents' judgments.

Relationship variance explained a much larger amount of the variance in the parents' judgments than in the adolescents' judgments for all personality factors (M parents = 29%, range = 17% to 44%; M adolescents' = 12%, range = 5% to 21%). For Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness, the amount of variance for parents' judgments explained by the relationship effects was found to be the largest. This means that between-family differences in parents' judgments on these factors in particular are largely influenced by differences in the parents' specific relationships to the target family members. Family variance did not differ for parents versus adolescents.

DISCUSSION

In this study, two main hypotheses were evaluated. The first hypothesis was that the specific relevance of different personality factors within the family setting would influence the extent to which

different sources of variance influence the judgments with regard to these personality factors. The second hypothesis was that the contributions of these different sources of variance would differ for judgments made by parents versus adolescents—that is, according to generation. Support for both hypotheses was found.

Differences Between the Big Five Personality Factors

Within the family the perceiver, target, relationship, and family sources of variance were found to contribute differently, to some extent, to judgments of the Big Five personality factors than in other settings, such as peers groups in colleges. The largest amount of total variance explained was found for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, confirming that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are most relevant in the family setting.

For Agreeableness, the largest amount of variance could be attributed to the perceiver, and family variance was also largest for this factor. High perceiver variance shows that individual family members are likely to have a generalized perception of their family members' Agreeableness; when a person views a particular family member as agreeable, he or she also tends to view the other family members as agreeable. Through the influence of "relational schemas" (Baldwin, 1992), a family member's perception of the quality of one relationship may influence his or her perception of the quality of the other relationships in the family. This may explain the strong influence of perceiver characteristics on judgments of Agreeableness.

Family variance indicates that the family as a whole tends to judge its members' personalities similarly, particularly for Agreeableness. This may be related to the quality of the family climate. When the quality of the family climate is good, all of the members are likely to perceive each other as more agreeable; when the quality of the family climate is low, all of the members tend to perceive each other as less agreeable. It is, nevertheless, as yet unclear whether the influence of the family as a whole is due to similarities in the characteristics of the members as perceivers or as targets.

For Conscientiousness, the largest amount of variance could be attributed to the target and the specific relationship. Target variance shows different family members to agree most on how individual family members fulfill their obligations and tasks, probably because

all family members will be depending on and bothered by a family member who does not do what he or she is supposed to do and so disorganizes effective and efficient family functioning. Relationship variance indicates that family members' judgments of Conscientiousness not only depends strongly on family obligations but also on mutual obligations in specific dyadic relationships.

The judgments of Extraversion in the family setting do not differ very much from the judgments of Extraversion in other settings (Kenny, 1994). The relevance of Extraversion may be as large within the family setting as in other settings. For both parents and adolescents, Emotional Stability and Openness were found hard to judge in this study, indicated by the low level of explained variance. Probably Emotional Stability is very important for family functioning but may be noticed by family members through other personality factors, in particular, Agreeableness. A family member in a bad mood will probably not be very agreeable. Others can notice this low Agreeableness, but the underlying feelings are more difficult to observe. Perceiver variance explained most of the variance in Emotional Stability, which points to a tendency of judges to infer or guess about all others' Emotional Stability in a similar manner.

In general, the results of this study are in accordance with results of other studies (Kenny, 1994). However, the level of consensus (i.e., target variance) is relatively low in this study compared to the study of Malloy et al. (1997). This difference between studies in target variance is difficult to explain. It may be due to the inequivalence of the members in the family compared to peers in other settings. The different positions of family members towards each other may be related to different experiences with each other and therefore lead to differing judgments. For example, because different interactions are involved in the marital relationships and parent-child relationships, the children will judge their mother differently from the father. Although Malloy et al. also examined personality judgments in families, these family members were all adults.

Parents' Versus Adolescents' Judgments

The results confirmed the expectation that the components of the SRM contribute differently to the personality judgments of parents versus adolescents, which suggests different processes behind personality judgments of these two generations. For each of the

Big Five factors, the percentage of the total variance explained by the different components was larger for parents than for adolescents, which indicates that adolescents' personality judgments are less influenced by characteristics of the perceiver and target, their relationship, and their family than parents' judgments, in particular for Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness.

Our hypothesis regarding higher perceiver variances for adolescents and higher target or relationship variances for parents was confirmed as well. Whereas the perceiver variances were much larger for adolescents than for parents, relationship effects explained a larger amount of the variance in the parents' judgments than in the adolescents' judgments. Adolescents appear to judge family members in a more generalized, subjective manner and are likely to judge the members of their family rather similarly, while parents focus more on the individual characteristics of the family members and base their judgments on this information.

These differences between parents and adolescents may be due to different role orientations or positions within the family setting. During the life course, individuals enact a sequence of age-graded social roles (e.g., Helson, Mitchell, & Moane, 1984), which clearly influence their goals in specific settings and relationships. Adolescents are developing a sense of identity, autonomy, independence, and control on the one hand and intimate relationships with peers and close friends on the other. Although the family remains important during adolescence, the focus of their attention gradually shifts to outside the family. It is therefore possible that they only consider family members' personalities as far as they concern themselves. Given their self-focus, adolescents may also compare the aspects of personality of different family members less effectively than adults do (e.g., Barenboim, 1981; Damon & Hart, 1988). They may also base their judgments on less well-integrated information than parents and thus judge others more similarly. In contrast, parents are more or less responsible for family life and family functioning. Even though the specific parenting behaviors may change, the tasks as a parent and a marital partner continue. Parents may therefore base their personality judgments on specific family members and their relationships to these family members. Given the finding that in-group perceptions are more differentiated than out-group perceptions (Mullen & Hu, 1989), it seems that on an in-group–out-group continuum, parents see the family more as an in-

group and adolescents regard it more as an out-group, even though they are a member of this group.

These results reflect Markus' distinction between the independent self and the interdependent self (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994). While the independent self refers to the self as an autonomous, independent person, the interdependent self refers to the self as part of social relationships that largely influence the behavior of the self. These concepts are primarily used to distinguish cultures, but the individuals within a culture may vary with respect to an independent versus interdependent self as well. Such a distinction may also be reflected in descriptions of others. For the interdependent self, relationships are a goal in themselves and not a means for realizing individual goals. Parents, who are primarily interested in the functioning of the family and its relationships, must constantly keep the needs, desires, and goals of the different family members in mind and may therefore judge others from a more interdependent than independent perspective. Adolescents, in contrast, are primarily involved in the development and expression of their autonomy and independence.

The provision of interdependent versus independent judgments may relate to differences between parents and adolescents in age and developmental level but also to cohort differences in societal circumstances. Different generations have undergone different macrohistorical social developments (Elder, Modell, & Parke, 1994), and Western society is often characterized as becoming increasingly individualistic (e.g., Veenhoven, 1999). While parents may also be increasingly individualistic, they were nevertheless raised at a time when small-scale community and family structures were still important, and this may be reflected by a relational focus and systemic orientation in their judgments of others. In contrast, the more individualistic orientation of adolescents may be reflected in larger perceiver effects when compared to parents.

STUDY 2

In Study 1, we distinguished how a particular family member's judgment may generalize across the other members of the family (perceiver effects) and how all family members may provide very similar judgments for a particular family member (target effects). In

Study 2, we examined how these perceiver and target effects relate to the self-judgments of different family members.

The focus of this study is on self-other agreement and assumed similarity. Whereas self-other agreement refers to the question of whether people see themselves as others see them, assumed similarity refers to the tendency of people to assume that others think, feel, and behave as they do themselves and to thus judge others similarly to themselves. In the family setting, the degrees of self-other agreement and assumed similarity are mostly found to be larger than in settings where the individuals are less familiar with each other (e.g., Kenny & Kashy, 1994; Kenny, 1994).

Self-Other Agreement

SRM analyses of self-other agreement consider the relation between a person's self-judgments and the manner in which others tend to perceive that person as indicated by the SRM target effect. Based on four SRM studies in which the perceivers and targets were acquainted for a considerable time, Kenny (1994) concluded that the mean self-other correlation is about .67 for Extraversion, .42 for Agreeableness, .47 for Conscientiousness, .36 for Emotional Stability, and .50 for Culture (see Table 3). In other words, people tend to see themselves as others see them and particularly when Extraversion is considered.

The validity of both self-judgments and other-judgments has frequently been questioned. Some researchers have reported the judgments of family members or friends to predict certain behaviors better than self-judgments (John & Robins, 1993) and particularly when the judgments of a number of friends are averaged (Kolar, Funder, & Colvin, 1996). Other researchers have found self-judgments to be superior to other-judgments (Shrauger & Osberg, 1981; Osberg & Shrauger, 1990; Shrauger, Ram, Greninger, & Mariano, 1996), or to be more differentiated than other-judgments (Damon & Hart, 1988; Borkenau & Liebler, 1993; Hampson, 1993; Sande, Goethals, & Radloff, 1988). Self-judgments may be influenced by self-presentational biases, but the same biases may also influence the judgments provided by family members. Regardless of the relative accuracy of the two, self-judgments can be used to validate the judgments of others, and the relation between self- and

Table 3
Correlations Between Self-Judgments, Perceiver Effects, and Target Effects

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional Stability	Openness	Mean
Self-other agreement (self-judgment–target effect)						
P	.48	.22	.64	.64	.60	.52
A	.63	.24	.73	.49	.83	.58
mean	.58	.23	.68	.56	.71	.55
Kenny (1994)	.67	.42	.47	.36	.50	.48
Assumed similarity (self-judgment–perceiver effect)						
P	.61	.63	.53	.73	.67	.63
A	.53	.77	.36	.71	.76	.63
mean	.57	.70	.44	.72	.71	.63
Kenny (1994)	.23	.62	.19	.35	.32	.34

$p < .05$ for all correlations.
Note. P = parents, A = adolescents.

other-judgments can be used to understand the process of personality judgment more generally (Kenny, 1994).

Symbolic interactionism, or the "looking-glass self" hypothesis, states that the view people have of themselves is a reflection of how they think significant others view them (Funder, 1980; Kenny, 1994; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1999). Felson (1989) found that self-judgments are related to the way in which individuals think the "generalized other" (Mead, 1934) judges them but not to the way in which they think specific others judge them. Cook and Douglas (1998) reported similar findings in a study on the "looking-glass self" hypothesis for adolescents using the SRM. The perception of how a person is viewed by significant others may be subjective, but it is also related to how these others actually perceive him or her. Family members often provide feedback on each other's behavior, which provides a real looking glass. It then follows that self-perceptions are also related to how others actually perceive us. The adolescents' opinions on how others may judge them were not very accurate; that is, they were not related to how the others actually judged them (see also Shrauger & Schoeneman). In other words, other processes must underlie the "looking-glass self" than self-other agreement.

Assumed Similarity

Assumed similarity refers to the proposition that people tend to assume that others think, feel, and behave as they themselves do. People are thought to generally see others as they see themselves. In the present study, an SRM analysis of assumed similarity was undertaken by examining the correlations between the perceiver effects and self-judgments for individual family members. Funder, Kolar, and Blackman (1995) state that self-other agreement may reflect assumed similarity because acquainted people are more likely to be similar to each other and are therefore more likely to agree when they judge each other as themselves. In this study, however, assumed similarity was assessed independent of self-other agreement by estimating perceiver effects and target effects separately.

In studies of long-term-acquaintances, the self-perceiver correlations have been found to be .23 for Extraversion, .62 for Agreeableness, .19 for Conscientiousness, .35 for Emotional Stability, and .32 for Culture (Kenny, 1994; see Table 3).

The large degree of assumed similarity for Agreeableness can be explained by the reciprocity of prosocial and antisocial behaviors. Someone who is agreeable tends to bring about agreeableness in others even after a few moments of interaction and may therefore expect these others to be agreeable as well. This reciprocity may also be assumed: individuals who think that they are agreeable may also think that others are agreeable to them.

We expect the variance in self-judgments to be influenced by processes similar to the variance in the judgments by other family members in Study 1. If family members agree to a large extent in their judgments of a family member's personality characteristics (as reflected by target effects), the relevant personality characteristics must be quite visible and serve a relevant function within the family setting and also clearly influence the self-judgments of the individual in question. For those personality factors with large target variances in Study 1, Conscientiousness in particular, we thus expected relatively high self-other agreement; for those with small target variances, Emotional Stability in particular, we expected low self-other agreement.

In contrast, if the judgments of the targets were found to depend on the particular judges or perceivers in Study 1, it is more likely that the self-judgments examined here will also be influenced by the characteristics of the perceiver or, in this case, the self as perceiver. Large perceiver variances were found for Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Openness in Study 1, so we also expected the self-judgments for these personality factors to be primarily related to perceiver characteristics. In these cases, the self-other correlations were expected to be lower than the assumed similarity correlations. We also expected higher assumed similarity for adolescents than for parents, because the judgments provided by adolescents tend to be more influenced by perceiver effects than the judgments provided by parents.

METHOD

The method for Study 2 was similar to that for Study 1.

RESULTS

To investigate the relation between self-judgments and the judgments provided by other family members, the SRM variance

components for the family members' personality judgments from Study 1 were used. The family members' self-perceptions were added as separate factors to the accepted models from Study 1. To assess the degree of self-other agreement, we computed the correlations between the family members' self-judgments and the target effects for them. These correlations indicate the extent to which the self-judgments relate to how the other family members generally judge the target family member.

To assess the degree of assumed similarity, we computed the correlation between the family members' self-judgments and the perceiver effects for them. These correlations indicate the extent to which the self-judgments of a family member relate to the judgments that a family member generally provides of the other family members.

The self-other agreement and assumed similarity correlations were simultaneously estimated using LISREL 8.30. In Table 3, the correlations are presented between the family members' self-judgments and target effects (i.e., self-other agreement) and the family members' self-judgments and perceiver effects (i.e., assumed similarity).

The degree of self-other agreement and assumed similarity was found to be substantial, with the correlations between the self-judgments and target effects ranging from .22 to .83 (mean $r = .55$) and the correlations between the self-judgments and perceiver effects ranging from .36 to .77 (mean $r = .63$). That is, a self-judgment is related to the manner in which family members generally perceive the target family member and also to the manner in which the family member generally perceives the other people in the family. The mean correlations in the family setting were found to be higher than the correlations reported by Kenny (1994), with the exception of the correlations between the self-judgments and target effects for Extraversion and Agreeableness, which were found to be lower in the family setting than in other settings.

The amount of assumed similarity was particularly large for Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Openness. For Openness and, to a lesser extent, for Emotional Stability, the degree of self-other agreement was also large. For Agreeableness, however, the degree of self-other agreement was found to be very low. This shows the self-judgments of individual family members to be more related to just how agreeable they generally judge the other members of the family to be and less related to how agreeable the other family

members generally judge them to be. For Extraversion, the degrees of self-other agreement and assumed similarity were substantial and about equal in magnitude. For Conscientiousness, the degree of self-other agreement was somewhat larger than the degree of assumed similarity. The way in which family members perceive themselves is thus more related to the way in which other family members perceive them than the way in which they judge others with regard to Conscientiousness.

In general, the results showed no large differences between the parents' and adolescents' mean levels of self-other agreement or assumed similarity. With regard to specific personality factors, the differences between the parents and adolescents were more pronounced. The degree of assumed similarity was higher for parents with regard to Extraversion and Conscientiousness and higher for adolescents with regard to Agreeableness and Openness. The degree of self-other agreement was higher for parents with regard to Emotional Stability and higher for adolescents with regard to Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness.

DISCUSSION

Our hypothesis that family members' self-judgments will be largely influenced by the same characteristics that influence the judgments of others was supported to some extent. Both the other-judgments of Agreeableness in Study 1 and the self-judgments in Study 2 were largely influenced by, or related to, perceiver effects but not target effects, while the opposite was found for the other-judgments and the self-judgments of Conscientiousness. Family members tend to judge all family members, including themselves, very similarly with regard to Agreeableness: they tend to judge their family as agreeable as they judge themselves. Individual family members thus tend to view themselves in a similar manner as they view other family members with regard to this factor. The influence of target effects on Conscientiousness may be due to the differences in the degree to which—and efficiency with which—the different families members perform their tasks. All family members, including oneself, can notice and agree on the extent to which particular family members fulfill their obligations. Nevertheless, the degree of assumed similarity was lowest but still substantial for this factor.

For Emotional Stability and Openness, which were found to be difficult to judge within the family, the degrees of assumed similarity showed that family members tend to judge others not only in a similar manner but also similarly to themselves. If little information is available, people tend to base their judgments of others on their self-perception. Nevertheless, the degree of self-other agreement was also large for these personality factors, which indicates some basic consensus between one's self-judgments and the judgments provided by other family members with regard to these personality factors as well.

The degree of self-other agreement for Extraversion was lower in the family setting than in other settings, which suggests that Extraversion may be less visible and perhaps less relevant within the family setting than in other settings. Family members judge themselves as they judge others with regard to Extraversion but tend to agree more with their peers than with their own family members when it comes to their own Extraversion.

Although the results revealed different degrees of self-other agreement and assumed similarity for parents versus adolescents, the differences were not particularly clear and not in one direction. The hypothesis that adolescents may have more difficulties judging the personalities of others than parents, and therefore judge others more similarly to themselves, was not confirmed. On most personality factors, the adolescents revealed a higher degree of self-other agreement than the parents, and the parents' judgments revealed a greater degree of assumed similarity than self-other agreement, which suggests that, within the family, adolescents' behavior may be a better reflection of underlying personality than parents' behavior. In other words, adolescents tend to perceive themselves somewhat more in keeping with how they themselves are perceived by the family and less in keeping with how they perceive the other members of the family, while the opposite appears to be the case for parents.

CONCLUSION

The present study showed that personality judgments in a family setting involve partially different processes than personality judgments in a nonfamily setting. Variance sources influenced judgments of personality factors slightly differently in the family setting than in

other settings, which suggests that the relevance of particular personality factors may differ depending on the setting. The specific requirements of the family setting make the personality factors Agreeableness and (to a lesser extent) Conscientiousness even more relevant in the family than in other settings, and therefore lead to different SRM results than can be expected from other SRM studies. Judgments of Agreeableness reflect an individual's subjective generalized perceptions of interpersonal relationships within a family, while judgments of Conscientiousness discriminate family members in terms of their fulfillment of family tasks and obligations.

The present results also suggest that different processes may underlie the personality judgments of different generations. Parents focus more on specific targets and relationships and adjust their judgments more to the rated family member than adolescents, who appear to have a more generalized judgment and rate other family members more similarly than parents. Adolescents appear to have more difficulties than parents with the evaluation of the personalities of the others in the family, but their judgments are not more influenced by their self-perceptions than the judgments of their parents are. These results suggest that when adolescent family relationships are studied, the specific interest of the study should dictate the level of analysis and who is asked to judge.

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