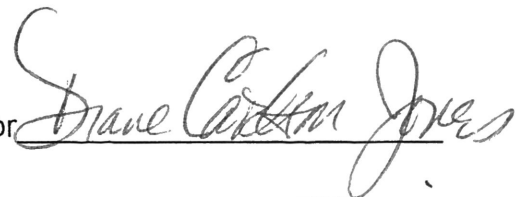


Divorce and Attachment: Effects on Late Adolescent Romantic Relationships

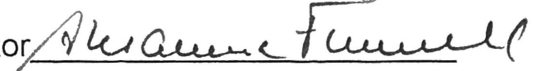
Aimee Schwartz  
University Undergraduate Fellow, 1995-1996  
Texas A&M University  
Department of Psychology

APPROVED

Fellows Advisor

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dr. Carlene Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the "Fellows Advisor" label.

Honors Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne Funnell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the "Honors Director" label.

**Divorce and Attachment: Effects on Late Adolescent Romantic Relationships.** Aimee Schwartz (Dr. Diane Carlson Jones), Psychology.

This study investigated the relationships among parental divorce, parental attachment relationships, family conflict, and late adolescents' romantic relationships. The sample included 125 subjects from divorced families (47 males; 78 females) and 141 subjects from intact families (80 males; 61 females). Ages range from 18 years to 22 years. Participants completed self-report measures assessing perceived parental attachment, romantic attachment, romantic relationship characteristics, social competence skills, and family conflict. Evidence was obtained that the quality of the parent-child attachment relationship strongly influences the quality of attachment in a romantic relationship for the adolescent rather than divorce or conflict.

## Introduction

### Attachment Theory

Recently much research has been conducted on the processes by which people develop, maintain, and dissolve affectional bonds within close relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Bowlby's (1979, 1980) landmark exploration of attachment, separation, and loss provides the foundation for the research. He hypothesizes that an innate attachment system evolved to maintain proximity between infants and their caretakers under conditions of danger or threat. According to Bowlby's (1969) theory, infants who remain in close contact with caregivers possess an attachment tendency which give them a higher survival rate and allows them the opportunity to reproduce and pass on these tendencies to future generations. The quality of this early relationship is strongly influenced by the caregiver's emotional availability and responsiveness to the child's needs (Bowlby, 1973).

Adding to Bowlby's (1973) theory, is a contribution made by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall (1978). Ainsworth, et al. (1978) have identified three primary attachment styles in young children. Secure attachment style is characterized by children who seek proximity and are readily comforted; whereas, *anxious/ambivalent* attachment style is characterized by children who protest and show inability to be comforted when distressed. *Avoidant* attachment style is characterized by children who avoid proximity or

interaction with the caretaker when distressed. Continuity in infant attachment patterns seems to be mediated by continuity in the quality of primary attachment relationships (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Through continuous interactions children develop internal “working models” consisting of expectations concerning whether the caretaker is someone who is caring and responsive, and also whether the self is worthy of care and attention (Bowlby, 1973). In other words, the working model is based on a child’s view of the dependability on others as well as the view of the worthiness of the self. These models are then used later in new relationships to draw on past expectations and behaviors. Thus, Bowlby (1973) argued that working models are an important mechanism to consider when looking at the role that early, primary relationships have on later adult relationships.

#### Attachment in Romantic Relationships

Several studies have shown that the attachment style established at infancy usually stabilizes and is carried on into adulthood (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990). As Bowlby (1973) said, “attachment behavior [characterizes] human beings from the cradle to the grave” (129). Indeed, Bowlby (1973) argued that the working model that is internalized from early childhood, and this model is then used later in life leading to expectations and beliefs about oneself and others that influence social competence and well-

being throughout life (Skolnick, 1986). Thus, recent research has begun to explore whether an individual's attachment history might influence his or her attachment style toward romantic partners during adulthood (Bartholomew, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990). Hazan and Shaver (1987) have used the attachment theory as a framework for understanding adult love relationships. They suggest not only that early relationships have an impact on adult romantic relationships but that romantic love itself is a process of becoming attached that shares important similarities with child-caregiver attachment. These similarities include a desire for closeness to the attachment figure, especially under stress, a sense of security from contact, and distresses protest when threatened with loss or separation (Hazan & Shaver 1987, Shaver & Hazan, 1988, Weiss, 1986). On the basis of descriptions of the behavioral and emotional characteristics of avoidantly, securely, and anxiously attached children, researchers have developed a measure of attachment style adapted to adult romantic relationships (Bartholomew, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

According to Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measures, people who possess a secure attachment style tend to develop mental models of themselves as being valued and worthy of others' concern, support, and affection, and of significant others as being accessible, reliable, trustworthy, and well-intentioned (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Their romantic relationships

are characterized by positive affect, high levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and interdependence (Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990). People who manifest an anxious/ambivalent style tend to internalize mental models of themselves being misunderstood, unconfident, and underappreciated, and of significant others as being undependable and either unwilling or unable to pledge themselves to committed, long-term relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Their relationships usually have a negative affect (Simpson, 1990), lower levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and interdependence (Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990). Finally those who have an avoidant style perceive themselves as being aloof, emotionally distant, and skeptical, and significant others as being unreliable or overly eager to make long-term commitments to relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Their romantic relationships tend to be of a negative affect (Simpson, 1990), and have low levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and interdependence (Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990). Previously, it has been suggested that the quality of marital relationship can have a great effect on the parent-child interaction and relationships (Belsky, 1981; Goldberg, 1990). Poorly functioning marriages can undermine parent-child relationships and often lead to an insecure attachment style. This style is internalized and later referred to during a romantic relationship. Those found to internalize insecure attachment styles

tend to get involved in dysfunctional romantic relationships (Rholes, Simpson & Blakely, 1995).

### Effects of Divorce

In addition to attachment styles, parental divorce has also been found to affect relationship functioning as well as other characteristics of adolescents. This is of great concern to our society because the divorce rate is at a very high point. Currently four out of every ten children have experienced parental divorce (Steinberg, 1993). Furthermore, researchers estimate that this number will rise to six out of every ten children for those born in 1990 (Steinberg, 1993). Growing up divorced has become an alternative developmental path for a substantial number of children in this country.

Research on divorce has found conflicting results concerning long-term and short-term effects as well as effects incurred according to the age when parental divorce occurred. Also controversial is the issue of which factor of divorce is the crucial element effecting the children. For instance, Hetherington et al., (1979) observed that children from broken or intact homes characterized by interparental conflict are at a greater risk than are children from broken or intact homes that are relatively harmonious. Grych and Fincham (1990) support the notion that there is an existence of a relation between marital conflict and children's adjustment; however, they add that the

effect of conflict depends on children's understanding of the conflict, contextual factors, and level of cognitive development. In addition, considerable evidence suggests that marital conflict has a greater effect on boys than on girls (Hess & Camara, 1979; Hetherington et al., 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). However, Emery (1982) suggests that girls are just as likely as boys to experience problems due to marital status. The exception is that girls do not act out their behaviors as boys do; they tend to become anxious, withdrawn, or perhaps well-behaved (Emery, 1982).

Some studies have shown that young people show signs of difficulty immediately after divorce such as problems in school, negative self evaluation, social adjustment, less optimism about the future, increased drug and alcohol use, and delinquent acts; however, within two years the majority of these people have adjusted to the change (Steinberg, 1993). On the other hand, some studies show that individuals who experience parental divorce during preadolescence continue to demonstrate adjustment difficulties even after two or three years; also, some individuals show adjustment problems as late adolescents that were not present earlier (Steinberg, 1993). Specifically, Kostoulas et al. (1991) found that many young women who had done well during their early adolescent years moved into late adolescence and became very frightened of failure, confronted issues of love, commitment, and marriage with anxiety and concern about betrayal, abandonment and not



being loved. It appears that the long term legacy of parental divorce includes both emotional pain and developmental disruption for many children (Kalter, 1987).

In addition, divorce has different effects on boys and girls. Boys have more problems with impulse control and involvement in delinquent acts while girls have more problems getting along with others and having inappropriate emotive behavior (Kostoulas et al., 1991). Both boys and girls are found to have difficulty establishing and maintaining mutually enhancing heterosexual relationships (Kalter, 1987). However, these difficulties differentiate between the sexes. For instance, boys who grow up without a father tend to face difficulties related to the development of a stable and valued internal sense of masculinity; instead, they are open to developing pronounced feminine identifications (Biller, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Whereas, females who experience parental divorce tend to be associated with precocious sexual activity, lower self-esteem, and more difficulty establishing, gratifying, lasting adult heterosexual relationships (Hetherington, 1972; Hetherington & Parke, 1979; Wallerstein, 1985). Also, girls from a divorced family usually grow up without a continuous sense of being valued and loved as a female, which seems an especially key element in the development of the conviction that one is indeed femininely lovable (Furstenberg et al., 1983).

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects parental divorce has on late adolescents' romantic and parental attachment relationships.

Adolescence is the age period selected for study because of the developmental tasks of identity, intimacy, and sexuality that emerge during this period (Steinberg, 1993). This is a challenging period when an individual tries to integrate the established need for intimacy with the emerging need for sexual contact in a way that does not engender an excessive degree of anxiety. Not only does an adolescent have to face changes with feelings toward intimacy and sexuality, but changes in relationships with family members, and those with peers are also occurring. Sullivan concludes that forming a solid foundation of security in early relationships will benefit the child when facing developmental transitions (Steinberg, 1993). This research examines the relationships among parental divorce and characteristics of romantic and parental attachment relationships. It is expected that

1. Adolescents whose parents are divorced will form less secure attachments with their parents than those whose parents are still married.
2. Adolescents who experience parental divorce will be less secure and more anxious/ambivalent in their romantic attachment relationship than adolescents who have not experienced parental divorce.
3. Adolescents who experienced parental divorce are more likely to experience low levels of trust and commitment in a romantic relationship.

4. Girls who experienced parental divorce will have more problems being involved in a secure romantic relationship than boys who have experienced parental divorce.
5. Girls who experienced parental divorce will be more likely to turn to close friends as a support system whom they can talk to and confide in than boys who have experienced divorce.
6. Parental attachment relationships will influence the romantic attachment relationship.

## Method

### Participants

Subjects were 266 undergraduates at Texas A&M University who participated for credit in their introductory psychology course. The sample included 47 men and 78 women whose parents were divorced and 80 men and 61 women whose parents were still married. The subjects ranged in age from 18 years to 22 years with a mean of 19 years. The racial composition of the sample was 3.18% African-American, 13.42% Hispanic, 2.83% Asian, and 78.09% White. The parents on average completed some college.

### Procedure

Prescreening. Men and women first volunteered to participate in a group screening session. Each subject completed a demographic questionnaire. Those who responded that their parents were divorced were contacted by telephone and invited to participate in a follow-up study. A comparison group was randomly selected from the remaining participants

whose parents were married, and they too were telephoned. All subjects received credit for participating in the screening whether they were invited to participate in the follow-up study or not.

Data Collection. The subjects who participated in the follow-up study were asked to fill out several questionnaires concerning patterns of current and past relationships (both romantic and friendships), and attachment experiences. The questionnaires were administered in a group setting and took approximately 2 hours to complete. After completing the questionnaire, subjects received a debriefing form and additional credit for their introductory psychology course.

### Measures

All subjects in the follow-up session completed demographic and relationship questionnaires. The following questionnaires were used.

*Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment* (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The Parental Attachment, which consisted of a maternal scale and a paternal scale, and the Peer Attachment scale assessed adolescent's satisfaction with their parents and friends through a 74-item questionnaire. Sample items included, "I feel my friends are good friends," "My parents respect my feelings," "I get upset a lot more than my parents know about." The response scale for each item was a 5-point scale (0=Almost Never or Never True; 4=Almost Always or Always). The reliabilities

(Cronbach's alpha) reported by the authors for the three scales were satisfactory (.89 for both maternal and paternal Parental Attachment; .83 for Peer Attachment).

*The Adult Attachment Scale* ( Romantic Attachment; Collins & Read, 1990) was an 18-item questionnaire that assessed to what degree a respondent agreed with a statement describing attachment styles in romantic relationships. Subjects rated their responses on a 5-point scale (0=I strongly disagree; 4=I strongly agree). Scores were summed for each of the subscales: Depend, Anxiety, and Close. Collins and Read (1989) reported the reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the three scales to be acceptable (.75 for Depend, .72 for Anxiety, and .69 for Close).

---

insert Table 1 about here

---

*Multidimensional Intimacy Scale* (MIS; Snell, Schicke & Arbeiter, 1989) This was a 60-item questionnaire that asked the participants to evaluate how well characteristics describe them during relationships (e.g., intimate, preoccupied, conscious, motivated, anxious, and assertive). Subjects rated themselves on a 5-point scale (0=Not at all characteristic of me to 4=Very characteristic of me). The authors reported an alpha coefficient of .85 for the total score.

We computed a factor analysis and found that many of the scales loaded on similar factors. See Table 1 for the factor loadings. Thus, we condensed the twelve scales into three subscales. Relationship Control was composed of the original scales Relationship Motivation, Relationship Consciousness, Internal Relationship Control, and Relationship Preoccupation. Relationship Fear consisted of the original scales Relationship Assertiveness, Relationship Anxiety, and Relationship Satisfaction, Fear of Relationship, Relationship Monitoring, External Relationship Control, and Relationship Depression. The original scale Relationship Esteem was kept as a separate factor.

*Trust Scale* (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) was a measure that required participants to respond to 26 statements concerning the trustworthiness of their partner on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Responses measured the level of trust in an interpersonal relationship based on predictability, dependability and faith in his/her partner. Alpha coefficients for all the scales reported by the authors was .70.

After conducting a factor analysis, we combined the Faith and Dependability scales into an overall Trust scale. Therefore, we had the two domains of Trust and Predictability (see Table 1).

*Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire* (ICQ; Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg & Reis, 1988) was a 40-item questionnaire that assessed five domains of interpersonal competence: (a) initiating relationships, (b) disclosing personal information, (c) asserting displeasure with others, (d) providing emotional support and advice, and (e) managing interpersonal conflict. The response scale for each item was a 5-point scale (0=I'm very poor at this I'd feel so uncomfortable and unable to handle this situation; 4=I'm very good at this, I'd feel very comfortable and could handle this situation very well). The authors reported that the internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) were satisfactory ranging from .77 to .87.

A factor analysis revealed that five domains loaded on two factors. Therefore, we combined the domains to make 2 scales. Cope, consisted of the original status Emotional Support, and Conflict Management. Openness included the original scales Initiation, Negative Assertion, and Disclosure.

*Conflict subscale* of the *Family Environment Scale* (Moos & Moos, 1986) was a 9-item measure that assessed the degree of conflict within a family. The response scale for each item was from 0 (True or Mostly True) to 1( False or Mostly False). A series of validation studies have demonstrated the reliability and validity of the measure.

*The Demographic Questionnaire* included personal information (e.g. sex, age, ethnic background), dating status (age of first date, dating

experience, number of serious dating relationships), and family information marital status of parents, educational background of parents, living arrangements).

## Results

Means and standard deviations for each scale are reported in Table 2. These are comparable to the original studies. The internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are also presented in Table 2 and were acceptable to excellent. Correlations examining the relations among each scale used in this study are presented in Table 3.

---

insert Table 1 and Table 2 about here

---

### Parent Attachment and Romantic Attachment

We conducted multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) to investigate the extent to which levels of perceived maternal attachment and paternal attachment varied with the subject's sex and parental marital status. There was a significant effect for both marital status,  $F(3, 254)=6.52, p<.001$ ; and sex,  $F(3, 254)=10.23, p<.0001$ . Follow-up tests were conducted using univariate ANOVAs. For the paternal attachment scale, significant effects were found for both parental marital status,  $F(1,256)=15.74, p<.0001$ ; and



sex,  $F(1, 256)=6.04$ ,  $p<.01$ . These results indicate that participants whose parents are married scored significantly higher on paternal attachment ( $M=2.79$ ) than participants whose parents are divorced ( $M=2.27$ ). Also, male participants reported a closer attachment to their father ( $M=2.74$ ) than female participants ( $M=2.37$ ) reported.

A multivariate analyses of variance was also calculated to examine if romantic attachment varied by sex and parental marital status. There was a significant multivariate effect for parental marital status,  $F(3, 260)=2.69$ ,  $p<.05$ . Consistent with expectations, the univariate ANOVAs resulted in a significant effect for Anxiety,  $F(1, 262)=6.10$ ,  $p<.01$ . This finding indicates that participants whose parents were divorced were more anxious in romantic relationships ( $M=1.66$ ) than participants whose parents were still married ( $M=1.42$ ).

### Romantic Relationship Characteristics

In order to examine romantic relationship characteristics, a  $2(\text{Sex}) \times 2(\text{Parental Marital Status})$  multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on the three MIS measures of Relationship Control, Relationship Fear, and Relationship Esteem. The results indicate a significant main effect for sex,  $F(3, 259)=5.97$ ,  $p<.001$ , which was confirmed in an univariate analysis for the scale Relationship Esteem,  $F(1,261)=6.35$ ,  $p<.01$ . Male participants indicated feeling more comfortable and confident with themselves in a

romantic relationship ( $M=14.30$ ) than what females indicated feeling ( $M=12.30$ ).

### Social Competence

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on the ICQ scales in order to examine subject's self-perceived skills in social relationships. A 2(Sex) x 2(Parental Marital Status) multivariate analysis was performed on the measures Cope and Openness, and resulted in a significant effect for sex,  $F(2, 257)=2.97, p>.05$ . The univariate analysis revealed a significant sex effect for the Openness scale,  $F(1, 258)=4.01, p<.05$ . Female participants reported finding it easier to communicate with others ( $M=2.54$ ) than males did ( $M=2.41$ ). A significant interaction effect also resulted from the MANOVA between the sex and parental marital status  $F(2, 257)=3.39, p<.04$ . This effect was confirmed on a univariate analysis for the scale Cope,  $F(1, 258)=5.03, p<.03$ .

Post hoc comparisons of means were made using  $t$  test ( $p<.05$ ). Unexpectedly, males from divorced families reported a greater ability to give and receive advice and emotional support ( $M=3.08$ ). The level was not significantly different compared to females from married families ( $M=3.01$ ), and was marginally significant compared to females from divorced families ( $M=2.90, p<.06$ ), and males from married families ( $M=2.89, p<.07$ ).

We conducted a 2x2 ANOVA to investigate the extent to which Peer Attachment varied with the subject's sex and parental marital status. The results show a significant main effect for sex for the scale Peer Attachment,  $F(1,259)=18.24$ ,  $p<.0001$ . Female participants indicated a closer attachment to their friends ( $M=3.34$ ) than male participants ( $M=3.05$ ) indicated.

Influence of Marital Status, Conflict in the Family, and Parent Attachment on Romantic Attachment

Simultaneous multiple regression models were analyzed for each of the Romantic Attachment scales. Depend, Anxiety, and Close romantic attachment variables were the dependent measures in three separate multiple regression equations that explored the relationship between gender, marital status, conflict in the family, parental attachment, and an interaction between marital status and paternal attachment and characteristics of romantic attachments (see Table 4). The interaction variables were centered prior to entry. Variance inflation indices were all around 1.0 indicating that multicollinearity was not a statistical problem.

---

insert Table 4 about here

---

These analyses indicated that the three models were significant: Depend,  $F(5, 266)=9.33$ ,  $p<.0001$ ,  $MSE=.57$ ,  $R^2=15\%$ ; Anxiety,  $F(5, 266)=6.52$ ,

$p < .0001$ ,  $MSE = .60$ ,  $R^2 = 11\%$ ; and Close,  $F(5, 266) = 4.409$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $MSE = .48$ ,  $R^2 = 8\%$ . The significant independent predictors for the scales Depend, Anxiety, and Close were mother attachment,  $F(1, 266) = 2.86$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F(1, 266) = -2.98$ ,  $p < .01$ ; and  $F(1, 266) = 2.11$ ,  $p < .05$ , and father attachment,  $F(1, 266) = 3.90$ ,  $p < .0001$ ;  $F(1, 266) = -3.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and  $F(1, 266) = 2.37$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively. These results indicate that both maternal and paternal attachment are significantly related to romantic attachment rather than marital status or conflict in the family.

### Discussion

This study examined the effects of parental marital status on adolescents' attachment relationships with parents and in romantic relationships. We integrated information on parental attachment, romantic relationships, and parental divorce. The results partially confirm the predictions. Significant results were found for sex, marital status, and sex by marital status; however, we tended to find more sex differences than the expected effects for parental marital status. Effects concerning the quality of the parent-child attachment relationship revealed to be significant.

Contradictory to past research, parent attachment resulted in having a greater influence on romantic relationships than conflict in the family or marital status.

### Sex

Several sex effects were found, most of which are consistent with

previous research. In the domain of parent attachment, we found that males compared to females tend to have a stronger attachment with their fathers. This is presumably a result of the emphasis on the relationship with the same-sex parent during development stages (Biller, 1981; Gardner, 1976; Huston, 1983).

When considering romantic relationships, males report significantly greater relationship esteem. Regardless of their parental marital status, males tend to be more comfortable and have more confidence in themselves when involved in a romantic relationship. Esteem in romantic relationships stems from an overall self-esteem. Several studies have shown that girls have lower self-esteem (Rosenberg & Simmons, 1972; Simmons, Brown, Bush & Blyth, 1978). This lack of self-esteem is evident in conversations between males and females. Crosby and Nyquist (1977) explain that women use tag questions, which are less assertive declaratory statements, when talking with significant others as if they are asking the significant other's permission for their feelings, likes, or dislikes.

Also congruent with past literature, is females' indication of feeling closer to their friends than males feel. This supports the research which suggests that girls develop more intimate friendships compared to boys (Camarena, Sarigiani & Petersen, 1990; Crockett, Losoff, & Petersen, 1984). Friendships also provide positive opportunities for self-disclosure, intimacy,

and companionship (Rubin, 1980). In support of Rubin (1980), we found that females reported higher levels of Openness (ICQ). This indicates they are more comfortable sharing personal feelings and thoughts with friends (Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg & Reis, 1988; Camarena et al., 1990), find it easier to talk with new acquaintances, and are more likely to confront a companion with a problem (Buhrmester et al., 1988).

### Marital Status

Consistent with the hypothesized effects of divorce expectations, the results illustrate that students whose parents were divorced indicate feeling more anxious in romantic relationships compared to students whose parents were still married. Students from divorced families are more fearful of being abandoned and not being loved.

In addition to this, both males and females from intact homes show greater attachment with their father than participants of broken homes indicate feeling. This could easily be explained by the absence of the father after a divorce; often, he is no longer available, thus the child is unable to form an attachment with him.

The analyses also resulted in a significant interaction between marital status and gender for the social competence scale of Cope. Males who experienced parental divorce self-report the greatest ability to give and receive advice and emotional support when comparing all four groups.

This finding is unexpected because studies have reported that individuals who have secure attachments in adolescence are more competent in soliciting support than those who are more anxious in relationships (Erikson, Sroufe & Egeland, 1985; Rice, 1990). Males may be reaching out in search for support in cases of father absence and lower levels of paternal attachment.

#### Influence of Parental Attachment on Romantic Attachment Relationships

The multiple regression analyses examined the independent contributors of divorce, family conflict, and parent attachments to the prediction of romantic attachment characteristics. Consistent with our hypothesis, these analyses revealed that quality of the parent-child attachment relationship strongly influences the quality of attachment in a romantic relationship rather than divorce or conflict per se. Perceived attachment with both the mother and father highly influence the adolescent's ability to depend and rely on a partner during a love relationship. However, only the quality of the relationship with the father indicates any effect on how comfortable adolescent's feel when they become close to others. Finally, when adolescents feel less secure in their attachment with both their mother and father, the more fearful of abandonment and anxious in the relationship they become. According to our results, it truly is parent attachment that influences adolescent romantic attachment relationships because conflict of the family and marital status were held constant throughout the analyses.

When considered as a whole, these findings suggest for adolescents the quality of the relationship with parents is a more important factor than marital status of the parents in predicting attachment behaviors in future romantic relationships. Therefore, this study supports the literature concluding that the nature of an individual's early attachment relationship with parents is often an important determinant of the capacity to form satisfying intimate relationships in late adolescence and even on into adulthood. More research should be done before definite conclusions can be drawn from this study due to the use of self-report assessment. A promising area for future research will be developing techniques to examine in detail the implications that father absence itself has on late adolescent romantic attachment relationships. Pursuing this domain for further investigation may lead to a better understanding of attachments with both parents and significant others.



## REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M., Blehar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ainsworth, M. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. American Psychologist, *44*, 709-716.
- Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, *16* (5), 427-454.
- Bartholomew, K. (1990). Avoidance of intimacy: an attachment perspective. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, *7*, 147-178.
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: a test of a four-category model. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *61* (2), 226-244.
- Belsky, J. (1981). Early human experience: a family perspective. Developmental Psychology, *17*, 3-23.
- Biller, H. B. (1981). The father and sex role development. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), The role of father in child development (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Biller, H. B. (1981). Father absence, divorce, and personality development. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), The role of father in child development (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation: anxiety and anger. New York: Basic books.

Bowlby, J. (1979). The making and breaking of affectional bonds. London: Tavistock.

Bowlby, J. (1980). Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss, sadness and depression. New York: Basic Books.

Buhrmester, D., Furman, W., Wittenberg, M. T., & Reis, G. T. (1988). Five domains of interpersonal competence in peer relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *55* (6), 991-1008.

Camarena, P. M., Sarigiani, P. A., & Petersen, A. C. (1990). Gender -specific pathways to intimacy in early adolescence. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, *19*, 19-32.

Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990). Adult attachment, working models, and relationship quality in dating couples. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *58* (4), 644-663.

Crockett, L., Losoff, M., & Petersen, A. C. (1984). Perceptions of the peer group and friendship in early adolescence. Journal of Early Adolescence, *4*, 155-181.

Crosby, F., & Nyquist, L. (1977). The female register: An empirical test of Lakoff's hypothesis. Language in Society, *6*, 313-322.

Emery, R. E. (1982). Interparental conflict and the children of discord and divorce. Psychological Bulletin, *92* (2), 310-330.

Erikson, J. F., Sroufe, L. A., and Egeland, B. (1985). The relationship between quality of attachment and behavior problems in preschool in a high-risk sample. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, *50*, 147-193.

Furstenberg, F. F., Jr., Peterson, J. L., & Nord, C. W. (1983). The life course of children of divorce. American Sociological Review, *48*, 656-668.

Gardner, R. (1976). Psychotherapy with children of divorce. Aronson, New York.

Goldberg, W. A. (1990). Marital quality, parental personality, and spousal agreement about perceptions and expectations for children. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 36, 531-556.

Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (1990). Marital conflict and children's adjustment: A cognitive-contextual framework. Psychological Bulletin, 108 (2), 267-290.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52 (3), 511-524.

Hess, R. D., & Camara, K. A. (1979). Post-divorce family relationships as mediating factors in the consequences of divorce for children. Journal of Social Issues, 35, 79-96.

Hetherington, E. M. (1972). Effects of father absence on personality development in adolescent daughters. Developmental Psychology, 7, 313-326.

Hetherington, E. M. (1979). A child's perspective. American Psychologist, 34, 851-858.

Hetherington, E. M., Cox, M., & Cox, R. (1978). The aftermath of divorce. In J. H. Stevens & M. Mathews (Eds.), Mother/child father/child relationships. (pp. 417-428). Washington, D. C. : National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Hetherington, E. M., & Parke, R. D. (1979). Child psychology: A contemporary viewpoint (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Huston, A. C.(1983). Sex-Typing. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), Handbook of child psychology, 4. New York: Wiley.

Kalter, N. (1987). Long-term effects of divorce on children: A developmental vulnerability model. American Journal Orthopsychiatry, 57 (4), 587-600.

Kostoulas, K., Berkovitz, I. H., Irving H., Arima, H. (1991). School counseling groups and children of divorce: Loosening attachment to mother in adolescent girls. Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy, 1 (3), 177-192.

Moos, R. H., & Moos, B. S. (1986). Family environment scale manual (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Rempel, J. K., Holmes, J. G., & Zanna, M. P. (1985). Trust in close relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 49 (1), 95-112.

Rholes, W. S., Simpson, J. A., & Blakely, B. (1995). Adult attachment styles and mothers' relationships with their young children. Personal Relationships, 2, 35-54.

Rice, K. (1990). Attachment in adolescence: A narrative and meta-analytic review. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 19, 511-538.

Rosenberg, M., & Simmons, R. (1972). Black and white self-esteem: The urban school child. Washington, D. C.: American Sociological Association.

Rubin, Z. (1980). Children's friendships. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Shaver, P. R., & Hazan, C. (1988). A biased overview of the study of love. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 5, 473-501.

Simmons, R., Brown, L., Bush, D., and Blyth, D. (1978). Self-esteem and achievement of black and white adolescents. Social Problems, 26, 86-96.

Simpson, J. A. (1990). Influence of attachment styles on romantic relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59 (5), 971-980.

Skolnick, A. (1986). Early attachment and personal relationships across the life course. Life Span Development and Behavior, 7, 173-206.

Snell, W. E., Jr., Schicke, M., & Arbeiter, T. (1989). Development and validation of the relationship orientation scale. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southeast Missouri State University.

Steinberg, L. (1993). Adolescence, (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1980). Surviving the break-up: How children and parents cope with divorce. New York: Basic Books.

Wallerstein, J. S. (1985). Children of divorce: Preliminary report of a ten-year follow-up of older children and adolescents. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 24, 545-553.

Weiss, R. S. (1986). Continuities and transformations in social-relationships from childhood to adulthood. In W. Hartup & Z. Rubin (Eds.), Relationships and development (pp. 95-110). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Table 1  
Factor Loadings for Study Variables

		Factor1	Factor2
<u>MIS</u>	Relationship Assertiveness	<u>-0.66</u>	0.42
	Relationship Anxiety	<u>0.84</u>	-0.03
	Relationship Motivation	-0.04	<u>0.85</u>
	Relationship Consciousness	-0.13	<u>0.84</u>
	Internal Relationship Control	-0.18	<u>0.68</u>
	Relationship Preoccupation	0.26	<u>0.82</u>
	Relationship Esteem	0.63	0.58
	Relationship Satisfaction	<u>-0.75</u>	0.26
	Fear of Relationship	<u>0.74</u>	-0.26
	Relationship Monitoring	<u>0.54</u>	0.38
	External Relationship Control	<u>0.42</u>	0.28
	Relationship Depression	<u>0.77</u>	0.17
<u>ICQ</u>	Initiation	<u>0.83</u>	0.08
	Negative Assertion	<u>0.81</u>	0.06
	Disclosure	<u>0.72</u>	0.34
	Emotional Support	0.28	<u>0.77</u>
	Conflict Management	0.01	<u>0.89</u>
<u>Relationship Trust</u>			
	Faith	<u>0.65</u>	0.42
	Depend	<u>0.63</u>	0.48
	Predictability	0.26	0.61

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables

Study Variable	Married		Divorced	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Parental Attachment</u>				
Maternal (.96)	3.02	3.01	3.11	3.05
	.68	.83	.54	.96
Paternal (.96)	2.91	2.63	2.45	2.16
	.73	.86	.97	1.13
<u>Romantic Attachment</u>				
Depend (.80)	2.43	2.49	2.40	2.15
	.75	.81	.75	.86
Anxiety (.73)	1.39	1.44	1.69	1.64
	.72	.78	.80	.87
Close (.66)	2.78	2.64	2.69	2.61
	.66	.72	.69	.75
<u>MIS</u>				
Relationship Control (.91)	11.67	11.26	11.57	10.99
	3.35	3.74	2.85	3.61
Relationship Fear (.92)	7.15	6.93	8.16	7.39
	3.14	3.13	2.94	3.24
Relationship Esteem (.90)	14.42	13.15	13.38	11.64
	4.19	5.18	4.37	5.16

Table 2 continued.

Study Variable	Married		Divorced	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Relationship Trust</u>				
Trust (.86)	3.99	4.20	3.92	4.09
	.80	.88	.86	.86
Predictability (.78)	3.77	4.02	3.66	3.92
	.84	1.03	.86	.97
<u>Interpersonal Competence</u>				
Openness (.91)	2.47	2.59	2.31	2.49
	.53	.66	.69	.55
Cope (.87)	2.89	3.01	3.08	2.90
	.53	.50	.53	.51
<u>Peer Attachment (.94)</u>	3.07	3.38	3.02	3.31
	.61	.47	.63	.52

Note. Values on the first line of each scale indicate the mean; values on the second line indicate the standard deviation.

Cronbach's alpha reliability scores are indicated in the parenthesis.



Table 3

Correlations Between Study Variables

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Maternal Attachment													
2. Paternal Attachment	0.28***												
3. Family Conflict	0.40***	0.31***											
4. Depend	0.28***	0.33***	0.22***										
5. Anxiety	-0.25***	-0.28***	-0.15**	-0.25***									
6. Close	0.20***	0.21***	0.17**	0.52***	-0.18**								
7. Relationship Control	-0.05	-0.07	-0.02	0.09	0.35***	0.20***							
8. Relationship Fear	-0.17**	-0.23***	-0.10	-0.40***	0.42***	-0.51***	-0.02						
9. Relationship Esteem	0.09	0.12*	0.11	0.29***	-0.12*	0.44***	0.49***	-0.54***					
10. Trust	0.18**	0.14*	0.10	0.31***	-0.30***	0.31***	0.13*	-0.55***	0.32***				
11. Predictability	0.18**	0.17**	0.09	0.29***	-0.34***	0.30***	-0.02	-0.43***	0.19**	0.66***			
12. Openness	0.12*	0.16**	0.05	0.35***	-0.17**	0.45***	0.26***	-0.55***	0.57***	0.38***	0.29***		
13. Cope	0.20***	0.15**	0.15**	0.16**	-0.06	0.18**	0.10	-0.18**	0.25***	0.28***	0.21***	0.37***	
14. Peer Attachment	0.26***	0.16**	0.13*	0.28***	-0.17**	0.20***	-0.06	-0.24***	0.07	0.13*	0.17**	0.18**	0.31***

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 4

Multiple Regressions of Gender, Marital Status, Conflict in Family, and Parent Attachment on Romantic Relationship Characteristics

Predictors	Depend	Anxiety	Close
	B	B	B
Sex	0.02	-0.04	-0.03
Marital Status	0.05	-0.11	-0.02
Conflict	0.06	-0.01	0.05
Maternal Attachment	0.16*	-0.21**	0.10
Paternal Attachment	0.26***	-0.16*	0.20**
Marital Status*Paternal Attachment	-0.01	0.02	0.10
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.11	0.07

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .  
B = standardized regression coefficient.