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The Effects of Parental Divorce on Young Adults Attitudes towards Divorce

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I would like to thank my parents for supporting me throughout my college experience. I would like to thank my research partner Amber Johnson and faculty supervisor Dr. Paul Etcheverry for a fun year of research.

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The Effects of Parental Divorce on Young Adults Attitudes towards Divorce

Cierra Branch-Harris

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Southern Illinois University of Carbondale

Abstract

Participants will be students taking an Introduction Psychology course at a large Midwestern University ages 18-25 years. Participants will be evaluated on their attitudes towards marriage based on their parents' marital status. The measures being used in this study are the Attitudes toward Marriage Scale (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986), Attitudes towards Divorce Scale (Kinnard & Gerrard 1986), Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (Seid & Fincham 1992), Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge 2007), Commitment Scale (Rusbult, Kusashiro, Kubabcka & Finkel 2009), and Adult Romantic Attachment Questionnaire (Frayler, Waller & Brennan 2000) . We hypothesize that parental divorce will have a negative effect on young adults' attitudes towards marriage, parents who remain married will have positive effects on young adults' attitudes towards marriage, parents who have high levels of conflict produce negative attitudes among young adults and parents who have low levels of conflict will exhibit positive attitudes. We also hypothesize that women will have more favorable attitudes towards marriage but more favorable attitudes toward divorce than men and that divorce will have a negative effect on adult romantic attachment.

The Effects of Parental Divorce on Young Adults Attitudes towards Divorce

In America there is a stereotypical dream that adults are supposed to find their perfect soul mate, get married, have the white house with the picket fence and start a family. Too often than not, this dream is not a reality for most people living in the United States and other countries. Couples often rush into a marriage not knowing the struggles associated with the union. After marriage, couples realize that they are not equipped with the tools they need to have a successful marriage. The divorce rates are increasing and a parent being divorced is the new family structure (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). It is estimated that at least half of new marriages will end in divorce. Now, there are more couples less interested in the union of marriage. What are the factors associated with the decision to get married or to get a divorce? Is parental divorce a factor in determining the attitudes of young adults? The following literature review examines how divorce influences the perception of divorce in young adults.

Riggio (2001) examined social learning theory and the social approach theory to assess whether children from married or divorced families had a positive or less positive attitude toward their relationship with their siblings. College students described their sibling relationship using a five point Likert scale. Participants were also questioned about their sibling relationship. Parental divorce may contribute to negative attitudes among children even years after the divorce. This reflects the long term negative consequences of divorce. Based on the social learning theory, Riggio (2001) proposes that a child from a divorced family will have a less positive relationship with their sisters and brothers.

There are two theories that are useful to help understand how parent's marital quality may influence young adult's attitudes on divorce: 1) theory of reasoned action and 2) social

learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Theory of reasoned action assumes that social norms shape how we view certain behaviors and social learning theory emphasizes that we learn our behaviors from others (Kapinus, 2005). Kapinus (2005) examined the assessments of young adults on divorce based on their parents' marital quality while also looking at the effect of parental views. She proposed that young adults who believe their parents have low levels of marital quality will be less likely approve of divorce (Kapinus, 2005). This study conducted by Kapinus used a twelve year longitudinal study sample of married individuals surveyed in 1980, 1983, 1988 and 1992. Young adults were more likely to hold positive views of divorce when parents had tolerant attitudes towards divorce; married offspring were less likely to hold tolerant views towards divorce. The limitations of this longitudinal study included participant dropout and recall bias.

How does parental divorce affect the level of commitment of young adults in a future marriage and their likelihood of divorce? Miles and Servaty-Seib (2010) examined whether college students from divorced homes would exhibit lower levels of commitment to marriage than their counterparts and if they would support divorce more than their counterparts from intact families. The participants included college students from divorced families who were administered a demographic questionnaire. Young adults who experienced divorce during childhood supported divorce and reported a lower level of marital commitment. This study is important because college students are at the age when they are making decisions regarding their future and are often making decisions about their future family and marriage. Knowing the attitudes that college students hold towards marriage and commitment may help counselors prepare them for a more positive future.

Cartwright (2006) conducted life-story interviews with forty young adults aged 19-20 years old who experienced parental separation as adolescents. The interviews examined the participants' own views of how parental divorce impacted them in their lives. Very few of the participants said their experience while their parents deciding to divorce was positive while the majority of participants said they experienced negative effects related to the divorce (Cartwright, 2006). Some of the negative effects that participants mentioned were problems in intimate relationships, a strained relationship with family members and problems functioning in everyday life.

Divorce is not just a single event but is a long process in which all parties lose. Amato (2000) wanted to know the consequences of divorce for children and adults. There were many similarities between children and adults from divorced families. Children and adults from divorced families scored lower on well-being compared to currently married families. Some families recovered quickly from divorce while others display long-term deficits in functioning. Amato (2000) studied the mechanisms of divorce that affected individuals which included disruptions in parent-child relationships, loss of emotional support, economic hardship and an increase in the number of other negative life events associated with divorce such as moving.

Couples in a Relationship or Married

Do couples of divorce produce children who divorce? Glenn and Kramer (1987) looked at children's susceptibility to divorce by race and gender. In addition to finding children's proneness to divorce they analyzed the possible explanations for the intergenerational transmission of divorce. They considered explanations such as the absence of modeling of spouse roles, the inability to control social contexts, inappropriate parental role models, and the acceptability to divorce, marriage at an early age, lower education, and lower commitment to

marry. The data from their study was pooled from 11 U.S. surveys from 1973 through 1985 including white males, white females, black males and black females. There was a tendency for divorce to run in families and children of divorce were predisposed to divorce. There may not have been sufficient numbers of participants involved in order to make a comparison. This study did not indicate how many participants were included and did not include the differences among races.

More and more research is reporting evidence of a relationship between parental divorce and children who grow up to have their relationships end the same way. Amato and DeBoer (2001) suggested that there is an intergenerational transmission of marital instability among families. They examined longitudinal data from two generations to assess marital instability and the two explanations that they studied were based on relationships skills and marital commitment. The hypothesis that children with maritally distressed parents are unable to learn the skills and interpersonal orientations that facilitate the maintenance of long-term, satisfying relationships was not supported. In addition, parental divorce had a greater impact on children when parents had low conflict. The limitations of this study were the samples size was small. Also the results were based on children married at early ages. The select sample of this study was unrepresentative of the population causing insufficient results.

As divorce rates increase so does the approval of divorce. Cunningham and Thorton (2005) examined the patterns of divorce and how attitudes have changed over time. It was hypothesized that entry into marriage is likely to reduce tolerance for divorce. Data was contrived from an intergenerational study over thirty-one years. Those who get married without living together first are more accepting of divorce while those who lived together first were not.

The application of the social approach theory is useful to help understand these results. The patterns of divorce are influenced by society's approval.

Influences of Gender, Religion and Race

Parents can unknowingly have a substantial influence on a child's perception of families, relationships and behavior in the family environment. To what degree do attitudes of the parents regarding divorce influence their children's attitudes on the subject? Kapinus (2004) focused on gender and parental divorce. Her aim was to answer the following questions: 1) Do parents' attitudes towards divorce affect their children's attitude toward divorce? 2) Does gender influence these attitudes? and 3) How do the conditions during/following the divorce contribute to young adult's attitude? To obtain this data Kapinus used methods similar to Amato (2000) which was a longitudinal study over 12 years. Participants were surveyed in a Marital Instability course which is a class the participants all had in common. Fathers had more influence on the son's attitude but the gender of the parent had no influence on the daughter's attitude (Kapinus, 2004). There may therefore be differences in how children apply the thoughts of their parents. The results indicated that males may be more likely to adopt the attitudes of their father and females' may be more independent and develop their own attitude. The limitations of this study were using data from two different generations from mother's and fathers and using multiple methods to measure attitudes toward divorce. Also, this research used empirical evidence to fill in the gaps of missing data which is not good for the study because of researcher bias.

The studies reviewed indicate that gender differences exist between the attitudes that women and men hold toward divorce. The purpose of Kapinus and Flowers (2008) study was to determine how the gender difference on attitudes toward divorce changed. The sample size of this study included 1,437 participants 18 and older; living in the U.S. spoke English and did not

reside in a college dormitory. Participants were asked how easy should it be to obtain a divorce and participants were given the option of difficult, easy; the same or they did not have an opinion on the subject (Kapinus & Flowers, 2008). Women were more likely than men to support divorce (Kapinus & Flowers, 2008). The limitations of this study were the influence religion had on the attitudes on divorce and gender. Women are more likely to be spiritual. Different types of religion may be more accepting of divorce which will affect women's attitudes regarding divorce.

The influence of religion and race on the attitudes of marriage has also been examined (Ellison, Wolfinger & Ramos-Wada, 2012). Attitudes among Latinos in America aged 18 through 59 years old were measured. The dominant religion among Latinos is Catholicism which strongly discourages divorce among the faithful and does not allow remarriage within the church (Ellison, Wolfinger & Ramos-Wada, 2012). The secondary religion that the minority of Latinos follows is Protestant Ellison (2012) compared Latino Catholics and Protestants. Evangelical (Protestants) were significantly more conservative than Catholics in their opposition towards divorce (Ellison, Wolfinger & Ramos-Wada, 2012). This may be because Evangelicals are more religiously active than Catholics and other religions in the sense that they attended church more often and participated in more church activities. There is no religious difference in how they support marriage. This study highlighted the many factors that may influence attitudes towards marriage. Attitudes on marriage or divorce can be formed through personal experiences and the observations of things in society. Some of the influences that affect attitudes of divorce are gender, family background (divorce vs. nondivorced), race and religion.

There is a good amount of research conducted on marriages and family. Marriage and Divorce affects many things in a family such as how children treat their siblings, the attitudes

that children obtain from witnessing parental conflict and commitment of the children in future relationships. There are many variables to consider when doing research on marriages and family such as race, religious involvement and gender just to name a few. Children from divorced families are more likely to have a less positive relationship with their sisters and brothers than children from married or still intact families (Riggio, 2001). Young adults are more likely to hold the same views of their parents regarding divorce (Kapinus, 2004). If their parents hold positive views towards marriage or divorce that is what the child is going to believe in. Young adults from divorced homes report a lower level of marital commitment (Miles & Servaty-Seib, 2010). There is also a gender, religious and racial difference in attitudes towards marriage. Women are more likely to hold favorable attitudes towards divorce; people whom are more religiously active are less likely to have positive views toward divorce and Hispanics do not approve of divorce.

There is not much research done on college students and their attitudes towards divorce which is why I've decided to research it. We are investigating the effects of divorce on young adults' attitudes towards marriage. The variables we will be considering are parental marital status, parental relationship quality, gender and adult romantic attachment. We would like to determine if these variables influence college student's attitudes and whether their attitudes are going to be negative or positive. The categories for parental marital status include divorced, never married and married. Young adults living with their parents will experience no parental conflict, low levels of conflict or high levels of parental conflict. We hypothesize that there will be a gender difference in attitudes. Women will have more favorable attitudes towards marriage and less favorable attitudes divorce. Compared to men who will have a less favorable attitude towards marriage and more favorable attitude toward divorce. Parental divorce will have a

negative effect on young adults' attitudes towards marriage, parents who remain married will have positive effects on young adults' attitudes towards marriage, parents who have high levels of conflict produce negative attitudes among young adults and parents who have low levels of conflict will exhibit positive attitudes.

METHODS

Participants

The participants will be students at a large Midwestern University obtaining their bachelor's degree. We will recruit a sample of approximately 150-250 students enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology class ages 18-25 years. The sample of students will be split so half of the participants will be male and the other half will be females.

Each student will be asked to complete a demographic survey which asks questions such as race, ethnicity, age, gender and religion. In the demographic survey after being asked their age participants will be asked the age at which their parents divorced (if they have divorced parents). The age categories will be ages 0-5, 6-10 and 11-18 years.

Attitudes toward Marriage Scale

The *Attitudes towards Marriage Scale* (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) is a questionnaire consisting of fourteen items that assess the positive and negative attitudes towards marriage. The questions are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Six questions assess negative attitudes about divorce and eight questions assess positive attitudes (Moats 2004). The Cronbach's alpha for Attitudes toward Divorce Scale is .77 and test-retest reliability was found to be .86.

Attitudes towards Divorce Scale

The *Attitudes towards Marriage Scale* (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) and *Attitudes towards Divorce Scale* (Kinnard & Gerrard 1986) are very similar but they do have differences. The *Attitudes towards Divorce Scale* consists of twelve questions assessing the positive and negative attitudes towards divorce. The statements are based on a 5-point Likert Scale varying from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Reliability and validity of this instrument were not available (Moats 2004).

Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC)

To assess the marital quality of young adult's parental relationship we are using the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale developed by Fincham (2013). Grych assisted Fincham in investigating the relation between interparental conflict and child adjustment. This scale views several aspects of marital conflict. The scale consists of 51 questions asking young adults about their perception of conflict in their house. After the statements participants have the option of answering (T= True, ST= Sort of true, F= false).

The CDIC has a three factor analytically derived subscales (conflict properties, threat, self-blame) which demonstrate acceptable levels of internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The validity of the conflict properties was supported by significant relations with parent reports of conflict (Fincham 2013). The three subscales showed a test-retest score of .70 for conflict

properties, .68 for threat and .76 for self-blame. The CDIC shows good reliability and validity therefore it's a good measure of perceived marital conflict.

Procedure

Surveys will be administered through electronic emails. Students will be notified about our research study through emails. Interested participants can sign up for the study through an online website. Surveys will be administered individually to participants and will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete the three measures. Students will be informed that they can leave any time and are not required to finish the study. Once students have finished the surveys that will be the end of their participation there will not be any follow up information or call backs to do additional questionnaires. We will receive the results immediately and will be able to enter data. Participants will also be informed that their information will be kept confidential and their information will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Data Analyses

We will be running an ANOVA on parental status (Married, Divorce and Never Married) we are looking at the interaction between parental marital status and gender. The dependent variable is young adults' attitudes towards marriage and divorce. Our hypothesis is that there will be a two way interaction between status and young adults' attitudes. Status and gender will have a main effect. The continuous outcomes are attitudes towards marriage, romantic attachment, parental conflict and couples satisfaction in relationships.

RESULTS

The current study was designed to examine the relations between parental divorce and college students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce. While accounting for college students' attitudes of divorce our goal was to determine what other factors contributed to these attitudes. We included parental relationship status, which included single, married and divorced. Other factors such as gender and parental conflict were examined.

The sample size of the preliminary data collection consisted of 84 college students enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology course. Out of 84 college students 64.9% of participants were women and 32.1% were males. There were no significant results for this study, which may have been due to the small sample size.

Table 1: Gender of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	27	32.1
Female	57	64.9

Hypothesis #1:

Parental divorce would have some effect on college students' attitudes towards marriage. We predicted that college students who experienced their parents divorcing would have negative attitudes towards marriage. Further, college students whose parents divorced would have positive attitudes towards divorce. A one way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of attitudes towards marriage as measured by the *Attitudes Towards Marriage Scale* (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) on students from divorced families and students from married families. The predictor variables with both the ATM and ATD scale were parental marital status and gender and the dependent variable was college student's attitudes. The results of the

ANOVA were not significant, $F(1, 80) = .046$ $p = .831$. The total mean on the Attitudes Towards Marriage scale (Kinnard & Gerrard) was 3.49 ($n = 84$). The sample mean for students from married or still intact families was 3.45 ($n = 55$) and the mean score from divorced families was 3.52 ($n = 27$). A p-value of .103 was computed for this scale of the relationships between participants from divorced families and attitudes towards marriage. The results did not support the hypothesis that parental divorce had an effect on young adults' attitudes. The attitudes of young adult failed to differ among parental relationship status.

Another ANOVA was conducted to examine students' attitudes regarding divorce for those from married families and divorced families using scores from the Attitudes Towards Divorce Scale (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986). The total mean on the Attitudes Towards Divorce scale (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) was 2.94 ($n = 84$). The mean for students from married families was 2.94 ($n = 55$) and from divorced families was 3.05 ($n = 27$). The results of the ANOVA were not significant, $F(1, 80) = .477$, $p = .492$. The mean scores and p-value show an insignificant relationship between parental divorce and college students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce.

Hypothesis #2:

Parental Divorce would have different effects on young women's attitudes towards marriage/divorce compared to young males' attitudes towards marriage/divorce. Women would have more favorable attitudes towards marriage and least favorable attitudes towards divorce when their parents are divorced. Men would have least favorable attitudes towards marriage and more favorable attitudes towards divorce if their parents are divorced.

On the Attitudes Towards Marriage Scale (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) a one way ANOVA was used to determine the interaction between gender and parental marital status. Mean

scores for women from married families and for men from married families are displayed in Table 2. A p-value of .107 was computed for men and women from married families. The mean score and p-value were insignificant $F(3,78)=1.109$ $p=.351$ indicating there was not a difference between men and women attitudes whose parents were married.

Table 2: Attitudes Towards Marriage by Gender and Parental Marital Status

Gender of Participant	Mean	Std. Error
Male		
Married Parents	3.36	.13
Divorced Parents	3.59	.19
Female		
Married Parents	3.36	.09
Divorced Parents	3.49	.12

The Attitudes Towards Divorce Scale (Kinnard & Gerrard, 1986) was additionally analyzed by computing parental divorce with gender. Mean scores for women from divorced families and men from divorced families are shown in Table 2. A p-value of .191 was calculated for men and women from divorced families. The mean score and p-value were insignificant inferring that there was not a difference between men and women's attitudes whose parents were divorced.

Table 3: Attitudes Towards Divorce by Gender and Parental Marital Status

Gender of Participant	Mean	Std. Error
Male		
Married Parents	2.84	.16
Divorced Parents	3.04	.23
Female		
Married Parents	2.99	.11
Divorced Parents	3.05	.15

Hypothesis #3:

Parental relationship quality would influence college students' attitudes towards marriage. Parental marital status is not the sole predictor of college students' attitudes towards marriage so we looked at the influence of parental relationship quality. Regardless if parents are married or not if there is high levels of conflict in the relationship their children would have negative attitudes towards marriage. Compared to if the parents showed low levels of conflict they would have positive attitudes towards marriage.

A correlation was run on the *Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale* to determine if there were relations with *Attitudes Towards Marriage* and *Attitudes Towards Divorce Scales*. There was no correlation between levels of conflict and attitudes towards

marriage and divorce. There was no significant correlation between levels of parental conflict and attitudes towards marriage, $r = .186$, $n = 82$, $p = .94$. There was no significant correlation between levels of conflict and attitudes towards divorce, $r = -.213$, $n = 82$, $p = .055$.

Discussion

The goal of this study was determine whether there were relations between parental marital status and college students' attitudes towards marriage. It was hypothesized that parental divorce would had negative effects on college student's attitudes towards marriage. Regarding gender, women would have more favorable attitudes towards marriage if their parents were divorced and men would have least favorable attitudes towards marriage if their parents were divorced. The results did not support other findings from the literature regarding parental divorce and young adults' attitudes. In this sample there was no relation between parental divorce and college students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce. For this sample there was no relation between parental relationship quality and college students' attitudes. In addition, there was not a significant difference between attitudes and gender of children from married and divorced families. Further examination of this study is necessary to determine whether these factors influence college students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce.

This study was similar to the study conducted by Moats (2004) we have the same variables age, gender, and college students' attitudes towards divorce. Since we were looking at the same variables we also used two of the same measures, *Attitudes Towards Marriage and Attitudes Towards Divorce*. This study is different from ours because they used a convenience sampling method where our study was based on volunteers from a specific course. They distributed surveys at their University while we had participants come to our lab and complete questionnaires on a computer. They also had 386 participants and we had 84 college students.

Moats (2004) found significant results that perceived parental conflict was a strong predictor of college student's attitudes towards marriage and divorce. We found no relations between college student's perception of parental conflict and attitudes towards marriage and divorce.

A study conducted by Tomey (1994) found similar results that there was not a relation between parental divorce and college students' attitudes towards marriage. This may be due to their small sample size they surveyed 152 college student's from the University of Arizona. Tomey (1994) ran an ANOVA on the *Family/Marital Attitude Survey* which also included the demographic survey. One of the weaknesses of this study is that there was no information regarding the reliability and validity of the *Family/Marital Attitude Survey*. If the measure has no reliability and validity it may not accurately measure the variables that the researcher is looking at.

Hojat et al. (2000) looked at the influence of gender on attitudes towards marriage of Iranians. Hojat et al. (2000) found that women have more strict attitudes when it comes to marriage than males. It was surprising to find that Iranian males had more traditional attitudes towards marriage than women. It may be due to their religious ties. In our demographic survey we asked about religion but I think it would be interesting to determine whether levels of religious involvement would have an effect on attitudes towards marriage.

Some limitations of our study were our small sample size which was 84 participants. In addition, there was an uneven distribution of males to females in the study. There were 57 females and 25 males. A larger sample size with an equal distribution of females and males might produce significant results. Another limitation of this study was the distribution of divorced families to married families. Divorced families accounted for nearly double the sample so they were overrepresented.

In future studies it would be important to account for a complete list of different family structures. For example, we could include same-sex families. In the current study we only accounted for single, married and divorced families which may have limited participants' options if they described their family structure in a different manner. Also, for researchers interested in family relationships and attitudes it is important to collect data from a diverse population of participants.

The strengths of the current study are the methods that were used to measure attitudes towards marriage, attitudes towards divorce and levels of parental conflict. The *Attitudes towards Marriage Scale* and *Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict* showed high levels of reliability and validity. Information for the reliability and validity for *Attitudes towards Divorce Scale* could not be found. We believe that these measures did a good job of surveying the variables that we were interested in. The study was conducted in the lab which was a controlled environment for participants to complete the questionnaires. Another strength of this study is that we collected data at a large University in which we had access to diverse populations and a great number of resources. Some things that we could have done to improve our study is add some questions to the demographic survey. We did not ask participants questions about their race and even though this is something we weren't measuring it would have been a good idea to include it. Instead of only surveying students taking an Introduction to Psychology Course we could have included students from a variety of classes. In addition, we could have made sure we had an even distribution of participants in regards to gender and various races. We were unable to determine whether our sample was representative of the population because we didn't ask their race on the demographic survey. Also, there were twice as many females to males which would skew the results towards women.

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Appendix A
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Parental Divorce and Attitudes Towards Marriage and Divorce Among College Students

**Investigators: Paul E. Etcheverry, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Psychology Department,
Cierra Branch-Harris, Undergraduate Student
Amber Johnson, Undergraduate Student
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to learn more about college student's attitudes about marriage and divorce. In addition we would like to determine whether other factors have an influence on college student's attitudes such as demographics and personal beliefs.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for no longer than one hour. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed:

You will be asked to answer questions on the computer or on paper. These questions will ask you various questions about your demographics, current relationship and your general beliefs about marriage and divorce. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

At the end of the study, the experimenter will provide a debriefing explaining in more detail the purpose and goals of the current research. You should feel free to ask any questions or express any concerns you may have regarding the research.

PARTICIPANTS

All students in the Psychology subject pool are eligible to participate in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can end your participation at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

RISKS

There are minimal foreseeable risks from participating in this study. Some of the questions ask about personal information, including sexual orientation, race and religion, and maybe somewhat uncomfortable to answer. However, you are free to skip any question you wish if it makes you uncomfortable to answer it.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you apart from what you learn about psychological research. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by helping psychologists better understand the nature of romantic relationships which are an important source of human well-being

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will be compensated for participating in this study with 4 credit points. This credit will be given on the SONA experiment system.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken:

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact **Nicholas Hoffman**, or **Paul E. Etcheverry Ph.D., 618-453-3534, Life Sciences II 275B, petch@siu.edu.**

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand a copy of this form will be made available to me for the relevant information and phone numbers. I realize I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

(Participant's Signature)

(Date)

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other sex
3. What is your current marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. In a relationship
 - c. Engaged
 - d. Married

- e. Divorced
 - f. Other
4. Religious Affiliation
- a. Baptist
 - b. Pentecostal
 - c. Other protestant
 - d. Methodist
 - e. Nondenominational
 - f. Catholic
 - g. Mainline Protestant
 - h. Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.
 - i. Christian
 - j. Holiness
 - k. Jehovah's witness
 - l. Muslim
 - m. Unknown
 - n. Non-religious
5. You were mainly raised by?
- a. Both biological parents
 - b. One biological parent (Either mother or father)
 - c. Grandparents
 - d. Other family members
 - e. Adopted
 - f. Stepfather or stepmother
 - g. Other
6. What is your G.P.A.? _____
7. What is your year in school?
- a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
8. The primary person that raised you was
- a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Never Together
 - e. No longer together
 - f. Living together never married
 - g. Deceased (Which parent)
 - h. Don't know
9. If you answered marriage for the last question, what age were you when your parents got married?

- a. My parents were married before I was born
 - b. If your parents were married after you were born, how old were you when they got married _____
10. If you answered divorce for number 6, what age were you when your parents got divorced?

11. What is your relationship history? Have you ever been in a relationship, married or divorced?
12. Did you have more than one person raise you? If so please give a timeline of your age and when?

Attitudes Toward Divorce Scale

Please respond to each of the following statements by circling the appropriate rating on each scale

1 – Not at all 2 – A little 3 – Somewhat 4 – A lot 5 – Very Much

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) When people marry, they should be willing to stay together no matter what happens. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2) If people are not happy in their marriage, they owe it to themselves to get a divorce and try to improve their lives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3) The marriage vow “till death do us part” represents a sacred commitment to another person and should not be taken lightly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4) The negative effects of divorce on children have been greatly exaggerated. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5) In the long run, American society will be seriously harmed by the high divorce rate. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6) Many people that get divorced are too weak to make personal sacrifices for the good of their families. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7) People should feel no great obligation to remain married if they are not satisfied. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8) Even if people are unhappy with their marriage, they should stay together and try to improve it. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9) These days, the marriage vow “till death do us part” is just a formality. It doesn’t really mean that people should stay in an unsatisfactory marriage. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10) Most children of divorced parents experience negative effects of divorce for the rest of their lives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11) The fact that most individuals no longer feel that they have to stay in unhappy marital relationships will benefit society. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

12) Most people who get divorced do so as a last resort, only after 1 2 3 4 5
trying other solutions to the problems in their marriage.

Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale

Please respond to each of the following statements by circling the appropriate rating on each scale

1 – Not at all 2 – A little 3 – Somewhat 4 – A lot 5 – Very Much

- 1) If you were to marry, to what extent would you miss the life you had as a single person? 1 2 3 4 5
- 2) How difficult would it be for you to give up your personal freedom if you were married? 1 2 3 4 5
- 3) How difficult would it be for you to adjust to married life? 1 2 3 4 5
- 4) Do you ever have doubts about whether you would enjoy living exclusively with one person after marriage? 1 2 3 4 5
- 5) Do you think you would enjoy the responsibilities of marriage? 1 2 3 4 5
- 6) If you marry, how happy do you think you will be? 1 2 3 4 5
- 7) Do you ever think that you may not have a successful marriage? 1 2 3 4 5
- 8) Do you ever think you will find someone who would be a good marriage partner? 1 2 3 4 5
- 9) Do you ever think that you should stay single? 1 2 3 4 5
- 10) Do you ever worry that the person you marry wouldn't fulfill his/her responsibilities in the marriage? 1 2 3 4 5
- 11) Do you ever worry that the person you marry would be violent or abusive to you? 1 2 3 4 5
- 12) I believe marriage is one of the most important things in life. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13) A bad marriage is better than no marriage at all. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14) A person isn't really grown up until he/she gets married. 1 2 3 4 5

THE EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS-REVISED (ECR-R) QUESTIONNAIRE

Scale:

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

QUESTION 1=Strongly Disagree.....7=Strong Agree

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. I worry a lot about my relationships. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. I do not often worry about being abandoned. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 30. I tell my partner just about everything. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 31. I talk things over with my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 36. My partner really understands me and my needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Conflict Resolution Scale

Thinking of your parents of origin, use the scale below to rate how you believe they use/used the following styles to deal with arguments or disagreements.

1 – Never 2 – Rarely 3 – Sometimes 4 – Often 5 – Always

- 1) Launching personal attacks. 1 2 3 4 5
- 2) Focusing on the problem at hand. 1 2 3 4 5
- 3) Remaining silent for long periods of time. 1 2 3 4 5
- 4) Not being willing to stick up for myself. 1 2 3 4 5
- 5) Exploding and getting out of control. 1 2 3 4 5
- 6) Sitting down and discussing differences constructively. 1 2 3 4 5
- 7) Reaching a limit, “shutting down” and refusing to talk any further. 1 2 3 4 5
- 8) Being too compliant. 1 2 3 4 5
- 9) Getting carried away and saying things that aren’t really meant. 1 2 3 4 5
- 10) Finding alternatives that are acceptable to each of us. 1 2 3 4 5
- 11) Tuning the other person out. 1 2 3 4 5
- 12) Not defending my position. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13) Throwing insults and dig. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14) Negotiating and compromising. 1 2 3 4 5
- 15) Withdrawing, acting distant and not interested. 1 2 3 4 5
- 16) Giving in with little attempt to present your side of the issue. 1 2 3 4 5
- 17) How often do/did your parents argue with one another? 1 2 3 4 5
- 18) To what extent did your parents try to change things about one another that bothered them? (e.g., behaviors, attitudes, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 19) How much time do/did your parents spend discussing and trying to work out problems between them? 1 2 3 4 5
- 20) How often did your parents feel angry or resentful toward one another? 1 2 3 4 5
- 21) How committed do you feel your parent’s are/were? 1 2 3 4 5
- 22) How close do you feel your parents are toward one another? 1 2 3 4 5
- 23) When your parents' argue/argued, how serious were the arguments? 1 2 3 4 5
- 24) To what extent do/did your parents communicate negative feelings toward one another (e.g., frustration, anger, dissatisfaction)? 1 2 3 4 5

Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale

In every family there are times when the parents don't get along. Below are some things that kids sometimes think or feel when their parents have arguments or disagreements. We would like you to tell us what you think or feel when your parents argue or disagree by answering each of the sentences below.

T = TRUE; ST = SORT OF TRUE; F = FALSE

1. T ST F I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing.
2. T ST F When my parents have an argument they usually work it out
3. T ST F My parents often get into arguments about things I do at school
4. T ST F When my parents argue it's because one of them just had a bad day
5. T ST F My parents get really mad when they argue
6. T ST F When my parents argue I can do something to make myself feel better
7. T ST F I get scared when my parents argue
8. T ST F I feel caught in the middle when my parents argue
9. T ST F I'm not to blame when my parents have arguments
10. T ST F They may not think I know it, but my parents argue or disagree a lot
11. T ST F Even after my parents stop arguing they stay mad at each other
12. T ST F When my parents argue usually it has to do with their own problems
13. T ST F My parents have arguments because they are not happy together
14. T ST F When my parents have a disagreement they discuss it quietly
15. T ST F I don't know what to do when my parents have arguments
16. T ST F My parents are often mean to each other even when I'm around
17. T ST F When my parents argue I worry about what will happen to me
18. T ST F I don't feel like I have to take sides when my parents have a disagreement
19. T ST F It's usually my fault when my parents argue
20. T ST F I often see or hear my parents arguing
21. T ST F When my parents disagree about something, they usually come up with a solution
22. T ST F My parents' arguments are usually about me
23. T ST F The reasons my parents argue never change
24. T ST F When my parents have an argument they say mean things to each other
25. T ST F When my parents argue or disagree I can usually help make things better
27. T ST F When my parents argue I'm afraid that something bad will happen.
28. T ST F My mom wants me to be on her side when she and my dad argue
29. T ST F Even if they don't say it, I know I'm to blame when my parents argue
30. T ST F My parents hardly ever argue
30. T ST F When my parents argue they usually make up right away
31. T ST F My parents usually argue or disagree because of things that I do
32. T ST F My parents argue because they don't really love each other
33. T ST F When my parents have an argument they yell at each other
34. T ST F When my parents argue there's nothing I can do to stop them
35. T ST F When my parents argue I worry that one of them will get hurt
36. T ST F I feel like I have to take sides when my parents have a disagreement
37. T ST F My parents often nag and complain about each other around the house
38. T ST F My parents hardly ever yell when they have a disagreement
39. T ST F My parents often get into arguments when I do something wrong
40. T ST F My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument
41. T ST F After my parents stop arguing, they are friendly towards each other
42. T ST F When my parents argue I'm afraid that they will yell at me too
43. T ST F My parents blame me when they have arguments
44. T ST F My dad wants me to be on his side when he and my mom argue
45. T ST F My parents have pushed or shoved each other during an argument

- 46. T ST F When my parents argue or disagree there's nothing I can do to make myself feel better
- 47. T ST F When my parents argue I worry that they might get divorced
- 48. T ST F My parents still act mean after they have had an argument
- 49. T ST F My parents have arguments because they don't know how to get along
- 50. T ST F Usually it's not my fault when my parents have arguments
- 51. T ST F When my parents argue they don't listen to anything I say

15 Item Commitment Measure**My Goals for the Future of our Relationship****Instructions:**

To what extent does each of the following statements describe your feelings regarding your relationship? Please use the following scale to record an answer for each statement listed below.

Response Scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

Response

- 1) I will do everything I can to make our relationship last for the rest of our lives.
- 2) I feel completely attached to my partner and our relationship.
- 3) I often talk to my partner about what things will be like when we are very old.
- 4) I feel really awful when things are not going well in our relationship.
- 5) I am completely committed to maintaining our relationship.
- 6) I frequently imagine life with my partner in the distant future.
- 7) When I make plans about future events in life, I carefully consider the impact of my decisions on our relationship.
- 8) I spend a lot of time thinking about the future of our relationship.
- 9) I feel really terrible when things are not going well for my partner.
- 10) I want our relationship to last forever.
- 11) There is no chance at all that I would ever become romantically involved with another person.
- 12) I am oriented toward the long-term future of our relationship (for example, I imagine life with my partner decades from now).
- 13) My partner is more important to me than anyone else in life – more important than my parents, friends, etc.
- 14) I intend to do everything humanly possible to make our relationship persist.
- 15) If our relationship were ever to end, I would feel that my life was destroyed.

Couples Satisfaction Index: Example Items

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not at all TRUE	A little TRUE	Some- what TRUE	Mostly TRUE	Almost Completely TRUE	Completely TRUE
2. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all TRUE	A little TRUE	Some- what TRUE	Mostly TRUE	Almost Completely TRUE	Completely TRUE
3. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5

4. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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