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FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND PARENTAL DIVORCE AS PREDICTORS OF ATTACHMENT STYLES AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND PARENTAL DIVORCE AS PREDICTORS OF
ATTACHMENT STYLES AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract

Research has demonstrated that parental divorce and family functioning are associated with children's socioemotional and psychological adjustment well into their adult years. Research has also demonstrated that sexual attitudes are becoming more liberal (cf., Harding & Jencks, 2003; Leiblum, Wiegel, & Brickle, 2003). The purpose of this research was to examine family functioning and parental divorce status in relation to attachment styles and sexual attitudes among college students ($n = 387$). The participants completed the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS), The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Scale (ECR-R), and Family Relationship Index (FRI). As hypothesized, family functioning was a better indicator than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores. The hypothesis that family functioning would be a better predictor than divorce status in explaining permissive sexual attitudes was not supported. Furthermore, the hypothesis that higher scores on anxious and avoidant attachment scores would be predictive of more permissive sexual attitudes was supported with regard to avoidant attachment styles. Specifically, SPSS data analyses using multiple regressions found that college students who reported greater cohesiveness within their families (regardless of parental divorce status) reported lower anxious and lower avoidant attachment scores. Neither divorce status nor family functioning was predictive of permissive sexual attitudes. However, participants who reported greater avoidant attachment scores also reported endorsing more permissive sexual attitudes scores. Finally, males were more likely than females to endorse permissive sexual attitudes. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband and best friend, Michael C. Kufskie. Throughout the course of my studies Michael has made personal sacrifices, demonstrated selflessness, and has always been supportive and understanding of my personal goals. Without his support and encouragement throughout my entire academic career (both graduate and undergraduate), my graduation with a Ph.D. would not have been possible. I truly honor and recognize the confidence, the devotion, the guidance and the assistance he has freely extended to me in helping me obtain this important milestone in my life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mental health professionals (e.g., psychiatrists, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists) often counsel people with relationship issues. Divorce and family functioning are issues that potentially many mental health professionals will encounter as part of their work because divorce rates are relatively high in American society (Hughes, 2005; Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998; Wallerstein, 1985; Zill & Nord, 1993). Although divorce is not always experienced as a negative event, and it is noted that some children of divorce adjust well to the experience (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995; Wallerstein, 1985), the likelihood of mental health professionals encountering clients with concerns related to divorce and/or family functioning is high. It is important that mental health professionals understand the underlying facets of divorce in relation to family functioning in order to be effective in counseling clients. This research examines aspects associated with the divorce of one's parents, and how these aspects may be related to a person's psychological adjustment. More specifically, this particular research study aims to explore attachment, family functioning and sexual attitudes among college students from divorced and non-divorced families.

Whittaker and Robitschek (2001) stated that the need to focus on preventative components of the counseling process is a new direction for counselors. If mental health professionals understand some of the research related to family functioning and divorce, it will better equip them to work with families that may encounter concerns related to

divorce and/or family functioning. It will also help them develop a better understanding of adults from divorced families. This research aims to expand the research as it relates to the divorce process in relation to family functioning, attachment style and sexual attitudes.

Divorce and Children

According to the U.S Census Bureau (2005), marital patterns are affected by social events in addition to changes that may occur in the cultural attitudes and behaviors of people. Hughes (2005) reported that for every two marriages that occurred in the 1990s, there was one divorce. Similarly, the National Center for Health Statistics reports that one out of every two marriages end in divorce (Wendel, 1997). Studies of divorce reveal considerable inconsistency with regard to the moderating effects of age and gender on the consequences of marital dissolution for children (Zaslow, 1987). In a comprehensive review of gender and divorce as they relate to children, Zaslow (1987) concluded that it is unclear whether boys react more negatively to marital disruption compared to girls. Zaslow suggested that boys and girls may demonstrate different symptoms of distress. Specifically, it was stated that boys tend to respond more negatively to living with an opposite sex parent. Zaslow (1987) further noted that although the sex difference hypothesis in children's reactions to divorce has been widely discussed, it has not been fully examined empirically. Zaslow described several other limitations in research associated with children's responses to parental divorce. Furthermore, Zaslow proposed expansion of data collection for examining sex differences. It was also suggested that responses to divorce be examined in relation to

socioeconomic status, and argued for the use of nationally representative samples, the use of longitudinal designs, and the examination of parental conflict prior to divorce to get a better assessment of how divorce may be related to children's post divorce adjustment.

Additionally, in an extensive summary of the divorce literature, Emery (1988) argued that age effects may be less clear-cut or easily interpreted than has been previously regarded. Specifically, Emery (1988) stated that theoretical viewpoints suggest that children below the ages of five or six appeared to be the most harmed by divorce. This was also the age when divorce was most common. However, age of the child is frequently confounded with age at the time of separation as well as with the length of time since separation. Allison and Furstenburg (1989) attempted to disentangle these temporal dimensions. This was a task that required a longitudinal design along with a large sample of children who had been exposed to marital dissolution. Their results showed that marital dissolution had long lasting and pervasive effects on children in areas of problem behaviors, academic performance, and psychological distress. Relevant to the aforementioned study, daughters seemed to be more affected than sons in that they were more likely to express an insecure attachment style.

A study by Stolberg and Bush (1985) measured children's post-divorce adjustment. Findings of the study suggested that the number of major life events that were reported mediated the effect of age on children's post-divorce adjustment. The results indicated that children who described their mothers as being more socially competent post-divorce tended to be involved in more prosocial activities, had better school adjustment, had a better self concept, and had healthier ratings in relation to

internalizing or externalizing psychopathology. The children who were described as more socially competent were from homes which demonstrated less marital hostility.

Laumann–Billings and Emery (2000) noted that children of divorced parents are placed at a greater risk for a variety of psychological problems compared to children whose parents were still married. Specifically, children of divorce reported painful feelings, beliefs and memories associated with parental divorce. James (1989) stated that divorce can threaten the loss of parental contact which can feel threatening to a child, and that children who once formed secure attachments could react to a perceived loss such as divorce with feelings of anger and anxiety. Such feelings may result in “an anxious attachment to subsequent figures” (p. 120). Additionally, children from divorced families tend to be overrepresented in populations with psychiatric distress (Rae-Grant & Robson, 1988).

Amato and Keith (1991) conducted a meta-analysis. Their meta-analysis of 92 studies compared children living in divorced, single-parent families with children living in intact families that never divorced. The authors specifically examined children’s well-being. The results of their analysis concluded that children who lost a parent through death scored higher on measures of well-being than children who experienced a divorce. Divorce in conjunction with other factors such as loss of parental contact, family conflict and economic hardship was related to child well-being in terms of lower educational attainment, dependence on welfare, and bearing children out of wedlock. The strongest predictor of well-being was family conflict.

Amato (2000) examined research related to consequences of divorce for children and for adults. Amato concluded that marital dissolution has the potential to create significant turmoil for children and adults to the point where one may never recover emotionally from the divorce. Nevertheless, some individuals may only experience temporary problems in well-being, and in some cases, divorce is of benefit. Amato further attested that people vary greatly in their reactions.

Although there have been numerous studies related to divorce and children's post-divorce adjustment in relation to divorce, it is also important to review some of the research that has studied how children may be influenced by their parent's divorce when they become adults.

Adult Children of Divorce

Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) reported that young adults from divorced families have a tendency to be anxious, to fear rejection, to express incongruent feelings, to have low self-esteem, to be indecisive, and to be vulnerable to depression. Aro and Palosaari (1992) found similar results in adult children from divorced families (ACD) in terms of increased depression. Amato (1993) noted that persons from divorced families tend to have long-term consequences such as poorer psychological adjustment, lower amounts of socioeconomic attainment, and greater marital instability during early adulthood. Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) reported that many college students from divorced families had distressing feelings about their parent's divorce. They were three times more likely to believe that they had more difficult childhoods than most people. These beliefs were still evident more than a decade after the parental divorce. Bolgar,

Zweig-Frank, and Paris (1995) have also documented the relationship between being an adult child of divorce and the experience of interpersonal problems in a sample of college students. Their study noted that adult children of divorce are less submissive, are more controlling, and report more problems with intimacy compared to college students from intact families.

Gender differences among adult children of divorce have also been studied. Henry and Holmes (1988) conducted a study in which they noted that daughters of divorce compared to sons of divorce were more likely to be pessimistic about relationships in general. Daughters of divorce were also more likely to worry about being abandoned and not being “good enough.” Collins and Read (1990) reported similar results in their study. They noted that many adult daughters from divorced families likened the divorce to their father’s abandoning them, and they tended to be more argumentative in relationships.

Johnston and Thomas (1996) found that ACDs that marry are more likely to divorce when there are problems in their own marriage. Specifically, the experience of a parental divorce as a child appears to model divorce in one’s own marriage. For example, ACDs tend not to work on their own marriages when they experience difficulties in their own relationships (Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakeslee, 2000). These results are related to the study conducted by Amato (1993) in which long-term consequences on adult well-being were measured in relation to parental divorce. The results illustrated that the consequences were more likely to be negative than positive.

Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) also studied the long-term aspects of divorce in relation to parent-child relationships with a sample of college students. The

results indicated that adult persons from divorced families perceived their relationships with their parents less positively compared to adults from intact families.

Furthermore, Amato and Booth (2001) conducted a longitudinal study in which they assessed the marital quality of parents compared to the marital quality of their adult offspring. The results indicated that parental report of marital discord 17 years prior predicted the same model of marital discord among their offspring which suggested that marital quality is transmitted from parent to offspring. More specifically, when parents had reported that they had more conflict and instability in their marriages in 1980, children later reported the same in their own marriages in 1997. Franklin, Janoff-Bulman and Roberts (1990) also used college students from divorced and non-divorced families to assess levels of trust in marital relationships. Their results indicated that college students from divorced families reported less trust of a future spouse compared to college students from intact families.

Although there have been numerous studies on divorce in relation to child and adult post-divorce adjustment, it is also important to review how divorce is related to adjustment in relation to terms of family functioning and attachment.

Family Functioning

Family functioning is another factor that needs to be closely examined. Family functioning includes aspects such as the roles and rules within a family and the expectations for behaviors within a family (Bray, 1995). A divorce in and of itself is not typically the only contributor to children's adjustment. Typically, the functioning of the family that takes place prior to and after the divorce is significant. For example, family

dynamics can be related to the pre-divorce and post-divorce experience of all those involved. Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger and Mas (1992) researched family functioning in relation to children's post-divorce adjustment. They noted that families that had nurturance and support after the divorce were most likely to minimize maladjustment in their children. Also, children exposed to parental conflict post-divorce tended to regress emotionally in terms of social withdrawal, anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, family functioning such as disharmony among parental figures has been shown to have an unfavorable outcome on the parent-child relationship in the aspects of conflict between mothers and children, decreased time and attentiveness to children's needs, and inconsistent discipline (Hetherington, 1989). Disharmony among parental figures has also been related to the child's peer and romantic relationships in that more parental conflict was related to declines in rates of intimacy in child romantic relationships (Bolgar et al., 1995; Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998). Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) conducted a study where they assessed the relation between children's performance in school and family environment with 219 eighth grade students. The results determined that family process variables such as valuing achievement and intellectual activities tended to be more reliable predictors of school performance than family structure (e.g., two-parent nuclear families, mother-custody, and stepfather families).

Amato and Booth (1997) conducted a longitudinal analysis in which they measured overt interparental conflict prior to divorce; they found that less than a third of the divorces involved highly conflicted marriages (e.g., spousal physical abuse, serious

quarrels, and disagreements that occurred often or very often). Because divorce is not just related to high conflict marriages, it is also important to examine family functioning in conjunction with divorce.

Family functioning involves many factors. For the purpose of this research, cohesion, expressiveness and conflict are specific areas of focus in relation to family functioning. According to Moos and Moos (1986), cohesion refers to the extent to which the family members are concerned about and committed to the family. Cohesion also involves the degree to which family members are helpful and supportive of one another. Expressiveness refers to the extent to which family members are allowed and encouraged to act openly. Expressiveness also involves the extent to which family members are able to express feelings directly. Conflict refers to the extent to which the outward expression of anger and aggression are characteristic of the family.

Research in relation to family functioning has demonstrated that low family functioning (along with parental divorce) is related to young adults' inability to form lasting, intimate relationships with significant peers (Amato & Booth, 1991). A review of the literature by Emery (1982) noted that high levels of family conflict can be adversely associated with adolescent functioning in regard to behavioral problems and coercive demands. Emery also suggested that conflict may disrupt attachment bonds. Robitschek and Kashubeck (1999) found that unhealthy family functioning in college students was associated with lower levels of hardiness, which in turn predicted greater psychological distress.

Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995) conducted a 12-year longitudinal study that examined high-conflict and low-conflict ridden families. The results demonstrated that young adults living in high-conflict families had higher well-being if their parents divorced when they were children as opposed to staying together. In low-conflict families, if the children's parents stayed together, then as young adults they had higher well-being. Jekielek (1998) also conducted a study with results similar to those cited by Amato et al., in that the consequences of divorce of the parents depended partly on the level of parental conflict prior to the actual divorce.

Katz and Low (2004) conducted a study in which they measured marital violence in relation to child outcomes (delinquency, aggression, withdrawal and anxiety/depression). The results of the Katz and Low study indicated that marital violence was significantly related to child delinquency and aggression as well as to withdrawal and anxiety/depression.

Several studies have examined family functioning in relation to adult children of alcoholics (cf., El-Sheikh & Buckhalt, 2003; Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999). However, very few studies have looked at family functioning in recent years as it relates to adult children of divorce. This research study will focus on adult college students who experienced their parents' divorce when they were a child and adult college students who did not experience parental divorce as a means to identify potential correlates of family functioning and divorce status. How divorce and family functioning relate to attachment security is also of concern.

Attachment and Parental Divorce/Family Functioning

Attachment is considered an emotional bond that one person forms with another person (Ainsworth, 1973). Attachment style has been studied in both children (cf., Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) and adults (cf., Hazen & Shaver, 1987). Dimensions of attachment style include secure and insecure attachment. Furthermore, it has been theorized that the stress associated with changes in family status (e.g., divorce) may be related to a shift in cognitive schemas. Cognitive schemas may result in a less secure attachment (Bowlby, 1969) as well as intergenerational diffusion of the predisposition to a particular attachment style (Adshead & Blueglass, 2001).

Walker and Ehrenberg (1998) assessed the adult child's perception of his or her parents' divorce to understand how it may be related to his or her own adult romantic relationships. In their study, they made careful indication that some individuals from divorced backgrounds enjoyed positive and long lasting romantic relationships. They also addressed the fact that further research is required to determine why some young people from divorced homes are capable of having thriving romantic relationships while others experience long-term relationship difficulties. Overall, the findings indicated that the majority of college student participants from divorced homes (73%) classified themselves as having an insecure (fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing) attachment style. Only 27% classified themselves as having a secure attachment style. Perceived reasons for parental divorce were explored in relation to the participant's own attachment styles (secure and insecure) in romantic relationships. The participants who identified that they were

somehow accountable for their parent's divorce were more likely to have an insecure attachment style in their own relationships.

Love and Murdock (2004) noted that numerous studies have shown that children from stepfamilies tend to have more difficulties compared to those from intact, biological families in relation to emotional, social, physical and psychological distress. The results of their study confirmed that, after controlling for family conflict, attachment style was a significant predictor of well-being in college students. Individuals from stepfamilies had less secure attachments to their parents compared to individuals from intact biological families. Overall, the authors found that attachment style was partly associated with the relationship between family type and psychological well being.

Caffery (2000) and El-Sheikh and Buckhalt (2003) utilized college students to assess family functioning in relation to attachment style. It was noted that families that provided emotional support and nurturance were more likely to have securely attached children. Caffery found that family functioning variables (e.g., affective responsiveness, affective involvement, communication, and role functioning) were related to higher scores on attachment security variables (e.g., confidence). El-Sheikh and Buckhalt determined from their study that higher levels of family cohesion and adaptability were robust factors that protected against adjustment and cognitive difficulties in families who displayed marital conflict. It was also noted that less secure attachments to parents were predictive of higher levels of cognitive and social problems among children. Thus, the results of both studies indicated that family functioning was significantly related to attachment security.

A study by Kapanee and Rao (2007) assessed family functioning in relation to family dynamics and adult attachment style among 327 college students. The results noted that persons who were securely attached rated their families higher in family functioning variables such as cohesion, expressiveness, and family sociability. It was also noted that good interpersonal communications were associated with a secure attachment. Overall, the data on divorce, family functioning, and attachment suggest that divorce and poor family functioning are associated with attachment styles in offspring.

Sexual Attitudes

Sexual attitudes encompass a wide range of factors associated with sexual behaviors such as religion, sexual locus of control, views on premarital sexuality, attitudes about condoms, marital standards in relation to moral development, and intimate personal relationships. Sexual attitudes and behaviors can include communication about sex, sexual locus of control, sexual self-efficacy, attitudes about condoms, and sexual behaviors (Feeney, Peterson, Gallois, & Terry, 2000).

For example, the aspect of choosing to be monogamous in an intimate relationship is an endorsement of a sexual attitude and its subsequent behavior. Closely tied to sexual attitudes is sexual behavior. Feldman and Cauffman (2000) defined sexual permissiveness (an attitude) to include the aspect that sexuality among humans should be unrestrained, open and free, as opposed to being limited and controlled. Endorsement of casual sexuality would be an example of sexual permissiveness. The literature also shows that sexual permissiveness is closely related to sexual behaviors and other sexual attitudes. Hendrick, Hendrick, Slapion-Foote and Foote (1985) identified sexual

permissiveness as how far people will go sexually. Another factor associated with sexual permissiveness is the value of engaging in extramarital sex (Treas & Griesen, 2000; Smith, 1994). Thus, sexual attitudes related to permissiveness can include aspects of non-commitment in a sexual relationship, the endorsement of casual sex, and the utilization of numerous sexual partners (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich, 2006). Sexually permissive attitudes and behaviors have been examined in the literature on adult children of divorce.

Specifically, one study that measured parental divorce in association with sexual attitudes was conducted by Jeynes (2001), who tested the hypothesis that children from recently divorced (four years or less) parents have different attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital intercourse compared to those with parents divorced for four years or longer. Previous research (cf., Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan, & Anderson, 1989) had indicated that divorce has a greater impact on children early after the divorce (recency hypothesis) compared to later years after the divorce (constancy hypothesis). The results from Jeynes' study indicated that children from recently divorced single-parent families compared to children from intact families displayed a more permissive pre-marital sexual attitude of not thinking it was important to be married before childbirth, and that it was acceptable to have a child out of wedlock. Jeynes also noted that children from recently divorced single-parent families compared to children from non-recently divorced families were no more likely to believe it was important to be married prior to childbirth or to consider having a child before marriage or to have had a child out of wedlock. Thus, the results from this particular analysis of divorced families clearly supported the constancy hypothesis in that students whose parents had recently divorced did not display more

permissive sexual attitudes or behaviors in relation to premarital sex compared to students whose parents had been divorced for four years or longer. Thus, children from any divorced family may undergo long-term emotional and behavioral consequences, consistent with the constancy hypothesis as also supported by other researchers (cf., Wallerstein, Corbin, & Lewis, 1988; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998).

Gabardi and Rosen (1992) noted that college students who were adult children of divorce (ACD) tended to have negative emotions related to trust, and that sexual activity was more desired by ACD compared to adult college students whose parents did not divorce. The Gabardi and Rosen study also revealed that college ACD had significantly more sexual partners compared to college students from non-divorced families. This was true for both males and females. However, regardless of divorce status, males were more endorsing of sexual behaviors than females in general. Furthermore, the Gabardi and Rosen study noted that the degree of parental marital conflict was associated with the total number of sexual partners of college students. Specifically, their study noted that college students who had reported that their parents had high levels of marital conflict tended to have more sexual partners compared to college students whose parents did not have high levels of marital conflict. Additionally, other studies (Bukstel et al., 1978; Jaynes, 2001; Walker & Ehrenberg, 1998) have also noted that ACD desire more sexual activity compared to non-ACD.

Christensen and Brooks (2001) conducted a review of the literature to assess how parental divorce influences ACD in their own intimate relationships. The authors noted

that ACD had significantly more sexual partners and desired more sexual behavior compared to those adults from intact families. ACD also tended to marry at an earlier age compared to persons who did not experience a parental divorce. It was speculated that marrying at an early age may be a means for commitment and fulfillment of emotional and physical needs. It was also noted in their review that ACD tended to put themselves in situations that promoted marriage despite their negative views toward marriage. One specific example cited was that ACD were more likely to be involved in intimate steady relationships, which in turn was theorized that ACD were more likely to enter marriage not based on choice, but more on circumstances such as cohabitation.

A study by Hendrick and Hendrick (1995) examined the relationship between gender and attitudes related to sex and love. Based on theories delineated through social learning theory and sociobiology, they hypothesized that men would be expected to be more permissive and game-playing in sexual attitudes while women would be more emotionally oriented and realistic. It was also hypothesized that women would be more invested in the relationship compared to men, and that men would have more sexual partners. The results indicated that men were more permissive and game-playing than women in their sexual attitudes, yet it was not confirmed that women were more emotionally focused. Women were more realistic and more invested and committed in relationships. Men also reported having more sexual partners. Overall, the study found that men tended to be more oriented to sex while women tended to be more oriented to love.

Attachment Styles and Sexual Attitudes

Closely related to attachment styles is the concept of sexual attitudes in intimate relationships. The two are related because they are both theorized in models of romantic love (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Specifically, Hazan and Shaver (1987) stated that romantic love is understood in terms of attachment, care-giving and sex. Feeney et al. (2000) conducted research related to attachment styles and sexual attitudes and behaviors in college students. The results indicated that an insecure attachment style was inversely related to open sexual communication and internal locus of control. The Feeney et al. study demonstrated that attachment variables were associated with sexual attitudes and behaviors.

Schachner and Shaver (2004) measured attachment dimensions and sexual motives in college students. Schachner and Shaver hypothesized that highly anxious individuals would be overly concerned about abandonment, and, therefore, would be more likely to engage in sexual activities as a means to feel valued and to keep their partners. It was also hypothesized that highly avoidant persons would not seek sex as a means to create intimacy, but instead would seek sex for autonomous reasons such as fitting in with peers. Both hypotheses were supported.

Other researchers have also conducted studies demonstrating an empirical link between attachment style and sexuality. Brennan and Shaver (1995) reported that persons with a secure attachment style were less likely to be involved in one-night stands, and that an avoidant (insecure) attachment style was characteristic of attitudes and behaviors related to uncommitted sex. Feldman and Cauffman (2000) conducted a study with

college students to examine the relationship between attachment style and sexual betrayal in romantic relationships. Only students who had been in a committed relationship which entailed an agreement of monogamy were included in the study. The researchers hypothesized that attachment styles, sexual permissiveness, levels of sexual experience, and romantic style would be correlated to attitudes toward betrayal and betrayal behaviors. Betrayal was defined as engaging in sexual intercourse or other petting behaviors while in a committed relationship without sanction of doing so by one's romantic partner. Sexual betrayal was also defined as being closely related to sexual permissiveness in the aspect that permissive sexual attitudes had been correlated in the attitudes and acceptance of betrayal in adults, high school students, and college students (Seal, Agostinelli, & Hannet, 1994; Sponaugle, 1989). Specifically, it was hypothesized that persons who had an avoidant romantic style would be more likely to engage in sexual betrayal more often compared to those who exhibited a secure romantic style. The results of their study revealed that behaviors which involved betrayal were significantly correlated with an avoidant relationship style. The results also indicated a high incidence of sexual betrayal among the participants despite a very low acceptance of the behavior. More than one third of the participants had reported betraying a romantic partner. From their study, it was noted that sexual permissiveness, early onset of sexual intercourse, number of romantic relationships and an avoidant relationship style were all related to a higher incidence of betrayal behaviors. Persons who displayed a secure romantic relationship style were less accepting of betrayal compared to those with an insecure or avoidant romantic relationship style. Males endorsed acceptance of attitudes towards

betrayal more so than females. However, there were not any significant gender differences in the actual behaviors. Overall, the data on sexual attitudes and attachment style as related to sexual attitudes and behaviors suggest that sexually permissive attitudes and behaviors are associated with experiencing a parental divorce and with the level of intimacy in romantic relationships. The data also suggest that attachment style is associated with permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors.

Statement of Purpose

Research has demonstrated that parental divorce is associated with children's socioemotional and psychological adjustment well into their adult years. The purpose of this study is to examine family functioning and parental divorce status in relation to attachment styles and sexual attitudes among college students.

Hypotheses

The literature supports the contention that divorce is related to one's attachment style, and is also related to one's romantic relationships as an adult (Ainsworth, 1989; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Biringen, 1994; Chess, 1983). The literature also supports the notion that divorce alone is not always the best predictor, as family functioning is a significant component of divorce. In addition, ACD have been shown to desire more sexual behavior compared to non-ACD (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992) and ACD are more likely to seek sexual intimacy to fulfill their physical and emotional needs for affection compared to non-ACD (Amato, 1996). Studies have also identified gender as being a factor in relation to attachment (cf., Christensen & Brooks, 2001) and sexual attitudes (cf., Feldman & Cauffman, 2000; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1995). This study will

examine attachment styles, family functioning (expressiveness, cohesion, and conflict) and sexual attitudes of college students who grew up in divorced and intact families. The question of whether or not any of the variables are related is of interest. Based on the literature, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

Hypotheses

Attachment Styles

H1: Family functioning will be a better predictor than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores.

H2: Poorer family functioning (low expressiveness, low cohesion, higher conflict) will predict higher scores on the anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment.

Sexual Attitudes

H3: Family functioning will be a better predictor than divorce status in predicting permissive sexual attitudes.

H4: Poorer family functioning will predict more permissive sexual attitudes.

H5: Higher scores on the anxiety and avoidant dimensions of the attachment measure (i.e., insecure attachment) will significantly predict more permissive sexual attitudes.

Finally, the role of gender in the hypothesized relationships above will be examined.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental health professionals are often faced with the task of counseling individuals who are experiencing difficulties within their current romantic relationship. Arguably, many of the relationship-oriented adjustment problems that are experienced in adulthood may be traced back to difficult situations that were encountered within the family during childhood. Research has also demonstrated that parental divorce and high levels of inter-parental conflict place children at future risk for developing their own relationship problems (cf., Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995; Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998). Theory and research have demonstrated that the quality of the caregiver/child attachment relationship in early years of development is often related to that child's own romantic relationships in adulthood. For example, children who develop a secure attachment are more likely to develop close intimate relationships in adulthood (Walker & Ehrenberg, 1998) whereas children who develop an insecure attachment may encounter difficulties in forming close intimate relationships in adulthood (Collins & Read, 1990). There also appears to be a connection between attachment style and sexual permissiveness (cf., Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

This chapter will review significant research studies which are related to divorce, family functioning, attachment styles and sexual attitudes among college students from divorced and non-divorced families. First, this chapter will begin with a review of parental divorce and family functioning and how each is inter-connected. Second, a discussion of how children of divorce and high conflict families fare psychologically will

be discussed. Third, an overview of the attachment theory literature and its connectedness to adult romantic relationships will be discussed. Furthermore, there will be emphasis on how attachment is measured as well as how stable attachment remains over time. Finally, sexual attitudes in relation to attachment style will also be addressed.

Divorce

It is no secret that divorce is frequent in our society. It is a marker of high stress periods that precede and follow it. The events surrounding divorce are related to the physical and mental health of all those that are involved. If these events are experienced as distressing to the child, then potentially there could be lifelong consequences in that person's psychological functioning in important areas such as adult romantic relationships. Furthermore, if an event such as divorce is experienced as psychologically distressing, then it may also result in insecure patterns of attachment.

It is probably safe to ascertain that most people get married without intentions of ending their marriage. However, as relationships continue to develop, it is likely that changes will take place that are either welcomed or unwelcomed. Some of these changes may be easily handled while other changes may not be easily handled. It is possible that the unwelcomed changes can lead to negative outcomes, and as a result the couple may encounter complications in their marriage that cause significant turmoil and pose conflict. As a result, the couple may make attempts to salvage the marriage through counseling or some other means. Sometimes these attempts may be successful and other times they may not be. As a result, the marriage may end by means of divorce. As it is well known, the ending of a marriage is a process, and the legal dissolution is divorce. The actual divorce

is only one aspect of the ending of a marriage and by itself is seldom a crucial factor. Divorce usually occurs after a period of separation or other attempts (e.g., counseling) to rescue a marriage. Because divorce is a legal process and can be counted, divorce statistics can be readily used as a means to indicate societal trends that occur within a given society. However, the crucial factors (e.g., conflict) associated with divorce are often unaccounted for and sometimes can have lasting effects for all persons involved and especially for members (e.g., children) of the family unit.

Furthermore, divorce rates have changed over time due to various reasons such as changes in the laws related to divorce, changes in societal acceptance of divorce, more liberal reasons for divorce and persons having more resources (e.g., legal aid) which afford them access to the legal system as a means to offset the financial costs entailed in obtaining a divorce (Rae-Grant & Robson, 1988). However, the increase in the divorce rate also reflects changing attitudes toward the institution of marriage (cf., Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004; Whitton, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2008) such as no longer viewing marriage as a permanent institution. It is also common to find couples cohabitating more than in previous years along with having children out of wedlock. Another example of societal change related to the value of the institution of marriage is the fact that some couples obtain a legally binding prenuptial agreement prior to actually becoming married which implies that marriage may be considered a temporary union between couples.

It is also noteworthy to mention that because of the climbing divorce rates, the experience of growing up in the United States has changed. According to Wallerstein (1985), the startling prediction made in the middle 1970's that 30% to 40% of children

born in the 1970s would experience their parent's divorce, was accurate. It was also estimated that approximately 45% of all children born in 1983 would experience a parental divorce (Wallerstein, 1985), while another 35% of children born would experience their parent's marriage to another person, and 20% would experience an additional divorce. Previous data also indicated that approximately 50% of all marriages and 40% or more of first marriages end in divorce (Zill & Nord, 1993). Current trends translate into even more startling expectations. Hughes (2005) reported that during the 1990s statistics demonstrated that there was one divorce for every two marriages. Given that approximately 1.5 million American children experience a parental divorce each year (Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998), children's psychological adjustment post-divorce is an area of concern in the aspect of how these children function within their own romantic relationships when they become adults. Specifically, the connection between experiencing childhood parental divorce and its relatedness to psychological adjustment in young adulthood is of concern (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) reported that young adults from divorced families have a tendency to be anxious, to fear rejection, to express incongruent feelings, to have low self esteem, to be indecisive, and to be vulnerable to depression as it stems from loss. Some researchers have noted that it may not be divorce in particular that is the root cause of the psychological maladjustment, rather it is inter-parental conflict that is the source of longer term, relationship-oriented difficulties (cf., Amato, 1993; Brown, Portes, & Christensen, 1989).

One study with two different samples conducted by Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) documented that children of divorced parents are at greater risk for a variety of psychological problems in comparison to children of married parents. The first sample included 193 college students from which 99 had parents who had divorced and 94 had parents that never divorced. The second sample consisted of a community sample which included 53 young adults and adolescents that experienced living in a low-income family.

The results indicated that many persons from divorced families (regardless of college or community status) reported feeling distressed about the parental divorce. Furthermore, young adults of married parents reported less distress about their childhoods compared to young adults whose parents had divorced. For example, young adults whose parents had divorced were likelier to believe that they had a more difficult childhood by as much as three times compared to persons whose parents did not divorce. It is important to note that Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) found that students had painful memories, beliefs and feelings associated with their parent's divorce more than a decade post divorce. Although this study showed significant results, it was not without limitations. Aside from a positive factor that this particular study used a sample of college students and compared them with a sample of low-income families in the community to assess any significant differences that may have resulted, limitations included the aspect of overlooking successful coping mechanisms among children from distressed families, the limited measures of psychological adjustment and the variability of reported distress of a parental divorce over time. An additional limitation included the difficulty of documenting memories which caused painful feelings.

Other studies have also related parental divorce to measures of offspring well-being. Amato and Keith (1991) conducted a meta-analysis regarding long-term outcomes of parental divorce related to well-being. Criteria for inclusion in the meta-analysis were: a) inclusion of a sample in which children lived in single-parent families due to parental divorce or separation and a sample of children who had been living in a family in which the parents did not divorce; b) each study had to include at least one quantitative measure of well-being; and c) the data from each study had to be in a form that permitted calculation of effect sizes. Each study also had to be composed of strictly children and not adult children of divorce. As a result, 92 studies were analyzed in which over 13,000 children were included. Through the meta-analysis, it was determined that children from families which did not divorce had higher levels of well-being compared to children from divorced families. However, divorce was not found to have a profoundly negative effect on all children. The results also illustrated that parental divorce was more likely to be viewed as negative in stepfamilies as opposed to children who resided in single-parent divorced families. It was also concluded that children who experienced parental death were better off than children who experienced parental divorce and that children who resided in stepfamilies were no better off than children of divorce who did not live in stepfamilies.

Amato and Keith (1991) further commented that their meta-analysis revealed that parental divorce appears to lower the well-being of children. However, Amato and Keith cautioned that the factors associated with the divorce may be a stressor and that the divorce alone may only contribute minor effects. It was suggested that future studies

should not include such a large number of outcomes and that future researchers should limit their analyses to only measures that have a strong theoretical link to divorce. It was also suggested that future researchers should study adult children of divorce in relation to long-term outcomes.

Limitations to the study by Amato and Keith (1991) included the aspect that the measurement of parental divorce alone is not clear. It can be considered a stressor or it could have a minor relationship to distress. As a result, it is also not clear as to the degree to which children of divorce may be seriously affected by the divorce. The use of multiple outcome variables as opposed to limiting the measures to only those that had a solid theoretical construct also made the analysis somewhat difficult to fully interpret and explain. Another possible limitation was that the researchers may have been looking in the wrong places for participants (such as colleges), ignoring that other researchers have discussed how divorce can be related to lower educational attainment and lower socioeconomic status, which places people at a disadvantage to attend college. Thus, most studies cannot be generalized to the larger population, but only to college students.

Despite the growing evidence of the relatedness that divorce has to children's psychological well-being, it is also noteworthy to discuss research on how divorce is specifically related to the romantic relationships of adults who had experienced parental divorce when they were children.

Adult Children of Divorce and Romantic Relationships

Research has demonstrated that children from divorced families have a tendency to endure psychological hardship when developing close romantic relations with a partner

(Collins & Read, 1990). Furthermore, many daughters from divorced families blamed their fathers for abandoning the marriage as opposed to working on it (Henry & Holmes, 1998). This feeling of blame was generalized to relationships with significant male attachment figures such as those associated with romantic relationships. Daughters from divorced families also speculated that it was men (as opposed to women) who end relationships.

Many sons from divorced families also experienced negative aspects associated with parental divorce. For example, sons from divorced families held the belief that relationships were not lasting (Henry & Holmes, 1998). This pessimistic view did not necessarily come about by fears of being abandoned by their partners, but instead, came about as them believing that they would somehow end the relationship in the future. It was stated that sons from divorced families had fears related to commitment and being close to another person (Henry & Holmes, 1998).

Furthermore, over the past 40 years, the frequency of divorce has escalated throughout the United States. Studies have shown that adolescents of divorce may be able to cope with stress and adapt well during their early years, but they will be more likely confronted with concerns related to love and marriage anxiety that stem from issues such as betrayal and abandonment in their adult years (Wallerstein, 1991).

Specifically, Wallerstein (1991) conducted a review of the literature related to the long term outcomes of divorce as it related specifically to children. These studies included longitudinal assessments which measured cognitive and personality development of the children, group differences among non-divorced and divorced

families as well as remarried and single-parent households, observations about children of divorce as they entered young adulthood, inter-parental conflict and discord, and inter-generational transmission. From Wallerstein's review it was discovered that adult children of divorce experienced ongoing negative memories of the divorce. Furthermore, a significant number of adult children of divorce continued to report feeling sad and resentful toward their parents for divorcing. Many also reported feeling as though they had missed out on a normal childhood as they had not been able to grow up in an intact family. Wallerstein further attested that it cannot be inferred that bad outcomes can simply be reversed by reversing the occurrences (e.g. divorce), but that there is no doubt that a broken marriage contract weakens the family in relation to child-rearing and child-protective purposes. Wallerstein's conclusions included the importance of understanding the impact of the custodial parent-child relationship and the impact that chronic inter-parental hostility promotes in children. It was further acknowledged that each study which was reviewed by Wallerstein showed different types of long term effects which can be the result of different kinds of stressors in post-divorced families. Wallerstein also commented that the studies give credence to understanding how complex family interactions can be in relation to parent-child relationships. Wallerstein cautioned researchers to not focus on one single aspect, but to use a variety of assessment dimensions in conducting future research.

Another study that examined divorced and non-divorced families was conducted by Gabardi and Rosen (1992). Gabardi and Rosen studied 300 college students from divorced and non-divorced families to examine how intimacy development was related to

parental divorce. The participants completed a series of questionnaires which assessed demographics, dating status, sexual behaviors, relationship beliefs, intimacy, and attitudes toward marriage, self-esteem, and level of conflict among parents. The results demonstrated that students who had experienced a parental divorce also had significantly more sexual partners compared to those from non-divorced families. Students who were from divorced families also reported that they would like to engage in more sexual behaviors when going steady compared to students whose families were not divorced. Parental marital conflict also was found to be a predictor of the total number of sexual partners for both students from divorced and non-divorced families. Higher parental conflict also was a predictor of intimacy problems and negative attitudes toward marriage for ACD. Trust was examined by Gabardi and Rosen. Adult children of divorce, in general, demonstrated a lack of trust. As a result, their relationships were hindered due to fear of rejection.

Other researchers have examined ACD and their experience of interpersonal problems. For example, Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, and Paris (1995) examined the long-term outcomes associated with parental divorce in relation to interpersonal problems prior to and after the divorce. In this study, 605 college students participated, of which 467 came from families where the parents were currently married and 125 came from divorced or separated families. Participants completed a questionnaire which assessed interpersonal problems and another questionnaire which assessed family variables related to the development of interpersonal problems. The results of the study demonstrated that children from divorced families tended to be over-controlling in their relationships and to

have problems with intimacy compared to children from non-divorced families. Children of divorce also reported more problems with submissiveness. These findings were consistent with a similar study in which Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) demonstrated that children of divorce tended to experience a crisis in intimate relationships when they reached adulthood. Limitations to this study included the complexity of measuring interpersonal problems, the nature of self-report instruments, and the use of a university population which is often related to higher socioeconomic status. Another limitation included unequal sample sizes among divorced and intact families.

Other research (Amato & Booth, 1996; Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984) also supported the idea that there is decreased satisfaction in romantic relationships among young adults from divorced homes. Amato and Booth (1996) used national longitudinal records from the Study of Marriage over the Life Course to assess whether divorce was transmitted inter-generationally. The records included data from 2,033 married persons who were 55 years of age and younger and participated in random digit telephone interviews in 1980. Follow up interviews took place in 1983 (86% of the original sample), 1988 (71%) and 1992 (61%). Variables such as parental divorce, offspring divorce, age at marriage, and attitudes toward divorce and interpersonal problems were assessed. Control variables included the educational level of the husband's and the wife's parents, race, gender and duration of marriage.

Results of the analysis demonstrated that couples that had a wife or husband who had experienced the divorce of their parents were more likely to divorce compared to couples in which neither spouse had experienced their parent's divorce. The results also

demonstrated that the likelihood of divorce among the couples was particularly high if both spouses had experienced their parent's divorce. This was also true of persons in second marriages compared to first marriages. Also relevant to the study was that offspring from divorced families were more likely to report attributes related to interpersonal problems such as jealousy, anger and infidelity. Amato and Booth (1996) further theorized that persons from divorced families are influenced by their own parent's interactions, and as a result may not learn how to successfully function in their own marriages.

Limitations to Amato and Booth's (1996) study included possible alternative explanations for offspring divorce other than inter-generational transmission. These included the possibility that personality problems of parents can transfer to offspring via genetics or parenting, and as a result, the problems increase the risk of divorce for both generations. It is also possible that offspring who experienced a parental divorce may also experience high levels of instability while involved in close dating relationships.

An additional study which assessed attitudes of ACD was conducted by Amato (1996). Amato's study consisted of using national longitudinal data as a means to explain intergenerational transmission of divorce. Analysis of the results indicated that ACD tend to marry at an earlier age compared to non-ACD. Amato hypothesized that ACD suffer emotional deficits due to the failed marriages of their parents, and therefore, they seek intimacy to fulfill emotional needs more than do persons from intact families.

Johnston and Thomas (1996) conducted a study in which they assessed perceived risk and trust as each was associated with intimate relationships. The Johnston and

Thomas study included a sample of 60 undergraduate students (43 women, 17 men). There were 21 students from divorced families and 39 students from non-divorced families. Each was involved in an exclusive heterosexual relationship of at least three months, but never married. The subjects completed questionnaires which assessed risk, trust, parental conflict, and other demographic variables.

Johnston and Thomas (1996) hypothesized that persons from divorced families would score higher on perceived risk of intimacy and lower on dyadic trust compared to persons from non-divorced families. The results revealed no support for the hypothesis in relation to perceived risk. However, persons from divorced families had significantly lower scores on dyadic trust compared to those from non-divorced families. It was also noted that persons who scored high on perceived risk also scored low on dyadic trust. According to Johnston and Thomas, this study demonstrated that ACD that end up getting married are more likely to divorce rather than work on the relationship when problems arise. Finally, perceived risk for dating was related to parental conflict. Although the study had a relatively small sample size, it is another example of how the experience of a parental divorce may be related to offspring functioning in their own intimate relationships.

Timing of divorce is also an important factor to consider in the association between parental divorce and relationship difficulties in adulthood. For example, Summers, Forehand, Armistead, and Tannenbaum (1998) hypothesized that adolescence is a time when romantic relationships are beginning to develop, and if one experiences the divorce of parents during one's adolescence, it is symbolic that romantic relationships

are not always secure. In their study, they specifically set out to answer the question of whether or not family variables, which included inter-parental conflict, could explain any inter-generational transmission of relationships. Participants in their study included 285 Caucasian adolescents and their mothers. The results indicated that young adults who grew up in non-divorced families had more secure romantic relationship attachments in comparison to young adults from divorced families. There were not any significant family process variables (e.g., interparental conflict) that mediated the relationship between attachment and divorce of parents. However, the father-adolescent relationship and the father-young adult relationship were predictors of young adult psychosocial adjustment. Limitations to this study included using a sample of convenience, a sample composed of strictly Caucasian persons, and the inability to generalize the findings to other populations beyond a Caucasian community. Difficulty in measuring family process variables such as parenting practices and having only one source of data were also limitations to this study.

Christensen and Brooks (2001) reviewed the literature related to adult children of divorce. In their review, several factors were indicated that relate to complications that ACD experience in interpersonal relationships. For example, the authors noted that female ACD experienced different difficulties compared to male ACD. Specifically, young females had greater relationship conflict and more sexual partners. Other research has shown that both male and female ACD had more sexual partners compared to non-ACD (cf., Gabardi & Rosen, 1991). Christensen and Brooks also stated that there is slightly more evidence which indicated that women have more difficulty with intimacy

compared to men (cf., Kinnaird & Garrard, 1986). Christensen and Brooks further concluded that they recognized the difficulty of measuring interpersonal relationships as they are quite complex. Recommendations for future researchers included addressing variables that may contribute to negative perceptions of ACD in relation to intimacy and marriage, concentrating on favorable outcomes, and long-term studies which assess lifelong outcomes related to interpersonal relationships.

In review of the aforementioned studies, it is clearly evident that divorce and inter-parental conflict are dimensions that are related to the psychological well-being of offspring. Whether the primary reason for less psychological well-being is the divorce or inter-parental conflict is not completely clear despite the impressive evidence that each is a contributing factor. What is clear, however, is that divorce is a product of American society, and that the divorce rates do not appear to be decreasing. It is also clear that children of divorce fare worse psychologically compared to those who grew up in non-divorced families. It is also clear that parental divorce is associated with negative outcomes, and that the experience of seeing how parents relate to one another may be related to how offspring communicate in their own intimate relationships in adulthood. Below, family functioning is discussed in more depth.

Family Functioning

As previously noted, parental divorce in the family of origin has been associated with relationship difficulties among adult children from divorced families (Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000). However, it is not the divorce alone that is always the factor related to such difficulties. It is most likely the events that supersede and perhaps even

follow the divorce that may contribute to potential long lasting psychological consequences for adults. Research in relation to family functioning has demonstrated that low family functioning (along with parental divorce) is related to young adults' inability to form lasting intimate relationships with significant peers (Amato & Booth, 2001).

Furthermore, the literature contends that persons who grew up in families that did not divorce may also have problems with psychological adjustment in domains such as interpersonal relationships and psychological adjustment. Therefore, another factor needs to be closely examined in conjunction with divorce status – family functioning. Family functioning involves many factors, such as expectations for behaviors within a family (Bray, 1995). It also includes aspects such as the roles and rules within a family. For example, family functioning in relation to cohesion, conflict and expressiveness has been reported in studies that look at differences between well adjusted and not well adjusted adults from divorced families in relation to factors such as vocational identity (cf., Johnson, Buboltz, & Nichols, 1999). Family functioning has also been assessed in relation to factors associated with psychological well-being and distress (Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999). Low family functioning (along with parental divorce) has also been examined in relation to young adults forming lasting, intimate relationships with significant peers (Amato & Booth, 1991). For the purpose of this research, cohesion, expressiveness and conflict are of focus as they are operationally defined and have been frequently examined in the literature.

According to Moos and Moos (1986), cohesion is part of the relationship dimension. Cohesion refers to the extent to which the family members are concerned and committed to the family. Cohesion also involves the degree to which family members are helpful and supportive of one another. Expressiveness refers to the extent to which family members are allowed and encouraged to act openly. Expressiveness also involves the extent in which members of one's family are able to express feelings in a straightforward manner. Conflict refers to the extent in which the expression of aggression, conflict and anger are perceived in one's family. Several studies have noted that conflict is a factor that stresses parents and can cause them to not be as effective with their children. Parental conflict has also been cited as having a potential negative outcome on psychological adjustment in children (Emery, 1982).

Emery (1982) conducted a meta-analysis in which the data from several studies on marital turmoil and behavior problems in children were reviewed. For this study, only children's social behavior which had been considered by mental health professionals, parents and/or teachers to be maladaptive was considered. Emery cautioned against the likelihood that one single hypothesis could explain the relationship between marital and child problems. However, through this analysis of previous studies, it was determined that conflict between parents can lead to factors such as inconsistent discipline and poor modeling which can be related to stress on children. Emery further commented that attachment bonds can be disrupted by marital turmoil based on the maternal deprivation hypothesis formulated by Bowlby (1969). This hypothesis stated that the loss of an attachment figure usually produces an instinctual fear such as anxiety. Likewise, marital

turmoil such as divorce contributes to paternal deprivation, which, in turn, results in the disruption of attachment bonds.

Parental conflict has also been speculated to be related to the exhibition of interpersonal problems in children of divorce (Amato, 1986; Amato & Keith, 1991). Amato (1986) conducted a study in which the association of levels of marital conflict with self-esteem among 274 school children in grades three through 10 was researched. One-hundred thirty two of the children were between eight and nine years old while the other 142 were 15-16 years old. Amato hypothesized that: (a) parental conflict would be negatively associated with children's self-esteem, (b) the negative effect on self-esteem would be higher for males compared to females, (c) the negative effect on self-esteem would be higher for young children compared to adolescents, (d) marital conflict would be negatively associated with the quality of parent-child relationships, and (e) the negative effect of marital conflict in relation to children's self-esteem would be higher for children who had low quality relationships with both parents as opposed to children who had high quality relationships with one or both parents.

Amato's (1986) results showed that children's self-esteem was significantly and negatively associated with parental conflict. The hypothesis that parental conflict would result in higher negative self-esteem for males compared to females was not supported. The hypothesis that parental conflict would result in higher negative effects of self-esteem for young children compared to adolescents, however, was supported for female participants. Marital conflict tended to be associated with low quality relationships for

young girls in relation to both parents. For adolescent males, as marital conflict increased, they became more distant from their fathers and closer to their mothers.

Amato's (1986) study was quite complex and diverse, and used a relatively diverse sample of students from both the private and public sectors. However, this study was conducted in Australia in the state of Victoria. As a result, Amato's study can only be generalized to an Australian population as cultural differences may emerge among different countries.

A study by Enos and Handal (1986) measured family conflict in relation to the psychological adjustment of children. Specifically, Enos and Handal assessed the dimensions of family structure (divorced and intact families) and family conflict. Their sample included 823 white adolescents (518 females, 305 males) from private high schools who were between the ages of 13 and 18. About 92% ($n = 755$) of the sample resided in never divorced intact homes (478 females, 277 males) and 8% (40 females, 28 males) came from divorced families in which they lived with one parent.

Assessment included participants' assessment of family climate, other measures of psychological adjustment, and a demographic questionnaire. The authors used the physical wholeness position which contends that the sex and the age of the child at divorce would be related to later psychological adjustment. It also was hypothesized that divorce would be negatively related to psychological adjustment. The authors also used the psychological-wholeness position which contends that the presence of perceived conflict has an adverse effect on adjustment regardless of marital status. The authors used the two perspectives for comparisons. The results revealed that the two family conflict

groups (high versus low) were significantly different in relation to perceived family environment and psychological adjustment. Specifically, the low-family conflict group displayed more family cohesion than the high-conflict group. It was concluded that parental divorce was not a prominent variable in relation to psychological adjustment, but instead, high family conflict was more related to psychological adjustment.

Limitations to this study included the lack of diversity in the sample. Although this is a limitation in that the results cannot be generalized to other populations, it does provide information on the functioning of white families. The fact that the authors used students from private schools only is also a limitation. The use of student self-report was also a limitation as it only provided information on how the students (not other family members) perceived the family structure. Also, the use of young students' reports may not be accurate as young persons may not be able to understand the concepts well enough to answer due to cognitive immaturity in relation to such sophisticated questionnaires as used in this study.

In further examination of studies on inter-parental conflict, Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) conducted a study that examined differences in academic performance and school behavior as each related to family structure (intact, stepfather families, and mother-custody divorced families). The participants included 219 students from a public junior high school who completed a 27-page questionnaire over the course of three sessions. The questionnaire included measures of adjustment (e.g., goal directedness, severity of maladjustment, academic performance and school problems) and correlates of adjustment (e.g., inter-parental conflict, family environment, coping strategies, and social support

from peers). The results indicated that family process variables more so than family structure variables were more reliable predictors of adolescent adjustment. Family process variables were significantly related to number of absences, academic achievement and grades. Finally, generalized conflict (and not just inter-parental conflict) was related to maladaptive functioning.

Limitations to the Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) study included the difficulty of comparing academic performance across multiple family structures and types of inter-parental conflict. Other limitations also included the aspect of measuring academic performance in relation to family structure and inter-parental conflict. There were numerous variables that may have not been accounted for in such a complex study measuring academic performance. For example, genetics has been shown to be related to academic performance, as are children's health (e.g., Down syndrome) and mental capacity (e.g., ADD).

Amato and Keith (1991) conducted a meta-analysis of 92 studies involving children from divorced and non-divorced families. In relation to family conflict, it was revealed that children in high-conflict families showed significantly lower psychological adjustment. Specifically, children in non-divorced families that exhibited high-conflict were considered to be worse off in relation to psychological well-being, self-concept, conduct and social adjustment compared to children who were residing in non-divorced families with low conflict. Interestingly, the children living in high-conflict non-divorced families demonstrated poorer psychological well-being, poorer self-concept, poorer

conduct, and poorer social adjustment compared to their counterparts in divorced families.

Borrine, Handal, Brown, and Searight (1991) conducted a study in which different views of parental marital status and quality along with children's long-term adjustment were measured. The Borrine et al. study demonstrated that perceived family conflict was a determining factor in whether or not the child adjusted well psychologically.

Specifically, these authors utilized 917 adolescents from divorced and non-divorced families. The participants were assigned to groups based on marital status (divorced, non-divorced and blended) and perceived levels of conflict (low, high and medium). The results indicated that parental marital status by itself was not related to perceived family conflict and adolescent adjustment. However, perceived family conflict was statistically meaningful as it was related to adjustment among adolescents. The Borrine et al. study extended the study by Enos and Handal (1986) in the aspect that it confirmed the results that family conflict is related to adjustment in children.

Furthermore, Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger and Mas (1992) examined how family functioning and the adjustment of children post-divorce were related. Their study utilized 102 children from elementary, middle and high schools and their parents. All students had parents who had separated or divorced. The researchers measured the socioemotional adjustment of children in relation to behavioral problems and social competencies, family functioning, and behavioral and affective responses of the child as each related to parental divorce. Specifically, internalizing stress, externalizing stress and social competence were examined. The results indicated that families that had nurturance

and support post-divorce were most likely to minimize maladjustment in their children. The study also noted that children exposed to parental conflict post divorce tended to regress emotionally as evidenced by social withdrawal, anxiety and depression. Furthermore, family functioning, such as disharmony among parental figures, was shown to have a detrimental outcome on the parent-child relationship.

Subsequently, Amato (1993) conducted another meta-analytic study in a similar fashion to the Amato and Keith (1991) study. Five constructs (absence of the non-custodial parent, adjustment of the custodial parent, inter-parental conflict, economic hardship, and stressful life changes) were examined in relation to adjustment of children following divorce. Included in this study were 180 published studies that included quantitative data. The outcome variables consisted of academic achievement, behavior problems, psychological adjustment, self esteem, and quality of social relationships. Amato concluded that all outcome variables in most of the studies were strongly related to the level of inter-parental conflict in both divorced and non-divorced families. Amato further attested that continued contact with a non-custodial parent could be more harmful than beneficial if there is continued conflict among the parents post divorce. Amato cited limitations to previous studies in that they were assessing complex attributes that were not easily connected to divorce, and that many of the hypotheses of other researchers have not been tested repeatedly.

Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995) conducted a study in relation to family functioning. Their research specifically examined how children's long-term outcomes were related to parental marital conflict and divorce. Their study examined high-conflict

and low-conflict families. Amato et al. utilized a 12-year longitudinal study of marital instability (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 1991) to test their hypotheses. This study specifically included data of 2,033 married persons who were 55 years of age and under that were interviewed via telephone in 1980, 1983, 1988, and again in 1992. As part of the 1992 interviews, random samples of participants' offspring were also interviewed. The successful sample interviewed included 471 offspring with a median age of 23.5 years. The offspring were placed in different groups. They were categorized in the parental divorce group if they were residing with both parents in 1980 and if they experienced a parental divorce after 1980, and the intact group in which the offspring did not experience a parental divorce. The researchers measured marital conflict severity and level (verbal and/or physical) based on parent self-reports of severity and level. In order to assess the connection of offspring outcomes in relation to parental divorce and marital quality, multiple regression analyses were conducted. The results demonstrated that young adults living in high-conflict families had higher well-being if their parents divorced when they were children as opposed to staying together. It was the opposite for low-conflict families. If the children's parents stayed together, then as young adults they had higher well-being.

Although the Amato et al. (1995) study gives researchers good information into the aspect of how marital conflict can later be related to psychological well-being, the study is not without limitations. This study did not have a relatively large sample size that was proportionate among parental divorce status groups in the entire population nor was it proportionate in relation to general levels of conflict in the entire population. Having

relatively equal groups and a larger sample size would have made for a better comparison.

Ensign, Scherman, and Clark (1998) utilized 101 college students (56 females, 45 males) from divorced and non-divorced families to examine divorce, conflict, intimacy and parental attachment. The college students ranged in age from 21 to 47. Each was asked to complete a packet of questionnaires which assessed parental attachment, parental conflict and attitudes about love and sex. The findings demonstrated that students from divorced families tended to have lower levels of intimacy in their own intimate relationships compared to students from non-divorced families. The results also demonstrated that levels of parental conflict were negatively correlated with intimacy in students' intimate relationships. Specifically, as level of family conflict rose, student's intimacy in relation to intimate relationships tended to decline. It was also noted that the greater the level of conflict among parents, the less close parent-child relationships were. The authors further emphasized that parental conflict, as opposed to divorce, was negatively related to children's adjustment.

Although this study extended the research on intimacy and provided additional support for the view that parental conflict can be related to children's well-being, it is not without limitations. One specific limitation was the correlational design. In correlational studies, one cannot determine the temporal order of events, and one cannot infer that significant results imply causality. The use of self reports is also a limitation.

A study by Jekielek (1998) also shared similar results to those cited by Amato et al. (1995). The Jekielek study investigated whether or not children were better off in a

two-parent family with marital conflict or in a divorced or separated family. This particular study utilized data from a longitudinal study –the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY), which began in 1979. Using an early adolescent sample from the NLSY, the author examined the family experiences of children who were pre-school age and older when their parents either divorced or separated. Parental marital disruption and conflict were utilized as independent variables while control variables included the child's ethnicity, sex, and age along with the mother's family income and level of education.

The significant findings of the analyses were that parental conflict significantly increased levels of anxiety and depression in children. Childhood anxiety was higher when parents displayed higher levels of marital conflict as opposed to marital disruption. It was also of importance to note that parental marital disruption between the years of 1988 and 1992 also significantly increased anxiety and depression in children two years after the divorce. The interaction related to parental conflict and marital disruption showed that parental engagement in high levels of conflict in 1988 related to low levels of depression and anxiety in 1992 if the parents had separated or divorced compared to children whose parents remained married. It was also found from this study that recent (less than two years) divorce increased child anxiety more so than divorce that occurred earlier (two or more years previous). This was an excellent study which examined divorce and marital conflict in relation to child well-being. However, this study is limited in that it did not measure child well-being prior to marital disruption or parental conflict.

Several studies have also examined family functioning in relation to adult children of alcoholics and family functioning dynamics (cf., Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999; El-Sheikh & Buckhalt, 2003). Robitschek and Kashubeck (1999) utilized data from 294 college students who completed questionnaires which assessed parental alcoholism, personal growth orientation, family functioning, hardiness, psychological well-being and psychological distress in conjunction with demographic variables. The significant findings of their study demonstrated that family functioning was a better predictor of psychological well-being than parental alcoholism.

The El-Sheikh and Buckhalt (2003) study assessed positive aspects of family functioning and attachment among children and parents in relation to parental drinking problems and other adjustment and intellectual outcomes of children. The participants in their study included children who were between six and 12 years of age, their mothers, their fathers, and their teachers. There were a total of 156 families in the study which included 110 boys and 106 girls. The children were grouped by problem drinking parents and non-problem drinking parents. Questionnaires were completed by the mother that assessed child and family functioning and a self-report measure completed by the child. Upon parental consent (77%), the child's teacher completed a report form. The results indicated that higher levels of family cohesion served as a healthy protective factor against adjustment and cognitive difficulties in children, and that a less secure attachment to the mother or father was predictive of higher levels of cognitive and social problems despite problem-drinking status.

Marital violence is another significant factor in relation to family functioning. Katz and Low (2004) conducted a study in which they measured marital violence in relation to child outcomes (delinquency, aggression, withdrawal and anxiety/depression). The Katz and Low study utilized a pool of participants (133 families) solicited through preschools, newspaper announcements, and pediatrician and dentist offices. Procedures included an interaction that was conducted in a laboratory and a peer interaction assessment along with self-report measures of marital violence and children's behavior problems. The results of the Katz and Low study indicated that marital violence was significantly related to child delinquency, aggression, withdrawal, and anxiety/depression.

Another study by Fabricius and Luecken (2007) measured relationships with parents and parental conflict of children of divorce. For their study, Fabricius and Luecken utilized 1,154 college students that were enrolled in an introductory psychology class at a state university. About 28% of the students in the study had experienced a parental divorce. The researchers' measures asked students whose parents had divorced before they were 16 years of age ($n = 266$) to answer additional questions about the frequency of parental conflict prior to, during, the first two years after, and the next three years after their parents' separation. The researchers also asked participants to answer questions related to factors such as painful feelings about the divorce, father caring, and physical health outcomes (e.g., somatic symptoms). The results of the Fabricius and Luecken study indicated that the more parental conflict the college students experienced as children from divorced families, the worse their relationships were with their fathers,

which, in turn, made them feel even more distressed in relation to their parents' divorce as a young adult. Another significant finding of their study demonstrated that the more time children of divorce spent with the fathers post divorce, the less parent conflict was exhibited.

Limitations to this study included the use of college students as they may not adequately represent the general population. A potential confounding variable with college students, as noted by the authors, was that college students may tend to be psychologically healthier and less negatively affected by divorce.

In review of the literature on family functioning, it is clear that family functioning includes communication within the family of origin, and that family functioning may be related to offspring well-being. Research has demonstrated that if parents have high levels of conflict, it may lead to unfavorable outcomes in the parent-child relationship and in later adult-adult romantic relationships. The research has also demonstrated that persons living in high-conflict families tend to fare worse emotionally compared to persons living in families in which conflict is low. Finally, family functioning was more related to offspring well-being than divorce.

How divorce and family functioning relate to attachment security is also of concern. Caffery (2000) and El-Sheik and Buckhalt (2003) utilized college students to assess family functioning in relation to attachment style. Overall, the results of both studies indicated that family functioning is related to attachment security. It was noted that families that provide emotional support and nurturance are more likely to have

securely attached children. The next section of this chapter will discuss the basic premises of attachment theory.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was originally devised as a means to explain many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbances which included emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression (Bowlby, 1977). Attachment theory has also been known to be related to emotional bonds such as love (Shaver & Hazan, 1988), and it has entailed the behavior and emotions which one experiences with others in meaningful relationships (Pistole, 1994). In relation to this study, it is worthy to note that attachment theory is part of a developmental approach to understanding relationships in general. Specifically, Wynne (1984) stated that attachment theory is related to an “epigenesis” of relational systems or how “the interchanges or transactions of each developmental phase build upon the outcome of earlier transactions” (p. 298).

Attachment theory was initially developed by Bowlby (1969; 1973) and later refined by Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978). Attachment theory is based on the conceptualization that humans need to form close affectionate bonds. It serves both as a theory of how an inborn “attachment system” functions in all humans, and it also serves as a theory of how attachment strategies are adopted in response to individual life experiences (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Attachment is considered an emotional bond that one person forms with another person (Ainsworth, 1973). Behavior as it is related to attachment is that which results in a person achieving closeness to others (Bowlby, 1980). Attachment theory has also been

studied in conjunction with animals (Harlow, 1961). As previously stated, most of the early research in attachment was conducted by Bowlby and Ainsworth. Early studies focused on attachment which took place among caregivers and their children.

Attachment theory was further expanded as a means to study adult romantic relationships (cf., Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) introduced their three category measure of adult attachment as an adult analogy to Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall's (1978) classification of infants' research. Adult attachment has focused almost exclusively on correlates of individual differences in attachment. This has been quite an endeavor in that many attachment strategies have been related to aspects such as jealousy, parental drinking, relationship satisfaction, self-disclosure, support seeking and several other categories.

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) formulated his theory of attachment out of concepts that were derived from psychoanalysis and were merged into a new paradigm compatible with developmental and other branches of psychology. It was Bowlby's theory that transformed researchers and other's ways of thinking about infant-caregiver attachments. Specifically, Ainsworth initially tested Bowlby's theory through empirical methods.

In Bowlby's book titled *Attachment and Loss* (1980) Bowlby stated that behavior related to attachment includes behavior that results in a person attaining and maintaining closeness to another individual. Attachment behavior is observed in infants and children with such actions of exchanging occasional glances and greetings to the attachment figure (e.g., mother/father). It can also exhibit itself as the child following the caregiver and

clinging or crying with the result being getting the care that the infant/child wants from the attachment figure.

Additionally, Bowlby (1980) stated that during the course of healthy psychological development, attachment related behavior leads to the psychological development of a caring bond which is also known as an attachment. This is something that normally takes place between the child and caregiver (parents) and later is expanded to adult and adult attachments.

Attachment theory has broadened the view of child development and how children come to develop different attachment styles due to the interactions that they experience with caregivers. According to Ainsworth et al. (1978), attachment styles in children include both dimensions of secure and insecure. Anxious and avoidant are two types of insecure attachment. Ainsworth et al. devised the *Strange Situation* experiment in which they assessed attachment styles between the child and the mother. A child that had a secure attachment style was upset when the mother left the room, but was easily comforted and welcomed the mother back upon her return. The child with an anxious attachment style was upset when the mother left and had difficulty being comforted upon reunion with the mother. The child with an avoidant attachment style did not experience significant distress upon the mother leaving or upon her return.

Additionally, it is very characteristic around the time of their first birthday that most infants tend to become upset when separated from their parents (Fish & Belsky, 1991). According to Fish and Belsky (1991) research has documented both longitudinal and cross sectional research on infants who have been brought up under diverse

conditions in well-developed countries such as the United States (Kagan, Kearsley, & Zelazo, 1978) and in other countries which are undeveloped (Lester, Kotelchuck, Spelke, Sellers, & Klein, 1974). Studies have revealed that child protest to separation from primary care-givers tends to be uncommon prior to nine months of age, peaks somewhere around 13 months of age and tends to decline soon after (Fish & Belsky, 1991).

According to Bowlby (1980) strong emotions come about during the formation of attachment relationships. This is also true in the disruption of attachment relationships and also in the renewal of attachment relationships. Bowlby also stated that the formation of a bond can be described as falling in love. Similarly, threat of loss will arouse anxiety while an actual loss causes one to feel sadness. Each situation, however, is likely to arouse feelings such as anger. When a bond is unchallenged, it is experienced as a feeling of security while the restoration of a bond is experienced as happiness. If a bond is not challenged, then it is more likely that the person will experience security.

Furthermore, Bowlby stated that attachment behavior is related to evolution because it contributes to the individual's survival. For example, attachment behavior keeps a person emotionally and physically connected with his or her caregivers. As a result, this reduces the risk of harm from environmental factors and predators. Initial interactions determine how an individual's attachment behavior develops and the manners in which it will become organized are based upon the experiences that he or she has with attachment figures throughout infancy, childhood, and adolescence.

Attachment Stability

Most theorists propose that attachment style stays relatively consistent throughout the lifespan, as attachment style is believed to be based on the early formation of attachment relationships in the first year of life. This early formation usually takes place with the caregiver and the infant and is thought to be relatively stable across the lifespan (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1980). However, there is also research that debates the theory that attachment style is stable across the lifespan. For example, others (cf. Baldwin & Fehr, 1995; Davila, Burge, and Hammen, 1997; Fraley, 2002) theorized that events that occur throughout the course of the lifespan can promote change in one's attachment style. Specifically, Bartholomew (1990) stated that the stability of attachment style can be related to the stability of the child's relationship with the primary caregivers in addition to the quality of the family environment. A divorce or other major life event may alter the relationship with caregivers which could subsequently change the person's attachment style.

One study that measured attachment stability was conducted by Baldwin and Fehr (1995). Baldwin and Fehr collected data from several previous studies that involved participant completion of the Hazan and Shaver (1987) single item attachment style scale. From their review, it was discovered that approximately 30% of people changed attachment styles over various time periods ranging from one week to several months with interpretations of moderate stability to significant instability. It was stated by Baldwin et al. that an individual's attachment style is related to relational schemas of the moment

and not to general dispositions or traits. This study reported that people do change attachment style over time.

Furthermore, Davila, Burge, and Hammen (1997) tested a hypothesis about why attachment styles change. Their study included 155 women from high schools in Los Angeles as participants. The participants were between the ages of 17 and 19 and represented ethnically diverse groups. Assessments included attachment status, current and past symptomology, family history of psychopathology, family “divorce” status, and personality disturbance. The study lasted two years as the participants were contacted at different intervals for follow up. In their study, Davila et al. hypothesized that some people are more prone to attachment style change than others. The results demonstrated that family dysfunction could disrupt the development of coherent views of self and others, and as a result manifest itself into an unstable attachment style in adulthood. Davila et al. also noted that attachment instability is linked to attachment insecurity. They specifically suggested that people who were uncertain about their security may be more insecure than people who were certain about their security.

Davila et al.’s study was consistent with the Baldwin and Fehr (1995) longitudinal study which suggested that approximately 30% of women changed their attachment styles over time. Specifically, women in the Davila et al study were undergoing a major life transition which was thought to be quite stressful. Their findings suggested that some people are prone to fluctuations in attachment style, and that attachment style fluctuation may be related to attachment insecurity.

This study was good in that it utilized a longitudinal design. However, the missing component to this study was assessment of attachment style and other variables in the participants during the first few years of life per theory by Ainsworth and Bowlby that asserts that attachment formation takes place early in life – such as the first two years.

Fraley (2002) conducted meta-analyses involving attachment stability from infancy to adulthood by examining attachment systems via internal working models. From this study, it was determined that there is a debate as to whether or not early experiences remain continuous and play an important role in attachment behaviors throughout life. This was termed the prototype perspective. Other perspectives hold that early experiences are not constant, and that they are subject to transformation based on new experiences. This was termed the revisionist perspective. Fraley determined through examination of numerous studies that the prototype model was supported by some evidence that adult attachment security is overlapped with parental influence. Particularly it was stated that attachment stability tends to remain stable during the first 19 years of life. Limitations to this analysis included the aspect that data that was used for this study were not longitudinal. Another limitation was that the previous research studies did not measure the care-giving environment over time. For complex studies to clearly measure attachment stability, numerous factors need to be accounted for and measured with the same set of persons over a longitudinal period of time.

As previously discussed, the events that took place during childhood in the parent-child relationship are often related to an individual's close relationships in adulthood (Collins & Read, 1990). Hazan and Shaver (1987) utilized infant attachment

theory (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1982, 1980) as a basis for examining adult relationships as they related to early interactions with parents. Attachment theory and romantic love were assessed with 620 participants who responded to a publication in a newspaper as a means to get a representative sample. Participants were asked to complete a survey which measured the participants' most important relationship, whether or not the relationship was a current or a past relationship, and questions about attachment style and attachment style history. The results demonstrated that 56% of the participants were classified as secure. It was also determined that those with a secure attachment style described important love experiences as being happy and trusting. It was also noted that predictors related to adult attachment type were also related to the relationship each had with parents and also the relationship that their parents had with each other.

Bowlby's (1982) theory was based on a model of social and personality development. According to West and Sheldon-Keller (1994), attachment patterns in childhood are translated to adulthood. West and Sheldon-Keller stated that early attachment experiences are the basis for a model of attachment, and this model is what determines an individual's expectations in a relationship. Furthermore, the memories that an individual has of a primary attachment figure acts as models what he or she expects in relationships. It is this model that allows one to maintain security through behaviors. This was presumed as a basis for understanding attachment relationships. Because of the significance of attachment in early childhood, it is essential to understand how attachment styles are carried throughout life and into adult relationships.

Attachment Theory, Adult Attachment Styles and Intimate Relationships

Essential to adult attachment is the fundamental ability to understand intimate close relationships in adulthood. According to Fraley and Shaver (2000), attachment theory is now one of the standard theoretical foundations for the examination of such relationships. Attachment theory provides a developmental framework for understanding the behavioral, cognitive, and affective components related to adult relationships (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994). According to Bowlby (1988) and Hazan and Shaver (1987), early accessibility together with responsiveness of early attachment figures is related to the views of other interpersonal relationships in the future. Romantic love is considered to be an attachment process (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) although it is experienced differently by different people. Attachment theory provides a framework for understanding how intimate relationships function. It also explains how maladaptive and adaptive forms of love relationships come about based on previous social interactions with caregivers. Additionally, attachment theory provides a basis for how adult love is frequently associated with socioemotional processes that take place in childhood (Wilson, 1981).

Furthermore, adult recollections of childhood relationships with parents are associated with attachment between spouses (Collins & Read, 1990) as well as marital adjustment (Cohn et al., 1992). People also tend to interpret and respond to new information in ways that model their working models of attachment (Fuller & Fincham, 1995). People often select partners who confirm expectations of relationship structure (Collins & Read, 1990). For example, adults who remembered their relationships with

their parents as one that was warm and accepting during childhood tended to have more confidence that their romantic partners would be dependable in times of need. They are also less likely to be concerned with feelings of abandonment (Collins & Read, 1990).

Adult attachment styles are quite different compared to child attachment styles. Adult attachment styles tend to be based on the complexity of adult intimate relationships. As a result, researchers have developed ways to assess adult attachment styles differently than from child attachment styles had been assessed. For example, based on the works of Bowlby's theory of attachment, a four-category model of adult attachment was derived by Bartholomew (1990), Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), and Griffin and Bartholomew (1994). According to this model, there are four adult attachment patterns that consist of insecure and secure attachment styles. The insecure styles are fearful, preoccupied and dismissing. The secure attachment style is labeled as secure. Internal working models portray one as either worthy or unworthy of love along with portraying others as either available and responsive or unavailable and inconsistent. According to Bowlby, it is the internalized working models that actually influence a child's behavior and expectations in intimate relationships throughout life.

Secure attachment is the sense of worthiness (lovability) and includes the belief that other people are generally accommodating and receptive. These individuals tend to have relationships that display happiness, trustworthiness and friendship (Kurdek, 2002). Securely attached adults tend to have an optimistic sense of self and an optimistic sense of others (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). These individuals also tend to have a sense of self

worth that is internalized, and they tend to be comfortable with being in close intimate relationships.

Fearful attachment is the sense of feeling unworthy or not having qualities that promote being loved. These people also have an expectation that others would be rejecting and untrustworthy as well. People with fearful attachments tend to avoid close relationships with others as a means to protect themselves emotionally from rejection by other people. These individuals tend to have relationships characterized by difficulties related to intimacy, trust and dependence (Kurdek, 2002). Adults who have a fearful attachment style tend to have a negative self view.

Preoccupied attachment is the sense of not feeling worthy of love, combined with the tendency to evaluate other people in a positive manner. People who strive for self-acceptance tend to value acceptance by others. An adult who displays a preoccupied attachment style is usually characterized as having an anxious sense of acquiring acceptance from others (Simpson & Rholes, 1998).

Dismissing attachment is the sense of feeling worthy of love, yet also displaying characteristics which tend to be negative in relation to other people. A person who displays this type of attachment style avoids close relationships as a means to protect him or herself against disappointment. This person attempts to display a sense of independence and promotes characteristics that make him or her invulnerable. A person with this type of attachment style has a positive view of him or herself and has a negative view of other people. Dismissing individuals tend to have negative expectations, and as a result, they will avoid emotional closeness, and they will be defensive about the value or

importance of having close intimate relationships with others (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). Together, preoccupied attachment and secure attachment styles correlate with a strong dependency on others to maintain a positive self-image. Fearful attachment and dismissing attachment styles are avoidant of intimacy (Bartholomew, 1990).

Despite the impressive evidence for the predictive validity of attachment strategies in general, little attention has been paid to basic measurement issues. Attachment patterns or strategies have variously been assessed by three category and four category interview procedures (cf., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985), three category and four category self-report measures (cf., Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and multi-item scales that form either two dimensions such as anxiety and avoidance (cf., Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000), or three dimensions such as close, depend and anxiety (cf., Collins & Read, 1990).

Although Bowlby (1979) stated that attachment processes affect human beings birth until death and he wrote extensively about attachment in adulthood, it was not until the mid-1980s that research on adult attachment became significant (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). One of the basic concepts of attachment theory is that attachment relationships continue to be important throughout the life span as noted by Ainsworth (1982, 1989) and Bowlby, (1977, 1980, 1982) in many of their publications. Although there is evidence that exists related to the continuity of attachment-related behaviors (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), researchers have just recently begun to examine the relationship related to close and emotional adaptability in adults and working models of attachment.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) conducted a study in which they measured attachment style with love expectations. In one part of their study they tested attachment theory by means of a “love quiz” (p. 513) which was derived from measures related to attachment between the infant and caregiver and working models of love. The “love quiz” asked participants to examine the most important love relationship the participant ever had. Part of the questionnaire was composed of questions adopted from previous questionnaires about love and/or related to literature about infant-caregiver attachment. Another part of the questionnaire asked the participant to describe whether or not the relationship was current or past along with other questions such as how many times the participant had been in love. The final part of the questionnaire focused on attachment style and history. The survey was printed in a newspaper with instructions on where to send the replies. Over 1200 replies were received. The researchers based their analyses on the first 620 replies. The subjects were mostly women (415) with an average educational level of “some college.” The researchers repeated their study again due to suspected problems with methodology and data collection. The second study utilized 108 college students who answered different parts of the questionnaire over the course of one quarter. Their study supported their hypotheses that attachment styles are as just as common during adulthood as they are in infancy and that people who have different attachment styles tend to have different expectations about the course of romantic love. This included one’s own expectations about the accessibility and feelings of trust associated with potential romantic partners along with one’s own sense of being capable of feelings being reciprocated by a potential partner.

Henry and Holmes (1998) conducted a study in which they found significant differences in relation to gender and attachment issues as they related to divorced and intact families. Their longitudinal study consisted of 102 children from divorced families (40 Males, 62 Females), 65 individuals who had parents in a conflicted relationship (18 males, 47 females) and 98 individuals who had not experienced a parental divorce or conflictual relationship (36 males, 62 females). All of the participants were college students with a mean age of 19.7 years, and each participant was involved in a serious dating relationship. The participants were asked to complete questionnaires which assessed attachment models of relationships at the beginning of the study and six months after the initial assessment.

The results of the Henry and Holmes (1998) study demonstrated that daughters of divorced families were much less likely to be categorized as securely attached compared to daughters from non-divorced families. Specifically, they were much more likely to be categorized as preoccupied or as having negative views of themselves in relationships. They were also more likely to be clustered as fearful in the aspect that they felt that their self image was 'damaged,' and they also doubted how their partners would value them. Furthermore, Henry and Holmes noted that daughters of divorce tended to be more pessimistic about relationships in general, and they also tended to be significantly more likely to worry about abandonment. Specifically, they worried that their partners would begin to dislike them due to unfavorable qualities that could lead to the end to the relationship. This would further reinforce the negative connotation that they were not well equipped or valuable enough to continue to attract potential partners.

Furthermore, the study by Henry and Holmes (1998) also noted issues with conflict anxiety in relation to daughters of divorce versus daughters from non-divorced families. Specifically, it was noted that conflict anxieties were likely to manifest themselves quite frequently. Compared to daughters from non-divorced families, daughters from divorced families had more argumentative relationships with their partners. The preoccupied (attachment style) divorced daughters were also significantly more likely to break up with a partner compared to daughters from non-divorced families.

Henry and Holmes (1998) also looked at the differences between sons from divorced families and sons from non-divorced families. The study demonstrated that adult sons of divorce were relatively the same in attachment styles compared to sons from intact families. Unlike daughters of divorce, sons from divorced families were just as likely to be securely attached as sons from intact families. Specifically, they were neither more anxious, nor more avoidant of intimacy, than their intact counterparts. According to Henry and Holmes, sons of divorce looked more secure than sons from intact families. However, through further analysis of the data, divorced sons were found to be self-deceiving in their perceptions of their attachment styles as evidenced by analysis of scores on the subscales.

Furthermore, analysis revealed that divorced sons were less likely than intact sons to believe their relationships would endure (Henry & Holmes, 1998). Specifically, divorced sons showed lower degrees of commitment compared to sons from intact families. They envisioned that at some point in the relationship, they would terminate their involvement.

In relation to daughters of conflict, it was revealed that they shared similar childhood and adolescent experience with daughters of divorce prior to the divorce. The similarities included parental fighting, yet the conflict daughters tended to report compromised attachments with both parents whereas the divorced daughters tended to have a relationship with the mother that would counter any negative experiences. In relation to attachment, however, conflict daughters appeared to be more avoidant (fearful; dismissing) whereas divorce daughter tended to be more anxious (preoccupied).

In relation to sons of conflict, it was revealed that they shared experiences similar to the other groups. In relation to interpersonal functioning, it was revealed that conflict sons were significantly less trusting than intact sons. They also believed that their relationships with partners would not endure. Additionally, conflict sons appeared to be the most vulnerable group in the study as they were more likely to worry about being abandoned, that they would be left by their partners for someone else, and they tended to fight more frequently compared to intact sons. However, their attachment style ratings were similar to intact sons on all aspects except for self-esteem. It was speculated that conflict sons were being defensive in their responses.

In summary, Henry and Holmes (1998) concluded from their research that adult children of divorce held negative beliefs about relationships as they were often disheartened by the aspect of expecting to be hurt in relationships and they held a belief that interpersonal relationships are only temporary. Divorced sons and daughters also had a tendency to leave their partners before their partners left them. The authors further

concluded that experiencing a parental divorce perpetuated the same behaviors among sons and daughters from divorced families.

Although the researchers did a good job of initially limiting the study participants to a set of fixed criteria which eliminated extreme differences, it is not without the limitation of a convenience sample of college students. As a result, this study can be generalized only to college students, and not to the general population.

Feeney and Noller (1990) assessed attachment styles as predictors of adult romantic relationships. Their study included 374 undergraduate students (162 males and 212 females). Students were asked to complete questionnaires designed to measure attachment style in relation to adult romantic relationships as a means to replicate the Hazan and Shaver (1987) study. The results indicated that those students who were securely attached tended to report positive experiences in early family relationships. Avoidant attachment style types tended to report memories of separation from their mothers during childhood along with the tendency to have mistrust for others.

Specifically, it was noted that those with secure attachment styles tended to report healthy family relationships and attitudes of trust towards others while those who displayed an avoidant (insecure) attachment style tended to endorse mistrust and detachment from others. It is believed that attachment style is reflective of general views related to interpersonal relationships. Overall, the results of their study suggested that attachment style was useful as a measure of perspectives on adult love relationships.

In relation to important research studies related to adult attachment styles, Collins and Read (1990) conducted three studies to examine connections of attachment between

adults. The first study involved developing a scale which was more sensitive than previous scales in measuring adult attachment styles. In their first study, they used 406 undergraduate students of which 206 were women and 184 were men. Collins and Read developed the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) as a means to explore relationships between attachment and other variables that researchers may be interested in examining. The scale had good reliability and validity.

The second study of Collins and Read (1990) involved examining how the relations among mental representations of self, mental representation of others and mental representation of romantic relationships, were related to adult attachment styles, working models of attachment and attachment history. Collins and Read hypothesized that there would be a connection between how one perceived relationships with parents in childhood, how one perceives one's self, and social interactions in adulthood. Undergraduate students (90 females, 38 males) completed a series of questionnaires which assessed demographic information, perception of attachment history with parents, self-esteem, personality attributes, trust and beliefs about romantic love, and a scale which assessed the extent to which the students perceived themselves to be warm and responsive listeners. Collins and Read stated that a person's self-disclosure is an important aspect of intimacy, and that early attachment relationships could be an influence on one's capacity for psychological intimacy. The results indicated that students who displayed a secure attachment style had more positive views of themselves compared to those with insecure attachments styles. It was also noted that students who had a secure attachment style were more likely to portray positive views about the social

world which was the opposite for persons who displayed an insecure attachment style. Results related to romantic love revealed that persons that displayed a secure attachment style also displayed views of love that were more romantic and less practical. Persons with an insecure attachment style, however, tended to have an obsessive and dependent style of love. In relation to examining attachment history, the findings revealed that those who viewed their parents as warm and not rejecting tended to have views that others were dependable. They were also less likely than their counterparts to feel as though they would be abandoned and not loved. The research also demonstrated that when the students remembered their relationship with their mother as warm and responsive, they were more comfortable with intimacy and being close to others. Also, students who remembered their parents as cold or inconsistent tended to have an insecure attachment style.

Study three of Collins and Read (1990) assessed the importance of attachment styles as they related to dating relationships. They hypothesized that dating partners would have similar scores on the attachment dimensions based on the theory that people tend to be attracted to others who share similar beliefs and expectations related to love. They also hypothesized that working models about the nature of love and also about oneself as a love object would be related to how a person responds to others in terms of what they expected a partner to be like, and in how their actions are interpreted. Collins and Read noted this hypothesis to be similar to the aspect that a person who is comfortable with closeness is unwilling to tolerate a partner who is avoidant of closeness. A third hypothesis of the study was that there would be similarity between attachment

styles of one's romantic partners and the care-giving styles of a person's parents. This hypothesis was based on the theory that parents are teachers in that they teach children what relationships are like, with the opposite sex parent serving as a model for heterosexual relationships. This was speculated on the aspect that persons may seek intimacy to continue relationships which are congruent to past relationships as a means to maintain consistency within the self (cf., Bowlby, 1973).

In this third study (Collins and Read, 1990) 71 dating couples were used. The original pool of participants came from an undergraduate research methods course with the couples being configured of not only students but also friends and acquaintances of students. Participants completed questionnaires which measured attachment styles, perceptions of attachment history with parents, and demographic information. They also completed an assessment in which the participants were asked to rate the satisfaction of their relationships, communication in their relationships, and several aspects of trust in partner. The results indicated that the participants who were comfortable getting close to others were also more likely to have a partner who was comfortable with getting close. It was also noted that men and women that were comfortable with closeness tended to date partners who were viewed as dependable. The results also indicated that descriptions of the opposite sex parent were predictive of the attachment style of their partner.

Another study conducted by Scott and Cordova (2002) examined the relationship between adult attachment styles, marital adjustment, and depressive symptoms in 91 married couples. It was hypothesized that adults with secure attachment styles would be able to protect themselves from depressive symptoms if there was distress in

the relationship. Scott and Cordova based this hypothesis on the aspect that securely attached individuals tend to have a positive view of themselves and others. Their second hypothesis was based on the literature which states that adults with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style tend to be critical of themselves. Specifically, the second hypothesis stated that individuals with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style would be more likely to endorse an association between experiencing depressive symptoms and adjustment to marriage. Further hypothesized was that persons who were low on anxious-ambivalent attachment would not endorse depressive symptoms, therefore, there would not be an association with marital adjustment. A third hypothesis of the study was that marital adjustment and depressive symptoms would not be moderated by avoidant attachment in relation to spouses' ratings.

By means of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, Scott and Cordova (2002) found that in relation to marital distress and depressive symptoms, attachment styles in adults were a key variable in identifying marital dysfunction and depressive symptoms – particularly on how each are related. Specifically, there was not a significant relationship between adjustment in marriage and depressive symptoms for wives and husbands who endorsed a highly secure attachment style. However, for wives and husbands who had rated themselves as low on secure attachment, there was a significant main effect. The researchers further stated that attachment insecurity may be a factor that predisposes individuals to being depressed in relation to dysfunction in marriage whereas individuals with a secure attachment style may have alternative supportive means to protect themselves from depressive symptoms when marital dysfunction occurs.

Furthermore, the results of the Scott and Cordova (2002) study found that endorsing a high level of anxious-ambivalent attachment was related to having depressive symptoms and dysfunction in a relationship. In relation to avoidant attachment styles, the researchers did not find an interaction between having an avoidant attachment style and adjustment in depressive symptoms for both husbands and wives. Regardless of whether or not spouses endorsed a high or low level of avoidant attachment, they endorsed no more and no less depressive symptoms in relation to marital dysfunction. This study found a main effect for avoidant attachment ratings with both wives and husbands. This effect suggested that persons who are avoidantly attached tend to endorse more depressive symptoms. As suggested by the researchers, the factors that protect an avoidantly attached individual may also decrease marital functioning. In summary, the overall conclusion was that wives and husbands who had endorsed an attachment style of security also rated their marriages as being well adjusted and wives who endorsed an anxious-ambivalent attachment style also tended to rate their marriages as being more distressed.

Limitations to the Scott and Cordova (2002) study included the use of a cross-sectional data with self-report. As a result, the findings need to be interpreted cautiously. Furthermore, the authors noted a limitation in the aspect that the directions of the effects were inferred. Also, in relation to ethnicity, most of the participants were Caucasian. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to other ethnicities.

Another study by Grau and Doll (2003) examined attachment styles in relation to a person's experience of equity as related to intimate relationships. This study included

106 participants (53 males, 53 females) with a mean age of 27. Seventy five of the participants were students. The participants were recruited by means of a social network of the persons conducting the research. Each participant was involved in an intimate relationship. For the study, the participants completed questionnaires related to attachment styles and equity. Equity was examined in relation to positive characteristics such as being caring and giving and items related to serving one's own purpose. In this study, the results indicated that persons who endorsed an avoidant attachment felt under-benefited while persons who endorsed an avoidant attachment style felt over-benefited. Secure individuals endorsed an equity ratio of around zero which is indicative of equality in a relationship. Limitations to this study included the methods used to employ the participants. This limitation included recruiting participants by means of convenience. The participants were recruited based on a social network. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the general population. The findings also cannot be generalized to older persons given the fact that the mean age in this particular study was 27.

Models of Attachment

In order to understand adult attachment behaviors, it is also essential to understand attachment theory and romantic relationships through working models of attachment. Brumbaugh and Fraley (2006) conducted research in which they investigated working models of attachment in relation to successive relationships. Brumbaugh and Fraley stated that attachment theory is based on the idea that models of attachment continue across time and within a particular context. The objective in their research was to examine social and cognitive components which may transmit attachment

representations across time. Their study included a sample of 371 undergraduate college students. Each participant was required to have been in at least one romantic relationship in the past, but not involved in a current romantic relationship. The participants were required to complete an attachment measure questionnaire and a questionnaire which assessed information about their former relationship. They were also required to complete a slightly reworded version of the original assessment measuring attachment. They were then requested to come back one to two weeks later for another assessment in which they viewed two personal ads from a dating service for students. The ads were set so that the participants viewed an ad that was a paraphrased description each participant provided in the first session as it related to their past partner. There were also trait adjectives that were previously rated as irrelevant to their past partner rating. Additionally, there was a control ad that paraphrased information from someone else's described partner. After reading the profiles, the participants were asked about their thoughts and emotions related to the person described in the advertisement. They assessed how likely they would be to date that particular person based on the advertisement, and they were asked to complete an attachment questionnaire. Furthermore, a memory test was administered in relation to the advertisements.

Brumbaugh and Fraley (2006) noted that the participants transmitted their original working models of attachment to the new targets. Brumbaugh and Fraley further elaborated that this was a noteworthy finding because the participants tended to experience similar kinds of attachment-related thoughts and feelings which were characteristic of their most significant previous romantic relationship. It was noted that if

working models were transferred in a general way, this may help explain the clinical observation that people often tend to re-create the same kinds of interpersonal dynamics that have characterized their relationships from the past.

Furthermore, Brumbaugh and Fraley (2006) also studied the way in which global attachment models influenced perceptions. Brumbaugh and Fraley found that the two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance of global attachment operated in different ways. For anxiety, the global and relationship specific anxiety were interchangeable. For avoidance, their analysis revealed relationship specific avoidance was more influential than global models of avoidance. It was speculated that the difference was due to a high degree of resemblance in the attachment related anxiety that people experience with other people they have come in contact with, and that the expression of avoidance was much more distinguished in different relationships.

In general, the findings of Brumbaugh and Fraley (2006) suggested that attachment styles can be stable across different romantic relationships, but they caution that this does not mean that attachment styles cannot change. They noted that prior research (cf., Kirkpatrick and Hazan, 1994) demonstrated that insecure people can become more secure when matched with a secure partner. The changes, however, do not occur immediately because the establishment of trust is required in an ongoing relationship.

In summary, attachment theory was originally developed by Bowlby (1969; 1973) and later expanded by Ainsworth et al. (1978). Attachment theory has been studied in many perspectives. It was originally theoretically based as a developmental approach in

relation to and emotional bond between the primary care giver and the child. Later, it was researched in relation to adults. The two basic types of attachment began as secure and insecure. Others have expanded the research to include more precise sub-types in relation to insecure attachment styles – especially among adults. Attachment style has been assessed in both a categorical manner (cf., Ainsworth et al., 1978; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994a) and in a dimensional manner (cf., Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000). Attachment assessments have been conducted longitudinally and cross-sectionally with children and with adults.

Whether or not attachment style remains stable throughout life is of considerable debate among many theorists and researchers. Some researchers argued that attachment security remains stable throughout life (cf., Ainsworth et al., 1978) while others believe that attachment style may change depending upon life circumstances (cf., Baldwin & Fehr, 1995) such as the family environment (e.g., conflict) and whether or not one experienced parental divorce. There has also been the argument that certain people may be prone to attachment style change (Davila et al., 1997) while others argued that attachment style may be related to parental influence (Fraley, 2002).

Furthermore, as researchers developed adult attachment style measures, research on attachment has expanded since the initial assessments with children. Some of this research included measurement of how attachment styles are portrayed in adult intimate relationships in adults who grew up in divorced and non-divorced families (cf., Henry & Holmes, 1998), predictors of adult romantic relationships (cf., Feeney & Noller, 1990),

connections of attachments between adults (cf., Collins & Read, 1990), and working models of attachment (cf., Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2006).

In review of the aforementioned studies on attachment, these studies have been important contributions to the field of marriage and family therapy as they help to facilitate an understanding of family dynamics in relation to healthy and unhealthy functioning in interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, theorists, mental health professionals and researchers have the ability to gain better insight into how attachment styles are developed, maintained and inter-related by continuing to expand upon previous studies. Also of importance is having insight and understanding of how attachment styles shape and maintain the dynamic of how couples communicate in their own intimate relationships. Finally, understanding attachment theory and attachment styles better equips mental health professionals working with couples.

Sexual Attitudes

In relation to intimate relationships, sexual attitudes and behaviors are also complex dimensions to understand. Sexual attitudes include many factors associated with sexual behaviors. These factors can include religion, sexual locus of control, views of premarital sexuality, attitudes about condoms, marital standards in relation to moral development, and intimate personal relationships. Sexual attitudes and behaviors can include communication about sexual self-efficacy, and other sexual behaviors (Feeney, Peterson, Gallois, & Terry, 2000). Sexual permissiveness is also a component of sexual attitudes and behaviors. Sexual permissiveness refers to an attitude or behavior involving engagement in sexual exploration (Hendrick, Hendrick, Slapion-Foote, & Foote, 1985).

Another factor associated with permissive sexual values is the act of engaging in sexual relations with others outside of marriage. Among Americans who believed that sexual relations outside of one's marriage are "not at all wrong," 76% had reported engagement in sexual relations outside of marriage compared to 10% who believed sex outside of marriage is "always wrong" (Smith, 1994).

In relation to sexual attitudes, Bukstel, Roeder, Kilmann, Laughlin, and Sotile (1978) conducted a study that looked at sexual behaviors among college students. In their study, they administered questionnaires to unmarried college students ($n = 566$) to compare reported premarital sexual behavior and projected extramarital sexual behavior. The results of their study indicated that individuals who were involved in premarital sexual activity were more likely to project that they would be involved in extramarital sexual relationships. The findings supported results of previous studies that sought to identify precursors of extramarital sexual behavior. Bukstel et al. (1978) also stated that prior to their study other researchers (cf., Croak and James, 1973; Robinson et al., 1968; Robinson et al., 1972) had found that premarital sexual attitudes and behaviors of college students were gradually becoming more liberal. The study noted that the trend was most noticed during the late 1960s and early 1970s when college students began challenging cultural values regarding sexuality and marriage. It was also noted that a study by Athanasiou and Sarkin (1974) found that married individuals who reported extramarital sexual involvement recalled having had considerable premarital sexual experiences. The Athanasiou and Sarkin study found that premarital chastity predicted a more successful marriage. Limitations to the Bukstel et al. study, as with many previous studies, included

the use of a convenience sample and the use of self-report measures. Studying sexual attitudes and behaviors can also be limited in the aspect that some participants may not provide truthful answers out of fear of being ridiculed for religious, societal or moral standards.

Booth, Brinkerhoff, and White (1984) assessed romantic relationships among young adult college students by examining the relationship of levels of parental conflict prior to and after parental divorce to courtship behaviors and attitudes of persons from intact and disrupted (e.g., divorce, separation) families. Specifically, the researchers assessed the relationship of marital disruption (e.g., death of a spouse, divorce or separation) to courting behaviors. As a measure of control, the researchers used another group (intact group) who had lost a parent through death as a means to look for any differences that may exist between the three groups (intact, loss of a parent, and divorce/separation). For their study, they used a sample of 2,538 college students with a wide diversity of backgrounds. Three hundred and sixty five of the participants had experienced parental divorce or separation, and 228 experienced the death of a parent. The dependent variable in the study was the level of activity of courtship behaviors. The control variables in the study included father's and mother's education, religion, gender, and student's age, and whether or not the individual took part in the study over the course of the fall or spring semester (as it was determined that those who participated in the fall had less opportunities to meet potential mates for dating). Through analysis, the researchers defined marriage via three categories (no disruption; marriage disrupted by death, and marriage disrupted by divorce/separation).

The findings of the Booth et al. (1984) study indicated that children who experienced a parental divorce were more likely to have had premarital sexual intercourse and to cohabitate which indicated they were more likely to engage in a wider range of courtship activities compared to the intact and death of a parent groups. It was speculated by the researchers that the difference could be that children of divorce may be modeling courtship behaviors of their parents. Limitations to this study included the difficulty of linking divorce to divorce-bred attitudes, and the mere aspect that causal relations of divorce cannot be easily measured.

Furthermore, Hendrick et al. (1985) conducted a study using the Sexual Attitudes Scale with 813 college students. Student responses were analyzed to examine gender and sexual attitudes. The results showed a significant mean difference for sexual permissiveness as it related to gender. Specifically, they discovered that male subjects scored in a more permissive direction while females were more conservative in their sexual attitudes. It was also noted that members of both genders were relatively permissive on some items that dealt with premarital sex; however, it was men that were more permissive.

Gabardi and Rosen (1992) further demonstrated that parental divorce is often related to the sexual behaviors of young adults in a study of 300 college students. Gabardi and Rosen speculated that increased sexual behavior may be due to the person's desire to have a good relationship along with the myth that sexual intimacy leads one to experience love and/or a more satisfying relationship. The results showed that ACD desired more sexual behavior compared to those from non-divorced families. However, the Gabardi

and Rosen study did not demonstrate any significant differences in college students from divorced or non-divorced families as related to intimacy, relationship beliefs, attitudes towards marriage and self-esteem. It was further assessed that attitudes are somewhat similar among persons from divorced and non-divorced families.

This was a complex study which measured a plethora of variables. Although it provided data on a multitude of complex factors related to interpersonal relationships, it may have been better to study only some of the concepts, but in more detail. This study was also limited to young college students. Providing data for a wide range of ages may have also been beneficial.

Doruis, Heaton and Steffen (1993) analyzed data from the National Survey of Children (NSC, 1976-1987) in relation to how family structure and other life experiences influenced age at first onset of sexual activity among adolescents. The findings of their analysis included the aspect that sexual intercourse was lowest among 12 year olds if the parents were married ($p = .020$). The analysis also demonstrated that the odds of first sexual intercourse for adolescents at age 12 were 1.5 times more likely if the parents divorced.

Miller et al. (1997) also analyzed data from the NSC. The participants in the NSC included 2,031 children. Miller et al. utilized 759 of the participants and assessed family structure and age at first sexual intercourse. The results of the analysis revealed that increased time of living in a single-parent home after age 12 was strongly related to earlier age at first sexual intercourse for both males ($r = .21$) and females ($r = .22$). Additionally, for males, the frequency of parental marital status changes when the male

was between the ages of six and 11 were significantly related to earlier age at first sexual intercourse. For females, the most significant factor was living in a single-parent home.

Limitations to this study included the inability of the authors to operationalize the family process variables because of how they were grouped, and the fact that during each year of interviews, the questions were not verbatim as in previous interviews. There were also limitations in relation to gender as males and females tend to be sexually socialized differently. As a result, this could not be accounted for in a retrospective study.

Jeynes (2001) conducted a study in which he used students to examine the relations of parental divorce to various psychological measures. Jeynes cited research which stated that most children tend to recover from divorce within two or three years. Sources were also cited that noted that parental divorce tended to increase the likelihood that children would tend to display more acts of aggression. Jeynes' study took a representative sample of students from the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) 1988-1992 data set and focused on the relatedness of parental divorce to measures of attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital sexual intercourse. The results indicated that children from recently divorced single-parent families were more likely to believe it was not important to be married before child birth as opposed to their equivalents in non-divorced families. They were also more likely to consider having a child before marriage, and to have a child outside of marriage. Through regression, Jeynes noted that children who resided in a single-parent recently divorced family tended to have more permissive attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital intercourse. This study and others (cf., Dorius et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1997) supported the findings that

family structure can affect attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital sex and sexual attitudes for children.

In relation to sexual double standards, Marks and Fraley (2005) conducted a study in which they assessed whether people evaluate males and females differently based on the amount of experience one has with multiple sexual partners. There were two samples used. One of the samples included 8,080 people, predominately women (6, 733). This sample completed an online study. The second sample consisted of 144 undergraduate students. Domains of values, peer popularity, power/success and intelligence were examined. The results of the internet sample revealed that in relation to the domain of values, sex and number of sexual partners demonstrated interaction effects. Specifically, women were evaluated more positively while persons with many partners were evaluated less positively and more negatively.

In relation to peer popularity, the results revealed that women were evaluated more positively when accounting for sex and number of sexual partners. This was also true for persons with many sexual partners.

In relation to power/success, no main effects were found when examining sex and number of sexual partners. However, there was an interaction effect. This interaction revealed that men tended to be evaluated more positively as the number of sexual partners increased. The reverse was true for women – women were evaluated more negatively when the number of sexual partners increased.

In the final domain of intelligence, main effects were found for both sex and number of sexual partners. Specifically, women were evaluated as slightly more positive,

and persons who had more sexual partners were evaluated negatively. In this analysis, it was also discovered that both men and women were evaluated negatively as the number of sexual partners increased. However, women were evaluated more negatively than males. The authors noted that this was consistent with a sexual double standard despite the fact that the interaction was weak.

In relation to the student sample, the results revealed that the main effect was revealed in relation to values. Specifically, within relation to the number of sexual partners, persons who have more sexual partners were evaluated more negatively. In relation to peer popularity with the student sample, the results revealed that both males and females with more sexual partners were evaluated more negatively.

In relation to the results related to power/success and intelligence, the results revealed no main effects with sex and number of sexual partners, despite the tendency for participants to evaluate persons with multiple sexual partners more negatively. Intelligence did demonstrate a main effect in relation to the number of sexual partners. Specifically, persons with more sexual partners were evaluated more negatively. In both samples, increased number of sexual partners was related to being more negatively viewed.

Limitations of this study included the small student sample size. As a result, the researchers suggested that the results for the students may not be as stable compared to those from the internet sample. It was also noted that reliability coefficients were lower for the student sample, which, in turn, reduced statistical power. Another limitation of this study is that the results can only be generalized to a Western culture based on where

the participants were derived. It is also noted that the variables were studied in an artificial setting and not a natural setting.

Attachment Style and Sexual Attitudes

There is also empirical support for a link between attachment style and sexuality. Brennan and Shaver (1995) conducted a study with 242 college students. The subjects were asked to complete a series of inventories that assessed attachment, relationship satisfaction, sexual attitudes and behaviors. The results related to attachment style and sexuality demonstrated that persons who displayed a secure attachment style had a sexual expression that reflects intimacy and involvement such that secure individuals were less likely to get involved in one-night stands, and they were more likely to be involved in sexual relations that were mutually initiated. Other results indicated that persons who displayed an avoidant attachment style tended to show an approach to sex which was usually unrestricted and uncommitted. In further elaboration, it was determined that persons with an avoidant (insecure) attachment style avoided emotional dependency as they failed to commit in romantic relationships, and they tended to engage in brief sexual encounters and affairs.

In addition, there is considerable evidence that persons who have a weak attachment to their parents are more likely to exhibit permissive sexual attitudes such as early involvement in sexual activity (e.g., as an adolescent) and to have many sexual partners. For example, Smith (1997) conducted a study in which sexual activity was measured in young African American and Hispanic adolescent males and females residing in urban areas. This study's aim was to answer the question as to whether or not

there are differences in sexual activity among young males and young females of color. One thousand adolescents participated in the study. Questions about sexuality and parent attachment were assessed as part of the measures. The results indicated that males who came from a home that did not have two biological parents were more likely to engage in early (15 years of age or younger) sexual intercourse and a decreased risk of sexual activity among females if there were two biological parents in the home. The results also indicated that weak parental attachment was indicative of increased sexual intercourse for males and early sexual activity for females.

A study by Feeney et al. (2000) examined attachment style as it related to sexual attitudes and behaviors among adolescents. The researchers utilized Bartholomew's four categories of attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful). Their study included a relatively large sample ($n = 470$) of undergraduate students. The mean age was 18.38 years with a median age of 18 years. Attachment style was assessed with two measures. One measure was a forced choice description of four attachment prototypes, and the other measure was the 30-item Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ; Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994). Sexual attitudes and behaviors were measured in relation to communication about sex, sexual locus of control, sexual self-efficacy, attitudes about condoms, and sexual behaviors. Feeney et al. hypothesized that an insecure attachment style would be inversely related to open sexual communication and internal locus of control. The results supported their hypothesis as attachment was associated with many characteristics of sexual behaviors and sexual attitudes. Specifically, the results of the study demonstrated that sexual locus of control was moderately to strongly related to an

insecure attachment style which is based on feeling high anxiety and high discomfort (Feeney et al., 2000). Furthermore, the results indicated that anxiety and discomfort were inversely related to females' reports of uninhibited communication with relationship partners. Limitations to the Feeney et al. research included the use of self-report measures, the use of a convenience sample of college students, and the general difficulty in measuring the constructs of attachment style and sexuality as there can be numerous cultural variations in to what is viewed acceptable in a given society.

Feldman and Cauffman (2000) used romantic style as a variable in their study to investigate sexual permissiveness in relation to betrayal behaviors. Feldman and Cauffman examined self-reported acts of betrayal against a romantic partner, acceptance of betrayal in different circumstances, sex and intimacy variables, and demographic variables. This study utilized a sample of college students ($n = 417$) who were between the ages of 18 and 24, and who had identified themselves as heterosexual and had been in a romantic relationship. Questionnaires were administered to the total sample over the course of two time periods separated by a nine month interval. The results indicated that romantic style was correlated with betrayal behavior. Specifically, betrayal behavior was more common among persons who displayed an avoidant attachment style in comparison to persons who displayed a secure attachment style. The study found a high incidence of sexual betrayal (94%) even though the acceptance of sexual betrayal behavior was low (1.59 on a 4 point scale which ranged from 1 (*totally unacceptable*) to 4 (*totally acceptable*)).

Limitations to this study include cultural and societal values associated with sexuality. Some participants may not provide truthful answers in responding to self-report measures as they may fear their partners finding out about their responses. It is also possible that participants may not want to accept the possibility of going against acceptable societal values or standard mores in romantic relationships. It may even be possible that participants may deny any wrong-doing if it occurred, and, as a result may not want to willingly admit explicitly or implicitly of being capable of engaging in an act that society usually frowns upon.

Chapter Summary

In review of the literature, it is clear that many of the relationship oriented difficulties that are experienced in adulthood can be traced back to family dynamics and functioning within the family of origin. Specifically, research has clearly demonstrated that societal values are changing, and as a result, divorce rates are exceedingly higher in the United States than they were in previous decades. Research shows that most children from divorced families have lower levels of well-being compared to children from non-divorced families. In addition, children of divorced families are at higher risk for developing relationship problems in their own romantic relationships when they become adults.

It is also noted in the literature that not all children who grew up in families in which their parent's marriage remained intact fare well psychologically. Some research has also contended that children from divorced families were better off if their parents divorced as opposed to staying married. For example, researchers have argued that family

conflict is a significant factor related to children's psychological well-being. Specifically, some of the research has demonstrated that some children were better off if their parents divorced compared to children who resided in high-conflict families which never divorced. Regardless, the research clearly demonstrates that whether or not one resided in a divorced family or a high-conflict family, these persons have a tendency to experience attachment related problems in their own romantic relationships when they become adults.

As research and theory have demonstrated, attachment security and insecurity was originally based on the emotional bond that one originally forms within the first year of life with his or her care-giver. As a result, it has been theorized that these early bonds will serve as a foundation for how persons will function in other significant relationships throughout life. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the complexity of attachment theory and attachment style. Originally, attachment style was thought to remain stable throughout the lifespan. Current research is now showing that attachment style may not be as stable throughout the lifespan as originally thought and may change based on certain life circumstances and characteristics of the individual.

Furthermore, research has also demonstrated the significance of internal working models of attachment. For example, some research has shown that these internal working models are transmitted to new targets. As a result, feelings and thoughts that one experiences in current relationships are recreated from the same types of interpersonal dynamics of relationships from one's past. Research has shown that there may be a link between experiencing high parental conflict and/or divorce as children and the experience

of the same kind of relationship difficulties in their own intimate relationships. Specifically, research has demonstrated that how children experience their parent's relationship with one another may form the basis for how that child views relationship dynamics in their own intimate relationships when they become adults.

Finally, research has demonstrated that sexual attitudes and behaviors have become more liberal. This change was originally noted in the 1960s and early 1970s when college students began challenging cultural values associated with marriage and sexuality. Research has demonstrated that parental divorce is associated with sexual attitudes and behaviors of offspring. Specifically, it has been noted that offspring of divorce showed more permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors compared to offspring who did not experience parental divorce (cf., Booth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Dorius et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1997; Jeynes, 2001).

The research reviewed above demonstrated that divorce and sexual attitudes and behaviors appear to be related, and that sexual attitudes and behaviors also appear to be related to one's attachment style. Several research studies (cf., Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Smith, 1997; Feeney et al., 2000; Feldman & Cauffman, 2000) demonstrated a connection between insecure attachment style and more sexually permissive attitudes and behaviors compared to those who displayed a secure attachment style. Specifically, persons who display an insecure attachment style are more likely to engage in uncommitted sex whereas persons with a secure attachment style tend to get involved in sexual relations that are characteristic of a committed intimate relationship. It has also

been noted in previous studies that persons who have a weak attachment to parents are also more likely to display permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors.

Finally, it is evident that the variables of parental divorce, inter-parental conflict, intimate relationships, attachment and sexual attitudes are all quite complex to study. It is also clear that previous research has documented that each are important to understand in relation to how each influences one's psychological well-being, emotional development, and adult relationships throughout life. To this researcher's knowledge no previous studies have measured each of these variables in one study. Finally, having an understanding of these combined variables in one study may help answer the questions of how: 1) attachment style may be related to family functioning and divorce status, and 2) how sexual attitudes, family functioning and attachment styles may be related to one another. As a result, this study may also help future researchers and mental health professionals understand the complexity of these relevant variables.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter provides information about the study as it relates to the participants in the study. It also provides information related to the procedure and measures that the participants completed, and it also describes the design. Furthermore, this chapter includes information related to statistical analysis which includes descriptive and inferential statistics that were used.

Participants

The sample for this study included a convenience sample (non-probability sample). Three hundred and eighty seven college students, ranging in age from 18 – 60 years ($M = 27$; $SD = 9.76$) completed the measures for this study. One participant did not complete the vast majority of the measures and therefore was excluded from data analysis. Frequency analysis revealed a relatively equal numbers of males (43.4%) and females (56.3%) (one person did not indicate sex). Based on divorce statistics, ACD and non-ACD adult college students should exist in relatively even numbers in the general population. However, for this study, equal numbers of ACD (31.5%) and non-ACD (68.5%) college students were not obtained. This is not unusual as previous research has demonstrated that persons who have experienced a parental divorce tend to have lower levels of academic achievement (Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993).

SPSS frequency analyses also revealed that the majority of participants identified as Caucasian (77%), 15% identified as African-American, 2% identified as Hispanic, .5% identified as Native-American, .5% identified as Asian-American, .8% identified as

Asian, 2.6% identified as Multiracial, and 1% identified as “other.” The majority (49%) of the participants had completed a high school education, 21% had completed an Associate’s degree, and 18% had completed a Master’s degree. The rest of the participants had obtained a GED (12%), completed some high school (.5%), or had a doctorate (.3%) or post doctorate education (.3%). The vast majority of the sample (95%) identified themselves as heterosexual. Five percent of the sample considered themselves to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation. One person did not provide their sexual orientation on the demographic survey. A majority (84.7%) of the respondents indicated that they had engaged in sexual intercourse prior to marriage, and nearly one-third (29.4%) had been sexually unfaithful in a committed relationship. Finally, 31.5% of the participants indicated that they had experienced the divorce of their parents when they were less than 18 years of age.

Measures (see Appendix A for copies of all measures)

Demographics. Demographic information was assessed through the use of a short questionnaire which included questions related to the participant’s age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, parental divorce status, relationship status, college attending, level of education completed, whether or not they had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, and if they had been sexually unfaithful in a committed relationship.

Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale. The original Sexual Attitudes Scale was initially developed by Hendrick et al. (1985) and later revised by Hendrick and Hendrick to its final form in 1987. It was empirically driven and was developed because there were scales that assessed certain dimensions of sexual attitudes, but there was not one single

scale that “encompassed several attitudinal dimensions within a single measure” (Hendrick et al., 2006, p. 76). It was also further noted by the authors that sexual attitudes do not necessarily equate to sexual behaviors, but that attitudes and behaviors are often linked.

The original Sexual Attitudes Scale (SAS) consisted of 43 items and was designed to measure four factors: (a) Permissiveness, extramarital sex and other sexual relations (b) Sexual Practices dealing with birth control, sex education and “sex toys,” (c) Communion, reflecting attitudes towards sex that focus on sharing and involvement, and (d) Instrumentality, reflecting the idea that sex is pleasurable, a game between men and women, a physical or bodily experience (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987). The original scale is appropriate for people 16 years and older. It is self-administered and takes an estimated 15 – 20 minutes to complete. Research on the SAS (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1987) indicated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach alphas across the subscales ranged from .71 to .94 in two samples of college students).

Furthermore, Hendrick and Hendrick (1987) utilized 105 university students to assess the SAS subscales of Permissiveness, Sexual Practices and Instrumentality in relation to other scales that measure sexuality. The SAS subscales were correlated with scores derived from the Sexual Opinion Survey (SOS) created by Fisher, Byrne, White, and Kelley (1988), the Reiss Premarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale created by Reiss (1967), and the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory created by Green and Mosher (1985). Scores from the SAS Permissiveness subscale were significantly correlated with all other scores on scales that measure sexuality (-.53 to .63) indicating criterion validity. For

example, Permissiveness was correlated with the Sexual Opinion Survey (.61), the Reiss Premarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale (.63), and the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory (-.53). The correlations for Permissiveness, Sexual Practices and Instrumentality were found to be theoretically consistent as well as statistically sound in relation to current sexual attitudes measures.

The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS) was devised because the SAS, despite being used widely, had some limitations. For example, reanalysis of data sets collected over several years found that the “structure of the components changed somewhat over time” (Hendrick et al., 2006, p. 77) when using original loading criteria. Furthermore, a revised scale was devised because the items appeared to be dated in phrasing and to be not relevant to sexual attitudes as applied to intimate relationships. Hendrick et al. (2006) cited that attitudes and language can change compared to previous generations. Another reason for the brief scale development was the need for a shorter measure.

The BSAS has 23 items designed to measure sexual attitudes and behaviors on the same subscales on the original SAS: (1) permissiveness, (2) birth control, (3) communion, and (4) instrumentality. In responding to the BSAS items, participants are asked to indicate how characteristic each statement is of them. Each response is scored on a continuum from A (*Strongly Agree*) to E (*Strongly Disagree*). Subscale scores are calculated for each participant by summing the ratings given by participants for each item in the subscale and dividing by the number of items per subscale (mean score). Higher scores reflect greater endorsement of the particular subscale. For the purposes of the

present study, only the Permissiveness subscale is of interest as this scale measures permissive sexual attitudes in relation to the variables being researched in this study.

Hendrick et al. (2006) reported alphas (internal reliability) for the BSAS in a sample of college students as follows: Permissiveness = .93; Birth Control = .84; Communion = .71; Instrumentality = .77. Hendrick et al. stated that internal reliabilities for the four scales were comparable to the SAS and the items appeared to have language and attitudes that was current to modern societal values. In relation to gender differences, men and women were compared on the SAS and the BSAS. Means were similar for the two versions. On the brief version, men were more endorsing of permissiveness and instrumentality than women were, and women were more endorsing of Birth Control than men were. In the present study, a Cronbach's alpha of .92 was found for Permissiveness.

An additional study was utilized to perform an independent replication on another large data set (Hendrick et al., 2006). This study consisted of 528 college students as participants. The sample demonstrated internal consistency reliability alphas of .95 for Permissiveness, .87 for Birth Control, .79 for Communion, and .80 for Instrumentality. The subscale correlations of the BSAS were comparable to the correlations of the original SAS. The authors concluded that the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale has scaling properties that are not only similar to, but also perhaps superior to, the longer version.

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised scale. The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised scale (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) is a 36-item revised version of the original 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) questionnaire designed by Brennan, Clark and Shaver (1998). In completing the ECR-R,

participants are given a set of instructions that explain to the participants that the 36 statements are related to how the participant generally feels in emotionally intimate relationships, and not necessarily just what is happening in a current romantic relationship. Each participant is asked to respond by circling a number on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to indicate how much the participant agrees or disagrees with the statement.

In scoring the ECR-R, the first 18 items comprise the attachment-related anxiety scale. The next 18 items comprise the attachment-related avoidance scale. A score for attachment-related anxiety is obtained by averaging each participant's responses to the first 18 items after reverse scoring items 9 and 11. Another score for attachment-related avoidance is obtained by averaging each participant's responses to items 19-36 after reverse scoring items 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36. Higher scores are more endorsing of the particular subscale. It is recommended that the items be randomized. The ECR-R has been used in many studies and has been noted to be highly reliable and have high construct as well as predictive validity (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

Fraley et al. (2000) developed the ECR-R as a means to assess adult romantic attachment, and also as a means to increase measurement precision across the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance. Fraley et al. (2000) used 1085 undergraduate students to examine the ECR and several other attachment questionnaires via Item Response Theory (IRT) analysis with a program specifically designed to estimate item response models as a means to determine the psychometric properties of the scales. From the analysis, the

authors devised a new scale -- the ECR-R. It contains 13 of the original 18 items of the ECR that measured the anxiety dimension, and seven of the original 18 items that measured the avoidance dimension. According to Fraley et al., the ECR and ECR-R scales appeared to have the greatest degree of measurement precision compared to other scales measuring attachment. Specific results indicated test-retest correlations across 6 weeks of the ECR-R to be .91 and .94 for the anxiety dimension and .90 and .91 for the avoidance dimension in samples of college students. Internal consistency reliability was .90 or higher for the two ECR-R scales. A Cronbach's alpha of .94 was found for both the anxiety and avoidant dimensions with the participants in this study.

Furthermore, the ECR-R is different from earlier scales that measure attachment. Specifically, the ECR-R "provides a series of item discrimination values more evenly distributed across the entire trait ranges of anxiety and avoidance" (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005, p. 1525). Compared with other scales, the ECR-R also provides more precise estimates of attachment across the entire trait range (Fraley et. al., 2000) and also has more stable test-retest estimates (Sibley et al, 2005).

Sibley et al. (2005) conducted three studies that examined "the ECR-R's performance across a wide range of classical psychometric criteria" (p. 1525). The results of the three studies indicated that the ECR-R is preferable in situations in which one wants to examine subtle attachment effects with limited power or small effect sizes, and also when one uses analyses or designs that may worsen potential measurement error. Another advantage of the ECR-R is that it was designed to reduce error in longitudinal designs. This is relevant as this dissertation may lead to future studies with the same

participants. Additionally, Sibley et al. concluded that “the ECR-R provides one of, if not the, most appropriate self-report measure of adult romantic attachment currently available” (p. 1534).

Sibley et al. (2005) tested the reliability and validity of the ECR-R using 300 undergraduate students. The ECR-R was found to have a stability estimate over a three week period of .90 to .92. In the second study, 478 undergraduate students completed the ECR-R. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess whether or not the ECR-R adequately represented the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance in relation to attachment. The results confirmed that the ECR-R accurately represented the dimensions of attachment anxiety and avoidance.

Sibley and Liu (2004) also examined the factor structure and the short term-temporal stability of the ECR-R using 197 and 199 participants at two different data collection intervals at which 136 participants had participated at both time intervals. The results indicated that the ECR-R displayed a clear two-factor structure and that it also was a scale that provided reliable and repeatable measures of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. It was also concluded that the ECR-R provides stability estimates over time which are mostly free from measurement error. Because of this quality, it is predicted that the ECR-R will be able to more accurately assess predictors of long-term change (i.e., a longitudinal study).

Family Environment Scale. The Family Environment Scale (FES) was originally created in 1974 by Rudolf H. Moos and Bernice S. Moos. The FES contains 90 items that respondents are requested to answer either “true” or “false.” It was developed to assess

the social climate of the family. There are 10 subscales (9 items each) that measure Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Organization, and Control. For purposes of this research, only the 27 items which measure Cohesion, Expressiveness and Conflict will be used. These three subscales comprise the relationship dimension, also known as the Family Relationship Index (FRI).

Cohesion measures the extent to which the family members are concerned and committed to the family and the degree to which family members are helpful and supportive of each other. Expressiveness measures the extent to which family members are allowed and encouraged to act openly and to express feelings directly. Conflict measures the extent to which the open expression of anger and aggression and generally conflictual interactions are characteristic of the family.

Separate scores, ranging from zero to nine, are reported for each subscale. Higher subscale scores reflect a greater degree of emphasis on that characteristic of the family environment. The three subscales will be summed to get one score (the FRI).

The FES has internal consistency reliabilities of .61 to .78. Moos and Moos (1974) reported alphas of .78 for Cohesiveness, .69 for Expressiveness, and .75 for Conflict. Moos and Moos also reported test-retest reliabilities of .86 for Cohesiveness, .73 for Expressiveness, and .85 for Conflict across a four- month interval and again across a 12- month interval. The FES has been used widely for over 25 years in clinical

and research work (Boake & Salmon, 1983). Cronbach's alphas for the participants in this study were .73 for Conflict, .76 for Cohesion, and .63 for Expressiveness.

Procedure

Recruitment of participants occurred via researcher contact with faculty members at the respective colleges after obtaining necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from each institution. Specifically, the researcher asked for permission from individual faculty members at the selected colleges if a survey packet, which consisted of the BSAS, ECR-R, FES, and demographic questionnaire, could be administered to their students one time during the course of a semester. Data collection was conducted by this researcher who went to the individual faculty classrooms and gathered data from students who gave informed consent. Informed consent was obtained from students who were 18 years of age and older at the time of participation. Students who were under the age of 18 were not included in the study due to ethical reasons related to research such as the need for parental consent when collecting data from minors. Additionally, this researcher also offered additional times to administer the survey materials outside of normal class time to avoid interfering with normal class activities for faculty members who did not have time in class for student participation. Relatively equal numbers of males and females were recruited. For example, counseling and psychology classes (predominantly female) and computer and fire science classes (predominantly male) were the primary targeted classes for recruitment. Other undergraduate and graduate required courses were also targeted as a means to obtain relatively equal numbers of male and female participants. Recruitment

efforts continued in these departments and others until roughly equivalent numbers of males and females were achieved.

The demographic questionnaire was administered last to avoid any order effects the questionnaire may have had on survey responses. Measures (except for the demographic questionnaire) were counterbalanced to avoid systematic order effects. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires as they were arranged in the packet. After completion of the survey materials, participants were also given the option to be contacted for possible future studies (see Appendix B). This additional form asked each participant to write his or her name, e-mail address and an address of a relative to contact in case he or she was to move. All information was coded so as not to link individual participants who completed the surveys and the additional questionnaire.

After completion of the survey instruments, all participants and faculty members were given the opportunity to be randomly selected to receive one of five \$25 gift certificates to a book store (Barnes and Noble) for participation in the survey. There were two random drawings. One drawing was for the students that participated in the research, and the other drawing was for the faculty members who agreed to allow this researcher access to students in their classrooms. Upon completion of a raffle ticket, the student participants placed the raffle ticket in a sealed box marked "STUDENTS," and the faculty members placed the raffle ticket in a sealed box marked "FACULTY." The identifying raffle ticket for student participants was kept separate from the survey materials. Approximately two weeks after all data collection had taken place, a third

party selected two raffle tickets from the “FACULTY” box and three raffle tickets from the “STUDENT” box. Selected winners were notified by mail, e-mail or phone.

Research Design

Causal-Comparative

The proposed design for this study was causal-comparative. It was a causal-comparative design because the study was not experimental, and there was not any manipulation of independent variables. Instead, the independent variables that were investigated in this study included naturally occurring attributes of people (gender, parental divorce status, etc.).

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Data Analysis

Preliminary analysis of the data set included conducting descriptive analyses to examine out of bounds values and violations of normality as well as exploration of the interrelationships among study variables. In addition, means and standard deviations of participant’s scores on the BSAS, FES, and the ECR-R were obtained as well as the number of males and females and the number of ACD and non-ACD participants. Descriptive statistics were further utilized to summarize the data related to demographic variables (e.g., average age, education level, and race). Finally, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to explore interrelationships among variables, such as correlations among the measured attachment styles and permissive sexual attitudes.

Inferential Statistics

All hypotheses were tested using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17. Multiple regression analyses were utilized for all hypotheses.

Power analysis for hypothesis 1(H1) and hypothesis 3 (H3) was tested using regression analysis. The input parameters included: effect size = .15 (medium), alpha = .05, power = .80 with two predictors (family functioning and divorce status). Total sample size required was a minimum of 68 participants.

Power analyses for hypothesis 2 (H2) was tested using regression analysis. The input parameters included: effect size = .15 (medium), alpha = .05, power = .80 with one predictor (family functioning). Total sample size required was a minimum of 55 participants.

Power analyses for hypothesis 4 (H4) was tested using regression analysis. The input parameters included: effect size = .15 (medium), alpha = .05, power = .80 with one predictor (permissiveness). Total sample size required a minimum of 55 participants.

Power analysis for hypothesis 5 (H5) was also tested using regression analysis. The input parameters included: effect size = .15 (medium), alpha = .05, power = .80 with two predictors (anxious attachment and avoidant attachment). The total sample size required a minimum of 68 participants. Overall, a minimum of 300 participants was deemed necessary for ensuring adequate power.

Summary

In summary, this chapter provided information regarding the number of participants in the study, the procedure and measures that the participants completed, and

the design of the research study. Furthermore, this chapter also included information related to statistical analysis which included descriptive and inferential statistics. The following chapter will discuss the results of the research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The chapter begins with an overview of the preliminary analyses. It also includes a review of each of the five hypotheses along with findings of the research through the use of inferential statistics as computed with SPSS version 17.0.

Preliminary Analyses and Inferential Statistics

Preliminary analysis of the data set included conducting descriptive analyses to examine out of bounds values and violations of normality as well as exploration of the interrelationships among study variables. No out of bounds values were detected and the skewness and kurtosis indices for each scale were within +1.50 and -1.50, therefore, no data transformations were conducted. Preliminary analyses also were performed to examine the means and standard deviations of the scales as well as their reliability (see Table 1). All Cronbach's alphas were within an acceptable range. Due to missing data on items, sample sizes for hypothesis testing varied, ranging from 366 to 384. Pairwise deletion was used to maximize the number of cases utilized in each set of analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses as Related to Attachment Style

Hypothesis one (H1) and hypothesis two (H2) assessed attachment style as it related to parental divorce status and family functioning. The specific hypotheses and analyses are as follows:

H1: Family functioning will be a better predictor than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores.

Multiple regression analysis was used to develop models for predicting anxious and avoidant attachment scores from students' family functioning scores (conflict, expression and cohesion), parental divorce status, and students' gender. Predictor variables for each model were entered in three steps. In the first set of regressions, the three family functioning variables, conflict, expression and cohesion, were entered into each model first, followed by parental divorce status. Gender was added in step 3 for exploratory purposes to see if gender was predictive after family functioning and divorce were accounted for. In the second set of regressions, parental divorce was entered in the first step, followed by the family functioning variables in step two. In this way, the relative contributions of family functioning and parental divorce status could be compared.

Anxious Attachment. At step one, the first model containing the three family functioning variables was significant, $F(3, 334) = 15.92, p = .00, R^2 = .13$. The only significant predictor in this model was cohesion, indicating that students reporting greater cohesiveness within their families had lower anxious-attachment scores ($\beta = -.29, t = -4.38, p = .00$). Adding parental divorce status to the model did not explain a significant amount of additional variance in anxious attachment ($F \text{ Change} = .54, p = .46, R^2 \text{ Change} = .00$). The addition of gender in the third step did not explain a significant amount of additional variance ($F \text{ Change} = 2.36, p = .13, R^2 \text{ Change} = .01$).

In the second regression, when parental divorce was entered in step one it was non-significant $F(1, 336) = .10, p = .76, R^2 = .00$; the addition of family functioning

variables in step two explained a significant amount of variance, F Change = 16.04, $p = .00$, R^2 Change = .13. Thus with regard to hypothesis 1, family functioning was a better predictor of anxious attachment than parental divorce.

Avoidant Attachment. The first model containing the three family functioning variables in step one was significant, $F(3,332) = 10.37$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .09$. Expressiveness and conflict were both significant predictors in this model, indicating that students with higher expressiveness ($\beta = -.17$, $t = -2.9$, $p = .004$) and lower conflict within their families ($\beta = .16$, $t = 2.61$, $p = .01$) had lower avoidant-attachment scores. Adding parental divorce status to the model did not explain a significant amount of additional variance in students' avoidant-attachment scores (F Change = .76, $p = .38$, R^2 Change = .002). The addition of gender in the third step did explain a significant amount of additional variance (F Change = 5.28, $p = .02$, R^2 Change = .10), indicating that males were more likely than females to have an avoidant attachment style, ($\beta = -.12$, $t = -2.30$, $p = .02$).

The second regression analysis was conducted to determine the amount of variance in avoidance predicted by parental divorce entered in the first step, followed by family functioning in the second step. When parental divorce was entered in step one it was non-significant, $F(1, 334) = 1.68$, $p = .20$, $R^2 = .01$. In the second step, adding the family functioning variables explained a significant amount of additional variance, F Change = 10.01, $p = .00$, R^2 Change = .08. Thus, as expected, family functioning was a better predictor of avoidant attachment than parental divorce.

Taken together, the results of these analyses indicate that Hypothesis 1 is supported; family functioning was a better predictor in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores than parental divorce status. Specifically, cohesion was predictive of anxious attachment, whereas expressiveness and conflict were significant predictors of avoidant attachment. An additional finding was that males scored higher on the avoidant-attachment dimension than did females. No gender differences emerged for the anxious-attachment dimension.

H2: Poorer family functioning (low expressiveness, low cohesion, higher conflict) will predict higher scores on the anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment.

Based on the regression analyses conducted for Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Specifically, low cohesion predicted higher scores on the anxiety dimension of attachment and low expressiveness and higher conflict predicted higher scores on the avoidant dimension of attachment.

Hypotheses Related to Sexual Attitudes

Hypothesis three (H3), hypothesis four (H4), and hypothesis five (H5) assessed family functioning and divorce status as related to permissive sexual attitudes and attachment style. The specific hypotheses are as follows:

H3: Family functioning will be a better predictor than divorce status in predicting permissive sexual attitudes.

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict permissive sexual attitudes scores from students' family functioning scores (conflict, expression and cohesion), parental divorce

status, and students' gender. Predictor variables for each model were entered in three steps. In the first set of regressions, the three family functioning variables, conflict, expression and cohesion, were entered into each model first, followed by parental divorce status. Gender was added in step three for exploratory purposes to see if gender was predictive after family functioning and divorce were accounted for. In the second set of regressions, parental divorce status was entered in the first step, followed by the family functioning variables in step two. In this way, the relative contributions of family functioning and parental divorce status could be compared.

At step one, the first model containing the three family functioning variables was not significant, $F(3, 340) = 2.09, p = .10, R^2 = .02$. The addition of parental divorce status in the second step did not explain a significant amount of additional variance (F Change = .92, $p = .34, R^2$ Change = .003). However, the addition of gender in the third step did account for a significant amount of additional variance (F Change = 103.54, $p = .00, R^2$ Change = .23). Male respondents were more likely to hold permissive sexual attitudes than female respondents, ($\beta = -.48, t = -10.18, p = .000$).

In the second regression, when parental divorce was entered in step one it was non-significant $F(1, 342) = 1.68, p = .20, R^2 = .01$; the addition of family functioning in step two did not explain a significant amount of variance, F Change = 1.83, $p = .14, R^2$ Change = .02. Thus, with regard to hypothesis 3, neither family functioning nor parental divorce status were better predictors of permissive sexual attitudes. The only significant predictor was gender.

H4: Poorer family functioning will predict more permissive sexual attitudes.

Based on the regression analyses conducted for Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. The only significant predictor of permissive sexual attitudes to emerge from the model was gender, with male participants reporting more permissive sexual attitudes than female participants.

H5: Higher scores on the anxiety and avoidant dimensions of the attachment measure (i.e., insecure attachment) will significantly predict more permissive sexual attitudes.

Multiple regression analysis was used for predicting permissive sexual attitudes from students' avoidant and anxious attachment scores and students' gender. Predictor variables for the model were entered in two steps: attachment scores (avoidant and anxious) were entered in the first step, followed by gender to determine whether additional variance in permissive attitudes was explained by gender beyond that explained by attachment type.

The results indicated that the attachment predictor was significant, $F(2,355) = 9.49, p = .000, R^2 = .05$. The significant predictor in this model was avoidant attachment, indicating that students reporting greater avoidant attachment also reported more permissive sexual attitude scores ($\beta = .21, t = 3.54, p = .001$). The addition of gender as a predictor in this model indicated that, in addition to avoidant attachment, male students reported more permissive sexual attitude scores than females ($\beta = -.46, t = -9.98, p = .00$). These findings therefore indicate that Hypothesis 5 was partially supported, with

avoidant-attachment, not anxious-attachment, predicting more permissive sexual attitudes.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter provided descriptive analyses of the participants and findings of each of the five hypotheses. Specifically, the first hypothesis proposed that family functioning would be a better predictor than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, the results for hypothesis one indicated that students who reported greater cohesiveness within their families (regardless of parental divorce status) reported lower anxious and lower avoidant attachment scores. Gender explained only a marginally significant amount of variance for this hypothesis. Thus, hypothesis one was supported.

The second hypothesis proposed that poorer family functioning would predict higher scores on the anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment. As noted above, students who reported greater cohesiveness within their families reported lower anxious-attachment scores. Furthermore, students who reported higher expressiveness and lower conflict scores reported lower avoidant-attachment scores. Thus, hypothesis two was supported.

The third hypothesis proposed that family functioning would be a better predictor than divorce status in predicting permissive sexual attitudes. However, neither family functioning nor divorce status significantly predicted permissive sexual attitudes. Thus, hypothesis three was not supported.

The fourth hypothesis proposed that poorer family functioning would predict more permissive sexual attitudes. Multiple regression analysis indicated no significant relationship between the reporting of poorer family functioning and more permissive sexual attitudes scores. Thus, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

The fifth hypothesis proposed that higher scores on the anxiety and avoidant dimension of the attachment measure would significantly predict more permissive sexual attitudes. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, it was noted that students who reported greater avoidant attachment scores reported more permissive sexual attitudes scores. Thus hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Gender was also examined with each of the hypotheses. The results indicated that male participants scored higher on the avoidant-attachment dimension than did females, and male respondents were also more likely to hold permissive sexual attitudes than female respondents.

Table 1

Subscale Intercorrelations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach's Alphas

Subscale	Permissive	Expressive	Cohesion	Conflict	Avoidant	Anxious	α
Anxious							.94
Avoidant						.51**	.94
Conflict					.23**	.24**	.73
Cohesion				-.53**	-.21**	-.35**	.76
Expressive			.47**	-.25**	-.23**	-.20**	.63
Permissive		-.07	-.11*	.12*	.22**	.13*	.92
Mean	2.24	5.61	6.96	3.48	2.79	3.04	
SD	1.02	2.11	2.17	2.34	1.23	1.32	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Note. ECR-R = the experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Scale (anxious, avoidant)

- measured by Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7); FES = Family Environment

Scale (conflict, cohesion, expressiveness) – measured by (1) True or (2) False; BSAS =

Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (permissiveness) – measured by Strongly Agree (1) to

Strongly Disagree (5).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Attachment, Family Functioning and Sexual Attitudes by Parental Divorce Status

Parental Divorce Status	Attachment Style ECR-R		Family Functioning FES			Sexual Attitude BSAS
	Anxious	Avoidant	Conflict	Cohesion	Expression	Permissive
Divorced	3.11 (1.30)	2.90(1.78)	4.09 (2.34)	6.47 (2.37)	5.65 (1.99)	2.34(1.01)
Non- Divorced	2.97 (1.27)	2.67 (1.27)	3.29 (2.34)	7.25 (2.01)	5.65 (2.19)	2.21 (1.01)

Note: The range of scores for each scale is as follows: ECR-R = the Experiences in Close

Relationships-Revised scale – measured by Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7); FES =

Family Environment Scale – measured by (1) True or (2) False; BSAS = Brief Sexual Attitudes

Scale- measured by: Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Attachment, Family Functioning and Sexual Attitudes by Gender

Parental Divorce Status	Attachment Style ECR-R		Family Functioning FES			Sexual Attitude BSAS
	Anxious	Avoidant	Conflict	Cohesion	Expression	Permissive
Male	3.19 (1.24)	2.93 (1.12)	3.65 (2.18)	6.89 (2.18)	5.36 (2.04)	2.82 (1.04)
Female	2.94 (1.36)	2.63 (1.31)	3.44 (2.52)	5.86 (2.24)	5.65 (2.16)	1.77 (.73)

Note: The range of scores for each scale is as follows: ECR-R = the Experiences in Close

Relationships-Revised scale – measured by Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7);

FES = Family Environment Scale – measured by (1) True or (2) False; BSAS = Brief

Sexual Attitudes Scale- measured by: Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine family functioning and parental divorce status in relation to attachment styles and sexual attitudes among college students. Specifically, this study's aim was to examine the relationship between family functioning and divorce status in relation to attachment styles and permissive sexual attitudes and to examine attachment styles in relation to permissive sexual attitudes. To date, no previous studies have investigated the interrelationship among these variables in one study. However, previous studies have demonstrated that divorce (c.f., Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Aro & Polosaari, 1992; Amato, 1993) and family functioning (c.f., Portes et al., 1992; Amato & Booth, 1991; Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999) are related to psychosocial development of children and adults. Previous studies also have demonstrated that attachment style (c.f., Walker & Ehrenberg, 1998; Love & Murdock, 2004) and sexual attitudes (c.f., Jeynes, 2001; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Christensen & Brooks, 2001) are related to children's and adult's psychosocial development. Researchers also have discovered that poor family functioning is related to unfavorable outcomes in children's psychosocial development, such as social withdrawal, anxiety and depression (Portes et al., 1992), and young adult's inability to form lasting, intimate relationships (Amato & Booth, 1991). Researchers also have demonstrated that experiencing the divorce of one's parents as a child is related to negative outcomes such as problem behaviors, decreased academic performance, and psychological distress (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989), as well as problems with intimacy in adulthood (Bolgar et al., 1995). It has also been found that

attachment is a key aspect of emotional functioning in close relationships from infancy through adulthood (Adshead & Blueglass, 2001). Finally, previous studies also have shown that sexual attitudes among college students have become more liberal since the 1960s (Bukstel et al., 1978). The extent to which permissive sexual attitudes and attachment styles among college students can be predicted by family functioning and parental divorce status is a new line of inquiry and the focus of the current study.

Furthermore, this study is important because mental health professionals often counsel couples with relationship concerns. Divorce, family functioning, and sexual attitudes likely will be variables that are related to these couple's concerns. Knowing whether or not divorce status and/or family functioning are predictive of children's attachment styles also would be of benefit to know as researchers have documented that children are often influenced by such interactions. Having some insight in to whether or not attachment style is predictive of sexual attitudes will help the field to further understand the interconnection between such variables and their relationship to one's family of origin dynamics and functioning and children's own intimate relationships as adults.

Results and Implications

Several of the hypotheses, but not all, were supported in this study. The first two hypotheses examined attachment styles in relation to family functioning and parental divorce status. The third and fourth hypotheses examined family functioning and divorce status in relation to sexual attitudes. The fifth hypothesis examined attachment styles and permissive sexual attitudes.

Attachment. It was hypothesized that family functioning would be a better predictor than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores. The results of the analysis indicated that this hypothesis was supported. Specifically, the results indicated that in relation to anxious attachment, the family functioning variables explained a significant amount of variance whereas parental divorce status did not. College students who reported greater cohesiveness within their families reported lower anxious-attachment scores.

Similarly, the family functioning variables explained significant variance in avoidant attachment and parental divorce status did not. Specifically, the results indicated that college students who reported higher expressiveness and lower conflict displayed lower avoidant-attachment scores. Gender also explained a significant amount of variance. Specifically, male college students were significantly more likely than female college students to display an avoidant attachment style.

These findings include some of the variables unaccounted for in the study by Amato and Keith (1991). Amato and Keith measured parental divorce as related to offspring well-being. From their study, they discovered that parental divorce was related to lower offspring well-being. It also was found that offspring who experienced parental death were psychologically better adjusted than offspring who experienced parental divorce. Their study noted that divorce did not necessarily have a profoundly negative effect on all of the offspring. This finding raises the question of what other variables could explain the variations in effects. As indicated by the findings of the current study, family functioning is an important variable to consider when examining the relationship

between parental divorce and children's outcomes, particularly as related to attachment styles. This study found that family functioning, not divorce status, is a better predictor of attachment style. Perhaps attachment style is related to family functioning because in the family of origin, one learns the basic processes of communication. If one experiences poor family functioning, that may lead to insecure attachment, whereas good family functioning may lead to secure attachment. Additionally, it may be that poor family functioning and insecure attachment may lead to poor communication skills which may lead to relationship problems as an adult.

These findings replicate those of previous researchers (cf., Caffery, 2000; El-Sheik & Buckhalt, 2003; Kapanee & Rao, 2007). For example, Caffery (2000) found that family functioning and attachment styles were related, with higher scores on attachment security being related to better family functioning. It was also noted that families that provide emotional support and nurturance are more likely to have securely attached children. El-Sheikh and Buckhalt (2003) noted that a higher level of family cohesion was a protective factor. Specifically, their study noted that a less secure attachment to parents was predictive of higher levels of cognitive and social problems despite the family dynamics. Finally, Kapanee and Rao (2007) found that persons who were securely attached also rated their families higher in family functioning. The results of the current study indicated a correlation between family functioning and attachment styles as evidenced by the aspect that students who reported greater cohesiveness within their families also reported lower anxious attachment scores. It was also noted in this study that college students who reported higher expressiveness and lower conflict within their

families also reported lower avoidant-attachment scores. Thus, family functioning and attachment are important variables to study.

It is also important to note that there are differences between this study and previous studies, including the use of different measures and research designs. Nonetheless, the results are somewhat similar and help explain that family functioning is interconnected with one's psychological well being – especially in relation to the close emotional bonds that one forms with others.

Sexual Attitudes. It was hypothesized that family functioning would be a better predictor than divorce status in predicting permissive sexual attitudes. The results indicated that this hypothesis was not supported. Specifically, the results of the analysis demonstrated that neither family functioning nor parental divorce status were predictive of permissive sexual attitudes. Instead, when gender was examined, the results showed that male college students endorsed more permissive sexual attitudes than did female college students. These findings replicate the results of studies conducted by previous researchers. For example, Hendrick et al. (1985) studied sexual permissiveness attitudes in a sample of college students. Their results indicated that male participants expressed more permissive sexual attitudes than female participants.

Unlike previous studies, in the present study, divorce status did not relate to participants' sexual attitudes. For example, Gabardi and Rosen (1992) found that parental divorce status was related to the sexual behaviors of young adults, such that adult children of divorce reported desiring more sexual behavior and had more sexual partners compared to those from non-divorced families. It is not clear why the results from the

current study differ from those reported by Gabardi and Rosen. Perhaps the difference in when the studies were conducted is important. It could be that the stigma of parental divorce has lessened in the intervening years.

Attachment and Sexual Attitudes. The final hypothesis was that insecure attachment styles (e.g., anxious and avoidant) would significantly predict more permissive sexual attitudes. The results of the analysis demonstrated this hypothesis was partially supported; the avoidant style of attachment was predictive of more permissive sexual attitudes.

These findings replicate those of other studies such as Brennan and Shaver (1995) who found that college students with a secure attachment style were less likely to be sexually permissive. Brennan and Shaver also reported that persons who had an avoidant attachment style displayed more sexually permissive attitudes and behaviors. Further, a study by Smith (1997) revealed that weak parental attachment was indicative of increased sexual intercourse for males. Alternatively, Feeney et al. (2000) found that anxiety and discomfort as attachment style measures were inversely related to females' reports of uninhibited communication with relationship partners. Thus, the findings in this study confirm those in previous studies. Adults who favor a secure attachment tend to have relationships that display happiness, trustworthiness and friendship (Kurdek, 2002). They also tend to have an optimistic sense of self and an optimistic sense of others (Simpson & Rholes, 1998) and they tend to be comfortable in close intimate relationships (Brennan et al., 1998). Insecurely attached adults, however, tend to have relationships characterized by difficulties related to intimacy, trust and dependence (Kurdek, 2002). Simpson and

Rholes stated that adults with an insecure attachment style may have an anxious sense of acquiring acceptance from others. The avoidant type of insecure attachment is usually characteristic of a person who avoids emotionally close relationships as a means to protect him or herself against disappointment. Furthermore, this type of attachment would be typical of a person who promotes characteristics that make him or her invulnerable (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). By understanding the two basic types of attachment (secure and insecure), it makes sense that securely attached persons would report less sexually permissive attitudes as they may value intimate relationships and may not want to have sexual relations with just anyone. On the other hand, it makes sense that insecurely attached persons would be more sexually permissive as they tend to be anxious or avoidant of close intimate relationships, and, as a result, may endorse more sexually permissive attitudes.

This study also noted that males were more sexually permissive than females. This was also evident in previous studies. It is more acceptable in society for males to endorse permissive sexual attitudes (Gonzales & Rolison, 2005) and it is more acceptable for males to not value close intimate contact (Graham, 1992). This was the case in this study, as males were more likely than females to endorse an avoidant attachment style. This finding may have more to do with socialization experiences and male gender roles than it does with attachment styles. More exploration of attachment styles in men is needed.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, because a non-experimental research design was used, a cause and effect relationship could not be clearly established, despite significant relationships among some of the variables. Furthermore, participants' attachment style prior to their parent's divorce is not known. As a result, it is not reasonable to state that divorce by itself or family functioning are indicative of one's attachment style.

Second, the research design makes it impossible to know the temporal order of predictors. Interpersonal relationships are quite complex and difficult to measure. Other factors or variables that could have impacted the results of the study could include multiple variables that were not accounted for in this study. For example, attachment may be affected by factors such as quality of parenting or quality of a current romantic relationship, the length of the romantic relationship, whether or not participant couples cohabitate, and the degree of marital or relationship satisfaction at the time participants completed the study measures.

Another limitation of the design is that findings cannot be generalized to the general population because the groups were derived from a sample of convenience. College students are not likely to represent accurately the general population and may be representative of a higher functioning group, as children who experienced their parent's divorce tend to have lower levels of academic achievement (Zill & Nord, 1993). In fact, the majority (68.5%) of the participants in this study had not experienced a parental divorce. This is not representative of the general population, as the National Vital

Statistics Reports (Sutton, 2009) shows that for every 7.1 marriages there were 3.5 divorces in the year 2008. Also, many individuals do not go to college and so the participants in this study are not representative of the general population.

Furthermore, the sample in this study included mostly Caucasian and heterosexual individuals. As a result, these findings cannot be generalized to persons of other populations such as persons of color or same sex couples. For this reason, more research needs to be conducted with such diverse groups.

The use of self-report measures is also a limitation, particularly because participants were asked to answer questions that required them to draw from childhood memories. Even though a participant may think he or she is answering accurately, research has shown that genuine memories cannot always be distinguished from ones which were confabulated (Radvansky, 2006). It is also possible that participants may not respond honestly or openly, but instead may just want to make themselves look good.

Future Directions

The present study provided some important information related to family functioning, parental divorce status, attachment style and sexual attitudes among college students in the Midwest. However, there are still many unanswered questions. For example, it is not known how the avoidant-attachment dimension and permissive sexual attitudes are linked. Further exploration of avoidant attachment and permissive sexual attitudes would be of benefit. Perhaps a mixed methods study that combines both qualitative and quantitative data would be of benefit in exploring the interconnectedness of these two variables. It is also interesting to note that this study demonstrated gender

differences in the dimensions of avoidant attachment and permissive sexual attitudes in relation to male college students being more likely than female college students to endorse an avoidant attachment style and endorse more sexually permissive attitudes. To explore these interrelationships would be of benefit. For instance, just because males endorse more sexually permissive attitudes than females, it does not necessarily mean that they are behaving in a sexually permissive manner, as sexual attitudes may not be related to actual behaviors. Also, this study was conducted in the Midwest. Perhaps expanding this study to a population in which many states are represented would give a better account for sexual attitudes across the United States and not just one general area. Furthermore, a longitudinal study might be helpful to understand how attachment styles are developed and sustained or changed from childhood well into adulthood. More research with diverse groups such as persons of color, persons with mental and physical disabilities as well as same-sex couples would also be an important means to expand this particular body of research.

Counseling Implications

The findings of this study suggest that family functioning is an important variable to understand in relation to offspring well-being. Knowing this information is fundamental for mental health professionals and educators. For example, there likely will be situations in which a couple may seek out counseling in an effort to sustain positive family relations. Knowing how the family dynamics of a couple influences family functioning can assist mental health professionals with the counseling process. For example, Whittaker and Robitschek (2001) indicated the need to focus on preventative

components of the counseling process. Perhaps with this information, mental health professionals and educators could conduct seminars on the importance of positive family functioning. As this study demonstrated, family functioning is related to attachment style more so than parental divorce status.

Furthermore, in a family in which there is high family conflict, it may be best to take measures to remedy the actual conflict first in order to prevent offspring from further experiencing the potential relatedness of poor family functioning and poor psychological development. Once the conflict is remedied, then the mental health professional could continue the counseling process by focusing on the factors that may contribute to poor family functioning, and, in turn, help the family to understand what contributes to positive family dynamics and functioning.

Moreover, having an understanding of the factors that may contribute to poor psychological well-being for offspring is of benefit to marriage and family counselors as well as psychologists and educators. Knowing this significant information may help mental health professionals and educators understand the significance of resolving conflicts immediately by teaching a better manner of communication for the family immediately. This, in turn, could assist offspring with psychosocial development in many areas of their lives.

This study also provided some insight for the assessment process in a counseling session. In understanding family of origin dynamics, it may be beneficial to assess attachment styles of couples who come for family counseling. Knowing the dynamics of the different attachment styles and understanding a person's family of origin, may prove

to be helpful in the counseling process. With this information in mind, the counselor can educate their clients in understanding how their attachment style may be related to the dynamics of their marriage/relationship.

Also, in relation to the counseling process, it would be beneficial for counselors to establish a rapport with their clients that promotes an atmosphere of trust and security for persons with an insecure attachment style. It would also be beneficial for counselors to not stereotype their clients. For example, it would not be proper for counselors to presume that every person from a divorced family or from a family with high conflict has significant dysfunctional relationship issues with partners. Finally, it would also be helpful if counselors remained educated about current research related to the variables in this study and if counselors utilized multicultural counseling techniques for persons of different ethnicities, gender, and physical or mental disabilities as each of these factors may be related to the dynamics of family and couples relationships.

It would also be of benefit to consider the different attachment styles and how each might be related to the aspect of the counseling process. For example, knowing how to counsel individuals with a secure attachment style versus an insecure attachment style will assist the counselor. It would also be worthwhile to consider the implications for counseling in relation to specific attachment styles such as counseling a person with an anxious or an avoidant attachment style. Being prepared and well educated on the divorce attachment styles will allow for effective counseling techniques when working with different attachment styles. Also, understanding the different attachment styles within couples is also beneficial. Further exploration of the interactions of the different

attachment types may be helpful in understanding any dysfunction that may take place in a couple's relationship.

In conclusion, this study is beneficial to mental health professionals and educators in that it has provided some important information and insight related to adult romantic relationships in general. It reconfirms how important healthy family dynamics are in relation to providing a supportive and positive environment for one's offspring in relation to their own family dynamics as adults.

Summary

In summary, this study was the first to investigate the interrelationships between the variables of family functioning, parental divorce status, attachment and sexual attitudes. The findings suggest that family functioning is a better indicator than divorce status in explaining anxious and avoidant attachment scores. It was also noted that neither family functioning nor divorce status was a significant predictor of permissive sexual attitudes; permissive sexual attitudes were predicted by an avoidant attachment style and male gender.

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Consent Form



College of Education

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Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Kathy L. Kufskie PI's Phone Number 618-235-2700 ext. 8111

You are asked to participate in a research study about romantic relationships and how they may relate to your family structure while growing up. This study is being conducted by Kathy L. Kufskie, M.A., a doctoral student at the University of Missouri- Saint Louis and her faculty supervisor, Susan Kashubeck-West, Ph.D. It is important that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Missouri- Saint Louis or with Southwestern Illinois College. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

What will I do as a participant in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete some questionnaires regarding romantic relationships, your family interactions, sexual attitudes and demographic information.

It is estimated that your participation in the study will take no longer than 15 - 20 minutes.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There are minimal risks and discomforts involved in participating in this study. You will be asked to think about close relationships and rate the extent to which you believe a series of statements best describes your feelings. You will also be asked to read several statements that reflect different attitudes about sex and answer whether or not you agree or disagree with the statements. Should you experience any significant emotional distress, you may discontinue your participation at any time. This researcher will also be available to you to discuss any immediate concerns, and to provide you with resources that may be helpful to you.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The only people who will know that you are a research participant are members of the research team and your instructors, if you are given the option of extra credit for participation in the research study. Your instructor will only be informed that you participated in the research study, so that you can receive extra credit for participation. No information obtained about you during your participation, such as your responses to the questionnaires, will be provided to your instructor. In addition, no information about you, or provided by you during your participation in this study will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except:

- If necessary to protect your rights or welfare (for example, when the University of Missouri – Saint Louis Institutional Review Board monitors research or consent process): or
- If required by law

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. You will be identified by a code number on all information you provide. Your information will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a private office. At the conclusion of this study, information connecting you with your information will be destroyed unless you grant permission otherwise.

Will I be paid for my participation in this research?

As compensation for your time, you may elect to receive extra credit if your instructor is offering extra credit, and/or you may be entered into a drawing to receive one of five \$25 gift certificates to a bookstore. Should you choose to receive extra credit, your instructor will be informed that you participated in a study that required no more than 20 minutes of your time.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The researcher conducting this study is Kathy L. Kufskie, M.A. You may ask any questions you have now or later. The researcher can be contacted at 618.235.2700 ext 8111.

What are my rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Missouri – Saint Louis, (314) 516-5897.

Remember: Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

I have read the above statements and have been able to express my concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to me by the investigator. I believe I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I hereby give my consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature

Date

Participant's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix A

BRIEF SEXUAL ATTITUDES SCALE

Listed below are several statements that reflect different attitudes about sex. For each statement fill in the response on the answer sheet that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Some of the items refer to a specific sexual relationship, while others refer to general attitudes and beliefs about sex. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you are not currently dating anyone, answer the questions with your most recent partner in mind. If you have never had a sexual relationship, answer in terms of what you think your responses would most likely be.

For each statement:

- A** = Strongly agree with statement
- B** = Moderately agree with the statement
- C** = Neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- D** = Moderately disagree with the statement
- E** = Strongly disagree with the statement

1. I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

2. Casual sex is acceptable.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

3. I would like to have sex with many partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

4. One-night stands are sometimes very enjoyable.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

5. It is okay to have ongoing sexual relationships with more than one person at a time.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

6. Sex as a simple exchange of favors is okay if both people agree to it.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

7. The best sex is with no strings attached.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

8. Life would have fewer problems if people could have sex more freely.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
9. It is possible to enjoy sex with a person and not like that person very much.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
10. It is okay for sex to be just good physical release.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
11. Birth control is part of responsible sexuality.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
12. A woman should share responsibility for birth control.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
13. A man should share responsibility for birth control.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
14. Sex is the closest form of communication between two people.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
15. A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
16. At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
17. Sex is a very important part of life.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
18. Sex is usually an intensive, almost overwhelming experience.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
19. Sex is best when you let yourself go and focus on your own pleasure.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
20. Sex is primarily the taking of pleasure from another person.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*
21. The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself.
Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

22. Sex is primarily physical.

Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

23. Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating.

Strongly Agree A B C D E *Strongly Disagree*

**The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire
Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000)**

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.

For each statement:

- A = strongly AGREE with statement
- B = moderately agree with statement
- C = somewhat agree with statement
- D = NEUTRAL- neither agree nor disagree
- E = somewhat disagree with statement
- F = moderately disagree with statement
- G = strongly DISAGREE agree with statement

The statements below concern how you generally feel in your relationship with your romantic partner (i.e., a girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse).

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

22. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.

Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

23. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
24. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
25. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
26. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
27. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
28. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
29. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
30. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
31. I tell my partner just about everything.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
32. I talk things over with my partner.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
33. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
34. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
35. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
36. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*
37. My partner really understands me and my needs.
Strongly Agree A B C D E F G *Strongly Disagree*

Family Environment Scale/Family Relationship Index

There are 27 statements in this questionnaire. They are statements about families. **You are to decide which of these statements are true of your family as you grew up and which are false. If you think the statement is True or mostly True of your family, select (A) True. If you think the statement is False or mostly False of your family, select (B) False.**

You may feel that some of the statements are true for some family members and false for others. **Select (A) True if the statement is true for most members. Select (B) False if the statement is false for most members.** If the members are evenly divided, decide what the stronger overall impression is and answer accordingly.

Remember, we would like to know what your family seemed like to you growing up. So do not try to figure out how other members see your family, but do give us your general impression of your family for each statement.

1. Family members really help and support one another.
(A) True (B) False
2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves.
(A) True (B) False
3. We fight a lot in our family.
(A) True (B) False
4. We often seem to be killing time at home.
(A) True (B) False
5. We say anything we want to around home.
(A) True (B) False
6. Family members rarely become openly angry.
(A) True (B) False
7. We put a lot energy into what we do at home.
(A) True (B) False
8. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody
(A) True (B) False
9. Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things.
(A) True (B) False
10. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.
(A) True (B) False

11. We tell each other about our personal problems.
(A)True (B) False
12. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers.
(A)True (B) False
13. We rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home.
(A)True (B) False
14. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment we often just pick up and go.
(A)True (B) False
15. Family members often criticize each other.
(A)True (B) False
16. Family members really back each other up.
(A)True (B) False
17. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family.
(A)True (B) False
18. Family members sometimes hit each other.
(A)True (B) False
19. There is very little group spirit in our family
(A)True (B) False
20. Money and paying bills is openly talked about in our family.
(A)True (B) False
21. If there's a disagreement in our family, we try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace.
(A)True (B) False
22. We really get along well with each other.
(A)True (B) False
23. We are usually careful about what we say to each other.
(A)True (B) False
24. Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other.
(A)True (B) False

25. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone in our family.
(A)True (B) False
26. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family.
(A)True (B) False
27. In our family, we believe you don't ever get anywhere by raising your voice.
(A)True (B) False

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your sex?

- Male (A)
- Female (B)
- Transgendered (C)

2. What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight/Heterosexual (A)
- Gay or Lesbian (B)
- Bisexual (C)
- Questioning (D)

3. What is the highest level of education you have COMPLETED?

- Grade school (A)
- Some high school (B)
- High School Diploma (C)
- GED (D)
- Associates Degree (E)
- Bachelor's Degree (F)
- Master's Degree (G)
- Doctorate Degree (H)
- Post Doctorate (I)

4. Provide the name of the college that you are currently attending:

- (A) University of Missouri-Saint Louis
- (B) Southwestern Illinois College

5. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

- African-American/Black (A)
- Hispanic-American/Latino/Chicano (B)
- Native-American/American Indian (C)
- Asian-American (D)
- Caucasian/European-American/White (E)
- Multiracial (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

6. Were you adopted as a child?

- Yes (A)
- No (B)

7. Were your biological or adoptive parents ever married?

- Yes (A)
- No (B)

8. If your biological or adoptive parents were married, did they ever divorce from each other before you were age 18?

- Yes (A)
No (B)

9. If your biological or adoptive parents divorced, did either of them remarry while you were living with them and under the age of 18?

(Please skip this question if your parents are still married)

- Yes (A)
No (B)

10. Please indicate which statement best describes your current romantic relationship status:

- Single – no partner (A)
Dating casually (B)
Dating seriously (C)
In a married or committed relationship (D)
Divorced (E)
Other (please specify) _____ (F)

11. Have you engaged in sexual intercourse prior to marriage?

- Yes (A)
No (B)

12. Have you ever been sexually unfaithful in a committed relationship?

- Yes (A)
No (B)

For the next three questions, please write in your answers on this questionnaire.

13. What is your age?

Years _____

14. If your biological or adoptive parents divorced while you were age 18 or younger, what age were you when they divorced? (Complete this question only if your biological parents divorced while you were 18 or younger)

Years _____

15. If you were adopted, how old were you when you were adopted?

Years _____

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Longitudinal Research

“A longitudinal study is a comparative study of one individual or group over a relatively long period” (Coolican, 2006, p. 273).

The researcher of this study may decide to conduct a similar study several years from now for group comparison reasons. Your cooperation to be listed as a contact for any future studies will be highly appreciated and valuable to the research field. By giving your information, you will not be obligated to participate in future studies.

If you agree to provide contact information for future studies, please provide the necessary information below. This additional information that you provide will be filed separately from the questionnaires that you completed today.

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

E-mail Address: _____ @ _____

Name of Relative: _____ (relationship) _____

Address of Relative: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

FACULTY COVER LETTER



College of Education

One University Blvd
469 Marillac Hall
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-341-3388
E-mail: kufskie@umsl.edu

Dear Faculty Member:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Missouri - St. Louis. I am conducting a research study that will examine attachment style and sexual attitude differences of college students from divorced and non-divorced families. I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of a Ph.D. in Education with a dual emphasis in both Educational Psychology and Counseling.

I am sending this letter to ask you for your permission to allow me to come to your classroom at a prearranged time to administer a survey packet to your students who agree to participate. Or, if you prefer, I am asking for your permission to send you survey packets that you can pass out on my behalf to administer to your students no later than (I will enter the deadline here). If you choose to pass out the packets instead of having me come to your classroom, I can arrange to come to your office, and collect the packets from you after administration has been completed.

I understand that your time is valuable as I am a college professor myself. However, I would sincerely appreciate a maximum of 15-20 minutes of your class time to allow student participation in my research study. In gratitude, I am offering you and your students an incentive for participation. Specifically, I am offering the opportunity for you and your students a chance to enter a drawing for a gift certificate valued at \$25 to a bookstore. Furthermore, there will be two separate drawings. One will be for student participation, and the other will be for faculty participation.

If you believe you are interested in allowing your students the opportunity to participate in my research study, please contact me by e-mail at Kathy.Kufskie@swic.edu or by telephone at 618.235.2700 extension 8111. Your consent to allow student participation in this research study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Kufskie
Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri – St Louis
Divisions of Educational Psychology and Counseling and Family Therapy

SURVEY COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. It is important that you give truthful and accurate information when completing the questionnaires enclosed in the manila envelope. The questionnaires are to be completed in the order in which they are arranged in this envelope. You will also find a raffle card enclosed in the manila envelope. Please complete the necessary information if you would like to be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to a bookstore. Upon completion of the questionnaires, please place them back in the manila envelope, and return them to me (or the faculty member proctoring the survey). Do NOT place the completed raffle card in the envelope. Please place the completed raffle card in the box labeled "STUDENTS." The raffle card from every student participant will be included in a random selection drawing that will take place within two weeks of all data collection. Winners will be notified by mail, e-mail, or phone.

Again, I thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Kufskie
Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri – Saint Louis