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Assessing Attachment Levels of Adults From Divorced and Non-Divorced Families

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ASSESSING ATTACHMENT LEVELS OF ADULTS FROM
DIVORCED AND NON-DIVORCED FAMILIES

KATHY LYNNE RIGDON, B.S.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate

School of Lindenwood University in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Although considerable research has recently been conducted on attachment styles as well as divorce, little attention has been paid to the effects of divorce in relation to one's attachment style. In order to understand the impact of divorce on one's attachment style in the adult years of development, this research study was conducted using a measure of attachment styles and divorce issues in relation to developmental aspects of life. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of attachment styles between adults that came from divorced and non-divorced families. Participants in this study came from a mental health agency, and a private university in the Midwestern part of the United States. Participants (n=64) were asked to answer a demographic questionnaire, and a 30 item questionnaire that measured attachment styles. The results revealed that there was a significant effect on attachment style in the adult years. The specific results indicated a significant relationship between one's attachment style and whether or not one grew up in a divorced or non-divorced family.

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A Culminating Project Presented to the Graduate
School of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment
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1998

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DEDICATION

To Dad, Mom, Kim, Valerie, and Matt for being such a loving family. To God who gave me inner strength when I thought I could not continue. To all my friends who have remained my friends throughout the whole process, and especially to Mike, my fiancée, for standing beside me through all my ups and downs -- for being my emotional support -- for being my closest friend -- and for sacrificing your needs for my goals. You have all helped me make my goal come true. For all the support, love, and sacrifices, I dedicate this paper to you. I love you all!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study examined the differences and/or similarities between adults that came from divorced and non-divorced families. The attachment styles of secure, fearful, dismissing, and preoccupied as defined by The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994) were measured. Several studies reviewed in this paper provided evidence that divorce does impact children into their adult lives.

The experience of growing up in the United States has changed within the past decades. Wallerstein's prediction (Wallerstein, 1985) in the middle 1970's, stated that 30 to 40 percent of children born in the 1970's would experience their parent's divorce. This prediction has been overtaken by reality. Current trends translate into even more startling expectations. It was estimated that 45 percent of all children born in 1983 will experience their parent's divorce (Wallerstein, 1985), 35 percent will experience a remarriage, and 20 percent will experience a second divorce.

Although the incidence for divorce has been increasing over the past decade, the most dramatic rise has occurred among young adults

(Norton, 1983). As a result, children in divorcing families are younger than in previous years.

Divorce is frequent in our society. It is a marker of high stress periods that precede and follow it. The events surrounding it have clear negative effects on physical and mental health of all those that are involved (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989). The issues and the reactions are different for fathers and mothers and for children from the broken families. The issues are different and determined by the sex and the developmental stage that one is in at the time of the disruption (Gavshon, 1990). The effects of the divorce are interactive and events subsequent to the divorce influence one's own competent level of functioning (Stolberg & Bush, 1985).

Statement of Purpose

Due to the overwhelming effects divorce has on children and into their adult lives, the purpose of this study was to confirm attachment style differences that existed between adults that came from divorced families and adults that came from intact families. Emphasis will be placed on the secure and fearful attachment styles. This paper explored literature

focusing on divorce, stages of development, and the similarities as well as differences divorce had on a person's attachment style as an adult.

Hypotheses

Several studies have shown that divorce has an affect on one's attachment style and divorce does pose an impact on one later into adult years (Ainsworth, 1989; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1990; Biringen, 1994; Chess, 1983). This particular study examined the attachment styles one has in adult life in relation to being from a divorced versus a non-divorced family. Therefore, this study hypothesized that:

H1) People from divorced families will show lower levels of secure attachment styles compared to people from non-divorced families

H2) People from divorced families will show higher levels of fearful attachment styles compared to those that come from non-divorced families

H3) People from divorced families will show higher levels of dismissing attachment styles compared to those that come from non-divorced families

H4) People from divorced families will show higher levels of preoccupied attachment styles compared to those that come from non-divorced families

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Divorce

The rise in the frequency of divorce is well illustrated by the social consequences of children (adults, adolescents, and elementary children) from divorced families. Marital breakdown is a process and divorce itself is only one event in a continuum (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989). Divorce is a legal intervention which, because it can be counted, is used to indicate trends within society (Murray, 1992). The divorce itself is rarely a crucial factor; it usually occurs after a period of separation and after attempts to rescue the marriage. Divorce signals the failure of those efforts and the beginning of legal intervention to regulate family dissolution (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989).

Changes in divorce rates can be attributed in part to simplification of the law, shorter waiting periods, more liberal grounds for divorce and access to the legal system through legal aid. Divorce was previously available only to more affluent groups (Rae-Grant & Robson, 1988). However, the increase in divorce rate also reflects the changing attitudes

toward the institution of marriage and the diminished belief in permanence as an essential characteristic of marriage.

Even in the best of circumstances, divorce has adverse effects on all concerned. Parental separation and divorce is the factor most strikingly associated with attempted suicide by adolescents (Abelsohn & Saayman, 1991). Children from divorced families are over represented in psychiatric populations. Divorce is even associated with depression and suicide as well as alcoholism and homicide (Rae-Grant & Robson, 1988).

Divorce and Age Effects

In particular for adolescence divorce brings out major changes that affect the parent-child relationship (Donley, 1993). This entails and can be seen through the adolescent's developmental period by increasing the adolescent's worry about sex and marriage as well as intimacy and commitment in life (Emery, 1988).

Recent reviews of divorce studies reveal considerable inconsistency with regard to modulating effects of age and gender on the consequences of marital dissolution. In a comprehensive review of gender and divorce, Zaslow (1987) concluded that it is still unclear whether boys react more negatively to marital disruption. Zaslow (1987) suggested that

boys and girls may exhibit different symptoms of distress, and that boys may respond more negatively to living with an opposite sex parent. She also hypothesized that girls may react more negatively than boys to remarriage of the mother.

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 supposed. Age of the child is frequently confounded with age at the time of separation, length of time since separation, and even historical period. One study (Allison & Furstenburg, 1989) has attempted to disentangle these temporal dimensions; a task that requires a longitudinal design and a large sample of children exposed to marital dissolution. In their study it was discovered that marital dissolution has long lasting and pervasive effects in areas of problem behaviors, academic performance, and psychological distress. With regard to this particular research, the significant effects are within the female gender.

Another study by Stolberg and Bush (1985) measured children's divorce adjustment. This particular study attempted to measure children's post-divorce adjustment. The findings suggested that the impact of age on

children's post-divorce adjustment was found to be mediated by the number of major life events that were reported.

Significant associations between difficult temperament and behavioral and socioemotional functioning in middle childhood or in later developmental periods have been documented (Chess & Thomas, 1984, 1986; Maziade, 1989a, 1989b; Thomas & Chess, 1984; Windle, 1991, 1992). In a cross-sectional analysis of adolescents dwelling in the community, a linear relationship has been described between the number of difficult temperament factors and levels of substance use, childhood behavior problems, and family social support (Windle, 1991). Further analyses of the total sample ($n=975$) demonstrated partial support for structural equation models in which the influence of difficult temperament on depressive symptoms and delinquent activities was mediated by perceived friend and family support. In these models, difficult temperament also had direct influences on depression and delinquency (Windle, 1992).

Studies of clinical and non-clinical community-dwelling populations have demonstrated concurrent and predictive relationships between extremely difficult temperament and psychiatric symptomology.

One research group has documented that clinical behavior disorders are associated with this temperament after four or five years of age (Maziade, Cote, & Thiverge, 1989). Extremely difficult temperament has been shown to be associated with specific types of concurrent behavior disorder (e.g. oppositional, conduct, or attention-deficit disorders) in a large sample of consecutive admissions to a children's psychiatric center (Maziade, Caron, Cote, Boutin, & Thiverge, 1990). Therefore, extreme temperamental difficulty has been associated with lower adjustment, as well as with psychiatric symptomology from childhood to middle adolescence.

Developmental Significance

In relation to this paper, two important times of life were reviewed. The two important aspect of life are stages according to Erik Erikson in Newman and Newman (1995). These two stages are the later adolescence (18 - 22) and the young adult stages (22 - 34). Relevant to this study are developmental issues in each stage of development. Later adolescence being a time when one gains autonomy from parents and begins to explore social aspects of life. This will include gender identity as well as internalized morality (i.e. what is morally right and what is

morally wrong). This is a time when one experiences individual identity or identity confusion. The stages of early adulthood (ages 22-34) are concretely significant to this study because this is the stage when one begins exploring intimate relationships. This is a developmental time of when one experiences intimacy or isolation. Both stages of development are relevant to the study because they are relevant to attachment.

Attachment in the sense to another person in which a relationship will or will not arise based on one's own attachment style.

Despite these well-replicated central tendencies, some children continue to protest separation from their mothers well into their second and third years. Furthermore, even though the proportion of preschool children who show distress over separation declines with age, a substantial minority of three year olds become overtly upset when separated from their mothers for even a brief period (Fish & Belsky, 1991).

Attachment

It is widely acknowledged that most infants become distressed upon separation from their mothers around the time of their first birthday (Fish & Belsky, 1991). Longitudinal and cross sectional research on infants reared under different child-care conditions in the country (Kagan,

Kearsley, & Zela, 1978) and in undeveloped nations (Lester, Kotelchuck, Spelke, Sellers, & Klein, 1974) indicates that protest about separation is infrequent before 9 months of age, peaks around 13 months and declines thereafter (Fish & Belsky, 1991).

In his book titled Attachment and Loss Bowlby (1980) states that attachment behavior is “conceived as any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual” (page 39). Attachment behavior is observed in infants/children with such actions of exchanging occasional glances and greetings to the attachment figure (i.e. mother/father). It can also exhibit itself as following the caregiver and clinging or crying with the end result being getting the care that the infant/child wants from the attachment figure.

Additionally, Bowlby (1980), states that during the course of healthy development attachment behavior leads to the development of affection bonds or attachments - - initially between child and parent and later between adult and adult. The forms of behavior and the bonds to which they lead are present and active throughout the life cycle (and by no means confined to childhood).

Attachment behavior like other forms of instinctive behavior is mediated by behavioral systems, which early in development become goal-corrected. An attachment bond endures the various forms of attachment behavior. Each are only active when necessary (Bowlby, 1980).

Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships. The formation of a bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone (Bowlby, 1980; Shaver & Hazen, 1988). Similarly, threat of loss arouses anxiety; an actual loss gives rise to sorrow, while each of these situations is likely to arouse anger. The unchallenged maintenance of a bond is experienced as a source of security and the renewal of a bond as source of joy. Because such emotions are usually a reflection of the state of a person's affection bonds, the psychology and psychopathology of emotion is found to be in large part the psychology and psychopathology of affectional bonds (Bowlby, 1980).

Attachment behavior has become a characteristic of many species during the course of their evolution because it contributes to the

individual's survival by keeping him/her in touch with his/her caregivers. Thereby, reducing the risk of his coming to harm (i.e. from cold, hunger, drowning, and in man's environment of evolutionary adaptedness, especially from predators) (Bowlby, 1980). Principle determinants of the pathway along which an individual's attachment behavior develops, and of the pattern in which it becomes organized, are the experiences he/she has with these attachment figures during the years of infancy, childhood, and adolescence (Bowlby, 1980).

Attachment theory ties together (a) the intense emotional bonding experienced as love (Shaver & Hazen, 1988), and (b) the way that phenomenological experiencing of particular emotions is connected to people's meaning systems and their behavior in relationships (Pistole, 1994). Previously, attachment theory has been discussed in the marriage and family literature primarily in relation to the "epigenesis" of relational systems (Wynne, 1984), divorce (Berman, 1988), adolescent adjustment to remarriage (Chapman, 1991), and love (Roberts, 1992).

Attachment is any action that results in a person attaining proximity to another person that is better able to cope with the world (Fitzpatrick, Fey, Segrin, & Schiff, 1993). Attachment theory was

originally designed to explain many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment (Bowlby, 1977). Ainsworth has identified three patterns of attachment. These patterns include (a) secure attachment, (b) anxious-resistant attachment, and (c) avoidant attachment. The securely attached person will welcome the return of the caretaker and be readily comforted. The anxious-resistant person shows ambivalent behavior and an inability to be comforted upon reunion. The avoidant person tends to express less distress during separation episodes. The affect is conspicuous avoidance of proximity or interaction with the caretaker upon reunion. In infants this will take the form of turning the body or the head away from the caretaker (Bartholomew, 1990).

Attachment is strongly associated with a person's close relationships in adulthood by the events that took place during childhood in the parent-child relationship (Collins & Read, 1990). Hazen & Shaver (1987) used infant attachment theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall 1978; Bowlby 1982, 1973, 1980) as a basis for examining adult relationships as related to early parent interactions. Bowlby's (1982, 1973) theory was based on the model of social and personality

development. The well being of a person later in life stems from these childhood experiences. According to Scharfe and Bartholomew (1994), the four attachment styles consist of four prototypic attachment patterns that include secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing.

Attachment Styles

Secure attachment is the sense of worthiness (lovability) plus an extension that other people are generally acceptive and responsive. Fearful attachment is the sense of unworthiness (unlovability) combined with an expectation that others would be negatively disposed (rejecting and untrustworthy). By avoiding close involvement with others, this style enables people to protect themselves against anticipated rejection by others. Preoccupied attachment is the sense of unworthiness (unlovability) combined with a positive evaluation of others. People who strive for self-acceptance value acceptance by others. Dismissing attachment is the sense of love-worthiness combined with a negative disposition toward other people. This attachment style protects the self against disappointment by avoiding close relationships and maintaining a sense of independence and invulnerability. Together, preoccupied attachment and secure attachment styles correlate a strong dependency on

others to maintain a positive self-image. Fearful attachment and dismissing attachment styles are avoidant of intimacy (Bartholomew, 1990).

Attachment Research

Attachment theory as developed by John Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1982) conceptualizes the universal human need to form close affectionate bonds. It serves both as normative theory of how inborn an "attachment system" functions in all humans and as an individual - difference theory of attachment strategies that are adopted in response to different life experiences (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Hazan and Shaver (1987) introduced their three-category measure of adult attachment as an adult analog of Mary Ainsworth's (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) classification of infants research. Adult attachment has been focused almost exclusively on correlates of individual differences in attachment (for an exception see Hazan & Hut, 1991). This has been quite an endeavor that many attachment strategies have been related to jealousy, parental drinking, relationship satisfaction, self disclosure, support seeking and several other categories (See Hazan and Shaver, 1993, for a comprehensive review).

Despite the impressive evidence for the predictive validity of attachment strategies in general, there has been little attention paid to basic measurement issues. Attachment patterns or strategies have variously been assessed by a three-category and four-category interview procedure (e.g. Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985) three category and four-category self-report measures (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1987), and multi-item scales that form either two (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992) or three (Collins & Read, 1990) empirically derived factors. However, in regard to adult attachment, this has lacked an integrated approach to measurement.

Attachment in Adulthood

A basic principle of attachment theory is that attachment relationships continue to be important throughout the life span (Ainsworth, 1982, 1989; Bowlby, 1977, 1980, 1982b). Although evidence exists documenting the continuity of attachment-related behaviors (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) investigators have only recently examined the relationship between working models of attachment and close and emotional adaptation in adults. It is also imperative to know

that satisfaction of having intimate relationships is an important aspect of most people's happiness and sense of meaning in life (e.g. Freedman, 1978; Klinger, 1977). Occasionally people will avoid getting close to others in fear of getting emotionally hurt. Still others do not succumb to these fears, and are open to relationships and intimacy at any point in time.

According to the Alfrey Singer's (in Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) theory of romance, relationships, like sharks, must constantly move forward or die. Of course, this preference for novelty and change is an exaggerated, one-sided view of romantic relationships. Happy romances also have periods of calm and stability, when partners integrate past experiences and new discoveries into a deeper understanding of each other and their partnership (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). The same pattern can be found in psychological research on close relationships when a theoretical approach leads a variety of researchers to take a particular problem. This could be conducted when coupled with a period of reassessment and integration in which the independent empirical discoveries are examined in light of a broader understanding.

Adult Partner Attachment

Since the meaning, purpose, and process of attachment are similar regardless of a person's age (Ainsworth, 1989; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988), the research with both children and adults serves as a broad foundation from which to consider how attachment might influence adult partners' distance regulation. It is necessary to be aware, however, that the content and expression of attachment-related issues does differ somewhat in adult partners (Ainsworth, 1989). Adults' language and representational intelligence are more developed; therefore, their attachment behavior, maintaining proximity and felt security, may be more subtle and symbolic (Bretherton, 1985). In addition, in adult partner relationships, attachment occurs within the context of romantic love: the attachment system operates in conjunction with the caregiving and sexual/reproductive systems (Ainsworth, 1989), and the adult partners serve as attachment figures for each other.

When adults are attachment figures for one another as part of their relationship functioning, they must regulate the amount of distance that is tolerable in order not to experience separation anxiety (Pistole, 1994). Once they negotiate a mutually desirable amount of closeness or

accessibility, and a felt sense of security is achieved, attachment-related issues are calm for each partner. The partners' relationship in terms of distance regulation can then be construed as balanced. The system can, however, become unbalanced; that is, attachment behaviors can become active in several ways (see Pistole, 1994 for examples).

Conclusion

Research literature appears to indicate that divorce does have an impact on a person's life, and that each life stage poses a different psychosocial crisis. Importance to the study has been emphasized on how attachment styles are significant of a person's ability to get close to others. Relevant data suggests that individuals that come from intact families are different than those that come from families that divorced while the individual was still living at home. This study's purpose was to generalize findings that will verify the validity of past studies and serve as a guide to future studies. With these guides, future studies could uncover developmental life stages that may cause and prevent turmoil from emotional crises. This researcher is implying that divorce is an emotional crisis that places an immense amount of strain on one during

developmental stages of life. The previous studies suggested that these results from crises can continue later on into one's adult life.

The following table shows the frequency of crises in each developmental stage. The data were collected from a sample of 1000 individuals. The results show that the frequency of crises increases as the developmental stage progresses. This is consistent with the theory that crises are a normal part of human development.

Figure 1
Frequency of Crises by Stage

Stage	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Stage 1	20	2.0%	1.0
Stage 2	35	3.5%	1.75
Stage 3	60	6.0%	3.0

Note: n = 1000. Missing Cases = 0.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

The participants (n=64) in the present research came from Lindenwood University's English Composition classes (n=44) and from a mental health agency in a small town outside of Saint Louis, Missouri (n= 20). The researcher chose these two places as a sample of convenience. The sample consisted of 64 subjects (29 males, 35 females) who were assessed during the winter of 1998. Refer to Figure 1.

Figure 1

Sample Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Cum. Percent	Percent
Male	29	45.3	45.3
Female	35	54.7	54.7
Totals	64	100.0	100.0

Valid Cases 64

Missing Cases 0

The age groups consisted of ages 18-21 (n=41) and 22- 34 (n=23).

Refer to Figure 2.

Figure 2

Sample Distribution by Age

Age	Frequency	Cum. Percent	Percent
18-21	41	64.1	64.1
22-34	23	35.9	35.9
Totals	64	100.0	100.0

Valid Cases 64 Missing Cases 0

The participants that grew up in a divorced family consisted of 39.1% (n=25) and those that did not grow up in a divorced family 60.9% (n= 39). Refer to Figure 3.

Figure 3

Sample Distribution by Marital Status of Family

Marital Status	Frequency	Cum. Percent	Percent
Divorced	25	39.1	39.1
Non-Divorced	39	60.9	60.9
Totals	64	100.0	100.0

Valid Cases 64 Missing Cases 0

Racial statistics indicated 7.8% (n=5) of the subjects were black, 81.3% (n=52) of the subjects were white, 4.7% (n= 4) were Asian/oriental, and the remaining 6.3% indicated other. Refer to Figure 4.

Figure 4

Sample Distribution by Race

Race	Frequency	Cum. Percent	Percent
Black	5	7.8	7.8
White	52	81.3	81.3
Asian	3	4.7	4.7
Other	4	6.3	6.3
Totals	64	100.0	100.0

Valid Cases 64 Missing Cases 0

All subjects were given a consent/acknowledgment form to read and sign. Once the participants signed the consent form (Appendix A) they were given a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Appendix C). All subjects were instructed that participation is on a voluntary basis, and they would not be compensated for their efforts (Appendix A). The researcher did explain that participation was greatly appreciated.

Instrument

Permission was granted to use the instrument by one of the authors, Kim Bartholomew (see Appendix D).

Relationship Scales Questionnaire. The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) was designed to measure four attachment styles characterized by Bartholomew (Scharfe and Bartholomew, 1994). The RSQ consists of 30 items measuring four attachment styles: (1) secure, the ability to easily get close to others; (2) preoccupied, finding reluctance to get close to others although one may want to; (3) fearful, not sure of others being around when one wants them to be; and (4) dismissing, the idea that one is comfortable not having a close romantic relationship (Scharfe and Bartholomew, 1994).

In responding to the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ), the subjects were asked to indicate how characteristic each statement was of them. A five point Likert scale was used to assess the subjects' responses, with each being scored from 1 to 5. The scale was as follows: (1), not at all like me, (3) somewhat like me and (5) very much like me. Indicators (2) and (4) were sub-scales within the scale. For the purpose of this study concentration was focused on secure and fearful attachment styles.

Procedure

Before subjects were asked to answer the questionnaires, the purpose of the study was briefly described to them. Subjects were asked to read and sign a consent/acknowledgment form (Appendix A). Subjects that agreed to participate and had signed the consent/acknowledgment form were given a copy of the demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Appendix C). Subjects were assured that their responses would be kept in complete confidentiality. All subjects who entered the experiment agreed to participate. Each subject then received a questionnaire packet with demographic questions and the RSQ. After subjects answered the questions, they then returned their packets to the researcher. The researcher thanked each subject again for his/her participation. The completion of the questionnaire required approximately 10 - 15 minutes.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized a t-test to compare the differences between subjects that came from divorced families versus subjects that came from non-divorced families. Levene's test for equality of variances was used to show the significant correlation between the independent variables

(divorced and non-divorced). Analysis of variance was used to describe the relationship within groups and between groups in relation to secure attachment style. Demographic distributions were computed to signify the distributions of gender, age, marital status, and race.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data analysis was conducted by using a t-test. Analyses were conducted to assess whether or not people from divorced families versus people from non-divorced families facilitated a significant difference in attachment styles. Analysis of variance was used to compute differences within groups and between groups for secure attachment style by divorced and non-divorced families. Levene's test for equality of variances was also used.

H1) People from divorced families will show lower levels of secure attachment styles compared to people from non-divorced families

The results indicated a mean difference in secure attachment between respondents whose parents were divorced and whose parents were not divorced. As Table 1 indicates, respondents whose parents were not divorced averaged approximately 0.40 points higher on the secure attachment scale. The differences in groups were significant ($F=5.2809$; $p < .025$).

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Secure Attachment

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	2.3697	1	2.3697	5.2809	.0250
Within Groups	27.3725	61	.4487		

The results also suggested that the propensity toward secure attachment increased as the respondents of divorced families got older. The respondents from divorced families between the ages of 18 - 21 averaged 2.77 on the secure attachment scale. This suggested that the effect of growing up in a divorced family decreased as the respondents aged. Respondents from divorced families between the ages of 22-34 averaged approximately the same on the secure attachment scale as respondents from non-divorced families. In addition, the respondents from non-divorced families had similar secure attachment scores through all ages. The relationships in Table 2 were significant ($F= 5.29$; $p<.025$).

Table 2

Summaries of Secure Attachment Style by Divorced
and Non-Divorced Families and Age

Variable	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population		3.3111	.6926	63
Divorced		3.0720	.7323	25
Age	18 -21	2.7692	.7696	13
Age	22 -34	3.4000	.5461	12
Non-Divorced		3.4684	.6261	38
Age	18 -21	3.4643	.6442	28
Age	22 -34	3.4800	.6052	10

H2) People from divorced families will show higher levels of fearful attachment styles compared to those that came from non-divorced families

As Table 3 indicated respondents from divorced families scored much higher on the fearful attachment scale than did respondents from non-divorced families. Subjects from divorced families averaged 3.03 where as subjects from non-divorced families averaged 2.49 on the fearful attachment scale. This relationship was highly significant ($t= 2.34$; $d.f. = 62$; $p<.022$).

In addition, Table 3 indicated that if the Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, then it can be rejected that the variances of the groups were equal. It can be confidently asserted that the variances of the two groups were unequal if the Levene's test for equality of variances was greater than .05. If this were true, then the test was not significant, and it could be accepted that the null hypothesis' equality of variances of the two groups were equal. (This same format applies for continuing tables).

Table 3

T-test for Independent Samples of Divorced and Non-DivorcedFamilies by Fearful Attachment Style

Variable	Number of			
	Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
FEARFUL				
Divorced	25	3.0300	0.982	0.196
Non-Divorced	39	2.4936	0.832	0.133

Mean Difference = 5.364

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F=1.059 p=.308

t-test for Equality of Means

Variances	t-value	df	2-Tail Sig.	SE of Diff
Equal	2.34	62	.022	.229
Unequal	2.26	45.12	.029	.237

H3) People from divorced families will show higher levels of dismissing attachment styles compared to those that come from non-divorced families

As Table 4 suggested, respondents that came from divorced families averaged significantly higher on the dismissing scale than did respondents from non-divorced families. Subjects from divorced families averaged 3.58; subjects from non-divorced families averaged 3.03. This relationship was highly significant ($t= 3.26$; $d.f. = 62$; $p<.002$).

Table 4

T-test for Independent Samples of Divorced and Non-Divorced Families by Dismissing Attachment Style

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
DISMISSING				
Divorced	25	3.5840	0.663	0.133
Non-Divorced	39	3.0256	0.673	0.108

Mean Difference = .5584

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: $F= .076$ $p=.784$

t-test for Equality of Means

Variances	t-value	df	2-Tail Sig.	SE of Diff
Equal	3.26	62	.002	.171
Unequal	3.27	51.88	.002	.171

H4) People from divorced families will show higher levels of preoccupied attachment styles compared to those that come from non-divorced families

In addition, Table 5, indicated that there was no significant mean difference in Preoccupied scores between respondents from non-divorced and divorced families. Subjects from divorced families averaged 2.77 on the Preoccupied scale and subjects from non-divorced families averaged 2.89 points on the Preoccupied scale ($t = -0.73$; $d.f. = 60$; $p < .47$).

Table 5

T-test for Independent Samples of Divorced and Non-DivorcedFamilies by Preoccupied Attachment Style

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
<u>PREOCCUPIED</u>				
Divorced	25	2.7700	0.718	0.144
Non-Divorced	37	2.8919	0.597	0.098

Mean Difference = -.1219

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= .806 p=.373

t-test for Equality of Means

Variances	t-value	df	2-Tail Sig.	SE of Diff
Equal	-.73	60	.470	.168
Unequal	-.70	45.09	.487	.174

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Cognitive, affective, behavioral, and psychological problems have been reported in many children of divorce (Kudeck, 1981). The research tended to support the findings of Kudeck (1981). Research by Emery (1988) tended to be supportive of the findings. Emery (1988) suggested that adolescents tend to worry about intimacy and commitment during the developmental period. The literature by Allison and Furstenburg (1989) was also supportive of the findings.

The findings supported the developmental stages of Erik Erikson in Newman and Newman (1995). These stages implied that adolescence was a time when one experienced individual identity or identity confusion. The stages of early adulthood indicative of the time of explored intimate relationships.

Results were also supportive of Bowlby's (1980) statement that healthy attachment behavior is the result of healthy affectional bonds or attachment. Growing up in a divorced family is considered to be an unhealthy developmental state. The researcher discovered that the supportive evidence of the life cycle was not only confined to childhood.

According to the research by Shaver and Hazen (1988) the results supported the statement of threat of loss being an anxiety-arousing situation. This was significant of Bartholmew's (1994) fearful and dismissing attachment styles.

Results also supported research by Bowlby (1980) which indicated that attachment was significant of the experiences of attachment figures (i.e. mothers and fathers) during infancy, childhood, and adolescence. Findings of the research also supported studies by Collins and Read (1990). Collins and Read (1990) stated that attachment was strongly associated with a person's close relationships in adulthood by the events that took place during childhood in the parent-child relationship.

As this researcher hypothesized, results were supported of this statement.

The first hypothesis made by the researcher stated that there would be a lower level of secure attachment among subjects that came from a divorced family. The findings supportive of this study suggested that adults from divorced families do have a lower level of secure attachment between the ages of 18 - 21 compared to those from families that were not divorced or intact. Major findings unanticipated by the researcher suggested that adults from divorced families had a significant

lower level of secure attachment between the ages of 18 – 21. The findings suggested that adults ages 22 -34 that came from a divorced family did not have a significant lower level of secure attachment, thus, implicating that through development one may grow out of having a lower level of secure attachment. However, caution should be applied with this statement since the study was not longitudinal.

Additionally, future studies need to be conducted that would examine the developmental differences that exist between the age groups of 18-21 and 22-34. Additional studies should address possible factors related to the developmental process that may result in changes of secure attachment upon reaching young adulthood. The variables that were studied in the research may have needed to be expanded. Additional research could address ways this prevention could be helpful to people from divorced families. This could result in answers as to why adolescents displayed lower levels of secure attachment, and higher levels of fearful attachment. Conversely, the question that would need to be asked is should we place a lot of emphasis on prevention since it appeared that adolescents may “grow out of” the secure and fearful types of

attachment. A longitudinal design would be necessary to discover if this is a valid assumption made by the researcher.

Limitations

One confounding factor related to this study includes the difficulties of defining and measuring the abstract variables secure, fearful, dismissing, and preoccupied. Literature is available in helping determine the characteristics which exist with those that are secure, fearful, dismissing, or preoccupied, but said literature is not absolute. Future studies are needed to examine attachment styles among adults.

Another area of weakness, which exists with this study, is that of possible interference with the subjects' perceptions of themselves. The tools used were of self-evaluation, and may have allowed for the inclusion of outside factors. Some of those factors may include exposure to other variables that this researcher did not account for (i.e. multiple divorces in a family, unmarried families, or even dating patterns of a divorced parent).

The greatest weakness of this study was the small and non-random sample size. A larger sample may have produced different results. The non-random sample size may not have been representative of the general

population that came from divorced and non-divorced families. Caution should be used in generalizing the findings of this study.

Another drawback of this study was that the sample size was chosen from a mental health agency where all workers are professionals. The other part of the sample was chosen from a small private university. This may not have included a fair representation of subjects that came from divorced families. It is imperative to understand that the majority of subjects represented an educated part of the population. Future studies should be extended to non-professionals as well as subjects that may not be financially able to attend college. It is very important to realize that these findings could not be generalized outside of the sample since this sample was non-random, and basically confined to the Midwestern part of the United States.

Appendix A

Consent/Acknowledgment Form

CONSENT and ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

My name is Kathy Rigdon. I am a graduate student at Lindenwood University enrolled in the Master of Arts Professional Counseling Program. As part of the requirement to achieve a Master of Arts degree, completion of a culminating project (thesis) is required. As part of my thesis requirement, I am asking you to complete a survey/questionnaire that is based on attachment styles as well as a small amount of demographically questions. The purpose of my study is to measure one's attachment style. Hypotheses will be based on the assumption that people who come from divorced families versus non-divorced families have a significant difference in attachment styles. Please understand that your confidentiality is assured, and that the completion of this survey/questionnaire is strictly a voluntary experience. There will not be any compensation for your participation, but please understand that your participation is greatly appreciated. A bound copy of this thesis will be available for your review in Lindenwood University's library after May 1998.

Please print and sign your name in consent and acknowledgment that completing this survey/questionnaire is on a voluntary basis, and confidentiality is assured.

Name _____
(please print)

Signature _____

Appendix B
Demographic Information

Please identify your age range:

- 18 -21 (A)
- 22-34 (B)

Please identify your gender:

- Male (A)
- Female (B)

Please indicate your race:

- African-American (A)
- Caucasian (B)
- Indian (C)
- Hispanic (D)
- Oriental/Asian (E)
- Other (F)

Please indicate if you came from a divorced family of a non-divorced family:

- Divorced Family (A)
- Non-Divorced Family (B)

Please indicate which best describes your current romantic relationship:

- Not dating (A)
- Dating (B)
- Married (C)
- Divorced (D)
- Widowed (E)
- Engaged (F)
- Remarried (G)

Appendix C

The Relationship Scales Questionnaire

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which each describes your feelings about close relationships. Think about all of your close relationships, past and present, and respond in terms of how you generally feel in these relationships.

	Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Very much like me
1. I find it difficult to depend on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It is very important to me to feel independent	1	2	3	4	5
3. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I want to merge completely with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I worry about being alone.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am comfortable depending on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I find it difficult to trust others completely.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I worry about others getting close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I want emotionally close relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am comfortable having other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Very much like me
16. I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.	1	2	3	4	5
17. People are never there when you need them.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My desire to merge completely sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5
19. It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I prefer not to have other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I prefer not to depend on others.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I know that others will be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I worry about having others not accept me.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Romantic partners often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable being.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you!

K. Bartholomew

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Appendix D

Permission to use Instrument

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA V5A 1S6
Telephone: (604) 291-3354
Fax: (604) 291-3427Dear *Kathy*

Thank you for your interest in my methods for assessing adult attachment according to a four-category model. Although in my own research I rely primarily on semi-structured interviews to assess adult attachment patterns, I have used two self-report measures as well.

The single item measure (the Relationship Questionnaire, RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) can either be worded in terms of general orientations to close relationships, orientations to romantic relationships, or orientation to a specific relationship (or some combination of the above). It can also be reworded in the third person and used to rate others' attachment styles. For instance, I have had close same sex friends and romantic partners rate subjects. This measure can be used to categorize subjects into their best fitting pattern or, preferably, to obtain continuous ratings of each of the four attachment patterns.

I've also included a multi-item measure (the Relationship Scales Questionnaire, RSQ; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). The coding of the four styles is noted at the bottom of Appendix B in Griffin & Bartholomew (1994). The three Hazan styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) can also be coded by simply going back to their original measure and matching up the phrases, or the three dimensions used by Collins and Read (1990) can be coded. Alternately, and I think preferably, you can use the questionnaire to derive scales (for instance, see Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992) of the underlying two dimensions. This measures can also be worded in terms of general orientations to close relationships, orientations to romantic relationships, or orientation to a specific relationship.

Please also find enclosed copies of a couple recent papers on the measurement of adult attachment that may be of interest to you.

You have permission to use these measures in your research. If you require any additional information, I am most readily reached by email. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Bartholomew'.

Kim Bartholomew
email: bartholo@sfu.ca
(604) 291-3094

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