



The Impact of Parental Divorce on Children's Confidence Levels in Young Adulthood

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if social support is a factor related to higher confidence levels for those affected by parental divorce. Social support can be defined as financial support, service support, or guidance counseling (Kitson, Moir, & Mason, 1982). Past research indicates that both sibling and parental support, by way of financial, service, and guidance counseling, promote post-divorce adjustment (Jacobs & Sillars, 2012).

Introduction

- Divorce is a life transition that affects a substantial number of adults and children each year, with the impact of divorce being amplified significantly when there are children involved.
- Divorce can have long-term effects on children's relationship satisfaction, trust, commitment in intimate relationships, and optimism (Mustonen, Huurre, Haukkala, Kiviruusu, & Aro, 2011).
- The effects of divorce can continue to influence children into young adulthood, including confidence levels and expectations for success.
- The development of a career and establishing successful romantic relationships are important milestones in the lives of young adults (Washington & Hans, 2013).

Discussion

The results indicate that for those who experienced parental divorce, the quality of social support has a positive influence in terms of career expectations and relationship confidence and that there was a significant relationship between the amount of social support and confidence levels.

The findings also suggest that the perceived quality of relationship regarding social support has a greater influence on confidence levels than the quantity or amount of social support given by parents, family members, or friends.

Clinical Implications

The results of the study emphasize the importance of social support and provide support for previous research indicating that involvement with both parents after the divorce is an important adjustment factor for children of parental divorce (Austin et al., 2013).

The findings from the study and previous research indicate the quality of parental support is related to adolescent's adjustment to divorce, specifically in terms of their career confidence and relationship confidence (Sigal, Wolchik, Tein, & Sandler, 2012).

When discussing the well-being of children, clinicians may encourage parents to maintain a consistent relationship with their children and encourage healthy relationships with other supportive family members.

Methods

Sample

- $N = 312$ Young Adults (18-25 yrs. Old) who experience parental divorce between 2-17 yrs. old (78% female).
- Age: Average age of participants was 22 ($SD=2.2$) 54% of participants 21-24 ($N=166$)
- Race: (35%) Caucasian; (33%) African American; (16%) Hispanic American; (11%) multiracial; (4%) Asian American; (2%) Pacific Islander

Measures

- Revised-Social Support Questionnaire (Sarason, Levine, Basham & Sarason, 1983) for quantity (SSQ-N; $\alpha = .94$) and quality (SSQ-S; $\alpha = .97$) of social support.
- Confidence Scale ($\alpha = .92$; Stanley, Hoyer, & Trathen, 1994) for romantic confidence
- Generalized Expectancy for Success Scale (GESS) ($\alpha = .91$; Hale, Fiedler, & Cochran, 1992) for career aspirations

Analysis

- Pearson 2-tailed correlation
- One-way MANOVA

Results: MANOVA Table for Social Support & Confidence

Multivariate Analysis of Variance Between the mean score of Social Support & Confidence Levels (Romantic Relationship-Confidence Scale & Career Aspirations-GESS Scale)

IV Variables (Social Support)	DV Variables	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Support Satisfaction (Quality)	Confidence Scale	62	a1.741	2.262	.010
	GESS Scale	62	b.266	2.040	.020
Amount of Social Support (Quantity)	Confidence Scale	87	1.385	1.798	.040
	GESS Scale	87	.208	1.591	.082
Social Support Satisfaction & Amount of Social Support	Confidence Scale	129	1.448	1.880	.027
	GESS Scale	129	.163	1.253	.248

$p < .025$ level.

- $R^2 = .952$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .470$)
- $R^2 = .946$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .405$)

Results: Pearson Correlation Table

Pearson correlations between Social Support (Quantity) and Confidence Levels (Romantic & Career)

Variables	1.	2.	3.
1. Amount of Social Support (SSQ-N)	1		
2. Career Confidence (GESS)	.397	1	
3. Relationship Confidence (CS)	.285	.441	1
<i>M</i>	59.9	3.95	5.26
<i>SD</i>	23.8	0.47	1.21

$p < .001$ level

Reference

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