



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN SOUTH WEST ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: In this research, the psychological adjustment of adolescent students to parental divorce is the main focus of interest. The research questioned whether parental divorce influences the psychological adjustment of adolescents.

Method: Two groups (adolescents from divorced family and from intact family) were examined across three domains of self-reported adolescent psychological functioning. The study was conducted on 120 adolescents of both sex (60 from each study groups) attending 10+1 and 10+2 grade level at Jimma, Agaro and Mizan town preparatory schools. Socio-demographic details and responses to questionnaires assessing the psychological adjustment (depression, anxiety, and stress) of adolescents were recorded.

Results: The data of the two study groups was analyzed, and compared using computer based statistical measures (SPSS) of correlation and t-test. The comparison analysis, which was measured by independent sample t-test, at $\alpha = 0.05$, found that adolescents from a divorced family scored a higher mean in the psychological measure of depression ($M=2.66$ mean score), anxiety ($M=3.13$ mean score) and stress ($M=2.79$ mean score) as compared to the lower mean score of adolescents from the intact family.

Discussion: The finding indicated that adolescents from divorced family performed poor in psychological functioning (i.e., were more vulnerable to depression, anxiety and stress) as compared to adolescents from intact family, suggesting that differences can be attributed to parental divorce and its accompanying socio-demographic factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most common and potentially destructive crisis that many children and adolescents face is the divorce of their parents. Parents for one or another reason get divorced, but the often effect of the divorce on children is unquantifiable destructive, economically, psychologically and socially. Today the social problems related to divorce and its effects on children are becoming more extensive and pressing. The children, more than the parents, may feel pain, confusion anger, hate, bitter disappointment, a sense of failure, and self doubt (Kelly and Lamb, 2003). Too, little is known about adolescents' experience during and following parental divorce. The extent to which children of divorced parents at risk for developing psychological and social problems is not known and whether there are effects of divorce that are not immediately noticeable in children but are likely to appear later.

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Though it may not be possible to give evidence documented from research outcomes, from the context of the social structure of our society, one may understand that children of divorced parents will be victimized in their psychological and social development. Such complicates may be introduced into their social relationship and personality characteristics. Gossip in all its poisonous forms is irritating and often dangerous to children. For example, children in a single mother family may face direct problems which make them acutely aware of the fact that they are a child of a divorcee by common Amharic expression as "Yeset lij", which is equivalent to English expression a child of women with negative and inferior connotations attributed to women. Among research priorities, therefore, this study assumed that the problems of adolescents of divorced parents have to be examined carefully so that major social policies and welfare reforms need to be based on such research findings. The present study was conducted on adolescent students of Jimma, Agaro and Mizan town preparatory schools.

- How do adolescents psychologically adjust themselves to parental divorce?
- *Is there a significant group difference in the psychological adjustment between adolescents of divorced family and intact family?*
- How do socio-demographic variables as adolescent's sex, age (at time of parental divorce), family income, parental education and occupation affect adolescent's psychological adjustment?

This article summarizes more recent divorce and adolescent adjustment issues and findings with respect to parental conflict, divorce, custodial access, and type of custody arrangement. The weight of the evidence, gathered from multiple studies over the past two decades, is that divorced children (particularly boys), when compared to children in never-divorced families, have significantly more adjustment problems (Camera and Resnick, 1988; Emery, 1988; Guidubaldi, Perry, and Cleminshaw, 1984; Hetherington, Co, and Cox, 1982; Kurdek and Berg, 1983; Warshak and Santrock, 1983; Zill, 1983). The most reliable findings are those concerning the greater number of so-called "externalizing problems" of divorced children. Compared to never-divorced children, children of divorce and boys more so than girls, exhibit more aggressive, impulsive and antisocial behaviors, have more difficulties in their peer relationships, are less compliant with authority figures, and show more problem behaviors at school. It is important to note that, with the exception of several national studies, most data have been collected on White, middle-class, mother custody families. Further, data collection has relied very heavily on maternal reports of children's adjustment. When paternal reports and measures are included, predictability is increased beyond using maternal variables only.

Studies comparing the intellectual and academic functioning of children in divorced and nondivorced homes have also found that divorced children fare more poorly on IQ scores, on reading and math achievement test scores, and in grades than do their nondivorced counterparts. But the magnitude of the differences between the two groups, while significant, is consistently quite small. When the confounding effects of race and socioeconomic status are untangled, the differences between the groups are further diminished, and in the case of IQ and achievement scores, they disappear (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1984). Divorced children do appear to have significantly lower academic self-concept and reduced achievement motivation, as do children in unhappily married families (Long, Forehand, Fauber, and Brody, 1987). However, the age of the child at separation may be critical. In a study of seventh and ninth graders, adolescent academic self-concept was not significantly lower among divorced children, compared to never-divorced children, if parents separated before third grade. Nor were there differences in academic achievement after controlling for relevant demographic variables (Smith, 1990). Divorced children are more often absent from school, watch more TV, and spend less time on homework than do children from non-divorced families (Nastasi, 1988). Many studies have found that the problems observed after divorce were more severe and enduring for boys than for girls, although there is evidence that there are age- and sex-related differences. Girls initially experience more problems than boys when the parents' divorce during the children's adolescence (Frost and Pakiz, 1990), but younger school-aged-boys are initially more affected than girls.

It should be noted that, despite the more negative findings regarding children of divorce, the majority of divorced children, when assessed in the years after divorce, are functioning within normal or average limits. They are not, as a group, "disturbed," although media reports leave the casual reader with that impression. In fact, the mean differences between divorced and non-divorced groups of children, while statistically significant, are generally quite small. The more sophisticated the study and analyses, the weaker the effect (Amato and Keith, 1991). Even among a sample of chronically litigating, high-conflict postdivorce families, the overall mean adjustment scores of the majority of children fell within the *normal* range on the Child Behavior Checklist. Only 16% of the children were within the clinical range of disturbance (Johnston, Kline, and Tschann, 1989). Further, there is considerable range of functioning within groups of divorced and non-divorced children. Among divorced children are those functioning quite well, and among the non-divorced are children with major adjustment problems. In short, there is no one-to-one relationship between divorce and psychological adjustment problems in children. We should refrain from perpetrating the "child of divorce" as a person prototype, as this negative stereotype influences not only the children but those with whom they interact.

Child development research and divorce studies demonstrate that *marital* conflict may have both direct and indirect effects on children's adjustment in the married family as well as in the postdivorce family. High levels of marital conflict may directly influence children's emotional and behavioral adjustment through modeling processes. When children observe parents expressing emotional distress and anger through aggressive and uncontrolled behaviors, they are more likely to incorporate this way of dealing with upset into their own behavioral repertoire. Thus some of the impulsive, aggressive behaviors observed in children after divorce may, in fact, are well-established prior to divorce. The stresses of divorce may then exacerbate the use of these coping styles.

Second, marital conflict appears to have *indirect* effects on children's adjustment, expressed through the parent-child relationship. In married families, high marital conflict is associated with less warm, less empathic relationships between parents and children and more rejection of the child (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, and Volling, 1991; Caspi and Elder, 1988; Cowan and Cowan, 1987). There is also some evidence that fathers withdraw more from their children under conditions of high conflict. These parental behaviors, in turn, lead to more behavioral difficulties in the children. Continued high conflict after divorce may further interfere with parents' ability to nurture and be responsive to their children's needs and be consistent in discipline, which may exacerbate existing problems or create new problems for children. The import of these data is clear. Family processes that exist during the marriage are critical in shaping divorced children's positive or negative psychological adjustment. Certain types of family, parental, or marital dysfunction appear to place children at risk long before divorce occurs. Some of the variables affecting children's adjustment during marriage include the amount of conflict between spouses, the nature of the parent-child relationship, parenting or child-rearing practices, the extent of anger toward or rejection of the child, the psychological adjustment of one or both parents, and the presence of violence.

Researchers agree that the degree of parental conflict is a major stressor and a salient risk factor associated with children's adjustment to parental separation and divorce (Barnes, 1999; Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1999; McIntyre, Heron, McIntyre, Burton and Engler, 2003; O'Conner, 2003; Rushena, Prior, Sanson and Smart, 2005). Some literature shows that children have greater psychological problems when their parents are in conflict, either during marriage or following divorce (Kelly and Lamb, 2003) and children from divorced but conflict-free homes have been found to have fewer behavioral problems than children remaining in a conflicted marriage (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1999). Children's adjustment improves when conflict declines after divorce (Kitzmann and Emery, 1994). Most experts agree children will be better off living in a conflict free divorced family than a conflict ridden married one (Emery, 1999). Children are also at a higher risk for emotional difficulties when parents are too preoccupied with their own adjustment to carry out parental responsibilities adequately after the divorce (Bream and Buchanan, 2003), and when parental interest and investment after the divorce, as well as the parent-child relationship, deteriorate (Kelly, 2007). Pryor and Rodgers (2001) conducted an analysis of research studies into the well being of children following parental separation and divorce in areas including: social and emotional functioning in childhood; education and socio-economic outcomes in adulthood; physical health and development in childhood and adulthood; mental health and well being in adolescence and adulthood; and family and intimate relationships in adolescence and adulthood. Guided by the structure of Pryor and Rodgers' (2001) analysis, a review of the literature in these areas, with the addition of the area of economic functioning followed.

Social and emotional functioning in childhood

In an analysis of 13 studies that compared children from separated and intact families in respect of social and emotional behaviour in childhood and adolescence conducted between 1944 and 1998, Pryor and Rodgers (2001) found that no study showed children from separated families doing better than their peers from intact families. In one example, the Australian Mater Study of Pregnancy, 15 percent of children from divorced families showed withdrawn behaviour at age five, compared with 10.3 percent of children from intact families (Noom, Deković, and Meeus, 1999). There is no clear pattern across the range of outcome measures used in these studies, with differences of similar magnitude being found for a diverse range of behaviors including bed-wetting, withdrawn behaviour, habit behaviors, social/attentional problems and other mixed social/emotional problems (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). There is some suggestion that effect sizes are larger for outcomes reflecting the receipt of treatment, as compared with other direct measures of behaviour, which indicates it is possible that the experience of parental separation and divorce increases the likelihood that a child is referred for behaviour problems, above and beyond the increased presence of the difficulties themselves (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). The analysis by Pryor and Rodgers (2001) also showed there was no indication of any trend in effect sizes from earlier-born or later-born cohorts, any systematic differences between younger and older children and no evidence for a difference across the UK, USA and Australia, the countries represented in the analysis.

METHODS

Participants

Cross-sectional survey design was employed to investigate the influence of parental divorce on the psychological adjustment of adolescent students, comparing groups of adolescents from divorced (single-parent) and continuously intact (two-parent) families. The *study samples* consisted of adolescents who were assigned into two groups based on their parents' current marital status, i.e., group of adolescents from intact family and group of adolescents from divorced family. These groups of samples were obtained from three preparatory schools in Jimma, Agaro, and Mizan. 120 adolescent participants were purposely selected and represented in the research, of which participants were equally assigned in the divorced family and intact family groups. 60 adolescents (21 females and 39 males) from a single-parent group served as the primary participants and constituted adolescents of divorced family. The comparison group was formed, consisting of 60 participants from intact-family, and it is composed of adolescents in which the parents are married at the time of the assessment. These adolescents were from the same data base as the divorced group - matched on study area, age, gender, and family socioeconomic status with *each* adolescent from the divorced group. Equal number of sample adolescents was obtained from the three preparatory schools (20 drawn from each study sites).

Measures

The following instruments were employed in the present study:

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS): is a 42-item self-report measure of anxiety, depression and stress developed by Lovibond and Lovibond. The DASS consists of three self-report scales designed to provide relatively pure measures of the three related negative affective states of depression, anxiety, and stress (Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995). Each of the three scales contains 14 items, divided into subscales of 2-5 items with similar content. *DASS* is a Likert scale with 5 response levels ranging from 0 to 3 which indicate how much the statement is applied to the respondent: 4 = 'Usually', 3 = 'Often', 2 = 'Sometimes', 1 = 'Rarely', and 0 = 'Never'.

Socio-economic: data was collected through a general background information questionnaire developed to measure the sex, age, marital, familial, religion, social support, education, employment, income, and housing condition of the sample subjects.

Procedures

The questionnaire was completed during school hours by each respondent in the sample. The questionnaire was not completed simultaneously by all the participants. The possibility did therefore exist that respondents from one grade, who had already completed the questionnaire, may have discussed the questionnaire with respondents from another grade. But since this questionnaire did not measure achievement, any discussion by the participants was unlikely to have an influence on the results. Instructions were read aloud to the respondents before they completed the questionnaire. The participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions about any areas of confusion both before, and during completion of, the questionnaire. The respondents were

asked to mark their answer on the questionnaire. The information collected in this way was then coded for computer analysis.

RESULTS

As indicated in the table below the sex and grade level distribution of the 2 study groups was proportional: 39 (65.0%) and 21(35.0%) of the respondents were male and female, respectively, and, about 57% and 43% of the respondents of each group were represented from 10+1 and 10+2 grade levels, respectively. Similarly, both research groups were matched with an average age of 16. This is due to the sampling procedure of matching the subjects of the two groups for the purpose of research comparison. However, the two research groups varied in their familial characteristics of education, occupation and income. 66.6% and 32% of respondents from a divorced group and intact group have a family whose education was until primary level. The rest 23.3% and 10.1% of adolescents from a divorced group, and 31.7% and 15% of adolescents from intact group have their family achieved secondary and tertiary level, respectively.

Table 1. Adolescent respondents' Socio-demographic characteristics

	Divorced Group		Intact Group	
	N	%	N	%
Sex				
Male	39	65.0	39	65.0
Female	21	35.0	21	35.0
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Age	16.4	0.96	16.33	1.02
Income	625.00	109.00	1380.00	122.00

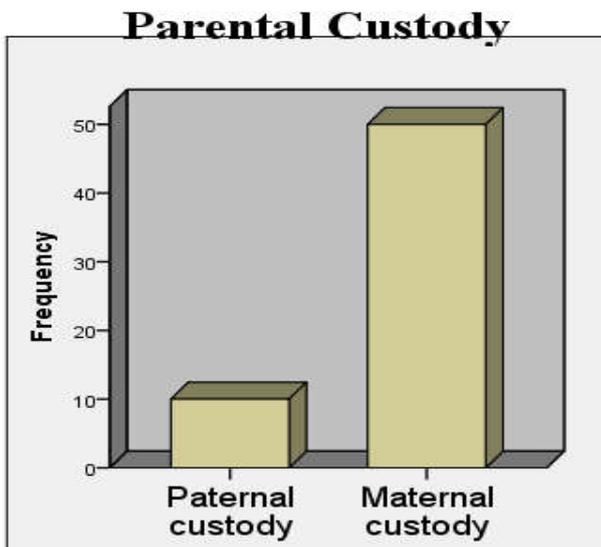


Figure 1. Parental status of Adolescent respondents of divorced group

The majority of mothers of the respondents (41.7% of the divorced group and 35.1% of the intact group) were house wives, the rest 23 (38.3%), 8 (13.3%), 4 (6.7%) of mothers of the divorced group, and 19 (31.7%), 7 (11.7%), 13 (21.5%) of mothers of the intact group are engaged in trade, administration and teaching occupations respectively. Moreover, the table indicates variation in the family income of the two groups in that the average monthly income of the intact group (1380.00 Birr) was higher than that of the divorced group (625.00 Birr). As indicated in the bar-charts, among adolescents of divorced family, 50 (83.3%) respondents

reported that they are raised by their biological mother, and only 10 (16.7%) of them are raised by their biological father following parental divorce.

Initial analysis of the consistency among psychological variables as shown in table 2 indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between depression and anxiety ($r = .697^*$), depression and stress ($r = .635^*$), and anxiety and stress ($r = .650^*$). These psychological variables were also significantly negatively correlated with personality factors, depression and personality ($r = -.482^*$), anxiety and personality ($r = -.619^*$) and stress and personality ($r = -.513^*$). However, as indicated in table 2 below, while the three psychological variables were significantly negatively correlated with the perceived competence, the personality factors were positively correlated with the perceived competence score of sample adolescents ($r = .256^*$), at $\alpha = 0.05$, $N=120$.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of Adolescent Psychological adjustment variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Depression score	1	.697*	.635*	-.482*	-.326*
2. Anxiety score		1	.637*	-.619*	-.320*
3. Stress score			1	-.513*	-.335*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, $N=120$. * $p < 0.05$; $N = 120$

The comparison analysis, which was measured by independent sample t-test, at $\alpha = 0.05$, as shown in Table 3 found that adolescents from a divorced family scored a higher mean in the psychological measure of depression (2.66), anxiety (3.13) and stress (2.79) as compared to the lower mean score of adolescents from the intact family. This mean difference between adolescents of divorced group and intact group was found significant on the three variables as shown in Table 2 psychological adjustment,

i.e. depression ($t = 3.69$, $\alpha = 0.05$), anxiety ($t = 4.05$, $\alpha = 0.05$) and stress ($t = 3.64$, $\alpha = 0.05$). When adolescents of divorced family were examined in light with their parental custody (maternal versus paternal), it was found that their means were significantly different only on measure of anxiety ($t = 3.82$, $\alpha = 0.05$), adolescents from the maternal custody scoring a higher mean. Parent-child relationship ($t = 4.09$, $\alpha = 0.05$), and perceived competence ($t = 3.45$, $\alpha = 0.05$),

Table 3. Comparisons of Adolescents of Divorced Group and Intact Groups

Area of functioning	Adolescent Group		Significance t-test, 1 vs. 2
	Divorced (1)	Intact (2)	
Psychological Adjustment			
∇Depression	2.66	1.52	3.69
∇Anxiety	3.13	1.22	4.05
∇Stress	2.79	1.83	3.64

* $p < 0.05$; $N=120$ (two-tailed).

The statistical result, as shown in table 4, indicated that adolescents' psychological adjustment was significantly correlated with family education ($r = -.457^*$), in which the measure of depression, anxiety and stress become lesser as their mothers' educational level increases; family monthly income ($r = -.323^*$), in which measures of psychological decreases as family income increases; and parental custody ($r = .263^*$), in which those adolescents under maternal custody scored less in measures of psychological adjustment. The correlation coefficients for the above psychological adjustment measures were significant at $\alpha=0.05$, $N=120$.

Table 4. Correlation between socio-demographic variable and adolescents' adjustment

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Depression score	1	.62*	.59*	.22	.27	.02	-.32*	-.46*	.17	.26*
2. Anxiety score		1	.68*	.20	.03	.26*	-.26*	-.31*	.09	.33*
3. Stress score			1	.17	.06	.13	-.46*	-.22*	-.02	-.25*
4. Grade level				1	.05	.76*	-.01	-.01	.05	.19
5. Sex					1	-.06	-.10	.15	-.22	-.05
6. Age						1	-.01	-.23	.10	.21
7. Monthly Income							1	-.09	.29*	.32*
8. Mother's Education								1	-.32*	-.14
9. Mother's Occupation									1	.22
10. Parental Custody										1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), N=120

DISCUSSION

This study examined whether adolescent psychological adjustment problems have been attributed to parental divorce. Two groups (adolescents from divorced family and adolescents from intact family) were examined across three domains of adolescent Psychological functioning (depression, anxiety, and stress) reported by multiple informants. The results indicated that adolescents from intact families performed better than those in the divorced group, suggesting that differences can be attributed to parental divorce and its accompanying disruption of family processes. The hypotheses of the present study were strongly supported by the research findings.

Psychological adjustment

The comparisons between the divorced group and the intact group indicated significant differences between groups in the hypothesized direction (i.e., the divorced group will have higher psychological adjustment problem scores and lower social competence) on the measures of adolescent functioning. Adolescents from divorced families scored significantly lower on psychological adjustment. The divorced group had higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress, than did the intact family group. The weight of the evidence, gathered from multiple studies over the past two decades, is that adolescents from divorced families, when compared to children in intact families, have significantly more adjustment problems (Camera and Resnick, 1988; Emery, 1988; Guidubaldi, Perry, and Cleminshaw, 1984; Hetherington, Co, and Cox, 1982; Kurdek and Berg, 1983; Warshak and Santrock, 1983; Zill, 1983). A large number of studies in the 1990s continued to find that children with divorced parents score lower than children with continuously married parents on measures of academic success (Astone and McLanahan, 1991; Teachman, Paasch, and Carver, 1996), conduct (Doherty and Needle, 1991; Simons and Associates, 1996), psychological adjustment and social competence (Forehand, Neighbors, Devine, and Armistead, 1994; Kurdek, Fine, and Sinclair, 1994), self-concept (Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, and Blair, 1994), social competence (Beaty, 1995; Brodzinsky, Hitt, and Smith, 1993), and long-term health (Tucker *et al.*, 1997). Marital conflict has also been linked to children's internalizing problems such as depression (Johnston *et al.*, 1987; Peterson and Zill, 1986), anxiety (e.g., Long, Slater, Forehand, and Fauber, 1988), children's self concept (Bishop and Ingersoll, 1989), and social competency (Burman, John, and Margolin, 1987), as well as being predictive of behavior problems in children of divorce (Emery, 1988; Rutter, 1979). 'Children who experience parental divorce, compared with children in continuously intact two-parent families, exhibit more conduct problems, more symptoms of psychological maladjustment, lower academic achievement, more social difficulties, and poorer self-concepts

(Amato, 1994). Compared to adolescents under maternal custody adolescents under paternal custody, and boys more so than girls, exhibit more problems in relationship with parents and friends, impulsive and antisocial behaviors, willpower, discipline and social correctness. Researches into the field of marital conflict and child adjustment indicate that boys were more at risk for adjustment problems than were girls (Emery and O'Leary, 1982; Porter and O'Leary, 1980; Rutter, 1970). Rutter (1970) also found that boys were more susceptible to psychological stresses within the family and found that marital discord and separation were associated with boys' deviance but not with girls'.

Many other studies also have found that the problems observed after divorce were more severe and enduring for boys than for girls, although there is evidence that there are age- and sex-related differences. The psychological adjustment of the custodial parent after divorce is emerging as a central factor in determining children's postdivorce adjustment meet (Kline *et al.*, 1989). Several early influential studies found that boys in divorced families had more adjustment problems than did girls. Because these studies have been widely cited, many have come to accept this finding as incontrovertible (Amato, 1994).

The quality of the father-child relationship was a significant predictor of adjustment, with a poorer relationship associated with more conduct problems and a better relationship associated with fewer anxiety and withdrawal problems. Fathers are perceived as having less control, offering less support, and providing less punishment compared to children in intact families (Amato, 1987). Children also develop a less positive view of the father-child relationship over time (Nastasi, 1988). Father-residence adolescents had poorer adjustment (more deviant behaviors) than did mother-residence adolescents, but father residence families had higher interviewer ratings of parent hostility than did the other two forms. The poorer adjustment of father-resident adolescents was associated with poorer monitoring in father-residence families, and for boys, more parent hostility and the parent's high working hours. Frey and Rothlisberger (1996) maintain that adolescents generally view the mother as the "emotional core" of the family because of her receptive and supportive role. Fathers, in contrast, are seen as "crisis managers" who offer help in problem situations.

Adolescents' Adjustment and Socio-demographic factors

Clearly, as Amato (1993) has stated, numerous mechanisms can account for parental divorce effects on children. The present study has found that the effect of parental divorce on adolescents' adjustment was associated with parental education, family income, parental custody, and adolescents'

sex. As there were differences in psychological and social functioning between adolescents from divorced families and from intact families, differences in some socio-demographic were found. However, adolescents from the already divorced group were functioning more poorly than those from the intact group, as a function of differences in one or more of the socio-demographic factors. Adolescents from divorced family who had parents of lower educational level, lower family income, and under paternal custody were examined with higher level of depression, anxiety, and stress. Morrison and Cherlin (1995) found some support for an economic decline hypothesis: Divorce resulted in economic hardship which influenced behavior problems of the children. However, they expressed hesitancy in ruling out parenting as a mechanism. Although some studies reported that the estimated effects of divorce are stronger for children of one gender (e.g., Hill, Yeung, and Duncan, 2001), most studies during the past decade reported few or no gender differences (Hetherington, 2006; Painter and Levine, 2000; Sun, 2001; Sun and Li, 2002; Woodward and Fergusson, 2000). Yet other studies show no gender differences in psychological well-being of adolescents (Booth and Amato, 1991; Mastekaasa, 1995; Ross, 1995; White, 1992).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current research findings were consistent with the results reported in several researches though they contradicted with few other studies. However, the comparative analysis of the study groups and the finding that adolescents from divorced group were functioning more poorly than those from the intact family group provides stronger support than contradicting studies for the role of divorce in adolescent functioning. In summary, the current results provide support for the hypothesis that the negative effects for adolescents traditionally associated with divorce already exist following parental divorce. Parental divorce, and its accompanying disruption of family processes, is associated with adolescent adjustment difficulties. It provides further evidence to earlier studies that conclude:

- Adolescents from divorced family have poor psychological adjustment (more vulnerable to depression, anxiety and stress) as compared to adolescents from intact family.
- The problem of psychological adjustment to divorce occurred to be more serious on boys than girls.
- Adolescent psychological adjustment to parental divorce is affected by socio-demographic factors, including adolescent sex, family income, parental education, and parental custody.

It is important to note that samples, informants, age of informants, tools and type of data collected, time of assessment relative to parental divorce, methods of data analysis, and other study variables varied widely in this study and across studies. For example, the sample size of the divorced groups varied substantially across studies; however, divorce problems have been found with small (Block *et al.*, 1986) and large (Cherlin *et al.*, 1991) sample sizes. As this example demonstrates, examination of the studies revealed a systematic similarity on these characteristics between studies which did and did not find divorce adolescent effects. Some strengths of the current study include the inclusion of comparative sample group, children in one stage of development (adolescence), multiple measures, and contextual socio-demographic variables. In

addition to these strengths, major weaknesses of the study should be noted: A relatively small sample size was utilized; adolescent pre-divorce adjustment was not assessed; and statistical analysis that further investigates the independent effect of variables was not calculated. Beyond these constraints, generalization of the findings to cultural groups should be investigated in the future. Moreover, continued attention to the effect of divorce and the role of related mechanisms prior to and after parental divorce is important to our understanding of child functioning and to the development of intervention programs for these children.

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APPENDICES: SCALES

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS - 42) Put a tick (✓) mark under the appropriate scale

<i>How often do You experience feelings as:</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
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