The Impact of Parental Marital Status on the Intimate Relationships of Latino Adults

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Abstract
With divorce being so prevalent, researchers have focused on the possible negative effects for the individuals involved. The majority of this research has focused on the effects of divorce in Caucasian individuals. Research examining the impact of divorce in other ethnic groups has been sparse and resulted in conflicting information. The current study examines the impact of parental marital status on adult intimate relationship satisfaction in Latino individuals. Latino participants were administered a demographic questionnaire and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) via an online survey. Data was analyzed to determine whether there was a difference in CSI scores for participants with divorced or married parents. The study found no significant difference between the CSI scores of individuals with divorced or married parents. Although the findings from this study expand what we know about the impact of divorce on relationships in Latino populations, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.

Degree Type
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THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL MARITAL STATUS ON THE INTIMATE
RELATIONSHIPS OF LATINO ADULTS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
HILLSBORO, OREGON

BY
JOSHUA TABALDO, M. S.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

JULY, 22, 2011

APPROVED: _______________________________
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With divorce being so prevalent, researchers have focused on the possible negative effects for the individuals involved. The majority of this research has focused on the effects of divorce in Caucasian individuals. Research examining the impact of divorce in other ethnic groups has been sparse and resulted in conflicting information. The current study examines the impact of parental marital status on adult intimate relationship satisfaction in Latino individuals. Latino participants were administered a demographic questionnaire and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) via an online survey. Data was analyzed to determine whether there was a difference in CSI scores for participants with divorced or married parents. The study found no significant difference between the CSI scores of individuals with divorced or married parents. Although the findings from this study expand what we know about the impact of divorce on relationships in Latino populations, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.

Key terms: Divorce, Ethnicity, Relationship Quality, Acculturation
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the support and effort of many, including my family and research group. I would like to express special thanks and gratitude to my wife, Crystal Tabaldo, and my son, Alexander Tabaldo, who have been extremely patient with my time spent working away from them. Special thanks are also needed to be extended toward my dissertation chair, Dr. Jane M. Tram, and readers, Dr. Lisa Christiansen and Dr. Alyson Williams. I would also like to thank my fellow peers James Maxson, M.S., Kelly Maynes, M.S., Derrin Fukuda, M.S., Carolyn Ferreira, M.S., Forrest Merrill, M.S., Jade Kost, and Blair Tyler.
The Impact of Parental Marital Status on the Intimate Relationships of Latino Adults

Divorce is no longer a rarity. With 43 percent of first marriages ending in separation or divorce within the first 15 years of marriage (Kreider & Fields, 2001), most North American individuals know someone who is divorced or is from a divorced family. This high rate of divorce demonstrates that the nature and structure of the family is changing. The “traditional” nuclear family of two parents and approximately two children has become less common. Step parents, half siblings, single parent households, and other numerous combinations of family structures add to the newfound complexity of family structure. Although this change in family structure is not necessarily positive or negative, aspects such as family context, child characteristics, and extra-familial contexts, (e.g., culture, socioeconomic status), add many possibilities to the child’s outcome from divorce in his or her transition into adulthood (Cummings & Davies, 2002).

Purpose of the Current Study

The research (e.g., Kelly & Emery, 2003; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004) that has explored the effects of divorce on Caucasian individuals has had positive (e.g., eliminating stress from children’s lives; Cummings & Davies, 2002) and negative findings (e.g., expecting divorce for oneself; Kirk, 2002). Research (e.g., Lopez, Melendez, & Rice, 2000) that has examined divorce with other ethnicities is sparse. As a result, further research in this area would be beneficial. The first purpose of this study was to extend previous work by examining the effects of divorce on one’s intimate relationships in a more diverse sample. Thus, in order to understand how divorce affects relationship quality with different ethnicities, the review will investigate the connections between the variables so that future researchers can more thoroughly understand the
effects of divorce in broader samples. More specifically, the current study examined whether the possible negative effects of divorce (e.g., lower relationship quality) as found in the literature with Caucasian participants (e.g., Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004), can be replicated in a study with Latino participants. The second purpose of the current study was to examine the generalizability of trends found in the literature regarding gender differences in relationship quality. Because the majority of the current research has included primarily Caucasian samples and has found that female individuals tend to report a higher relationship satisfaction (Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002), the current study examined if this trend can be generalized to Latino participants.

In the following literature review, three primary variables (e.g., parental marital status, relationship quality, and ethnicity) were addressed. The literature review subsequently explored how relationship quality, divorce, and ethnicity intersect with each other (i.e., how parental marital status varies between different ethnicities, how relationship quality varies by ethnicity, and how relationship quality is affected by parental marital status).

**Parental Marital Status**

Parental marital status, which is defined as the legal relationship status of one’s parents, was one of the key variables in this study. Divorce, defined as the legal separation of one’s parents, may disrupt the child’s environment in numerous ways (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Cummings & Davies, 2002). The following section highlighted some of the positive and negative effects of divorce.

Divorce can contribute to negative outcomes. Amato and Keith (1991) found achievement, adjustment, and well-being to be lower in children from divorced families
compared to children from intact families. Subsequent research completed by Amato (2001) found that the gap between children from divorced families and intact families had grown. However, research has shown various effects depending upon gender (e.g., females having larger negative effects than males; Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Amato & Keith, 1991; Strohschein, 2005) and age of the child when the parental divorce occurred (e.g., with younger children having larger negative effects than older children; Allison & Furstenberg, 1989). The effects of divorce also vary depending on the level of conflict and nurturance provided to the child pre-divorce and post-divorce. For example, those children who experienced more conflict and less nurturance before and after the divorce exhibited more maladjustment (Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger, & Mas, 1992). According to Kerig (1995), families with conflict and divorce may have a disruption of family cohesion.

However, divorce can also contribute to positive outcomes. In some cases, marital divorce and a reduction in related conflict reduces the child’s distress, which serves as a constructive protective factor (Cummings & Davies, 2002). It appears that in such situations, eliminating the high amount of stress and conflict in a home as a result of parental divorce benefits the child. Children whose families continued to have family rituals after a divorce tended to have reduced maladjustment (Portes et al., 1992). This suggests that if the amount of change during a divorce can be reduced, the children will benefit. Amato (2000) noted some of the mechanisms through which divorce affects individuals. The mechanisms included parent-child relationships, continuing discord between former spouses, loss of emotional support, economic hardship, and an increase in the number of other negative life events. Amato (2000) also noted protective factors
that moderated the speed and extent of adaptive adjustment. The protective factors included education, employment, support from a new partner, being the spouse who initiated the divorce, active coping skills, support from family and friends, and access to therapeutic interventions for children. The observed differences that exist in ethnicities further complicate the changing complexity of relationships throughout a child’s development after divorce.

Although there is research that suggests divorce can serve as a constructive factor (Cummings & Davies, 2002), the majority of research on relationship satisfaction has shown more negative outcomes for children (e.g., Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998; Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger, & Mas, 1992; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999). These negative effects can last onto into adulthood (Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998). Research by Kirk (2002) demonstrated that individuals from divorced families expected and feared divorce in their own intimate relationships more than individuals who had married parents. Other cross-sectional research found that participants exposed to high parental conflict reported more problems, less happiness, and more conflict in their own marriages (Belsky & Isabella, 1985; Booth & Edwards, 1990; Overall, Henry, & Woodward, 1974).

Given that most of the research on parental marital status consisted of mainly Caucasian participants, it is important to see whether these trends generalize to more diverse participants. The current study examined the generalizability of the negative effects of divorce, more specifically intimate relationship satisfaction, with Latino participants.
Intimate Relationship Quality

Intimate relationship quality is defined as one’s perceived satisfaction with their relationship. The following discussion focused on some of the gender differences that have been found in relationship quality. Much of this research focused on mainly Caucasian samples. The current study extended this question to a Latino population. Existing research suggests that relationship quality differs between males and females. Research by Steiner-Pappalardo and Gurung (2002) explained how gender, rather than biological sex, may be a stronger predictor for more positive relationship quality. The authors noted that the level of femininity predicted positive relationship outcomes in both males and females. As Steiner-Pappalardo and Gurung explained, this “positive femininity effect” (originally discussed by Winquist, Mohr, & Kenny, 1998) is due to aspects of femininity (i.e., expressiveness, communality) being more positive in relationships. Vonk and VanNobelsen (1993) found that higher scores of femininity and lower scores of masculinity are linked with higher relationship satisfaction.

There are also interesting gender differences in the effects of divorce on an individual’s intimate relationships. Young females viewed men as more unfeeling and negative, and young males reported more relationship difficulties (McCabe, 1997). Research by Van Schaick and Stolberg (2001) noted that with a sample of individuals with divorced parents, female participants had higher scores on measures of intimacy and commitment than male participants. However, the marriages of female adults with divorced parents were more likely to end in divorce than male adults with divorced parents (Amato & Keith, 1991). Additionally, female adults with divorced parents were less likely to get married than male adults with divorced parents (Korbin & Waite, 1984).
Although this research examined a question beyond the scope of the current study, the variation in relationship quality between male and female participants is noteworthy because it demonstrated how life stressors can impact the intimate relationships of male and female individuals differently. The current study explored if there is a difference in relationship quality between different genders regardless of stressors in Latino participants.

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity, defined as one’s identified cultural group(s), was one of the major aspects of this review. Ethnicity and culture influence one’s life in various ways depending on a person’s ethnic identification and acculturation to the dominant culture (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). Where an individual stands on the collectivism-individualism spectrum can affect how that person views the world, how that person copes with life stressors (i.e., divorce of one’s parents), and the types of relationships that person has (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). Culture and ethnicity may affect how an individual experiences the world around them and how an individual copes with various experiences. Thus, individuals from different ethnicities may be impacted by divorce in dissimilar ways. Ethnicity was discussed throughout this section by describing the continuum of collectivism and individualism and how that continuum varies between different gender roles.

**Collectivism-Individualism**

The continuum of collectivism and individualism encompasses values, norms, goals, and behaviors. Collectivist cultures tend to emphasize the importance of group goals more than individual goals, whereas individualist cultures tend to emphasize self-
determination, pursuit of self-interest, and self-actualization more than community. An individual can be high in collectivism and individualism without contradiction. Different social contexts can have a unique level of collectivism or individualism for an individual. For example, one person may behave in one manner with one friend and in a different manner with another friend. Similarly, one person may behave in a more individualistic manner with friends and in a more collectivist manner with family. Many minority groups are high in collectivism and low in individualism when compared to Caucasian individuals (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). For example, if one is a Caucasian person, he or she may identify as more individualist. If one is a Latino or an Asian individual, then he or she tends to be more collectivist. Yet, if one is an African American person, then he or she tends have a higher degree of individualism and collectivism. Coon and Kemmelmeier posited that the high degree of individualism and collectivism observed in African American individuals could be due to a possible survival mechanism to cope with exclusion from the dominant society. However, this theory would not explain the different pattern seen in people that are Latino or Asian. Some researchers (e.g., Gaines et al., 1997) have found that there are no differences regarding individualism among minority groups and Caucasian individuals. This finding may be due to acculturation level, which will be examined later. Overall, these categories of collectivist and individualist may broadly apply to different cultures, but the individuals composing that culture may identify themselves to be at any point along the spectrum.

Since the Latino culture is generally considered to be collectivistic and the Caucasian culture is considered to be individualistic, it might be expected that individuals from the different groups might be impacted by a parents’ divorce in different ways.
Also, individuals of different levels of collectivism/individualism also might be expected to have variation in relationship quality in different genders based on the differences in gender roles due to cultural factors. Durik et al. (2006) discussed how individualism and collectivism are related to how different ethnic groups conform to gender roles and norms. Their study focused on how gender stereotypes of emotions varied in four different ethnic groups (African American individuals, Latino individuals, Asian American individuals, and Caucasian individuals). The authors found that across ethnicities, female participants were more portrayed as being stereotyped to express and experience more fear, guilt, shame, love, sadness, surprise, and sympathy than were male participants. There were also differences between ethnic groups. For example, the authors found that African American males and females were rated similarly for expressions of pride, but the other ethnic groups had males portrayed as being stereotyped to express more pride than females with the largest disparity in European Americans. A similar trend was found with stereotyped rating for the expression of love with a gender disparity apparent in all groups, but the largest gap existed in the European American group. This study illustrated the impact of one’s level of individualism/collectivism as well as gender roles in how individuals interact with one another. The current study partly focuses on relationship quality differences between genders in Latino adults rather than stereotypes of emotion; however, the previous study is noteworthy because it demonstrated that differences in level of individualism/collectivism, which can vary by ethnicity, can result in variation in gender roles. These differences in gender roles due to ethnicity suggest that gender trends that are found in some ethnicities may differ in other ethnicities. Due to this reason, the
current study examined the generalizability of trends (of relationship quality and gender) from a typically individualistic population (e.g., Caucasian individuals) with a typically collectivistic population (e.g., Latino individuals).

**Parental Marital Status and Ethnicity**

The variations of parental marital status across ethnicities are explored in this section. First, rates of divorce are provided to illustrate the difference between the ethnic groups. The remainder of this section explored possible reasons for the varying divorce rates (i.e., religion).

**Rates of Divorce**

When examining how parental marital status varies across ethnicities, there are disproportionate rates of divorce (not just first divorce, but divorces in general) for different ethnic groups. According to the US Census Bureau (2004), Caucasian individuals had a divorce rate of 23.3% for men and 25.4% for women. African American individuals had a divorce rate of 19.1% for men and 19.6% for women. Asian individuals had a divorce rate of 7.3% for men and 10% for women. Latino individuals had a divorce rate of 11.2% for men and 14.6% for women. Given that the divorce rate for Latino individuals was nearly half the divorce rate of Caucasian individuals, the impact of divorce may be more significant for those whose parents are divorced. The rates of divorce do not describe the nature of the couples’ relationship quality, as a divorce could be either amicable or negative. The divorce rates also do not depict the likelihood that an individual from any particular ethnicity has of experiencing a divorce. However, the rates do provide information concerning marriages that did not have a desired amount of satisfaction. According to Bramlett and Mosher (2002), African
American women are more likely to experience marital disruption in their first marriage and less likely to remarry than other ethnic groups. These differences in divorce rates demonstrate a gap between the different ethnicities and warrant further exploration into the possible causes and effects of such discrepancies. Noticing the differences will allow researchers to begin to theorize about the factors that may contribute to ethnic discrepancies.

**Possible Reasons for Ethnic Differences**

There are a number of factors that contribute to the observed ethnic differences in divorce rates. For example, Philips and Sweeney (2005) identified education level, whether or not a couple had premarital sex, age when one marries, nativity status, and religious involvement as factors that separated ethnic group differences in divorce rates. According to Bramlett and Mosher (2002), unemployment, incarceration, mortality, and experiences as children of unmarried or less-educated parents also contributed to the divorce rate disparity.

A study by Neff, Gilbert, and Hoppe (1991) identified socioeconomic status, marital history, and nature of marital complaints as having a role in the disproportionate divorce rates. However, the Neff et al. (1991) study should be interpreted with caution due to the methodology. The sample was obtained by examining surnames from divorce petitions and determining whether or not the surname appeared to be Spanish. This methodology can be problematic as multiple non-Spanish ethnicities have stereotypical Spanish surnames. For example, individuals of Caribbean or Filipino ethnicities may have Lopez as a last name. Thus, it is likely that their sample included individuals who are not Latino individuals. Another limitation of this approach is that the use of
stereotypical Spanish surnames may exclude those who are Latino but do not have the author-defined Spanish surnames. One last criticism of the article is that the study did not specify the surnames that they used. Without information regarding the surnames used, readers can neither understand the authors’ definition nor replicate the study.

Although there are numerous potential factors that may interact with each other to contribute to the differences in divorce rates across ethnic groups, only religion was examined in this review. Although the current study does not assess for religious background, the ties between Catholicism and the Latino culture are strong enough to note the influence religion may have on the differences between ethnic groups. The discussion of religion was included to highlight a possible contributing factor to the variation in divorce rate, but further in-depth analysis of religion was beyond the scope of this study.

**Religion.**

Since Latino individuals on average have lower socioeconomic status than Caucasian individuals and African American individuals (US Census Bureau, 1999), one might expect Latino individuals to have a higher divorce rate. In contrast, Latino individuals have a lower divorce rate than Caucasian individuals and African American individuals (US Census Bureau, 2004). One proposed reason for this discrepancy is the relation between Latino culture and Catholicism, which may contribute to the preservation of marriage quality and stability (Bulanda & Brown, 2006). For example, individuals of Mexican descent have identified with Catholicism to such a degree that Catholicism has become a large aspect of Mexican culture (The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2008). Although other ethnic groups may also have large proportions of
individuals that identify as Catholic, only Latino individuals will be emphasized for the purposes of this review as Latino individuals are the focus of the current study.

Religion may also serve as a buffer to divorce. Various religious institutions understand that prohibition of divorce may not be logical or healthy: Orthodox Judaism, Protestant, Islamic, and Catholic religions have allowed for its members to divorce. Yet, the levels of acceptance (both overt and covert) vary among people who are divorced (Kaslow, 1991). When spouses attend church regularly, the couple has the lowest risk of divorce (Call & Heaton, 1997). However, this finding does not suggest that religion serves as a buffer against divorce. Rather, it is suggested that the sharing of similar values between spouses decreases the risk of divorce. This theory is supported by Call and Heaton’s (1997) findings that differences in church attendance increases the risk of dissolution of marriage. Marks (2005) also found that religious participation is correlated with higher marital commitment and increased family satisfaction. However, there may be a self-selection bias as most religions are marriage and family oriented.

Despite the evidence that religious involvement can serve as a buffer for divorce, there are some cases when religious involvement can serve as a challenge in marriage (Marks, 2005). For example, when faith involvement (e.g., going on missions), separates couples for extended periods, families can become strained. Another possibility is that couples may experience a conflict of religious values or beliefs when they are members of different religions. Parental relationships can also be damaged if a child converts to a faith different than that of their parents. If a person marries someone from another faith, there may be an inter-faith conflict between the individuals.
Because the majority of Latino individuals identify as Catholic, shared religion and spirituality could serve as a large protective factor against divorce (The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2008). However, it is important to note that a married couple’s choice to refrain from divorce does not signify that they have a high degree of relationship quality or relationship satisfaction. In some cases, it is possible that not being permitted to divorce due to religious affiliation may create more distress (to the relationship and to the individual), perhaps due to a feeling of being trapped.

**Summary**

Although Caucasian individuals have a higher divorce rate than other ethnicities, African American individuals are nearly as apt to divorce as Caucasian individuals and are more likely to divorce than Asian and Latino individuals (US Census Bureau, 2004). The differing rates in divorce and the likelihood of divorce may stem from a number of factors (e.g., Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Neff et al., 1991; Phillips & Sweeney, 2005). Religion affiliation, which is largely seen in the Latino culture, may play a large role in the enhancement of marital quality by decreasing the significance of the negative effects of divorce and decreasing the likelihood of divorce (Bulanda & Brown, 2006); however, there is little research examining any relationship between religious affiliation and the effects of divorce in Latino populations. Cultural factors (e.g., religious affiliation, socioeconomic status) may help explain any differences in divorce rates. Such cultural factors may also be used to explain the resilience of certain individuals after a parental divorce. These cultural factors can be applied when comparing individuals of different ethnicities as well as individuals within the same ethnic group. Knowledge of these
cultural factors may help us understand group differences that may arise from the current study.

**Parental Marital Status and Intimate Relationship Quality**

The impact of parental marital status on one’s relationship quality was discussed in this section. Divorce can have profound effects on how a person interacts with others. With regard to intimate relationships, Cherlin, et al. (1991) noted that the emotional difficulties that might affect people with divorced parents can often be attributed to pre-divorce marital conflict. A subsequent investigation explored the lingering effects of the parental divorce that affect individuals into their twenties and thirties (Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998). These lingering effects vary, but could involve dysfunction in one’s own intimate relationships. This section focused on the argument of whether or not parental divorce negatively affects intimate relationship quality.

The lasting effects of parental divorce that carry into adulthood can negatively affect intimate relationships (e.g., poor marital quality, low satisfaction; Amato & Booth, 1997). This is often completed through an intergenerational transmission (i.e., the transfer of marital qualities through generations). However, it is important to note that the presence of a divorce does not necessarily indicate that there was a high degree of marital conflict. In fact, marital conflict, rather than parental divorce, is associated with offspring conflict behavior (Cui, Finchman, & Pasley, 2008). It appears that conflict in marriage can transfer to the children of divorce. If marital conflict is able to transfer to children, one could wonder whether the likelihood of going through a divorce could also be transferred to the children of divorce. This is an example of Amato and Booth’s (1997) intergenerational transmission.
The type of conflict resolution with one’s mother or sibling, whether it is negative or positive, has been found to impact and influence one’s later interpersonal and romantic conflict resolution (Reese-Weber & Kahn, 2005). One third of the 93 interviewees from divorced families in a 25-year-long follow-up study found that participants were openly pessimistic about marriage and divorce for themselves and tried to avoid marriage and divorce (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). The authors claimed that, “parental divorce impacts detrimentally the capacity to love and to be loved within a lasting, committed relationship” (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004, p. 363). However, the authors then noted that 60% of the women and 40% of the men have been able to establish “reasonably gratifying and enduring relationships” (p. 363). Of the groups that have had trouble in relationships, some have had reasonably harmonious relationships, yet still had fears of commitment and difficulty resolving conflicts in intimate relationships.

The Wallerstein and Lewis (2004) study encouraged the exploration of the long-term effects of divorce. It also provided an avenue for further research in order to further support the claim that individuals with divorced parents have poorer intimate relationships in adulthood when compared to individuals with parents that remain married. However, the Wallerstein and Lewis study has a number of flaws. First, the authors failed to use standardized and objective measures. They also conducted few statistical analyses to determine whether or not differences between their groups were significant. These methodological concerns decrease the ability of the study to be replicated. Second, the authors failed to provide a figure for the number of people within each condition group (e.g., the number of participants who were in the condition that had trouble in relationships). Without information about the number of participants in each
group, generalizability of the participants’ statements about divorce cannot be determined for each group.

Specific information about the rate of people who experienced difficulty in relationships could provide a more honest and realistic perspective regarding the rate of intimate relationship dissatisfaction occurring in the general population. Kelly and Emery (2003) reported that 75-80% of children and young adults do not suffer from major psychological issues following a divorce. The authors also claimed that research attending only to those individuals with problems may create an unrealistic idea of the actual rates of those troubled by a parental divorce. Contrary to previous evidence (i.e., Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004), those from divorced families are not distinguishable from those with married parents in the long term. Kelly and Emery noted that there are children from married families who experience severe psychological, social, and academic difficulties. They also noted that there are children from divorced families who are functioning well in such domains. The authors noted that divorce is one of many aspects that help determine the long-term outcome of children from divorced families. In addition, Amato (1999) noted that approximately 42% of young adults from divorced households had well-being scores at or above the average of scores from young adults with parents that were still married.

Research has suggested that divorce of one’s parents may negatively impact one’s own intimate relationships (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). The divorce of one’s parents has the possibility of paralleling one’s relationship with future partners (Amato & Booth, 1997). Previous research by Kirk (2002) demonstrated that perceiving a high level of conflict with parents negatively affected participants’ fears of intimacy and satisfaction in
intimate relationships. The participants also noted lower expectations for a successful marriage to the point of even anticipating divorce in their own lives. Adults of divorced families are more likely to marry at a younger age, divorce and remarry more often, and are less likely to trust others (Ross & Mirowsky, 1999). Although empirical work with diverse ethnic groups in this domain has not been examined, it has been theorized that similar findings would be found in different ethnic groups (Nicholson, 2006). The current study examined the generalizability of those findings to a Latino sample.

**Summary**

Despite the conflicting research regarding the impact of divorce on individuals’ relationships (e.g., Kelly & Emery, 2003; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004), the research by Wallerstein and Lewis demonstrated that divorce can negatively affect people into adulthood. Although divorce does not negatively affect all children (Kelly & Emery, 2003), those that are negatively affected may have transferred interaction styles from their parents through the intergenerational transmission (Amato & Booth, 1997) or have a bias against marriage due to their observation of their parents’ unsuccessful marriage (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Though the research does not conclude how often divorce negatively affects people, the research (e.g., Amato, 1999) does note that divorce can have a negative effect. Understanding the differences and contributing factors to positive and negative outcome of parental divorce could make a negative outcome less likely. Individuals from divorced families have been described to have a transmission of negative interaction styles (Amato & Booth, 1997) and a negative bias with marriage (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). This study attempts to examine whether the negative
effects of divorce that have been found in some research with Caucasian samples extend to Latino individuals.

**Ethnicity and Intimate Relationship Quality**

The interaction between relationship quality and ethnicity is interesting for researchers. This section focused on how relationships can vary in different ethnicities. The section first examined structural and cultural differences in the Latino population. The roles of acculturation in the Latino population are further explored. The Latino population was the focal point of ethnicity for this review because there is a large base of research discussing culture in comparison to those that identify as Caucasian.

One’s relationships and the quality of those relationships can be greatly influenced by one’s ethnicity. As previously mentioned, many researchers choose to primarily examine Latino individuals and their relationships due to the availability of research for Latino individuals and lack of research for other ethnicities. Therefore, the ethnic differences in relationships could be part of either structural or cultural differences between ethnicities. For example, researchers have described what is called “the paradox of Mexican American nuptiality” (Oropesa, Lichter, & Anderson, 1994, p. 890) as having a mix of these two differences. According to the paradox of nuptiality, Mexican individuals and African American individuals have similar experiences of economic disadvantage. However, Mexican individuals more closely resemble Caucasian individuals than African American individuals with regard to family formation behaviors (i.e., having higher rates of marriage, more positive attitudes about marriage, and lower rates of divorce; Bulanda & Brown, 2007).
Structural Differences

Structural differences are economic factors that can affect the level of stress in a household throughout the duration of marriage. The role of economics plays varying roles with different ethnicities. Whereas education and employment does not have a salient role in Mexican divorce (Phillips & Sweeney, 2005), low levels of socioeconomic status, particularly among Mexican immigrants, have a lower risk of divorce (Bean et al., 1996). Wilson (1987) noted that the relatively low proportions of marriages in African American individuals is due to men not having stable earnings or being a viable mate. Financial issues appear to be fairly important for the marital quality of African American individuals (Orbuch et al., 1996). As for Caucasian individuals, because economic instability may weaken marriages and Caucasian individuals are typically born into wealthier family systems (Casper & Bianchi, 2002), have more education (Stroops, 2004), and have higher incomes (Fronczek, 2005), they would be expected to have stronger marriages than Mexican individuals and African American individuals. Though there are differences in economic level, there appears to be more aspects influencing relationships in ethnicities given that African American individuals and Mexican individuals have similar economic disadvantage, but nevertheless have different rates of divorce.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences appear to have an influence on marriage. There is an importance of family in Mexican families and the role the collectivist culture might be part of the paradox of nuptiality (Oropesa et al., 1994). Nevertheless, family cohesion waxes and wanes throughout one’s development. In a study by Baer and Schmitz (2007),
the Mexican participants who oriented toward Mexican culture had a significant increase in family cohesion during mid-adolescence. This is perhaps due to the development of the adolescent and the family’s attempt to prepare the adolescent for transition into adulthood. The difference between the two Mexican groups from the Baer and Schmitz study illustrated the role of acculturation level, as the group that oriented towards the Mexican culture had differences in family cohesion, but the group oriented towards the American culture demonstrated no differences when compared to Caucasian participants. Thus, acculturation level or amount of identification to certain cultures influences family cohesion. The degree of structural or cultural variation between different ethnicities suggests that due to these differences, other distinctions between how individuals from different ethnicities behave are plausible.

**Impact of Acculturation**

Acculturation is an important factor in the variation of how individuals of different cultures interact with one another. The variation stemming from different levels of acculturation has been shown to play a role in relationships (e.g., Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008). For example, Smokowski and colleagues (2008) noted increased cohesion in families with bicultural identification as compared to monocultural families. As previously discussed with multiculturalism, the level of acculturation affects how one interacts with others. Because acculturation level is in relation to the dominant culture, it does not fully address the role of the minority culture. It appears that those people who are involved with both their culture of origin and who have some biculturalism have a positive influence on family dynamics, such as cohesion and adaptability (Smokowski et al., 2008). Interestingly, there appears to be a higher degree of importance regarding
family among those who identify strongly with the Mexican as well as the American culture (Rodriquez, Mira, Paez, & Myers, 2007).

However, greater acculturation gaps between parent and child can cause conflicts between fathers and their children, but not for mothers and their children (Schofield, Parke, Kim, & Coltrane, 2008). Schofield and colleagues stated that this could be due to mothers being more involved in their children’s lives than fathers. Therefore, any disagreement created by differences in acculturation could be more salient to the children. As discussed earlier, an individual who is less acculturated to the Caucasian culture and identifies more with their collectivist culture will have more family cohesion in midadolescence (Baer & Schmitz, 2007). It appears that although identification as multicultural can increase family cohesion, conflict can be caused from the acculturative stress (Caplan, 2007) or differences between generations (Schofield et al., 2008). Despite these differences, relationships tend to vary in cohesion according to one’s culture, demonstrating the impact that ethnicity has on relationships. Due to this idea, it is possible that research findings from predominately Caucasian samples, may yield different results.

**Summary**

Ethnicity can affect one’s relationships as cultural influences and differences affect the amount of individualism and collectivism with which one identifies (Baer & Schmitz, 2007). Relationships in a collectivist culture, such as Latino culture, may produce more support and cohesion than relationships in an individualist culture, such as American culture (Updegraff et al., 2005). Of course, this is a broad generalization that does not portray the variation that occurs in the Caucasian and Latino cultures. Certain
concepts, such as family, are more emphasized in collectivist cultures, whereas other individual ideals are emphasized in individualist cultures (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). These differences in parenting practices or the various family relationships seem to be due to cultural factors and economic factors (Oropesa et al., 1994). As a result, the current study examined if intimate relationships from individuals from a collectivistic culture (i.e., Latino culture) also suffer from the negative effects of divorce that is seen in Caucasian samples.

**Parental Marital Status, Ethnicity, and Relationship Quality**

The last section of the review examined three studies (Davis, 2006; Lopez et al., 2000; Nicholson, 2006) that illustrated the interaction between all three variables. Or, more specifically, how one’s parental marital status affects one’s relationships in ethnicities. The current study examined how parental marital status impacts one’s intimate relationship satisfaction within an ethnicity.

With the lack of research that has combined parental marital status, ethnicity, and relationship quality no studies to date have specifically explored intimate relationships in ethnicities. Lopez et al. (2000) examined parent-child bonds and adult attachment in three ethnic groups of people: African American, Latino, and Caucasian groups. Although attachment relates to and provides information about intimate relationships, it does not completely address relationship quality or satisfaction.

Lopez and colleagues (2000) surveyed 487 undergraduates and asked them to complete three measures: a demographic questionnaire, the Adult Attachment Questionnaire, and the Parental Bonding Instrument. Although the authors found that those students from divorced families regarded their family relationships as less warm
and cohesive than students from intact families, they found no evidence of a significant
effect of parental marital status on the measures of adult attachment orientation.
However, parental bonds accounted for over twice the variance in adult attachment
anxiety among students from divorced families compared to peers from intact families.
This demonstrated the importance of a child’s bond with his or her parents and the effect
of attachment anxiety in parental marital status.

Latino and African American participants in the Lopez et al. (2000) study
reported greater attachment-related avoidance in intimate relationships than their
Caucasian counterparts. This may be due to numerous reasons. First, this finding may be
due to the campus consisting of predominately Caucasian students. Ethnic minority
students may have been more cautious and hesitant to form relationships. Cultural
factors may have partially accounted for the finding. As previously discussed, ethnic
minority participants who identified with more collectivist culture may have more
difficulty being separated from their family. However, this would not account for the
African American participants from previous research that tended to have a higher degree
of individualism and collectivism (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). It is possible that the
African American participants relied more on their collectivist ideals when in a new
environment. Perhaps the collectivist reasoning may apply more to the Latino
participants and the racial minority status may be a more appropriate reasoning for the
African American participants.

It is important to note that the level of pre-divorce and post-divorce conflict and
parental remarriage are not controlled for in the Lopez et al. (2000) study, which makes
the conclusions being drawn more conservative. The level of conflict is a large
confounding factor that may account for the effects. As mentioned before, pre-divorce conflict is an important factor to control because the effects that separate people of divorced families from those from intact families may be due to the conflict rather than the divorce itself.

There are some studies that show support for differences between individuals from divorced families and individuals from intact families (e.g., Davis, 2006; Nicholson, 2006). Davis examined the role of parental divorce of 191 undergraduate African American participants on their ability to form satisfying adult romantic relationships and on their socioeconomic status. The author found sparse adverse effects of divorce on the ability to form healthy adult intimate relationships and satisfaction with their relationships. The study examined primarily African American women, so the results cannot generalize to African American men.

Unfortunately, no Caucasian individuals or other ethnic groups were used and thus, no strong conclusions can be made comparing adult intimate relationships in ethnicities. However, this information can provide evidence that there may be an ethnic difference in how divorce affects intimate relationships. It may be that the amount of collectivism helps protect against dysfunction in intimate relationships and dissatisfaction by having closer bonds with family and friends.

Findings from Nicholson’s (2006) dissertation suggested that there are no differences in martial attitudes in African American individuals and Latino individuals from either intact or divorced families. The participants in Nicholson’s study consisted of 35 college student participants completing measures of parent-child relationship (e.g., relationship with the father and relationship with the mother), self esteem, and marital
attitudes. The author found interesting results. Nicholson found that intact families had better father-child relationships than divorced families. However, there were no differences of mother-child relationships in parental marital status. Of course, marital attitudes are not the same as relationship quality. However, understanding one’s views on marriage can provide insight into the quality of the intimate relationship. It is likely that those with low marital attitudes have lower quality of intimate relationships.

As for differences with ethnicity in the Nicholson (2006) dissertation, African American participants had more positive attitudes toward marriage than Latino participants. This result is partially contrary to the higher rates of divorce for African American individuals (US Census Bureau, 2004). It would help to further investigate the potential reasons for these observations. That is, why do African American participants have more positive attitudes about marriage, whereas the Latino participants thought more negatively about divorce?

The conflicting findings in Nicholson (2006) may be due to the small sample size and unequal groups. For example, there was one third (7) more Latino participants than African American participants. It may be that there were not enough African American participants to find an effect. Or, it is possible that the sample was biased as the participants were from an undergraduate university and was more likely to have a higher socioeconomic status and higher education than other members of their ethnicities. Once again, the results of this study did not include a sample of Caucasian participants to compare with and thus the research was unable to make stronger conclusions.

However, it is important to note that the previous two studies (Davis, 2006; Nicholson, 2006) are dissertations, not peer-reviewed articles. Due to the paucity of
research showing the intersection of divorce, ethnicity, and intimate relationships, any information should be presented, but, as with any study, should be interpreted with care. The current study focused on adding further information to this line of research to help to explain some of these discrepancies in the findings.

**Summary**

Based on the research that considered various ethnicities, there is conflicting research on how one’s relationships are impacted by the divorce of one’s parents (e.g., Davis, 2006; Lopez et al., 2000). Numerous aspects, such as culture and religion, may influence the differing rates of divorce in ethnic groups (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Neff et al., 1991; Phillips & Sweeney, 2005). Although Caucasian individuals have a higher divorce rate than other ethnicities, African American individuals may be more likely to divorce than other ethnicities (US Census Bureau, 2004). The differing rates of divorce and likelihood of divorce may be caused and influenced by countless factors (Amato, 2000). Culture and religion may play a large role in decreasing the significance of the negative effects related to divorce or even decreasing the likelihood of divorce (Call & Heaton, 1997; Smokowski et al., 2008). For Caucasian individuals, the research is conflicted as to how parental divorce affects individuals’ intimate relationships later in life (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Despite this finding, it is apparent that there are cases in which divorce negatively affects people and continues to have an adverse influence into adulthood. Although this is not the case for everyone, it is important to understand the potential negative effects divorce can have on individuals and to find ways to mitigate this potential outcome.
There are also gender variations in relationship satisfaction with female individuals reporting higher relationship satisfaction than male individuals (Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002), however, those findings consisted of primarily Caucasian participants. Due to research suggesting cultural variations between genders (Durik et al., 2006), it would be plausible that those gender variations in relationship satisfaction may not generalize. The current study examined the generalizability of those gender trends found in previous research with a Latino sample.

Because culture (i.e., amount of individualism or collectivism) and parental marital status influence one’s intimate relationships, it would seem logical that with cultural changes, there might be changes in how parental marital status affects one’s relationships. However, this hypothesis was not fully supported by the current research. Whereas Davis (2006) and Nicholas (2006) revealed no differences in parental marital status in forming intimate relationships, Lopez and colleagues (2000) found variation in adult attachment, which is conceptually related to relationship quality. There appeared to be some cross-ethnic variation amongst these three studies, though not all variation was statistically significant.

**Conclusion**

Unfortunately, the sparse research (Davis, 2006; Lopez et al., 2000; Nicholson, 2006) that has examined how parental divorce negatively affects intimate relationships in ethnicities cannot definitively answer whether parental divorce negatively impacts one’s relationships. Overall, it appears that parental divorce can have negative effects on intimate relationships in ethnicities. When exploring research findings with Caucasian participants, there appears to be some negative effects of divorce on the children of
divorce (e.g., Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Strohschein, 2005). Some researchers (e.g., Kelly & Emery, 2003) mentioned that articles often misrepresent the results and leave out children who positively adapt after a parental divorce. As these children grow into adulthood, their views on marriage may continue to be negatively affected (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Sparse research has examined the generalizability of the negative effects of parental divorce with other ethnicities, which is a focus of the current study. The research that exists with other ethnicities (e.g., Davis, 2006; Nicolson, 2006; Lopez et al., 2000) has yet to show any definite results that neither supports nor denies the negative effects of parental divorce in ethnicities. If there are any negative effects of divorce in non-Caucasian ethnic groups, what those effects are and the extent to which they affect people have yet to be determined. The current study focused on testing the generalizability of the research findings demonstrating negative effects of divorce with Caucasian participants with a Latino sample. Also being examined is the generalizability of possible differences in relationship satisfaction between genders that has been found in Caucasian samples to a Latino sample.

**Research Questions**

The effects of parental marital status on Latino individuals’ relationship quality have not been widely researched as most research consists of only Caucasian individuals. The primary research question examined the impact that parental marital status had on Latino adults, more specifically, Latino adults’ intimate relationship satisfaction.

The secondary research question examined the impact of gender on relationship quality for Latino adults. Based the existing literature, the gender difference in
relationship satisfaction has been examined. However, existing studies have consisted of
primarily Caucasian participants. This study seeks to expand this question to Latino
participants.

**Hypotheses**

The primary hypothesis of this study was that individuals with divorced parents
would demonstrate lower relationship satisfaction with their intimate partners than
individuals with parents who are still married. An individual might follow the modeling
of their parents, whether that may have lead to a divorce or to marriage. The independent
variable was parental marital status of the individuals. The dependent variable was the
level of relationship satisfaction.

The secondary hypothesis of this study was that participants that identified as
male would have a lower relationship satisfaction than participants that identified as
female. Based on previous research (e.g., Winquist et al., 1998), females might be
expected to report a higher relationship satisfaction than males. The independent variable
was the identified gender of the participant. The dependent variable was the level of
relationship satisfaction.

**Method**

**Participants**

The current study included a total of 40 participants: 23 individuals with married
parents and 17 individuals with divorced parents. The participants indicated they were
Latino, 18 years old or older, and were in heterosexual relationships. They also indicated
that their primary language was English. There were 25 female participants and 15 male
participants. The age of participants ranged from 18 years old to 48 years old ($M = 28.4$,
Fourteen participants identified as “Mexican,” seven as “Puerto Rican,” two as “Guatemalan,” one as “Honduran,” one as “Asian American,” two as “African American/Black,” six as “White/Caucasian,” three reported as “Mixed,” three indicated that they were “Other,” and one individual chose not to list any ethnic background. Thirty-three participants classified themselves as “Partnered,” whereas the other 7 participants considered themselves to be “Single.” Thirteen participants were first-generation immigrants (the first of their immediate family to be born in the United States and one’s parent), and thirteen participants considered themselves to be second generation immigrants (had at least one parent be the first child in their immediate family to be born in the United States). Eight individuals were third generation immigrants (had at least one grandparent be the first child in their immediate family to be born in the United States), and the remaining six participants were fourth generation immigrants (had at least one great-grandparent be the first child in their immediate family to be born in the United States). Twenty-one participants had “some college experience,” five participants had “some high school,” nine had an “undergraduate degree,” and five had either “a graduate degree or other advanced training.” Most of the participants (N = 24) spoke only English in their home, four participants spoke only Spanish, and twelve participants spoke a combination of the two languages.

Divorced and currently married were only two of the numerous variations in parental marital status (e.g., separation, estrangement). Only participants who had married or divorced parents and completed the full survey were included in this study. As a result of these criteria, 23 participants were excluded from the analysis.

Materials/Measures
Participants were administered two measures in an online format: a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the Couples Satisfaction Index (see Appendix B; Funk & Rogge, 2007). The demographic questionnaire consisted of basic demographic information including gender, ethnicity, and age. The demographic questionnaire also included questions regarding estimated annual income, primary language, when they or someone in their immediate family was first born in the United States, and highest education level. Finally, there were two questions that inquired about one’s parental marital status and one’s own relationship status. These final two questions were used to create the groups for analysis and for post-hoc analyses of any trends that may occur.

The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) was used to assess current relationship satisfaction. It was developed by Funk and Rogge (2007) who used principal-components analysis and item response theory from eight measures of relationship satisfaction, including the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976). Funk and Rogge noted how the MAT and DAS had relatively poor levels of precision to assess satisfaction. The resulting 32 Likert scale items from their analysis comprised the CSI. The CSI compared the level of satisfaction that the participants felt about their current intimate relationship. In this study, the level of satisfaction served as the dependent variable (CSI score), and the independent variable was the marital status of the parents (i.e., divorced or married). Thus, the higher CSI score, the more satisfied one was with their relationship, whereas a lower score indicated a lower satisfaction with one’s relationship. Funk and Rogge compared the CSI to the DAS and MAT and found higher precision of measurement as
well as more power in detecting differences in levels of satisfaction. The CSI has been noted to have a coefficient alpha of .92 (Fincham, Cui, Braithwaite, & Pasley, 2008).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited via an online advertisement (see Appendix C) on Craigslist.com from a northwestern, moderate-sized city. Those willing to participate were provided with a web link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire. Before reaching the questionnaire section, participants were required to have read through and agreed to an informed consent agreement which detail their rights as a volunteer. Once they agreed to the informed consent, the participants were led to a demographics questionnaire and then to the CSI (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Regardless of their agreement to participate in the study, each individual was directed to a web page where they could send their preferred contact information to the researcher to be entered into the an opportunity to participate in a raffle for one of two $20 gift certificates.

**Results**

Two independent samples t-tests were conducted to explore the two research questions in this study. The first t-test compared the CSI scores of the group of participants with parents who are divorced and the group of participants with parents who are married. The second t-test compared the CSI scores of the male participants and the female participants.

Although the CSI scores were higher for participants with married ($M = 103.43$, $SD = 40.39$) versus divorced parents ($M = 94.88$, $SD = 49.$), there was not a statistically a significant difference between the CSI scores for the group of participants with divorced parents and the CSI scores of the group of participants with married parents, $t (38) = -$
0.602, \( p = 0.551 \). These results suggest that there was no significant difference in the relationship quality of those with divorced or married parents.

By examining the means we found an interesting trend in the scores of male (\( M = 82.53, SD = 23.89 \)) and female participants (\( M = 110.16, SD = 50.26 \)). However, this difference was not statistically significant, \( t (38) = -1.99, p = 0.054 \). These results suggest that gender did not significantly impact relationship satisfaction.

**Discussion**

Although the mean CSI score for participants with married parents was higher than the mean CSI score for participants with divorced parents, there was not a statistically significant difference in intimate relationship quality between the two groups in this study. Similarly, although the mean CSI score of male participants were lower than the mean CSI score for female participants, there was not a statistically significant difference in the intimate relationship quality between male and female participants. One key limitation of the study was the low sample size, which resulted in insufficient power to detect statistically significant differences even if they truly existed. Despite the power difficulties, the trends observed by examining the means in this study are consistent with the findings found in the broader literature with Caucasian participants. The following section discusses the power limitations and the observed trends with parental marital status and gender. The current study’s implications are then discussed as well as the possible impact of acculturation and validity before a few closing remarks are made.

Prior to data collection, an a priori power analysis was conducted to estimate the ideal number of participants to ensure an appropriate effect size. Using a power level of 0.80 and an effect size of 0.65, the power analysis resulted in an ideal sample size of 160,
80 participants in each group. Due to the study’s small sample size (N = 40; Divorced parents group = 17, Married parents = 23), even if a significant effect had existed, it is likely that there would not have been sufficient power to detect it. To determine whether the findings were due to lack of power or to the lack of an effect, it would be important to conduct a future study with a larger sample size.

Since no significant differences were found and the sample size was small, no firm conclusions can be made. However, there were trends in the results that are consistent with the broader literature. For example, the group of individuals with divorced parents did have a lower mean CSI score than the mean CSI score of the group of individuals with married parents. Although not a significant difference with a low sample size, this trend does reflect the research seen in Caucasian participants (e.g., Kirk, 2002). That is, individuals with divorced parents appeared to have lower relationship satisfaction than individuals with married parents. This trend may imply that regardless of the ethnic background (e.g., either Latino or Caucasian identification) individuals with divorced parents may have lower relationship satisfaction than individuals with married parents. Future research with a larger sample size can examine this question further as the current research cannot make firmer conclusions with a small sample size.

The other interesting trend involved gender. The trend demonstrated that male participants had lower CSI scores than female participants. As previously mentioned, the low sample size does not yield enough power to make firm conclusions. However, this trend does reflect research that male participants reported more relationship difficulties than female participants (McCabe, 1997), though this study was conducted with only Caucasian participants. This trend also reflects the findings of Steiner-Pappalardo and
Gurung (2002) as they explained that the level of femininity predicted positive relationship outcomes (i.e., relationship satisfaction). The results from the current suggest that there may be a similar trend in Latino individuals. It is possible that regardless of ethnicity (at least with Caucasian and Latino adults), male individuals report less relationship satisfaction than female individuals. However, due to the low sample size of the current study, no firm conclusions can be made. Future research should include a larger sample size to explore this trend further.

If the trends found in the study reflected the larger populations, it would have important implications for how individuals receive after a divorce of one’s parents. If there are varying differences in how one is affected by one’s parent’s divorce based on ethnicity, it is important to find culturally-sensitive, as well as age-appropriate, interventions that are able to help individuals cope with negative effects of a parental divorce. Also, if there is a gender difference between how males and females are affected by one’s parent’s divorce, treatment can also become more individualized based on those gender differences. Understanding the impact of one’s parent’s divorce can help couples understand how to possibly improve their relationship by understanding how parental divorce can affect people differently.

Based on numerous characteristics of the current study’s sample, there was a strong likelihood that the current sample was fairly acculturated. For example, 24 of the participants identified as speaking primarily English in their homes with another 12 that identified as speaking a mixture of English and Spanish in the home. This majority of English speakers may indicate that our sample was highly acculturated to the mainstream American culture. Another factor that indicates a higher level of acculturation is the
education level of the participants. The majority of participants \((N = 35)\) had attended at least some college. If our sample of Latino participants were more acculturated, it would not be surprising that their scores for relationship satisfaction would be similar to Caucasian individuals. Since cultural effects of different ethnicities may influence how one is impacted by divorce, lessening the differences in culture may also lessen the variation in the effects of divorce. For this study, if the sample is more acculturated and presents more like the mainstream Caucasian culture than Latino culture, then the study may not generalize to individuals that identify more highly with Latino culture. Thus, in the future, research should try different methods of controlling for acculturation to measure a less acculturated sample (e.g., not surveying via internet).

Related to the concerns of acculturation are concerns about validity. The entire study was conducted in the English language. This decision was made by the researchers because a Spanish version of the CSI does not exist. Even if a Spanish version of the CSI did exist, this would not assure that it would be valid. Relationship satisfaction may not look the same from one culture to the next. Thus, in the future, research could use a measure that is well validated with Spanish-speaking populations or to work to adapt the CSI for Spanish speakers.

The main purpose of the current study was to examine whether the impact of parental divorce on relationship quality, conducted in predominantly Caucasian samples, can generalize to diverse populations. The current study found trends in Latino participants that reflected research with Caucasian samples. The first trend mirrored findings that individuals with divorced parents have lower relationship satisfaction than individuals with married parents. Another trend in the current study reflected research
that found male individuals reported less relationship satisfaction than female individuals. Although the sample size in this study was not large enough to detect a significant difference, the trends observed are consistent with the existing Caucasian data. Future research in this area should focus on obtaining a larger sample size to further explore the questions examined in the current study.
References


Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Gender:
☐ Male
☐ Female

Age:
_____ 

What is your racial or ethnic background?
☐ Asian-American
☐ Black/African-American
☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Native American
☐ Mexican
☐ Cuban
☐ Puerto Rican
☐ Dominican
☐ Guatemalan
☐ Honduran
☐ El Salvadorian
☐ Mixed (Please specify):
☐ Other (Please specify):

What is your relationship status?
☐ Single
☐ Partnered (In a heterosexual relationship)
☐ Partnered (In non-heterosexual relationship)
☐ Other (Please specify):

What is your parents’ relationship status with each other?
☐ Single
☐ Separated
☐ Divorced
☐ Married
☐ Partnered
☐ Other (Please specify):

How many generations has your family lived in the U.S.?
☐ First generation (I was not born here)
☐ Second generation (At least one of my parents were born here)
☐ Third generation (At least one of my grandparents were born here)
☐ Fourth generation (At least one of my great-grandparents were born here)
☐ Other (Please specify): _______________________________
What is your highest education level?
☐ Elementary or middle school
☐ High school
☐ Some college
☐ Undergraduate degree
☐ Graduate degree or advanced training

What is an estimate of your family’s total annual income?
☐ Less than $25,000
☐ Above $25,000 – Under $50,000
☐ Above $50,000 – Under $75,000
☐ Above $75,000 – Under $100,000
☐ $100,000 or more
☐ Don’t know

What language do you speak in the home?
☐ English
☐ Spanish
☐ Mix (Please specify): __________
☐ Other (Please specify): __________
Appendix B

Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Unhappy</th>
<th>Fairly Unhappy</th>
<th>A Little Unhappy</th>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Very Happy</th>
<th>Extremely Happy</th>
<th>Perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

2. Amount of time spent together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always Agree</th>
<th>Almost Always Agree</th>
<th>Occasionally Disagree</th>
<th>Frequently Disagree</th>
<th>Almost Always Disagree</th>
<th>Always Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Making major decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always Agree</th>
<th>Almost Always Agree</th>
<th>Occasionally Disagree</th>
<th>Frequently Disagree</th>
<th>Almost Always Disagree</th>
<th>Always Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Demonstrations of affection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

<p>| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all True</th>
<th>A little True</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Mostly True</th>
<th>Almost Completely True</th>
<th>Completely -ly True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I still feel a strong connection with my partner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If I had my life to live over, I would marry (or live with/date) the same person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Our relationship is strong</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I sometimes wonder if there is someone else out there for me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My relationship with my partner makes me happy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I can't imagine ending my relationship with my partner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually anything. 

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. I have had second thoughts about this relationship recently. 

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. For me, my partner is the perfect romantic partner. 

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<td>2</td>
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</table>

17. I really feel like part of a team with my partner. 

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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 

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<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

19. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Almost Completely</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

20. How well does your partner meet your needs? 

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Somewhat</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

21. To what extent has 

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
your relationship met your original expectations?

22. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Worse than all others (Extremely bad) Better than all others (Extremely good)

23. How good is your relationship compared to most?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Never Less than once a month Once or twice a month Once or twice a week Once a day More often

24. Do you enjoy your partner's company?

0 1 2 3 4 5

25. How often do you and your partner have fun together?

0 1 2 3 4 5

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your relationship. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

26. INTERESTING 5 4 3 2 1 0 BORING
27. BAD 0 1 2 3 4 5 GOOD
28. FULL 5 4 3 2 1 0 EMPTY
29. LONELY 0 1 2 3 4 5 FRIENDLY
30. STURDY 5 4 3 2 1 0 FRAGILE
31. DISCOURAGING 0 1 2 3 4 5 HOPEFUL
32. ENJOYABLE 5 4 3 2 1 0 MISERABLE
Appendix C

Online advertisement

People needed for dissertation study examining relationships in Latino individuals. Participants should:
- Identify as Latino
- Be at least 18 years old
- Currently be in a heterosexual intimate relationship
- Have parents that are divorced or married

Study includes a one-time, 25 minute internet survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LatinoRelationships) with the opportunity to win one of two $20 Visa gift cards at the completion of the study.

If you have any questions please contact Josh at 541-515-1013 or taba7305@pacificu.edu.