

THE MODERATING ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND
PARENTING QUALITY ON NEGATIVE CHILD BEHAVIOR
IN RE-PARTNERED COUPLES

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DEDICATION

Foremost, to my Lord and Savior. I leaned on the passages of Matthew 6: 25-27 (“Do not worry”) and Colossians 3:23 (“My work is for the Lord”) throughout my graduate journey. In times of exhaustion and desperation, my confidence and faith in you Lord carried me through. You were my rock during the most trying times. Your continual grace, mercy, and love astounds and comforts me.

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ABSTRACT

DEBORAH EUNGEE HOLT

THE MODERATING ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND PARENTING QUALITY ON NEGATIVE CHILD BEHAVIOR IN RE-PARTNERED COUPLES

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The disruption divorce poses on children's adjustment and behavior across the lifespan has been well examined. Scholars have paid less attention to the tenacity and ambiguous beauty of stepfamilies who cultivate the re-partnered couple dyadic relationship. This current study deconstructed the binary of intact and broken families by focusing on the restoration and resiliency of stepfamilies. Attachment theory is the framework for this current study, as stepfamilies and their experience cannot initially be inferred through a structural or pertinent lens. This study used a subset of biological mother participants from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS; $N = 404$). This study examined negative child outcomes following divorce and its link to negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Furthermore, the present quantitative study explored whether relationship satisfaction and parenting quality between the re-partnered couple buffered the expected continuum between negative child outcomes following divorce and re-partnering. Results suggest that negative child outcomes following divorce predicted negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Relationship satisfaction had a moderation effect on the causal effect between negative child outcomes following divorce and re-partnering. Limitations, implications, and directions for future research are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vii
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	4
Rationale of the Study	4
Summary	5
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
Theoretical Framework	7
Bowlby's Theory of Attachment	7
Ainsworth's Attachment Styles	9
Adult Attachment and Love	10
Attachment Styles and Adulthood	11
Adult Attachment, Couples Attachment, & Children Outcome	12
Adult Attachment Orientation and Child Behavior	12
Adult Attachment, Relationship Satisfaction, and Child Behavior ...	14
Couples Attachment and Child Behavior	16
Overview of Divorce and Effects on Child Behavior Across Time	18
Child Demographics and Divorce	21
Remarriage	22
Remarriage and Children	22
Remarriage and Re-Partnered Couples	23
Remarriage and Stepparents	28
Control Variables	30
Limitations of Past Research	32
Research Questions/Hypotheses	32
Summary	34
III. METHODOLOGY	36

Sample.....	36
Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS).....	36
Current Study	37
Measures	39
Predictor Variable	39
Negative Child Outcome Following Divorce	39
Outcome Variable	40
Negative Child Outcome Following Re-Partnering.....	40
Moderating Variables.....	40
Relationship Satisfaction	41
Parenting Quality	42
Demographic Control Variables	42
Focal Child's Gender	43
Mother's Age	43
Mother's Education.....	43
Mother's Mental Health.....	43
Co-parenting Relationship	43
Analysis Plan	44
Summary	44
IV. RESULTS	46
Preliminary Analysis.....	46
Multiple Hierarchical Regression	49
Research Question 1	49
Research Question 2	50
Research Question 3	51
Control Variables	52
Summary	52
V. DISCUSSION	54
Research Question 1	54
Research Question 2	56
Research Question 3	58
Control Variables.....	60
Strengths and Limitations	61
Implications and Future Research.....	63
For Biological Parents and Stepparents	63
For Clinicians and Parent Educators.....	64
For Lawmakers, Family Court Lawyers, and Judges	66
Community Agencies and Leaders	67
Future Researchers.....	68
Conclusion	68
REFERENCES	70

APPENDICES

A. Appendix A Tables	90
B. Appendix B Figures	95

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Participant Reports for Independent, Moderator, Dependent, and Demographic Control Variables: Descriptive Statistics ($N = 404$).....	90
2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Continuous Variables.....	91
3. Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Relationship Satisfaction.....	92
4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Parenting Quality.....	93

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Model of Current Study.....	94
2. Moderator Variable of Relationship Satisfaction.....	95
3. Moderation of Relationship Satisfaction on Negative Child Outcomes	96

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Divorce has become normalized in the United States, as nearly half of marriages end in dissolution (Amato, 2010; National Center for Health Statistics, 2017). More than 75% of divorcees will marry again (Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000). Thirty percent of divorced individuals will remarry within one year following dissolution (Coleman et al., 2000). The likelihood of divorce in subsequent marriages is even higher than first marriages (Bray, 2005; Everett & Lee, 2006; Kreider, 2006; Wallerstein, 2005). Couples in second or sequential marriage divorce at an accelerated pace than couples in their initial marriage. Re-partnered couples face more unique hardships and adversities than traditional first-married families (Clarke & Wilson, 1994; Ehrenberg, Robertson, & Pringle, 2012).

As a consequence of divorce, remarriage is expected and stepfamilies are prevalent (Lewis & Kreider, 2015). Kumar (2017) defined a stepfamily as a familial system with one or more children that is established through remarriage, due to divorce or bereavement. In other words, one or both partners who enters a couple system with a child from a former relationship is considered a stepfamily. The repercussions of divorce and remarriage can be substantial and create havoc for every member involved (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999; Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016). Individuals whose marriage end in dissolution experience loss and symptoms of depression (Sweeney & Horwitz, 2001). Stepparents often report feeling minimized, invisible, and experiencing poorer quality of life (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000; Sayre, McCollum, & Spring, 2010). Correspondingly,

extensive studies show that children of divorce carry the greatest injury, as the complicated phenomena of divorce and remarriage disrupts the organic process of attachment (Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016; Wallerstein, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Re-partnered couples and stepfamilies generated ambiguity and curiosity that family clinicians and professionals were not well equipped for in the 1900s. According to the existing research, re-partnering couples and stepfamilies are more susceptible to dissolution and fracture, as they face complicated challenges compared to traditional families (Sayre et al., 2010). Recoupling members and stepfamilies carry significant loss and attachment injuries as stepfamilies are typically created following severed relationships or death (Martin, Martin, & Jeffers, 1992). The recoupling members are often so distracted, mitigating and problem-solving other issues surrounding remarriage, that they overlook the significant need to strengthen and repair their couple dyadic relationship, that is, their bond and connection with each other.

Step-couple members reported experiencing heightened grief and confusion when blending. Step-couple members described feelings of pressure to pick and choose between their current partner and biological children, resulting in lack of safety and security for both individuals in the couple dyadic relationship (Visher & Visher, 1979). Other challenges stepfamilies endure compared to traditional families are conflict related to loyalty, such as parenting-splitting (between bio-parent and step-parent). Furthermore, rejection of stepparents by stepchildren and stepchildren feeling replaced or disempowered as their biological parent aligns with their new partner (Lawton & Sanders, 1994; Papernow, 1993) are common themes of stepfamily issues. The

adversities endured by stepfamilies make it difficult to establish strong relational attachment, closeness, and bond among the members, particularly for the re-partnering couple (Sayre et al., 2010).

Research shows that the recoupling dyad is the most influential in the healthy formation of the new family form, including children's adjustment following divorce (Furrow & Palmer, 2007). Extensive findings show that initially securing the remarried couple relationship is most important when treating stepfamilies, as re-partnered members miss the chance to establish a secure attachment and emotional connection prior to the entrance of children like first-married couples (Minuchin & Nichols, 1993; Papernow, 1993; Sayre et al., 2010; Visher & Visher, 1979). Secure attachment among remarried couples creates a safe haven to be more open in establishing and nurturing new relationships, such as one with stepchildren, as the re-partnered members experience a secure base with their romantic partner (Johnson, 2004; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Hazan and Diamond (2000) described that secure working model and emotional safety between romantic partners facilitate "reciprocal caretaking and caregiving" (as cited in Sayre et al., 2010, p. 404). Lack of emotional connection and bond between the dyadic couple relationship, however, makes it difficult for individuals to flourish, explore unfamiliar or uncomfortable surroundings, or be receptive to cultivating new relationships (Johnson, 2004). Secure attachment and emotional connection among re-partnered couples is imperative when considering the well-being and adjustment of children who have experienced parental divorce.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine negative child outcomes following divorce and its link to negative child adjustment and behavioral problems following re-partnering. Furthermore, this study will investigate whether relationship satisfaction and parenting quality between the re-partnered couple (i.e., biological parent and step-parent) buffers the relationship between negative child outcome following divorce and negative child outcome following re-partnering. In other words, the dyadic relationship between re-partnered members will be closely examined to see whether their attachment to one another disrupts the expected continuity between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes after re-partnering. The present study utilized secondary data from The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS). A hierarchical multiple regression and moderation analyses were implemented in order to achieve the purpose of this current study.

Rationale of the Study

Previous studies related to divorce, remarriage, and children of divorce have been criticized for depending on one distinct point in time, such as immediately following dissolution, rather than the perpetual influences divorce has on children (Demo & Acock, 1988; Rickel & Langner, 1985). In addition, former research attends to the pathology of and negative outcomes for children of divorce and stepfamilies. There is less focus on repairing the wounds within the new familial system. There is also a lack of research on the re-partnered couples' attachment and their experience on children's behavior (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013). Scholars have paid less attention to the tenacity and ambiguous beauty of stepfamilies that cultivate the re-partnered couple dyadic

relationship. This current study deconstructs the binary of intact and broken families by focusing on the restoration and resiliency of stepfamilies. Although more studies are shifting and examining stepfamilies through an attachment lens (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Furrow & Palmer, 2007; Jensen, Lombardi, & Larson, 2015; Sayre et al., 2010), this study will contribute to the existing remarriage and stepfamily literature as it attends specifically to the re-partnered couples and their attachment with one another. Consequently, this study focuses on how the couple dyadic relationship influences children's adjustment and stepfamily formation.

Summary

This current study will investigate children of divorce adjustment and behavior shortly after dissolution and its association with children of divorce adjustment and well-being years later following re-partnering. Furthermore, the study examined whether relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered couple buffers the anticipated continuum between negative child outcome following divorce and negative child outcome following re-partnering. The attachment theoretical framework was considered for this quantitative research to most efficiently understand how solid emotional bonds and attachment particularly among re-partnered members influence the well-being of children of divorce and the overall stepfamily. It is the researcher's goal to provide relevant and compelling insight and tools for family clinicians, educators, lawmakers, and professionals to help improve quality of life for each member involved in the new family form and preserve the union among stepfamilies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The topic of divorce and the risk dissolution that may pose on children's development and health have been well examined (Ahrons, 2007; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Kirby, 2006). Correspondingly, there is comprehensive research on how individual's attachment to his or her biological parents influence relationship satisfaction, parenting quality, and child's symptomology and psychopathology (Crowell, O'Connor, Wollmers, Sprafkin, & Rao, 1991; van IJzendoorn, 1992). More recent studies have shifted its focus to how individual's attachment and connection with his or her partner, that is, adult couples attachment, influences child's internalizing and externalizing behavior (Cowan, Cowan, & Mehta, 2009). To construct cohesion and better understand the phenomena surrounding remarriage and healthy stepfamily formation, preceding studies will be reviewed.

Although there are various approaches to comprehend the complicated phenomena of divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies, the deep pain and loss experienced by this specific family form, that is, stepfamilies, cannot initially be understood through a structural, or pertinent lens (Visher, 1994). Hence, this study evaluated how adult and couples attachment, divorce, and recoupling impacts children's behavior through an attachment lens. Demographic and multicultural factors influence on remarriage and children's behavior will be included throughout the review of relevant literature.

Theoretical Framework

Hazan and Shaver (1992) argued that attachment perspective integrates an exceptional perspective on stepfamilies, “where former bonds are broken (e.g., biological parents), existing bonds are sustained (e.g., biological parents and children), and new bonds are formed (e.g., remarried couple/step-parent and step-children)” (as cited in Furrow & Palmer, 2007, p. 47). Furthermore, nearly half of adults carry insecure working models (Hazan & Shaver 1987; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997), and adults with insecure attachment orientations are more vulnerable to detach and divorce with their significant other (Feeney & Noller, 1992). Insecure attachment orientations (e.g., anxious and avoidant) are an apparent predecessor of re-partnership and stepfamilies. The following paragraphs thoroughly review attachment theory and adult attachment.

Bowlby’s Theory of Attachment

Attachment theory was originated by British psychiatrist John Bowlby in the 20th century when volunteering at a school with troubled children and youth (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Bowlby (1951) noticed the significance of early relationships and deprivation with mothers had on the distressed children. He recognized that the insecure attachment between mother and child made children more susceptible to experience physical and mental illness. Furthermore, Bowlby was particularly curious about how the children’s (attachment) wounds and experience of separation and loss from their caregivers would influence society at large (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The notion that “children who suffer deprivation grow up to become parents deficient in the capacity to care for their children and how adults deficient in this capacity are commonly those who suffered deprivation in childhood” (p. 68-69) was the primary tenet in his attachment

research (Bowlby, 1951). Attachment helps individuals to make sense of relationship dynamics and interactions, individual's emotions and contentment of the relationship, and interpersonal reactions within the relationship (Ehrenberg et al., 2012).

During the process of developing attachment theory, Bowlby observed the level of anxiety and restlessness infants and young children displayed when apart from their principal caregiver, that is, typically, the mother (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Bowlby's objective was to better understand the affectional bond and connection between children and their attachment figures (Dillow, Goodboy, & Bolkan, 2014). The theory proposed that the onset of attachment occurs at birth, as the infant carries an innate desire to seek safety, assurance, closeness, and nurturance of the mother (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby referred to the instinctual need to bond and connect to others as the attachment behavioral system (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

According to Bowlby, a child's primary caregiver may involve mother, father, sibling, and/or grandparent and continues throughout the life span (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969; Lowenstein, 2010). Bowlby (1958, 1969) suggested that the child attaches to the one who is available and attentive and thus consistently responds to the child's signaling behavior. For example, crying and clinging are considered indicative attachment behaviors in infancy that prompts the primary caregiver to come near, care for, and protect the child (Ainsworth, 1989). Eventually, the child's experience related to attachment helps develop one's internal working model, that is, attachment orientation, of who he or she can trust and turn to in times of need (Bowlby, 1969). Early attachment is anticipated to mold and influence one's development as these encounters and

relationships become working models for future relations and connections with others (Bowlby, 1973).

Ainsworth's attachment styles. Bowlby was later accompanied by his American colleague Mary Ainsworth, and it was not until then that differences among individuals were considered (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The following four attachment styles were assembled by Ainsworth and her colleagues: a) secure attachment, b) avoidant attachment, c) ambivalent-anxious attachment, and d) disorganized attachment (Ainsworth, 1989; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Lowenstein, 2010; Main & Solomon, 1990). The styles of attachment are characterized as a guide of how individuals conceptualize self, how they feel about self and others, and how they behave in intimate relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Johnson, 2013). Ainsworth et al. conducted an experiment referred to the Strange Situation to identify the types of attachment and natural behavioral responses related to attachment. The study attended to infants' attachment behaviors when the primary caregiver would depart and return. At-home observations were also conducted to better understand the etiology of the infants' emotional reactions to infant-caregiver interactions and relationship (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

In the Strange Situation experiment, the secure infants would cry at the departure of their mother, but quickly shift to exploring their surroundings with deep curiosity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The infants would express cheer and fondness when rejoined with their mother. According to Ainsworth et al., secure attachment is achieved when the primary caregiver persistently meets the emotional needs of the child, meaning the primary caregiver is readily accessible and responsive (Bowlby, 1980). Consequently,

the child is able to confidently explore the world around him or her and return to his or her secure and familiar base post exploration (Fahlberg, 1991). Children who are securely attached to their primary caregiver are more inclined to have confidence in others and believe they are worthy of belonging and adoration (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

On the contrary, when children do not receive the proximity from their identified primary caregiver, they experience heightened distress and apprehension (Bowlby, 1951). Avoidant infants appeared minimally distressed at the absence of their mother and apathetic upon her return (Ainsworth et al., 1978). With avoidant attachment, caregivers display minute availability and presence for the distraught child. The mother appears emotionally stiff, discouraging the child to cry and encouraging self-reliance (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Lowenstein, 2010). Ambivalent-anxious infants appeared hypersensitive and would cry when their mothers left. Upon the mothers' return, the ambivalent-anxious infants' response was inconsistent and conflicted. The at-home observations displayed that mothers with ambivalent-anxious infants lacked consistency when responding to the child's needs (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Lowenstein, 2010). Disorganized infants exhibited astoundingly far-fetched responses at the departure and return of their primary caregivers (e.g., freezing or rocking). The primary caregivers of disorganized infants may appear afraid, dissociate, or neglect the proximity-seeking child (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Lowenstein, 2010).

Adult Attachment and Love

Bowlby believed the attachment style acquired at birth carries on into adulthood, as he describes one's internal working model as a ceaseless affair (Bowlby 1958).

However, it was not until the 1980s that researchers like Hazan and Shaver considered

the paradigm of attachment in adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Shaver and Hazan utilized Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory as a framework to conceptualize adult romantic love and attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They concluded that the previous infant-caregiver experience and interactions color individuals' worldview, perception of self, and their relationship with others (Dillow et al., 2014; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Makinen & Johnson, 2006). Similar to how infants seek safety and comfort from their principal attachment figures, adults also turn toward their romantic significant other for resembling emotions of validation, affection, and connection (Ehrenberg et al., 2012). In circumstances involving a great deal of stress, adults engage in typical behaviors that coincide with their working model of their early attachment history, that is, with their parents (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969). Hazan and Shaver (1994) iterated that the primary caregiver in adult attachment is the romantic partner and includes bonding, protecting, caregiving, and sex (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Attachment styles and adulthood. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), secure attachment among adults involved a friendship dimension, fidelity and trust, and constructive emotions. The avoidant adults were characterized by lack of trust and fear of getting close to their significant other. Ambivalent-anxious adults were characterized by excessive worry that their partner may not love them or that they will leave (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) also described that attachment in adulthood can be understood as two dimensions: a) anxiety over abandonment and b) proximity avoidance. Similar to Hazan and Shaver's ambivalent-anxious adults, anxiety over abandonment involves an internal working model of self as unworthy and unlovable and heightened concern and fear of being

dismissed by partners (Mondor, McDuff, Lussier, & Wright, 2011). Proximity avoidance entails an internal working model of other people as preoccupied and inaccessible and thus avoids getting too close in romantic relationships.

Adult Attachment, Couples Attachment, and Children Outcome

According to Cowan, Cohn, Cowan, and Pearson (1996), there are two research frameworks related to adult attachment, and children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Research involving theory of attachment persistently displays connection between adults' attachment orientation with their parents, adults' parenting behavior, and their children's working model and psychopathology (Crowell et al., 1991; van IJzendoorn, 1992). Family theorists and researchers, taking on a family systems approach, found consistent links between relationship satisfaction among romantic partners, styles of parenting, and their offsprings' adaptation and behavioral issues (Cowan, Cowan, Shulz, & Heming, 1994; Emery, Fincham, & Cummings, 1992). More recent studies have transitioned in focusing on how attachment among romantic partners, that is, couples attachment, influences children's adaptation (Cowan et al., 2009). Adult attachment involves adults' attachment orientation and working model of their early relationship to their parents, whereas couples attachment involves adults' attachment to their romantic partners (Cowan et al., 2009). The following segments will review the literature associated to these paradigms and its links to negative child outcome.

Adult Attachment Orientation and Child Behavior

There are copious studies that display the links between parents' attachment orientation early on with their parents and children's internalizing and externalizing behavior (Cowan et al., 2009). Cowan et al. (1996) looked at explicit and indefinite

connections between parental attachment histories and children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Findings indicated that the fathers' and mothers' attachment, marriage, and parenting style influenced children's externalizing behaviors. Fathers who scored higher levels of anger towards their parents resulted in their children illustrating more outward behaviors than their peers, such as physical aggression. It appears that fathers' resentment toward principal attachment figures was a primary element in the occurrence of children's externalizing behaviors. Additionally, there was a definite link between quality of marriage and externalizing behavior, as children displayed more negative engagement, hyperactive symptoms, and aggression when they experienced their fathers showing less constructive affect and intimacy (e.g., kindness and warmth) toward their partners during play. Furthermore, the findings of Cowan et al.'s (2009) study depicted that men in more negative relationships with romantic partner were seen as less intentional and involved parents with their children. Less effective parenting quality was associated with externalizing behaviors of the child (Cowan et al., 1996).

Mothers with more clear and fond memories with their early attachment caregivers were found to have less externalizing behaviors in their children (Cowan et al., 1996). Marital quality was connected to children's outward behaviors. Overall, the style of parenting performed as a mediator, connecting parents' marital satisfaction and children's adjustment and behavior. In other words, marital satisfaction influenced parenting style, and parenting style influenced children's behavioral problems (Cowan et al., 1996). Consistent with past research, Cowan et al. (1996) found how satisfied women felt about their marriage was independent of their attachment with their parents. Furthermore, a positive marriage and relationship with their partners appeared to act a

buffer that disrupted the pattern between mothers' insecure attachment orientation and poor parenting. Consistent with family systems approach, parents' attachment orientation with their parents, interaction within relationship with romantic partner, and style of parenting all accounted for children's externalizing behavior, especially in the academic setting (Cowan et al., 1996).

The results of the same study indicated mothers' attachment in their childhood to their parents, level of marital satisfaction and quality, and style of parenting influenced children's internalizing behavior, such as poor mood (e.g., depression), shyness, nervousness, difficulty making friends, and preference to play alone (Cowan et al., 1996). However, there was more variance in children's internalizing behaviors than externalizing behaviors associated with the mothers' model. In addition, mothers' working models of loving relationships with their parents may buffer their children from developing internalizing behaviors. Fathers' attachment in early relationship, quality of relationship with their significant other, and parenting style were also associated with children's internalizing behaviors. However, there was less variance in children's internal behaviors compared to external behaviors associated with the fathers' model (Cowan et al., 1996).

Adult Attachment, Relationship Satisfaction, and Child Behavior

The link between attachment and marital satisfaction has been well examined and recorded (Mondor et al., 2011). Adult attachment orientation is a reputable source of couples' relationship satisfaction (Mondor et al., 2011). Consistent findings showed that anxious and avoidant orientations among married couples are negatively correlated to oneself and partners' satisfaction in relationship. In other words, anxious and avoidant

couples appeared to report lower levels of satisfaction in their marriage and relationship, compared to those with more secure orientation. Moreover, behavior attributes relevant to those with avoidant orientations are more likely to engage in stonewalling and withdraw, that is, a damaging response that can lead to marital stress and dissolution (Gottman, 1994). Research shows that stereotypic behavioral responses associated with avoidant attachment might be more taxing and destructive to relationship satisfaction than behaviors in anxious orientation (e.g., verbal aggression such as criticism).

Consequently, there is ample research that supports the notion that couple satisfaction and functioning are associated with children's well-being (Knopp et al., 2017). Studies display that couple's relationship quality is the engine and what drives the family system (Cherlin, 2008). Correspondingly, heightened conflict and weak satisfaction among couples are related to decreased familial cohesion (Katz & Woodin, 2002), elevated emotional and behavioral issues (Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Frankel, Umemura, Jacobvitz, & Hazen, 2015), and poor academic performance (Timmons & Margolin, 2014) in children. Therefore, when insecure attachment and distress are present among partners, the whole system, including children and their behavior, are impacted and suffer (Cowan et al., 1996; Cowan, Cowan, Heming, & Miller, 1991; Cummings & Davies, 1994).

Fishman and Meyers (2000) examined couples' relationship satisfaction and children's psychological adjustment, including internalizing and externalizing problems. This particular study hypothesized that greater levels of marital satisfaction among couples would result in lower levels of child distress and behavioral issues. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that parent-child involvement would mediate the relationship

between marital satisfaction and child outcome, meaning larger levels of couple satisfaction would be related to higher levels of parents' availability and thus involvement with their child. As a result, children would exhibit lower distress and behavioral issues (Fishman & Meyers, 2000). Parent-child involvement is significant to consider as other studies have expressed that when parents are high conflict, distressed, and low marital satisfaction, the preoccupation and distraction influences how accessible and available they are for their children, hindering children's physical and mental health and well-being (Erel & Burman, 1995; Fauber, Forehand, Thomas, & Wierson, 1990).

Fishman and Meyers (2000) concluded that mothers' and fathers' reporting of how satisfied they were in their relationship had a positive association with children's emotional and behavioral health. In other words, the more marital satisfaction and secure attachment among couple members appeared to support and improve children's well-being. Additionally, greater levels of mothers' marital satisfaction concluded that there were larger levels of parent-child interaction and involvement. However, there was greater ambiguity around fathers' marital satisfaction and parent-child involvement. Findings confirmed the study's hypothesis that the more involved parents were with their children, the less behavioral and emotional issues children carried (Fishman & Meyers, 2000).

Couples Attachment and Child Behavior

The majority of the research surrounding attachment relates to parenting style, parent's attachment orientation/working model to their parents (i.e., adult attachment), and children adaptation (Cowan et al., 2009). Historically, attachment researchers have focused less attention on the probable significance of couple attachment, that is, the

relationship between couple members, have on children's adaptation. More recently, there has been a paradigm shift in the attachment literature, as more and more studies are focusing on the relationship between couple members and its influences on children's adaptation and behavior. Johnson (2004) explained that when secure attachment and emotional connection is achieved among the couple dyadic relationship, couple members are better able to cope with, adapt to, and overcome life stressors and change.

Cowan et al. (2009) expressed that systemic determinants such as couples' quality of relationship and couple attachment influence children adjustment and behavior. Furrow and Palmer (2007) noted that the couple dyad, and their bond to each other, is the most influential in the healthy formation and survival of the new family form, including child's adjustment and well-being. Correspondingly, poor relationship satisfaction and lack of emotional connection among couples hinder children's health and well-being (Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Zill & Peterson, 1983). Cowan et al. (2009) examined the design of couple attachment as an extension of the gap between adult attachment and quality of parenting, and the significance relationship quality of couple system and dyadic relationship between parent and child have on children's adjustment and behavior. In other words, they were curious about how parents' attachment to both their parents *and* significant other was related to children's early behavior and school performance. Findings indicated that parents' insecure attachment style to their parents (i.e., adult attachment) was connected to insecure working model of couple attachment. However, the route to cohesion of the two working models to child adaptation and outcome varied (Cowan et al., 2009). Mothers with an insecure attachment orientation to their parents exhibited low authoritative parenting style as noticed during the kindergarten follow up.

Mothers' insecure adult attachment and low authoritative parenting were associated with greater reports by teachers of children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Furthermore, mothers' insecure attachment orientation in the romantic relationship with partner was directly connected to children's internalizing and poor school performance at first grade follow up (Cowan et al., 2009).

Fathers' attachment orientation to their parents or partner was not clearly linked to their style of parenting that was observed in the artificial play (Cowan et al., 2009). When fathers presented insecure attachment orientation to their parents and partner, they exposed feelings of grief and frustration toward their partner during the partner problem solving conversation and more likely to withdraw in the conflict resolution exercise. In addition, fathers were less likely to co-parent their child effectively with their significant other. These father results assessed in the children's kindergarten year were linked to children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors and low school achievement portrayed during their first-grade year (Cowan et al., 2009). Cowan et al. (2009) showed that both adult attachment and couples attachment were statistically significant to children's adjustment and behavior. The following passages involve a brief overview of divorce and its effects on children's behavior across time.

Overview of Divorce and Effects on Child Behavior Across Time

There is extensive research that shows that divorce poses heightened disruption on children's emotional, social, physical, and behavioral health and development across time (Ahrons, 2007; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Kirby, 2006). Once marital dissolution takes place, spouses begin their own lives and the "abandoned" children often become their line of communication (Metzler, 2011). For the children, however, they begin a life with

a foot in two cultural worlds, that is, typically two vastly different homes, and their secure base and attachment becomes disrupted and threatened (Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016). Therefore, it comes to no surprise that children of divorce carry the greatest injury and trauma to the heart during the transition of divorce (Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016; Wallerstein, 2005).

Preschool and school-aged children lack the cognitive, verbal, emotional, and developmental skills individuals need to appropriately communicate their emotions, experiences, and needs (Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016). Consequently, heightened studies concluded that the impact of dissolution on young children results in reduced self-confidence, unsatisfactory performance in academia, deteriorating behavioral issues (e.g., defiance and anger outbursts), increased hypersensitivity and hyperactivity, chronic anxiety and stress, and maladjustment (Booth, Clarke-Stewart, McCartney, Owen & Vandell, 2000; Lowenstein, 2010). Statistics show that children of divorce are three times more likely to be referred for a mental health evaluation by their teachers than children in intact homes (Zill & Schoenborn, 1990).

Although the focal point of divorce and children literature heavily centers around preschool and school-aged children (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987), adolescents and teenagers are also affected as divorce is an ongoing process (Needle, Su, & Doherty, 1990). Children who experience parental divorce also endure hardship in their adolescent years as studies reflect problems surrounding alcohol and substance abuse, premature sexual activity, engagement in high-risk behaviors such as eloping, and continued issues around school performance, compared to those whose parents remain intact (Amato & Keith, 1991; Lowenstein, 2010; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Resnick et al., 1997).

Developmentally, adolescents endure organic and significant physical, psychological, emotional, social, and hormonal changes and thus make them more susceptible in engaging in poor coping skills, such as drug and alcohol use (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Needle et al. (1990) conducted a longitudinal study that examined use of substance among three various groups, individuals who experienced divorce during school-age years, individuals who experienced divorce during adolescent years, and individuals from intact families, while controlling for the environment of the home, peer pressure, and interpersonal adjustment. The findings displayed that children of divorce were more susceptible to alcohol and substance involvement. Correspondingly, both male and female adolescents in divorced families experienced more alcohol or drug use than the adolescents from married families. However, consistent with previous findings and further analysis of the same study indicated that individuals whose parents divorced during adolescent years endured more severe repercussion than the individuals in the childhood divorce group and intact families. In addition, regardless of the time frame of parents' divorce, male children and adolescents were more influenced by divorce and absence of attachment figures than female participants (Amato & Keith, 1991; Needle et al., 1990). Other studies have shown that adolescents of divorce suffer greater loss related to friendship dynamics and social dimension, as they are emotionally and physically less available than adolescents with intact parents (Wallerstein, 2005). In other words, adolescents of divorce are preoccupied and consumed with the tedious back-and-forth from one household to another that they lose valuable time with their peer groups and support.

Children of divorce and their experiences related to this particular circumstance also appear to have prolonged effects into adulthood (Amato, 2010; Amato & Keith, 1991). Zill, Morrison, and Coiro's (1993) study used longitudinal data from the National Survey of Children to examine whether there are long-term effects of parental divorce in young adults. The findings showed that 18 to 22-year-olds from divorced homes were more susceptible to have strained relationships with their parents, seek psychological help, increased rates of emotional distress or behavior problems, and increased risk of dropping out of school. Other studies have shown that young adults from divorced homes exhibit less commitment to marriage, troubled marriages, and the vicious cycle of divorce continues as they are more likely to get divorce themselves (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Cherlin, Kiernan, & Chase-Lansdale, 1995). Parental divorce appeared to elevate reluctance and anxieties surrounding love and commitment. In addition, some studies show that parental divorce during childhood is associated with chronic loneliness in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Child Demographics and Divorce

Zill et al. (1993) highlighted that gender and age of child at divorce also influences children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. In middle school and adolescent years, boys tend to exhibit more conduct issues such as anger outbursts at home and school, whereas girls displayed more depression and controlling, anxiety-induced behaviors (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Emery, Hetherington, & DiLalla, 1985; Zaslow, 1988). Furthermore, children younger than six years of age with divorced parents tend to present more behavioral issues and problems related to school performance in middle childhood and early adolescence compared to children whose

parents divorce post elementary school as they are less developed cognitively (Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016; Zill & Peterson, 1983). In contrast, Needle et al. (1990) showed that adolescents of divorce, that is, children whose parents engaged in dissolution during adolescent years, were more susceptible to poor adjustment and behavioral outcomes. Regardless, age of child, particularly at the time divorce occurs, appears to be significant when considering children's negative behavioral outcome.

Remarriage

Remarriage and stepfamilies received heightened exposure in academia in the late 20th century, as divorce took precedence over death of spouse for remarriage (Cherlin, 1992). Remarriage takes place when an individual who has formerly been married embarks on a second or subsequent union (Sweeney, 2010). When considering the recoupling dyad, at least one or both partners have been married previously and bring one or more children into the new system (Ganong & Coleman, 2004). The following sections review how remarriage and re-coupling influences children and children's behavior. It will also review how remarriage effects the remarried couple and stepparents, which results in impacting children and their behavior. Correspondingly, the passage will review demographic and multicultural factors that influence remarriage and children's behavior.

Remarriage and Children

The effects remarriage and stepfamilies have on children are one of the most frequently studied topics within remarriage research (Coleman et al., 2000). Children in remarried families and single-parent households appeared to have lower grades and

scores at school and on achievement examinations, compared to children from intact homes (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Bogenscheider, 1997; Pong, 1997). The most profound difference was the high numbers of children in stepfamilies to drop out of school, engage in excessive absences, and lack of completion of school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Children of remarriage and stepfamilies also launch from their homes faster than children from intact families, making them more susceptible to drop out of school early, cohabitate (i.e., risk factor for couples in their first marriage), or marry sooner than those from first-married families (Aquilino, 1991; Kiernan, 1992). In addition, children in stepfamilies appear to have more internalizing issues, such as anxiety, depression, and emotional instability (Zill, et al., 1993; Dawson, 1991; Hanson, McLanahan, & Thomson, 1996). Stepchildren in adolescent years exhibited more externalizing issues, such as alcohol and/or drug use (Hoffman & Johnson, 1998; Needle et al., 1990), increased engagement in sex (Day, 1992), getting pregnant out of wedlock (Astone & McLanahan, 1991), and involvement in illegal activities (Coughlin & Vuchinich, 1996), compared to children with intact parents and homes.

Remarriage and Re-partnered Couples

Remarriage literature displays that adults with insecure attachment orientations are more likely to end in divorce with their romantic partners, and, therefore, insecure attachment is an obvious precursor to the formation of re-partnership (Feeney & Noller, 1992; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mickelson et al., 1997). Remarried couples are established in (ambiguous) loss such as divorce or bereavement (Martin et al., 1992), carry attachment injuries and emotional wounds (Sayre et al., 2010), experience heightened ambiguity and uncertainty (Sweeney, 2010), and miss the opportunity to develop a secure

couples attachment and bond before children's arrival (Sayre et al., 2010). The conflicting and constantly changing needs of the modern family pose an abundance of challenges to the remarried couple.

Sayre et al.'s (2010) qualitative study described the experiences and challenges re-partnered members face as attachment injuries. For example, the recoupling dyad often report experiencing conflict related to loyalty, as individuals feel pushed and pulled between current and former partners, and/or between biological children and their present significant other (Visher & Visher, 1979). The relationship dynamics and interactions in stepfamilies involve stepchildren testing the boundaries of and dismissing the new recoupling member, that is, the stepparent (Sayre et al., 2010). Stepchildren also carry a heavy loyalty to their biological parents and may be one explanation that they experience difficulty accepting new parental figures, such as the stepparents. Correspondingly, children may feel threatened as the stepparent adopts a co-leading and facilitating parental role with the biological parent (Lawton & Sanders, 1994). These components may hinder the adherence among stepfamilies and the competence for them to establish a secure relational bond with each other (Sayre et al., 2010).

Results of this study showed that all participants described experiencing attachment injuries originating directly from stepfamily problems (Sayre et al., 2010). Participants reported experiencing ongoing arguments, a vicious negative cycle, and a lack of conflict resolution with their partner, resulting in emotions of hopelessness and fear. In addition, the findings showed the pathology and labels remarried members, particularly the stepparent, experience and endure. All participants also reported feeling a lack of support from their partners, resulting in biological parents siding with the children

and neglecting the couple relationship. Also, a damaging core belief triumphed that biological parents were solely supportive and protective of the own children in the stepfamilies, resulting in stepparents feeling like an “outsider” within their new family. Stepparents efforts and position were often minimized and dismissed. The findings of this particular study were consistent with adult attachment research. The results of this study displayed that relational bonds and couples attachment between remarried couple members are threatened in stepfamilies (Sayre et al., 2010).

Martin-Uzzi and Duval-Tsioles’ (2013) qualitative study investigated the influence of a previous marriage had on the remarried dyad and their relationship. The new couple was asked questions like, “What is it like maintaining a relationship with your previous spouse and children while strengthening your own relationship as a couple” (p. 47). It focused on the dynamics, interactions, meaning-making, and language of the re-partnered couple. The main aim was to examine how remarried members interact when confronted with the familiar trials and tribulations stepfamilies endure. There were four themes from the results of this study. First, the experience in the previous marriage shaped couple’s selection of their next partner. In other words, there were feelings of loss, failure, low self-worth, and worry for the well-being of their children from the prior marriage. Rather than viewing the new partner as their own individual, there was comparison between the new partner and old partner. For example, the divorced individual was curious whether the new partner was anything like or carries similar characteristics compared to the ex-spouse. Furthermore, after the remarriage occurred, the remarried couple’s priority was now on raising the children rather than

strengthening their current relationship and meeting each another's needs (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013).

Another conclusion from Martin-Uzzi and Duval-Tsioles' (2013) qualitative study was the diverse loyalties within the familial system that led to contention and conflict. The partners who brought children from previous relationship felt stuck between nurturing their children's needs and partners' needs. In fact, extensive research shows that discord and feuds over the children and childrearing is the most prevalent reason re-partnering couples argue about, compared to first-married couples (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). On the contrary, the partner entering the system that adopted the role of stepparent did not have a similar attachment to the children, resulting in lack of security and feeling like an outcast (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013). The stepparent's need to feel belonged, appreciated, and admired was often overshadowed by the biological parent's duty to be an exceptional parent.

Another significant theme remarried couples encountered was the challenges brought on or initiated by the ex-spouse. Martin-Uzzi and Duval-Tsioles (2013) depicted that ex-spouses interfered with the stepfamily's efforts to find balance and cohesion in their current family. There was a sense of competition among the two households, rather than a supportive working relationship, which also resulted in hindering the children and their well-being. Finally, another common theme remarried couples faced was surrounding role confusion. There was heightened confusion and ambiguity of how to integrate the stepparents into the familial system and also what role they would play with the children as well as the family (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013). Other studies showed that remarried couples tend to have more autonomy with raising children and

finances (Allen, Baucom, Burnett, Epstein, & Rankin-Esquer, 2001), and thus may be one rationale that the re-partnering members encounter ambiguity and complexity related to boundaries, roles, and expectations in their new family system. Biological parents also reported feeling of inadequacy, shame, and frustration for having difficulty in incorporating their new spouse into their system (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013).

Consequently, remarriage literature displays that the remarried couples are most influential in the healthy formation and survival of the new family form, that is, the stepfamily (Furrow & Palmer, 2007). The functioning and emotional health of remarried couples are connected inseparably to the functioning and well-being of the stepfamily (Adler-Baeder & Higginbotham, 2004; Bernstein, 2000; Pasley, Dollahite, & Ihinger-Tallman, 1993). However, the remarried couple and their relationship are often minimized or subordinate to the child of divorce (Kumar, 2017). Previous literature related to remarriage also found that couple members entering a subsequent marriage are more likely to withdraw during times of conflict with the current partner, due to the heightened fear and worry of divorcing again (Halford, Nicholson, & Sanders, 2007). Studies show that initially strengthening the relationship between remarried partners when stepfamilies seek treatment is imperative (Minuchin & Nichols, 1993; Papernow, 1993; Sayre et al., 2010; Visher & Visher, 1979). In fact, creating safety and security among the re-partnering dyad supports the bond between the stepparents and stepchildren (Dantas, Féres-Carneiro, Machado, & Magalhães, 2018; Doodson, 2014; Sayre et al., 2010). Stepfamily conflict, particularly between the remarried members, is a viable explanation for poorer child outcomes (Kurdek & Fine, 1993). Overall, secure attachment and emotional safety, such as increased relationship satisfaction and quality, among

remarried couples benefit children's long-term adjustment and well-being (Brody, Neubaum, & Forehand, 1988; Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, Markman & Johnson, 2009).

Remarriage and Stepparents

Step-parenting is widely known as a stressful and strenuous experience (Doodson, 2014). Approximately 23 million men will adopt the role of stepfather (Norton, 2015), and nearly half of women in the United States will adopt and experience the role of stepmother at some point in their lives (Ganong & Coleman, 2004). Stepfathers adopt the position and label of "the new friend" (Norton, 2015), whereas stepmothers are seen as wicked, jealous, distant, and cruel individuals who lie, steal, and mistreat their stepchildren (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000; Whiting, Smith, Bamett, & Garfsky, 2007). Roles among remarried men and women differ, due to gender roles, norms, and stereotypes (Norton, 2015). For instance, women are faced with the double bind of being the nurturing motherly type and caregiver, and, thus, must love the stepchildren as if they were her own, but often reminded that they are not the mother (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000; Dainton, 1993). Although stepmothers often overfunction and give extensive efforts within the stepfamily, that is, more so than biological parents, stepmothers receive minimal support and feel unwelcomed by various members related to the stepfamily, particularly the stepchildren (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000; Sayre et al., 2010).

In general, stepfathers appear to integrate into the new family system more feasibly than stepmothers, as stepmothers experience more stress, anxiety, and depression than stepfathers (Doodson, 2014; Furstenberg & Nord, 1985; MacDonald & DeMaris, 1996; Morrison & Thompson-Guppy, 1985). Findings from previous research also showed that stepmothers experience more depression than biological mothers (Shapiro &

Stewart, 2011). Regardless, stepparents often reported and treated as “third parties” who are expected to establish a (close) relationship with their stepchildren, but not identified as parents (Mahoney, 2006; Sweeney, 2010). The stigma related to stepparents need to be challenged as it does not accommodate to the changing formation of what families entail and look like today, rather it imposes further isolation for families of divorce and remarriage (Zaharychuk, 2017). Previous findings showed that stepparent support, warmth, and communication with and toward their stepchildren are imperative regarding child adjustment and behavior (Coleman et al., 2000). In fact, research displays that stepparents, particularly stepmothers, can help mediate the detrimental effects that children of divorce experience (Zaharychuk, 2017).

Jensen, Lombardi, and Larson (2015) examined adult attachment orientation and its association with step-parenting problems. The study hypothesized that insecure attachment among remarried couple members was related to higher levels of stepparent issues. In addition, and consistent with the adult attachment literature, couple relationship quality/satisfaction was a mediator of the relationship between adult attachment orientation and step-parenting issues. The results of this study found that an increase in both anxious and avoidant attachment orientations exacerbated level of step-parenting problems. However, increases in relationship satisfaction and safety, mitigated level of step-parenting problems. In summary, stability and contentment of one’s relationship presented to mediate the relationship of anxious attachment orientation and step-parenting problems. On the other hand, avoidant attachment orientation had a compelling and direct impact on issues that stepparents experienced (Jensen et al., 2015).

Control Variables

Sweeney (2010) noted several demographic characteristics of remarriage. For instance, approximately 69% of divorced women and 78% of divorced men will remarry. Furthermore, African American individuals remarry less than Caucasian individuals, and Hispanic women remarry less than White women (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001; Sweeney, 2010). Women's level of education also influences remarriage as studies show it is negatively correlated to remarriage (Sweeney, 2010). In other words, women who received higher education are less likely to engage in re-partnership. In addition, age appears to be a significant contributing factor regarding whether individuals would reengage in marriage, as older adults experience less pressure to marry and thus marry less (Sweeney, 2010).

The gender differences in how children react to dissolution create a platform for how they may respond to remarriage (Vuchinich, Hetherington, Vuchinich, & Clingempeel, 1991). Review of the literature regarding remarriage and stepparents show substantial corroboration about differences in gender and children of divorce mental outlook and behavior toward their stepparents (Shujja, Malik, Adil, & Atta, 2017). For example, remarriage appears to be more troublesome for female children than male children (Hetherington et al., 1982; Peterson & Zill, 1986), as girls' relationship with their stepfathers are more strained and perceived as negative, compared to stepsons relationships with their stepfathers (Vuchinich et al., 1991). Coleman et al. (2000) also noted that the quantity of warfare and discord among re-partnered families depended on the child's age of marital disruption and remarriage as well as the stepchild's gender.

The connection between dissolution, co-parenting status and relationship, and children's adjustment has been well examined (Visser et al., 2017). Cordial and effective co-parenting relationship between biological parents influences children's adaptation and well-being (Lowenstein, 2010). Research shows that the most harmful exposure children of divorce receive is the conflict between the biological parents (Amato, 2001; Kelly & Emery, 2003). Correspondingly, extensive research shows that co-parenting quality and relationship between biological parents is vital to children's well-being and adaptation to dissolution and re-partnership (Amato, 2005; Bronstein, Clauson, Stoll, & Abrams, 1993; Whiteside, 1998).

In addition, research shows that divorced mothers are more susceptible to stress and depression, which hinders children's adaptation and adjustment following dissolution as mothers are emotionally inaccessible (Turner, 2006). Mother's level of education also plays a significant role in children's behavioral adjustment to divorce and remarriage (Faber, Keiley, & Sprenkle, 2007). The earlier impact of dissolution and re-partnership on children's externalizing behaviors was significantly noticeable at lower education levels. Over time, however, mother's higher level of educations seemed to be associated with children of divorce and remarriage externalizing behaviors. Regardless, the literature shows that a mother's level of education is associated with children of divorce and remarriage outcome. Mother's age also carries a strong association to the likelihood of re-partnership, childbearing, and child adjustment (Vanassche, Corijn, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2015).

Limitations of Past Research

Cowan et al. (2009) emphasized that although there are thorough findings that support the adult attachment orientation to their parents influence relationship satisfaction among romantic partners and child well-being, there needs to be more studies that focus on the direct link couples attachment carries on children's internalizing and externalizing behavior. Couples attachment and its influences on children's adjustment and behavioral outcome needs to be further explored (Cowan et al., 1996). Ehrenberg et al. (2012) further emphasized that the exploration of working models, that is, attachment styles and orientation, among re-partnered couples and its influence on children adjustment and behavior require more examination. Martin-Uzzi and Duval-Tsioles (2013) iterated that there is a lack of research on the recoupling dyad and their attachment on children's adaptation and well-being. There is less empirical concentration on couple attachment orientation and step-parenting problems (Jensen et al., 2015). This is particularly meaningful as poor step-parenting experiences hinder the overall health of the stepfamily.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The review of the literature displayed that children's adjustment and behavior following divorce and across the lifespan are influenced (Ahrons, 2007; Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Needle et al., 1990). Research shows that initial strengthening and cultivating the relationship between re-partnered couples benefit children and their adjustment (Minuchin & Nichols, 1993; Papernow, 1993; Sayre et al., 2010; Visher & Visher, 1979). Adult and couples attachment orientation influences relationship satisfaction, and the satisfaction and quality of the re-partnered dyadic relationship impacts children and their well-being (Cowan et al., 2009; Fishman &

Meyers, 2000; Mondor et al., 2011). Correspondingly, the literature review consistently noted that secure attachment and relationship quality between remarried couples was associated with less step-parenting problems and thus helped children's adaptation and behavior (Jensen et al., 2015). The positive influence couple relationship satisfaction has on parenting quality is well noted in marriage and family research (Amato & Booth, 1996; Erel & Burman, 1995; Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Rogers & White, 1998).

Therefore, the research questions are:

1. Does negative child outcomes following divorce predict negative child outcomes following re-partnering?
2. Does relationship satisfaction between re-partnered members buffer the relationship between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering?
3. Does parenting quality between re-partnered members buffer the relationship between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering?

Based on the literature review, the hypotheses of this current study are as follows:

1. Negative child outcomes following divorce are expected to have a direct, positive relationship with negative child outcomes following re-partnering. It is expected that higher levels of negative child outcomes post dissolution, that is, when the child is five years old, to be associated with higher levels of negative child outcomes four years later, that is, when the child is nine years of age. It is expected that if the child of divorce exhibits negative adjustment

and behavior following dissolution, then the child will display negative adjustment and behavior later in life.

2. Relationship satisfaction will buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The relationship satisfaction between re-partnered couples will weaken the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce on negative child outcomes following re-partnering.
3. Parenting quality will buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The parenting quality between re-partnered couples will weaken the expected continuum between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering.

Summary

Extensive research shows that divorce and remarriage pose a great risk for each member involved, particularly the children. Children of divorce and remarriage, re-partnered couples, and stepfamilies cannot initially be understood through a structural or pertinent lens, due to the disruption in attachment. Hence, attachment theory is the framework for this current study. Secure attachment (i.e., relationship satisfaction and parenting quality) among re-partnered couples will act as a buffer, interrupting the expected continuity between negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave 4 when the child is five years of age and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave 5 when child is nine years of age. The moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among recoupling members will weaken the

relationship between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Figure 1 provides a visual depiction of the current study's hypotheses and framework.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a quantitative research study designed to investigate children's behavior following dissolution and re-partnering. The study assesses whether relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered couple buffers the relationship between negative child outcomes after divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The current study used original data from the FFCWS, which is further described below.

Sample

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS)

The FFCWS is a continuing longitudinal study that followed children of new parents and their children at child's birth, one year, three years, five years, nine years, and 15 years of age (Reichman, Corman, Noonan, & Jimenez, 2018; Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001). The FFCWS dataset involved relatively 4,900 children from major cities in the United States, utilizing stratified random sampling. Children were born and baseline surveys were administered between 1998 and 2000. The term *fragile families* originated as an extensive number of the couple dyads were not intact or married at the birth of child and thus at substantial risk for poorer quality of life compared to conventional families (Reichman et al., 2001). Interviews started at baseline, that is, birth of the child when the mothers were in the hospital. Mothers, fathers, and/or primary caregivers were interviewed again when the child was one year, three years, five

years, nine years, and 15 years of age. Interviews were conducted by phone as well as participants' homes (Reichman et al., 2001).

The initial objectives of this study were to examine the condition and competence of parents who were not married, the inherent features and dynamics of the relationship between non-married parents, how the children born in these circumstances with unmarried parents turn out, and how environmental codes and conditions may affect these families and children (Reichman et al., 2001). The study acquired information from mothers and fathers regarding mental outlook, relationship status and dynamics, parenting conduct and attitude, demographics (e.g., age and race), psychological and physiological well-being, socioeconomic and employment position, and environmental attributes. The study also included data related to biological parents' current partner. Furthermore, the study obtained information regarding children's mental, physical, social, and developmental well-being and status (Reichman et al., 2001).

Current Study/Subsample

The subsample of analysis for this present study was biological mothers from the FFCWS. The participants of this current study were identified to biological mothers who reported they were married ($N = 1,114$) or in a romantic relationship ($N = 2,475$) with child's father at birth or year one (Wave 1 and 2), that is, 3,589 reported either married or in a romantic relationship with child's father. In addition, the same biological mothers reported they were divorced ($N = 111$), separated ($N = 210$), or in no relationship ($N = 519$) with the child's father at Wave 4 when child was 5 years of age. Of the same biological mothers who reported married to child's father at birth and divorced, separated, or in no relationship with child's father when child was 5 years of age, the

study further identified and selected participants of biological mothers who also reported they were currently involved in a romantic relationship with someone else other than the child's father at Wave 5 when child was 9 years of age.

Therefore, the specific criteria had to be met in order for inclusion for the present research study: a) biological mothers of the child; b) biological mothers married to child's father at birth or one year; c) biological mothers divorced, separated, or in no relationship with child's father at age five years; and d) biological mothers in a romantic relationship with someone else other than child's father at age nine years. The subsample of this present study is biological mothers who reported married to child's father at birth or year one; divorced, separated, or in no relationship with child's father at five years of age; and re-partnered and in a romantic relationship with someone else other than child's father at nine years of age ($N = 404$).

For this study, participants focused on biological mothers for a few reasons. First, the remarriage literature shows that although there are heightened gray areas regarding specific risk factors for marital instability among re-coupling members, particularly for women under age 45 years who bring children from another marriage (Teachman, 2008). In addition, because more mothers carried residency or custody of their children in earlier years (Sweeney, 2010), this may be one explanation that fewer children subsequently live with father-stepmothers. Biological mothers who reported either married or in a romantic relationship with child's father at birth or year one were selected to broaden the sample size. Inclusion of mothers who reported divorced, separated, or in no relationship with father at Wave 4 were also considered. Correspondingly, the selection of mothers in a romantic relationship with someone else other than child's father at year nine was

considered, rather than narrowing the sample size to only the biological mothers that were married to current partner, that is, someone else other than child's father at age nine years. Broadening the sample size provides more accurate mean values and narrows the margin of error (Anderson, Durschi, Soloski, & Johnson, 2014).

Measures

Predictor Variable

The independent variable for the current empirical study is negative child outcomes following divorce, which is a continuous variable.

Negative child outcome following divorce. Twelve items were used to assess child behavior at age five years (Wave 4), using biological mothers' perceptions and reports. Participants were asked, "(He/She) can't concentrate, (he/she) can't pay attention for long;" "(He/She) can't sit still, (he/she) is restless or hyperactive;" "(He/She) clings to adults or is too dependent;" "(He/She) cries a lot;" "(He/She) is disobedient;" "(He/She) doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving;" "(He/She) has trouble getting to sleep;" "(He/She) is stubborn, sullen, or irritable;" "(He/She) has sudden changes in mood or feelings;" "(He/She) has temper tantrums or a hot temper;" "(He/She) is too fearful or anxious;" and "(He/She) wants a lot of attention." Responses provided by child's biological mother were on a 1 to 3 scale (1 = *not true*, 2 = *somewhat or sometimes true*, 3 = *very true or often true*). Higher scores represented greater negative child outcomes following divorce. One composite variable using the mean of the twelve items for negative child outcomes following divorce was created. Reliability test suggested high internal reliability for negative child outcomes following divorce (Cronbach $\alpha = .83$).

Outcome Variable

The dependent variable for the present study is negative child outcomes following re-partnering. This variable is also a continuous variable.

Negative child outcome following re-partnering. Data about child's behavior were obtained utilizing questions from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). Twelve items from Wave 5 when child was 9 years of age were selected that aligned with child behavior items in Wave 4, that is, when the child was 5 years of age. Biological mothers shared their perspectives and reports regarding their child's adjustment and behavior. Participants were asked, "Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long;" "Can't sit still, is restless, or hyperactive;" "Clings to adults or too dependent;" "Cries a lot;" "Is disobedient at home;" "Doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving;" "Has trouble sleeping;" "Is stubborn, sullen, or irritable;" "Has sudden changes in mood or feelings;" "Has temper tantrums or a hot temper;" "Is too fearful or anxious;" and "Demands a lot of attention." All responses were provided by biological mothers and was on a 1 to 3 scale (1 = *not true*, 2 = *somewhat or sometimes true*, 3 = *very true or often true*). Higher scores indicated greater negative child outcomes following re-partnering. One composite variable using the mean of the twelve items for negative child outcomes following re-partnering was created. Reliability test suggested high internal reliability for negative child outcomes after re-partnering (Cronbach $\alpha = .83$).

Moderating Variables

The third variable for the current empirical research involve indicators of secure attachment among the re-partnered couple. Indicators of secure attachment involved relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among re-partnered couples. Reflective of

the literature review surrounding adult couples' attachment, two significant components were identified to describe secure attachment, that are, relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered members (Cowan et al., 1994; Cowan et al., 2009; Emery et al., 1992; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Mondor et al., 2011). In previous studies involving romantic partnership and attachment security, partners expressed qualities of affection, trust, respect, and support when illustrating secure attachment (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Mondor et al., 2011). Therefore, these qualities are considered in the items of the current study. Responses were provided by biological mothers regarding their experiences and feelings about their current partner, that is, the child's stepfather, when child was nine years of age. The moderating variables are continuous.

Relationship satisfaction. Five items were used to assess relationship satisfaction between the re-partnered members at Wave 5 when the child was 9 years of age. Questions involved, "Current partner is fair and willing to compromise when you have a disagreement," "Current partner expresses affection or love for you," "Current partner encourages or helps you to do things that are important," "Current partner listens to you when you need someone to talk to," and "Current partner really understands your hurts and joys." Responses were on a 1 to 3 scale (1 = *often*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *never*). The five items were reverse coded to (1) *never*, (2) *sometimes*, and (3) *often*, such that higher scores indicated higher relationship satisfaction between biological mothers and their current romantic partners. One composite variable was created using the mean for these five items describing relationship satisfaction among the re-partnered couple. Reliability test suggested high internal reliability for relationship satisfaction between re-partnered couples (Cronbach $\alpha = .80$).

Parenting quality. Six items were selected to assess parenting quality between the re-partnered couple at Wave 5 when the child was 9 years of age. Questions involved, “Current partner acts like the kind of parent you want for your child,” “You can trust current partner to take good care of child,” “Current partner respects the schedules and rules you make for child,” “Current partner supports you in the way you want to raise child,” “You and current partner talk about problems with raising child,” and “You can count on current partner when you need someone to look after child.” Responses were on a 1 to 3 scale (1 = *often*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *never*). The six items were reverse coded to (1) *never*, (2) *sometimes*, and (3) *often*, such that higher scores indicated higher parenting quality between biological mothers and their current romantic partners. One composite variable was created using the mean for these six items describing co-parenting quality among the re-partnered couple. Reliability test suggested adequate internal reliability for parenting quality between re-partnered couples (Cronbach $\alpha = .79$).

Demographic Control Variables

The current study involved demographics that have been found in earlier studies to correlate with negative child outcome (Coleman et al., 2000; Hetherington et al., 1982; Peterson & Zill, 1986; Sweeney, 2010; Vuchinich et al., 1991; Zill et al., 1993). The current research also involved control variables that may be correlated with the outcome variable. The control variables for this study are the child’s gender, age of biological mother, educational level of biological mother, mental health of biological mother, and co-parenting relationship quality between biological parents. Although significant research displays child’s age at the time of divorce influence child adjustment and behavioral outcome (Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Coleman et al., 2000; Hirschfeld &

Wittenborn, 2016; Needle et al., 1990; Zill & Peterson, 1983; Zill et al., 1993), child's age at divorce was not controlled for as it is apparent with the present study's methodology and design that child's biological parents divorced between one and five years of age. Child's biological mother was re-partnered between five and nine years of age.

Focal child's gender. The child's gender was obtained at baseline from mother's reports. Male was coded as 1 and female was coded as 0.

Mother's age. Mother's age was measured at Wave 2 when child was one year of age. The respondent was asked her actual age in years at time of interview at year one.

Mother's education. Mother's education was measured at Wave 5 when the child was nine years of age. Mothers were asked, "What is the highest grade or year of regular school that you have completed?" The following responses were (1) *less high school*, (2) *high school or equivalent*, (3) *some college or technical*, and (4) *college or graduate school*.

Mother's mental health. Mother's depression was measured at Wave 5 when the child was nine years of age. Mothers were asked a single item question, "During the past twelve months, has there ever been a time you felt sad, blue, or depressed for two or more weeks in a row?" Yes was coded as 1 and No was coded as 0.

Co-parenting relationship. Co-parenting relationship between biological parents was also controlled for, using a single item question. Mothers were asked to describe, "Mother's relationship with father" at Wave 5 when the child was nine years of age. The following responses were on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = *excellent*, 2 = *very good*, 3 = *good*, 4 = *fair*, 5 = *poor*).

Analysis Plan

Prior to the main analyses, cases were selected from the original sample of FFCWS and tailored to meet the current study's subsample of biological mother participants. Center for Research and Data Analysis at Texas Woman's University assisted with the power analysis in order to secure adequate sample size for this present research. Responses that indicated, "not in wave," "skipped," "not asked," "missing," or "don't know" were recoded as missing. Eleven items for relationship satisfaction and parenting quality were reverse coded, such that higher values indicated higher relationship satisfaction and co-parenting among re-partnered couples. Internal reliability for each variable was tested. Composite scale variables were created using the mean of the twelve items for negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave 4, twelve items for negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave 5, five items for relationship satisfaction at Wave 5, and six items for parenting quality at Wave 5. The range, mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach's alpha were calculated through SPSS. A hierarchical multiple regression and moderation analyses were conducted.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the methodology applied for this quantitative research. The FFCWS and data acquired for the current study was thoroughly illustrated in this chapter. The analytic sample selected from the original study was explained. The current study subsample involved biological mother participants who reported married or in a romantic relationship with child's father at birth; separated, divorced, or in no relationship at Wave 4 when child was five years of age; and re-partnered and in a romantic relationship with someone else other than child's

father at Wave 5 when the child was nine years of age ($N = 404$). The predictor variable of negative child outcomes following divorce; outcome variable of negative child outcomes following re-partnering; moderating roles of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality between re-partnered couples; and demographic control variables of child's gender, mother's age, mother's level of education, mother's depression and mental health, and biological co-parent quality were also identified and described. A detailed data analysis plan was conferred.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The current study examined the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Furthermore, the current research examined the moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered couple would buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Biological mothers' responses were collected from Wave 4 and Wave 5 of the FFCWS when the child was five years and nine years of age for this current study. Demographic control variables were gathered from baseline at birth, when child was one year of age, and when the child was nine years of age.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess for assumptions of multiple hierarchical regression, which involved parametric tests, non-zero variance, linearity, no multicollinearity, independent residuals, and homoscedasticity of relationships. To check for normality and single out outliers or peculiar values, frequencies and descriptive statistics on the predictor, outcome, moderating, and demographic control variables were conducted (see Table 1). Byrne (2012) indicated that skewness must be less than two and kurtosis must be less than seven to meet the assumption of normality. All variables met the appropriate range and extreme outliers were omitted in order to maintain skewness and kurtosis within acceptable range.

Following the preparation of data for analyses and to check for missingness, it was observed that out of 404 recorded cases, 91 cases contained missing data (22.52%). Correspondingly, out of 35 variables, all 35 variables contained missing data (100%), which amounted to a total of 8.03% missing information in the dataset. To assess whether the pattern of missing values was missing completely at random (MCAR), Little's MCAR test (Little, 1988) was conducted. The null hypothesis of Little's MCAR test is that the pattern of the data is MCAR and follows a χ^2 distribution. Using an expectation-maximization algorithm, the MCAR test estimates the univariate means and correlations for each of the variables. The results revealed that the pattern of missing values in the data was MCAR, $\chi^2 (539) = 743.41, p < .001$.

Correlation analyses were conducted to assess for multicollinearity. According to Kline (2011), there should not be a near perfect correlation between predictor variable, that is, no greater than .80. The results of the correlation analysis indicated significant relationships between the predictor, outcome, and moderator variables (see Table 2). There were no multicollinearity issues as all correlation values remained below that figure.

Negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV was positively correlated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($r = .47, p < .01$). Meaning, the greater negative child outcomes following divorce when child was five years of age, the greater negative child outcomes following re-partnering when child was nine years of age. Negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV was negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction among re-partnered couples at Wave V ($r = -.16, p < .01$). The greater negative child outcomes following divorce when child was five

years of age, the less relationship satisfaction between re-partnered couples when child was nine years of age. There was no significant correlation between negative child outcomes following divorce and parenting quality ($r = -.05, p = \text{n.s.}$).

Negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V was positively correlated to negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV ($r = .47, p < .01$). There was no significant correlation between negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V and relationship satisfaction at Wave V ($r = -.07, p = \text{n.s.}$). There was no significant correlation between negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V and parenting quality at Wave V ($r = -.04, p = \text{n.s.}$).

Relationship satisfaction at Wave V was negatively correlated with negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV ($r = -.16, p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was positively correlated with parenting quality at Wave V ($r = .46, p < .01$). The more satisfied re-partnered couples were in their romantic relationship when child was nine years of age, the greater parenting quality between the re-partnered couples when child was nine years of age. There was no significant correlation between relationship satisfaction at Wave V and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($r = -.07, p = \text{n.s.}$).

Parenting quality at Wave V was positively correlated to relationship satisfaction at Wave V ($r = .46, p < .01$). There was no significant correlation between parenting quality at Wave V and negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV ($r = -.05, p = \text{n.s.}$). There was no significant correlation between parenting quality at Wave V and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($r = -.04, p = \text{n.s.}$).

Multiple Hierarchical Regression

Two separate hierarchical regression models were conducted to evaluate the moderating effect of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality on the association between negative child outcomes following relationship dissolution and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. After confirming that the assumptions of multiple regression analysis were met (Anderson et al., 2014; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003), the predictor and moderator variables were transformed into standardized z-scores to avoid non-essential multicollinearity. The first regression model included relationship satisfaction and negative child outcomes following divorce. The initial step of the regression analysis included negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction between recoupled members. Negative child outcomes following divorce x relationship satisfaction interaction term was entered in the second step. The second regression model included parenting quality and negative child outcomes following divorce. An interaction term was entered for negative child outcomes following divorce and parenting quality. The demographic control variables were included in each regression model. Moderation was present when a statistical significant interaction term was present.

Research Question 1: Negative Child Outcomes Before and After Re-Partnering

The first research question looked at the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. In order to assess this question a hierarchical multiple regression was performed. The overall model assessing the associations for negative child outcomes following re-partnering with negative child outcomes following divorce was significant $F(1, 324) =$

92.39, $p < .001$ and accounted for 22% of the variance. The predictor variable of negative child outcomes following divorce was a significant predictor. Higher negative child outcomes following divorce scores were associated with higher negative child outcomes following re-partnering ($\beta = .47, p < .001$). In other words, as negative child outcomes following divorce increased by one standard deviation, negative child outcomes following re-partnering increased by .47 standard deviation (see Table 2).

Research Question 2: First Hierarchical Regression Model – Moderator of Relationship Satisfaction

The second research question examined whether relationship satisfaction buffers the association of negative child outcomes following divorce on negative child outcomes following re-partnering. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. Overall, the final model was significant, $F(8, 201) = 10.77, p < .001$. Negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction explained 28.3% variance in negative child outcomes following re-partnering. In Block 2, which involved the interaction term of negative child outcomes following divorce x relationship satisfaction, negative child outcomes following divorce, relationship satisfaction, demographic control variables, and the interaction term explained 30% of variance in negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The R^2 increased an additional 2% between the two steps and the interaction term was significant, $p < .05$, indicating that relationship satisfaction did moderate the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce on negative child outcomes following re-partnering (see Table 3).

The association between negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave 4 and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave 5 was moderated by the

relationship satisfaction among re-partnered couples. Higher reports of relationship satisfaction, while negative child outcomes following divorce were increasing from low to high, were linked with higher reports of negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Results partially supported research question two as the current study hypothesized the moderator variable of relationship satisfaction to weaken the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Although there was a statistical significant interaction term between negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction, relationship satisfaction of the re-partnered couple exacerbates the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave 4 on negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave 5. As recommended by Anderson et al. (2014), an interaction plot was created to further examine the moderation effect. Predicted regression lines were plotted for negative child outcomes following divorce at one standard deviation above and below the mean. Graphical inspection indicated that relationship satisfaction produced a meaningful moderation effect (see Figure 2 and 3).

Research Question 3: Second Hierarchical Regression Model – Moderator of Parenting Quality

The third research question examined whether parenting quality would buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. A hierarchical multiple regression was used. The overall model was significant, $F(8, 198) = 11.06, p < .001$. Negative child outcomes following divorce and parenting quality between re-partnered couples accounted for 30.7% variance in negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Based on the

inspection of interaction term between negative child outcomes following divorce and parenting quality, the interaction term explained 30.9% of variance in negative child outcomes following re-partnering and no indication or presence of moderation, $p = .49$. The moderator variable of parenting quality and interaction term did not change the relationship between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering, even while controlling for child's gender, mother's age, mother's education, mother's depression, and mother's relationship with biological father. The moderation regression for parenting quality is displayed in Table 4.

Control Variables

Some control variables were significantly associated with the outcome variable. Child's gender at birth was significantly associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($\beta = .17, p < .05$). Mother's age obtained at Wave II was not associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($\beta = -.08, p = \text{n.s.}$). Mother's level of education at Wave V also was not associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($\beta = .20, p = \text{n.s.}$). Mother's level of depression at Wave V also had a significant association with the outcome variable ($\beta = .20, p < .05$). Lastly, mother's relationship with biological father at Wave V was not significantly associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V ($\beta = .01, p = \text{n.s.}$) Overall, child's gender at birth and mother's level of depression at Wave V were significantly associated with the outcome variable.

Summary

The assumptions for hierarchical multiple regression were met. A simple regression was conducted to assess the association between negative child outcomes

following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. In addition, two hierarchical multiple regression were conducted to examine the moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality between re-partnered couples on the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The association between negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V indicated a significant relationship. Research question two was partially supported, as there was a statistically significant interaction term of negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction. However, the moderator variable of relationship satisfaction intensified the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Parenting quality on the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering displayed no indication or presence of moderation. The demographic control variables of child's gender and mother's level of depression were significant and associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Correspondingly, the current study examined the moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered couple would buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering, while controlling for child's gender, mother's age, mother's education, mother's depression, and mother's co-parenting relationship with the biological father. Multiple hierarchical regression and moderation analyses were conducted with 404 biological mother participants from all over the United States. A subset from Waves IV and V of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study was utilized.

Research Question 1: Negative Child Outcomes Before and After Re-Partnering

The first research question assessed the association between negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV when child was five years of age and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V when child was nine years of age. Results indicated the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering to be significant, which supports prior findings. Extensive studies have shown that parental divorce poses great risk on children's health and development, as their secure foundation becomes vulnerable and their attachment becomes disrupted (Ahrons, 2007; Ehrenberg et al., 2012; Kirby, 2006). In addition, when divorce exists spouses transition to developing their own lives and the

isolated children become their main source of communication (Metzler, 2011). The impact divorce has on children results in poor self-image and lack of confidence, low school performance, elevated behavioral problems, mental health problems (e.g., stress and anxiety), and maladjustment (Booth et al., 2000; Lowenstein, 2010).

Studies have shown that parental divorce also carries long-term effects for children into their teenage years and adulthood, including parents' remarriage (Amato, 2010; Amato & Keith, 1991). There are prolonged effects for children of divorce, as previous findings have shown issues around high-risk behavior, premature sexual activity, continued issues at school, and susceptibility to substance use (Amato & Keith, 1991; Lowenstein, 2010; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Needle et al., 1990; Resnick et al., 1997). Respectively, the influence remarriage has on children is one of the most commonly studied subject matters within the re-marital literature and research (Coleman et al., 2000). Consistent with earlier findings, the current study's results supported the findings that children who experienced remarriage also show negative child outcomes. Other studies also found that children struggle in school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Bogenscheider, 1997; Pong, 1997), have an increase likelihood to drop out of school, cohabitate and marry sooner (Aquilino, 1991; Kiernan, 1992), experience more mental health issues and emotional instability (Zill et al., 1993; Dawson, 1991; Hanson et al., 1996), childbirth out of wedlock (Astone & McLanahan, 1991), and engage in illegal activities and alcohol/drug use (Coughlin & Vuchinich, 1996), particularly when children exhibited internalizing and externalizing behaviors following divorce and into parental re-partnership.

Research Question 2: Moderator Variable of Relationship Satisfaction

The second research question examined whether relationship satisfaction buffers the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV when child was five years of age on negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V when child was nine years of age. Although there was a statistically significant interaction term between negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction, and therefore, presence of moderation, results did not support research question two as the moderator variable of relationship satisfaction exacerbated negative child outcomes following re-partnering.

The initial protest and escalation of negative child outcomes shortly after re-partnering better reflects and supports the existing literature, as previous literature and findings have shown that the first two years of stepfamily living and again during adolescent years are most perplexing and stressful (Cartwright, 2010). Earlier research has shown that children's initial response to remarriage and stepfamily are negative and unwelcoming. In fact, existing literature has shown that children of remarriage have shown the highest level of internalizing and externalizing behaviors compared to divorced and nondivorced children (Faber et al., 2007). Children may initially feel threatened by the new coming parent figure and re-partnered couples are often subordinate to the child of divorce (Kumar, 2017). Prior research has shown that children have difficulty with re-partnership and remarriage, as the stepparent aligns with and adopts a co-leading role with the biological parent (Lawton & Sanders, 1994). Consequently, there may be an increase in negative child outcomes soon after re-partnering, as the biological parent's attention shifts from former wife and children to the

new partner, resulting in less emotional accessibility and availability by the biological parent and higher children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Aquilino, 1991; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Bogenscheider, 1997; Coughlin & Vuchinich, 1996; Dawson, 1991; Day, 1992; Hanson et al., 1996; Hoffman & Johnson, 1998; Kiernan, 1992; Needle et al., 1990; Pong, 1997; Zill et al., 1993). Existing literature displayed that the new relationship dynamic and status of the re-partnered couple produces stepchildren testing the boundaries of and dismissing existence/power of the stepparent (Sayre et al., 2010).

Further research needs to be accomplished in this area, as the current study contributes to the existing literature, but leaves ambiguity and significant questions unresolved. It would be interesting to assess the interaction between negative child behavior, relationship length, and relationship satisfaction in the re-partnered couple. In other words, future researchers could assess whether negative child outcomes following re-partnering diminishes once the re-partnered couple and stepfamily has had more time to adjust to the new family form and acclimate to the unique dynamics, resulting in a more secure relationship and higher satisfaction between re-partnered couples. Therefore, it would be relevant to examine negative child outcomes at Wave VI when the child is 15 years of age and Wave VII when the child is 22 years of age, while controlling for the time of which re-partnership occurred between Wave IV when child was five years of age and Wave V when the child was nine years of age. Furthermore, it is substantial to consider that the specific FFCWS dataset involved non-intact and "fragile" participants who were susceptible to experiencing poorer quality of life and insecure attachment,

which may result in greater negative child outcomes following an adversarial affair, that is, remarriage.

Literature has shown that the relational bond and attachment among re-partnered couples are threatened in stepfamilies (Sayre et al., 2010). Although the current study did not support the notion that relationship satisfaction among the re-partnered couples would buffer the expected continuum between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes soon after re-partnering occurs, it is imperative to foster a secure relationship between re-partnered couples. Remarriage literature has demonstrated that the re-partnered couple is the most influential in the healthy formation and survival of the new family form (Furrow & Palmer, 2007). Correspondingly, poor relationship satisfaction and lack of emotional connection among re-partnered couples hinder children's adjustment and well-being (Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Zill & Peterson, 1983). Preceding findings have illustrated that a secure bond and strong satisfaction among re-partnered couples create or aid in delighted, healthy, and resilient children (Johnson, 2004; Katz & Woodin, 2002; Knopp et al., 2017). As stated previously, it would be meaningful and necessary to further assess negative child outcomes and relationship satisfaction later in life, due to the lack of preparation for stepfamilies (Ganong & Coleman, 2004). By doing so, re-partnered members and stepfamilies would have more awareness and insight that the children involved may get worse before they get better.

Research Question 3: Moderator Variable of Parenting Quality

The third research questions examined whether the moderator variable of parenting quality would buffer the association between negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave IV when child was five years of age and negative child

outcomes following re-partnering at Wave V when child was nine years of age. Results were found to be nonsignificant, as the presence of a significant interaction term did not exist. Parenting quality did not moderate or weaken the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce on negative child outcomes following re-partnering.

Previous research showed the link between relationship satisfaction among romantic partners (i.e., adult and couples attachment); parenting quality and behavior; and children's working model, adaptation, and behavioral problems (Cowan et al., 1994; Crowell et al., 1991; Emery et al., 1992; van IJzendoorn, 1992). Earlier findings have indicated that parenting quality between partners influenced children's internalizing and externalizing behavior (Cowan et al., 2009). Hazan and Shaver (1987) emphasized that secure attachment among adults involved fidelity and trust related to parenting. Former studies have shown that parenting quality among re-partnered couples also influence children's adjustment and behavior, as the couple dyad and their relationship and parenting quality is the engine of the familial system (Cherlin, 2008). However, re-partnered couples compared to traditional first-married couples expressed heightened confusion and ambiguity related to parenting role, particularly for the stepparent, and therefore, results in child resistance and negative child outcomes (Bray, 2005; Coleman et al., 2000; Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013; Papernow, 1993). Research Question Three was not supported in this study. It would be noteworthy to seek what accounts for the distinction between previous and current findings of parenting quality on negative child outcomes following divorce and re-partnering.

Results were not found significant when controlling for child's gender, mother's age, mother's education, mother's depression, and mother's relationship with biological

father. More research needs to be done in this scope to assess what, if any, relationship influences this outcome. The demographic variables controlled in this study were found to be significant in previous literature when considering children of divorce and remarriage and their adjustment and behavior.

Control Variables

Child's gender at birth was statistically significant with negative child outcomes following re-partnering. This supports previous findings that children's gender influences how they will respond to parental re-partnership and remarriage (Vuchinich et al., 1991). Female children have shown to have more difficulty adjusting to remarriage and establishing rapport with stepparents than male children (Hetherington et al., 1982; Peterson & Zill, 1986). Mother's level of depression at Wave V when child was nine years of age was significantly associated with the outcome variable. Consistent with prior literature, mother's mental health influenced children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as they are less attuned to their children (Turner, 2006).

Mother's age at Wave II when the child was one year of age, mother's level of education at Wave V when the child was five years of age, and the co-parenting relationship between biological parents at Wave V when the child was five years of age were not associated with the outcome variable. Prior research has shown that cordial and supportive co-parenting relationship among the biological parents can positively affect children of divorce adjustment and mitigate negative child outcomes following re-partnering (Lowenstein, 2010).

Strengths and Limitations

This current research had some strengths and limitations to the methodology. Starting with the strengths, the current study utilized data from a longitudinal design, which allowed the researcher to see the changes over a period of time, that is, from child's birth to adult child at twenty-two years of age. The use of a longitudinal study also created room for new and refreshing insights from former analyses. Furthermore, the methodology of this current study bridged the gap between previous findings of couples attachment and its impact on children's adjustment and behavioral outcome. Another strength of this present study's methodology is the inclusion of the moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality among the re-partnered couple. Moderation variables and analysis contributes to the sophisticated progression and revolution in the field of marriage and family therapy (Aguinis, Boik, & Pierce, 2001; Anderson et al., 2014). Finally, the current study was a process focused research, meaning that this research provides tools for clinicians and helping professionals.

There were several limitations to the current study. The first limitation relates to the assumptions of normality and validity. The study could have involved and established more valid measurement tools for each variable. Although Cronbach's Alpha displayed adequate internal reliability, a more efficient measurement tools could have produced more meaningful and statistically significance with the outcome variable. The use of secondary data made it difficult to select items that were entirely reflective of the desired and intended variable to be measured. Relationship satisfaction and parenting quality were used to describe secure couples attachment among the re-partnered members, rather than items that directly and specifically measured adult couples secure attachment.

Consequently, the moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality had a ceiling affect and the mode was the highest value possible. This violated the assumptions of normality and thus instrument tools and items can be stronger for future research. The missing cases resulted in inconsistent sample sizes, which was also a threat to validity.

Secondly, the study's design of the time of which re-partnership occurred and data collected for negative child outcomes following re-partnering could have been further apart and modified. Therefore, looking at how negative child outcomes following divorce at Wave V when child was five years of age and negative child outcomes following re-partnering at Wave VI or VII when child was 15 or 22 years of age, while controlling for and ensuring that re-partnership occurred between Wave IV and Wave V, that is, between five and nine years of age for the child. Third, the smaller sample size was a limitation of this current study. With a moderation analysis, a smaller sample size reduces statistical power (Anderson et al., 2014). Fourth, though there were several control variables, some relevant control variables were excluded (i.e., race).

Finally, the current study was confined to the shortcomings of the original study. The lack of resident fathers in the original dataset made it particular difficult to attend more to the father-stepmother dyad and re-partnerships. Stepmothers, especially complex/resident stepmothers, play a vital role within the family system (Ceglain & Gardner, 2000; Zaharychuk, 2017). Despite all their efforts, stepmothers are more likely to experience depression and anxiety and live a decreased quality of life, due to the complexity and ambiguity of their role and stigma (Ceglian & Gardner, 2000). Hence, an

area for growth and for future research is focusing directly on the father-stepmother dyad, their relationship, and their influence on child adjustment and behavior.

Implications and Future Research

The results of this study have important implications for biological parents and stepparents; clinicians, parent educators, and researchers; lawmakers, family law attorneys, and judges; and community agencies and leaders. The current study found that negative child outcomes following divorce predict negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Furthermore, the current study concluded that relationship satisfaction among re-partnered couples exacerbated the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Parenting quality among re-partnered couples indicated no significance on the continuum between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. The implications and recommendations for future research are pivotal and necessary to consider to best support children who have experienced parental re-partnership.

For Biological Parents and Stepparents

The current study posed a refreshing perspective as the causal effect of negative child outcomes following divorce on negative child outcomes following re-partnering exacerbated with higher reports of relationship satisfaction among re-partnered couples. Biological parents and stepparents can utilize this research to better prepare for children's adjustment and well-being when re-partnership and blending of the family occurs. Re-partnered couples and parents can expect an initial decline in children's adjustment and behavior when re-partnering takes place. Sufficient preparation and knowledge can help

normalize the experience of re-partnered couples and prevent stepfamilies from plummeting or facing crisis during this time of transition.

With that being said, however, extensive research has shown that children are often more prioritized than the new marital relationship, which results in lack of secure attachment among re-partnering members (Sayre et al., 2010; Visher & Visher, 1979). Previous findings have also shown that poor satisfaction among re-partnered relationships hinder children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Zill & Peterson, 1983). Jensen, Lombardi, and Larson (2015) indicated that the challenges re-partnered couples face may lead to injurious outcome on the children and overall stepfamily. The results of this study can also help the re-partnered couple, particularly the biological parent, to be strategic and intentional with their children and new spouse. Biological parents do not have to pick and choose between biological children and their current partner. Rather, biological parents can strive to seek balance in cultivating their relationship with both their current partner and children.

For Clinicians and Parent Educators

Clinicians and parent educators are working more repeatedly with re-partnered couples and stepfamilies and thus would prosper from a systemic understanding of the intricate familial dynamics and system. There are substantial components to be cognizant of when working with stepfamilies. Foremost, stepfamilies are established in deep loss and bear attachment injuries. Stepfamilies are most exposed and vulnerable at the earlier years of coming together as a new family (Furrow & Palmer, 2007). Stepfamilies hold a complicated arrangement and distinct needs, making them separate and dissimilar to traditional first-married families. Clinicians and family educators can utilize this research

to assist stepfamilies in navigating the complexities of this unique family form. Clinicians and family educators can enhance preparation for re-partnered couples regarding realistic expectations of their unique dynamic and family form. Clinicians and family educators can aide in strengthening and validating children of divorce and remarriage. Clinicians and family educators can also help align and develop close rapport with both the biological parent and stepparent. Creating a safe space for all members involved and psychoeducation can magnify the well-being of the children at stake, re-partnered couples, and stepfamilies (Katz & Gottman, 1993).

Most stepfamilies will inquire assistance within the first few years (Pasley, Rhoden, Visher, & Visher, 1996). Stepfamilies need interventions that are tailored and sensitive to the unique demands, adversities, and strengths they carry (Michaels, 2000; Pasley et al., 1993; Visher & Visher, 1996). Although structural therapy may be helpful with the role and boundary ambiguity that stepfamilies often encounter (Minuchin, Nichols, & Lee, 2007), the unbearable hurts and pains these individuals experience cannot initially be inferred without generating safety surrounding their profound losses and injuries (Visher, 1994). The fundamental needs of individuals and human relationships surround deep emotional connection with others, secure attachment with significant and relevant members, sense of belonging and feeling loved, and autonomy (Johnson, 2004; Visher, 1994). Consequently, it is the deep desire and need for approval, support, and security that step-couples seek therapy (Martin-Uzzi & Duval-Tsioles, 2013). Therefore, clinicians and parent educators can utilize this research and its finding by fostering safety by collaborating with and providing a non-judgmental platform where each member feels heard and understood, regarding their experience. Clinicians and

parent educators can help bring to life the hope stepfamilies carry of wanting to have another chance (Bray & Berger, 1993; Furrow & Palmer, 2007; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). The internal needs must be met first to experience external changes; otherwise, members of the stepfamily are more likely to feel invalidated and resentful, resulting in isolation and withdrawal. Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy and Emotionally Focused Family Therapy may be appropriate and beneficial for stepfamilies (Furrow & Palmer, 2007).

The current research is also relevant for clinicians and parent educators as it is critical that they immerse and keep up-to-date with current studies and research related to re-partnered couples and stepfamilies. Ethically, it is the clinician's obligation and duty to immerse self in the most recent literature and research. Understanding research that contains moderation and mediation is also particularly important for clinicians. For example, teaching a couple who may already engage in and utilize active listening techniques and assertiveness skills would not improve with teaching them those skills. With that being said, couples and family therapists could benefit and mature by fully understanding "under what circumstances" a given intervention or skill may be useful (Anderson et al., 2014, p. 355).

For Lawmakers, Family Court Lawyers, and Judges

The verifiable truth that second or sequential marriages are more susceptible to end in dissolution compared to first marriages is well renowned (Bray, 2005; Doss et al., 2009; Everett & Lee, 2006; Kreider, 2006; Wallerstein, 2005). Doss et al. (2009) concluded that re-partnered couples in second or subsequent marriages were at greater risk for dissolution, but unquestionably less involved in premarital counseling or

education. Premarital education in first married couples is quite common and valuable (Johnson et al., 2002). Hence, lawmakers, family court lawyers, and judges can use the results of this study by enforcing premarital counseling and stepfamily education, in hopes to preserve remarriage and instill systemic changes. Lawmakers, family court attorneys, and judges can also enforce family professionals to construct premarital education and curriculum that is specifically tailored to meet the needs and realities of remarried couples and stepfamilies (Fox & Shriner, 2014). An evidence-based premarital curriculum for stepfamilies can increase effective communication and conflict resolution related to the complex and unique tribulations they walk and experience. Without supplementing and fulfilling these changes, the vicious cycle of marital distress, child maladjustment, and divorce continues. Shifts in policies and laws can create pathways to empower re-partnered couples and parents, enrich the lives of children of divorce and remarriage, and keep stepfamilies intact.

Community Agencies and Leaders

The results of this current study also have significant implications for community agencies and leaders, as they can help reduce the stigma and normalize stepfamily status. Community agencies and leaders can shift the stigma to a bright and positive outlook by providing psychoeducation regarding stepfamily development and experiences. Psychoeducation on how numerous partnerships and its potential consequences on children and their well-being is also paramount to note (Cherlin, 2008). Due to the minimal resources for stepfamilies, community agencies and leaders can also support re-partnered couples, stepfamilies, and children's well-being by establishing more support groups for this particular population. Community agencies can implement support groups

for children, adolescents, and teens who experienced divorce and remarriage. Community agencies and leaders can utilize various channels and platforms such as social media, podcasts, blogs, events, and more to help support this unique family form.

Future Researchers

This current study also has implications for future researchers. The current study contributes to the existing literature and to the field of marriage and family therapy. However, the current research leaves relevant and substantial questions unanswered. Future research examining negative child outcomes and relationship satisfaction later in life could enhance results. More specifically, future researchers can utilize the longitudinal study by assessing negative child outcomes in Wave VI when the child is 15 years of age or Wave VII when child is 22 years of age. In addition, future researcher could address the limitations of this current study. By doing so, future researchers could sharpen and acquire credible knowledge that authentically reflects children of divorce and remarriage, re-partnered couples, and stepfamilies. Future research within this scope can also add to the existing literature, as it would illustrate stepfamily resilience and that stepfamily living can be successful and positive.

Conclusion

The current study examined the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Additionally, the current study identified moderator variables of relationship satisfaction and parenting quality and its causal effect on negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering, while controlling for child's gender, mother's age, mother's level of education, mother's depression, and co-parenting relationship

between biological parents. This study assimilated the attachment theory lens and framework. Multiple hierarchical regression and moderation analyses were used for this current study. Overall, there were some significant results. Results suggested that negative child outcomes following divorce influence negative child outcomes following re-partnering. In other words, participants who reported high level of negative child outcomes following divorce also reported high level of negative child outcomes following re-partnering. There was also a presence of moderation and interaction term between negative child outcomes following divorce and relationship satisfaction. However, relationship satisfaction exacerbated the association between negative child outcomes following divorce and negative child outcomes following re-partnering. Parent quality among the re-partnered couple carried no significance. There were some interesting findings within the demographic control variables. Child's gender and mother's level of depression were significantly associated with negative child outcomes following re-partnering. However, mother's age, mother education, and the co-parenting relationship were not significant factors within the study.

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APPENDIX A

Tables

Table 1

Participant Reports for Independent, Moderator, Dependent, and Demographic Control

Variables: Descriptive Statistics (N = 404)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Negative Child Divorce	.57	.40	.79	.24	1.83
Negative Child Re-Partner	1.37	.32	1.21	1.49	1.58
Relationship Satisfaction	2.79	.31	-1.55	1.74	1.40
Parenting Quality	2.82	.26	-1.94	4.40	1.60
Control Variables					
Child Gender	.50	.50	.04	-2.01	1.00
Mother's Age	24.34	4.83	1.19	1.68	32
Mother's Education	2.50	.92	-.33	-.83	3
Mother's Depression	.24	.42	1.25	-.43	1
Co-parent Relationship	3.82	1.16	-.71	-.40	4

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Continuous Variables

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4
1. Neg. Divorce	.57	.40	-			
2. Neg. Re-Partner	1.37	.32	.47**	-		
3. Rel. Satisfaction	2.79	.31	-.16**	-.07	-	
4. Parenting Quality	2.82	.26	-.05	-.04	.46**	-

Note: Neg. Divorce = Negative child outcome following divorce; Neg. Re-Partner = Negative child outcome following re-partnering; Rel. Satisfaction = Relationship satisfaction.

** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Moderator Variable of Relationship Satisfaction

	R^2	b	SE	β	t	p
Model 1	.08*					
Child Gender		.10	.04	.17	2.43	.02
Mother Age		-.01	.00	-.08	-1.07	.29
Mother Education		-.01	.02	-.02	-.24	.81
Mother Depression		.15	.05	.20	2.92	.00
Co-Parenting		.00	.02	.01	.10	.92
Model 2	.28*					
Child Gender		.07	.04	.12	1.98	.05
Mother Age		.00	.00	.01	.16	.87
Mother Education		-.02	.02	-.05	-.71	.48
Mother Depression		.07	.05	.09	1.35	.18
Co-Parenting		.01	.02	.04	.60	.55
Neg. Divorce		.14	.02	.48	7.52	.00
Rel. Satisfaction		.01	.02	.02	.29	.77
Model 3	.30*					
Child Gender		.07	.04	.12	1.95	.05
Mother Age		.00	.00	.01	.18	.86
Mother Education		-.02	.02	-.05	-.80	.42
Mother Depression		.07	.05	.09	1.44	.15
Co-Parenting		.01	.02	.04	.61	.55
Neg. Divorce		.15	.02	.49	7.70	.00
Rel. Satisfaction		-.01	.02	-.02	-.25	.81
Neg. Divorce * Rel. S.		.04	.02	.14	2.23	.03

Note. Co-Parenting = Mother's relationship with father; Neg. Divorce = Negative child outcome following divorce; Rel. Satisfaction = Relationship Satisfaction; Rel. S. = Relationship Satisfaction.

* $p < .05$

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Moderator Variable of Parenting Quality

	R^2	b	SE	β	t	p
Model 1	.08*					
Child Gender		.10	.04	.16	2.30	.02
Mother Age		-.01	.01	-.08	-1.07	.29
Mother Education		-.00	.02	-.01	-.14	.89
Mother Depression		.14	.05	.19	2.80	.01
Co-Parenting		.01	.02	.02	.31	.76
Model 2	.31*					
Child Gender		.06	.04	.11	1.72	.09
Mother Age		.00	.00	-.02	-.08	.94
Mother Education		-.01	.02	-.03	-.52	.60
Mother Depression		.05	.05	.07	1.14	.26
Co-Parenting		.01	.02	.05	.86	.39
Neg. Divorce		.15	.02	.50	8.07	.00
Parenting Quality		-.01	.02	-.05	-.75	.46
Model 3	.31*					
Child Gender		.06	.04	.10	1.70	.09
Mother Age		.00	.00	-.00	-.06	.95
Mother Education		-.01	.02	-.04	-.60	.55
Mother Depression		.05	.05	.07	1.13	.26
Co-Parenting		.02	.02	.06	.92	.36
Neg. Divorce		.15	.02	.50	8.08	.00
Parenting Quality		-.02	.02	-.05	-.82	.41
Neg. Divorce * Parent.		.01	.02	.04	.69	.49

Note. Co-Parenting = Mother's relationship with father; Neg. Divorce = Negative child outcome following divorce; Parent. = Parenting Quality.

* $p < .01$

APPENDIX B

Figures

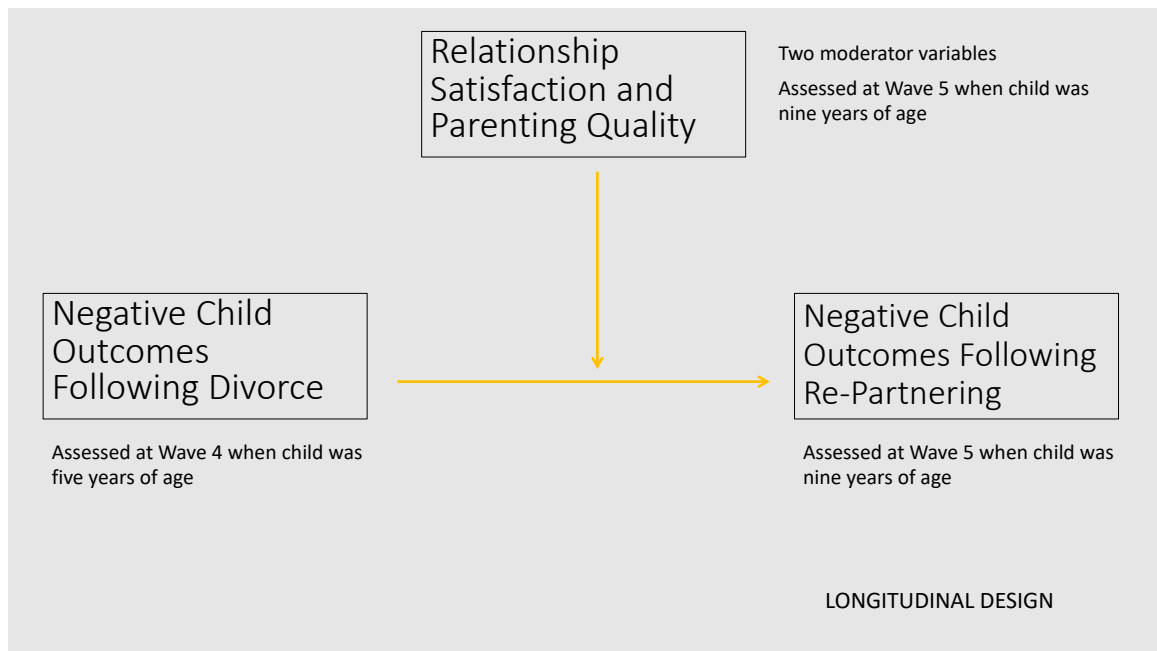


Figure 1. Model of Current Study

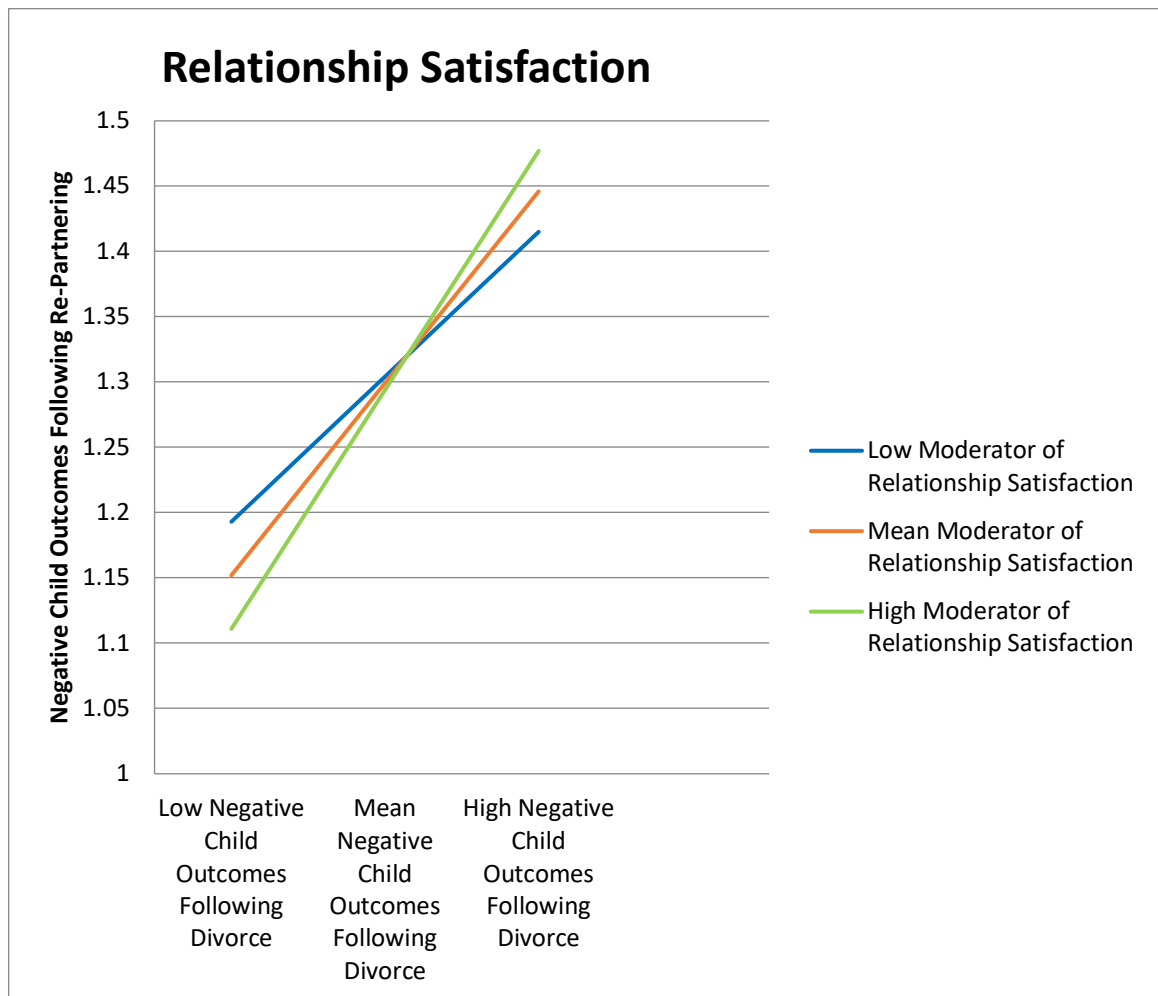


Figure 2. Moderator Variable of Relationship Satisfaction

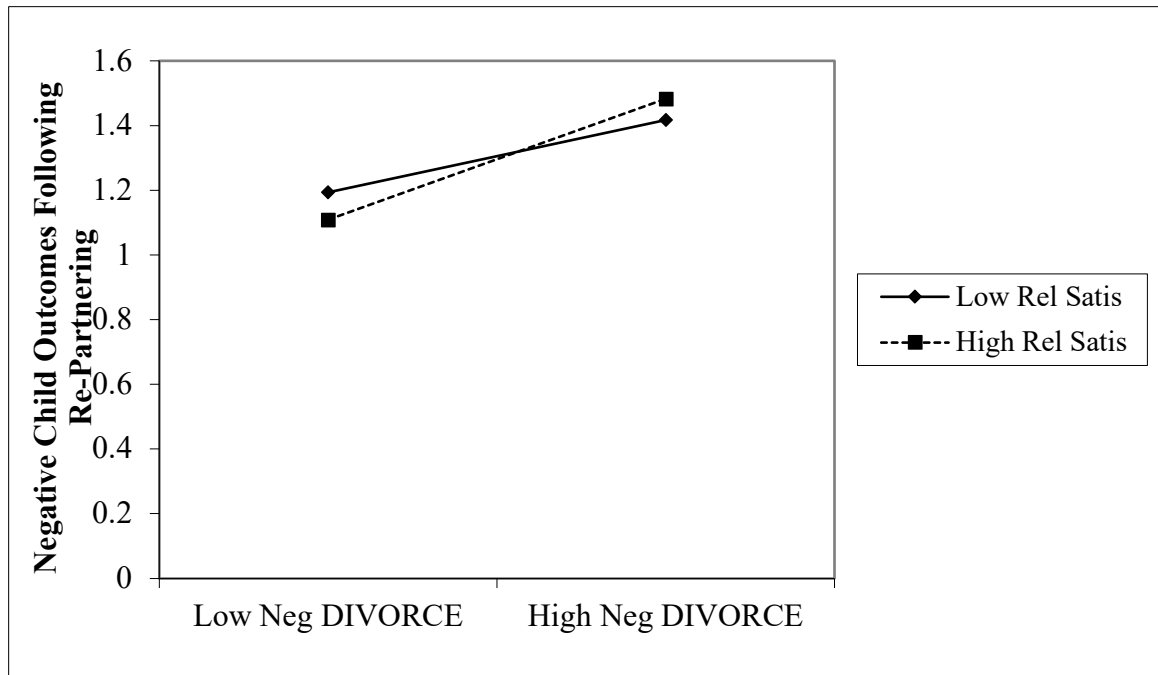


Figure 3. Moderation of Relationship Satisfaction on Negative Child Outcomes