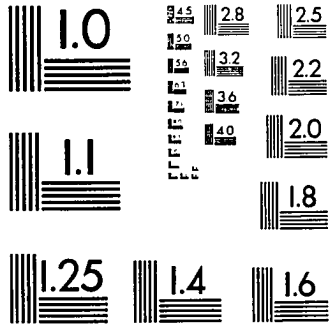
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CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF THE DIVORCE PROCESS

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A DISSERTATION

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THE DIVORCE PROCESS

APPROVED BY:

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT

One hundred ninety-two subjects between the ages of 6-8 (early latency) and 9-12 (later latency) including males and females from intact homes and homes in which a divorce had occurred participated in this study. Differences in perception of children concerning divorce were explored using a 2 X 2 X 2 factorial design (family status X gender X age grouping). The Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI) subscale scores were used as dependent measures.

Results indicated that children from homes in which a divorce has occurred are more likely to perceive the father as responsible for the breakup of the family. Early latency age group children were more defensive about the concept of divorce than later latency age group children regardless of family status. As the study included subjects from homes in which no divorce had occurred the children were asked to imagine how it would be and respond accordingly. Children from intact homes reported the most difficulty in coping with hopes of reunification. Later latency age group children from homes in which a divorce has occurred reported a higher capacity to deal with their hope of reunification than their younger counterparts who had also experienced the divorce of their parents.

Methodological problems and suggestions for future research were discussed. It was concluded that children who are experiencing the divorce of

their parents may be helped by understanding and responding to their perceptions of issues such as defensiveness, hope of reunification, and paternal blame.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVORCE PROCESS

The rate of divorce has increased in the United States from less than one divorce per 1,000 population in 1910 to more than five divorces per 1,000 population in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). If the rate stabilizes, then 40% of marriages in the United States will ultimately end in divorce (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976).

In 1948 only 42% of divorcing people had children under 18 years of age (Hunt, 1966). Currently, 60% of divorcing people have children (Bane, 1979), many of whom are under the age of five when the divorce occurs (Westman, Cline, Swift, & Kramer, 1970). Approximately 11,000,000 out of 66,000,000 children are living in single parent homes (Everly, 1977). In the United States, 1,181,000 children were involved in divorce in 1979 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981) and current demographic predictions indicate that by 1990 one-third of our children will experience their parents' divorce before they reach the age of 18 (Glick, 1979).

Most of the research in the past reported children's perceptions as observed by parents, school personnel and mental health professionals. The present study examined children's perception of divorce across family status, gender and age grouping.

Prior to 1970 research on the effects of divorce on children tended to conceptualize divorce as an event with tragic consequences. Bowlby's (1944)

study of juveniles referred to a child guidance clinic reinforced the psychoanalytic point of view that separation from the mother figure early in life was a major cause of delinquent character development. He noted that in the literature "Broken Homes" were the specific events most widely remarked upon, and he suggested the term was more sociological than psychological and needed greater specificity in research.

The association between broken homes and problems of children was usually demonstrated by data which showed a much higher incidence of broken homes in specific populations than in the general population. Empirical data has linked the broken home to delinquency (Monahan, 1960); schizophrenia (Hilgard & Newman, 1961); depression (Beck, Sethi, & Tuthill, 1963); accident-proneness (Krall, 1953); and in adverse performance on intelligence and personality tests (Altus, 1958). Other studies have found no relationship between broken homes and these factors (Burchinal, 1958); and others have attributed the relationship to the operation of a third variable such as parental instability as highly correlated with the breakup of the home (Nye, 1957).

Gregory (1956) pointed out the great variability in frequency and etiology of broken homes and the difficulty in defining a normal level or limits of variation of childhood parent-loss in the intact or broken home. Munro (1965) noted much of the writing is on an intuitive level and based on a small number of retrospective cases. Despite these limitations, the helping professions historically viewed divorced people as maladjusted (Fisher, 1973). A review of literature over the past two decades points to a growing realization that factors other than the breakup of the family per se are significant in causing disturbances in children (Rutter, 1971).

Post 1970 research has tended to focus on the complex cultural, economic, legal, psychological, and sociological processes of the broken home and the divorce itself (Pais & White, 1979; Price-Bonham & Balswich, 1980). A strong trend in post 1970 research suggests that despite individual differences, age and developmental stage appear to be the most important factors governing initial responses to divorce. Need of the parents, stress, and the choice of coping and defensive strategies are some of the perceived concerns expressed by the children (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980) longitudinal study of 60 families and 136 children disclosed that children's responses fell with unanticipated regularity into four age and developmental groupings: 1) preschool and kindergarten children (three to five year olds); 2) young school age children (six to eight year olds); 3) older school age children (nine to 12 year olds); and 4) adolescents (13 to 18 year olds). Two of the four age and developmental groupings will be the focus of this study: young (six to eight) and older (nine to 12) school age children.

The young school age children reflected considerable maturation within a compressed time span when compared to the preschool and kindergarten children. Drawings and clinical interviews suggested intellectual and emotional advances which increased the capacity to understand the meaning of divorce as well as some of the specific implications. They were more conscious of their sorrow than any other group in the study, and had great difficulty in obtaining relief (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

The older school age children (nine to 12) appeared to have benefited from a period of rapid growth and strengthening in ego as evidenced by a newly available repertoire of coping skills, a time of greatly enhanced capacity to understand a complex reality and to withstand stress without regression. This

apparent developmental milestone occurred somewhere in the eighth or ninth year. Significant changes in relationships with parents were observed and the single feeling that most clearly distinguished this group from all the younger children was a fully conscious anger.

Emery (1982) supports the need for replication and explanation and notes three common problems in current research: (1) biased sampling--usually from a clinic population; (2) non-independent data--that is overlapping judges or knowledge of divorce status; and (3) the use of measures which lack reliability and validity and distort the magnitude of the association between divorce and child problems.

This investigation was designed to explore the relationships between divorced and intact homes, early and later latency age groupings and gender using a structured questionnaire. This study concentrated on perceptions collected directly from children offering an additional view to the current literature which relies completely on parents, teachers and mental health workers to present children's perceptions.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were 96 male and 96 female students from schools located in several communities adjacent to a large metropolitan area in central Oklahoma. These communities have historically been described as agricultural and "bedroom" communities in which blue collar workers commute to jobs in the larger adjacent cities. Recent trends note an influx of white collar workers in these communities. Total population is approximately 30,000 people.

One half of the subjects were living in intact homes in which no divorce had occurred and one half were in single parent homes in which a divorce had

occurred during the last eighteen months. In the later latency age grouping (9-12 years old) about eighteen percent were nine year olds.

Instruments

As a result of the need for sound measures children's reactions to divorce two structured questionnaires (Berg, 1979; Reinhard, 1977) have appeared in the literature. Each subject was asked to complete the Revised Childrens' Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI) (Berg, 1979). Children had difficulty responding to the Structured Divorce Questionnaire (Reinhard, 1977) and therefore this instrument was not utilized.

The CAPSI consists of seven scales: Peer Ridicule and Avoidance (PRA); Paternal Blame (PB); Fear of Abandonment (FA); Hope of Reunification (HR); Maternal Blame (MB); Self Blame (SB); and Defensiveness (DF). Each scale consists of 10 items. Children responded by checking yes or no for each item and group mean scores were obtained. Scores on each scale may range from 0 (no measured adjustment) to 10 (maximum measured adjustment). Test-retest reliability is reported for all subscales and they range from .63 to .91 over a one week period. Concurrent validity between CAPSI scores and problem behaviors identified by parents on the Behavior Problem Checklist are reported in the manual indicating a strong and significant correlation between age and problem attitudes measured by the CAPSI.

Procedure

School personnel were contacted by the investigator to explain the research and solicit cooperation. After receiving administrative approval and a signed school consent form individual teachers were asked to distribute informed consent forms to the parents using regular classroom distribution procedures. This usually consisted of a "home room" request to have parents review, sign and

return the material the following day. Phone contact was provided for parents with concerns or questions. After the parent's forms were collected in the classroom a youth permission form was then distributed, read aloud and discussed.

Children were told they were agreeing to help with a study about what children think about their parents' divorce. They would be asked to fill out some forms with some questions about their point of view. Their parents, guardians and school have been asked to help by giving permission. The students do not have to be in the study and may resume regular school activities if they wish. Also they can ask any questions and their individual answers on the forms would be kept private except for the research team. As the study included subjects from homes in which no divorce had occurred the children were asked to imagine how it would be and respond accordingly.

Following discussion the youth permission form was signed by each child and witnessed by the teacher. The Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI) was administered in the group setting by the investigator or school psychologist with school staff present in the room. Questions clarifying items were answered consistent with administration instructions and all the items were read aloud to the early latency age group (6-8) as the manual specifies. Children were asked to complete the cover sheet and respond yes or no by checking the appropriate box for each of the seventy items.

Screening was a continual process which ensured voluntary participation by school, parents and children. Children of remarriage and children whose parents' divorce occurred beyond the 18 month time limit were not included in the study.

The design of the study can be graphically presented as follows:

	Divorce		Intact	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Early Latency Age 6-8	N = 24	N = 24	N = 24	N = 24
Later Latency Age 9-12	N = 24	N = 24	N = 24	N = 24

RESULTS

The data were analyzed using a 2 X 2 X 2 (family status X age X gender) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The .05 level of significance was used for all analyses performed in this investigation. Significant main effects were found between divorce and intact family status groups, $F(7, 178) = 14.67$, $p < .01$, as shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Significant main effects were also found between the early latency age group (6-8) and later latency age group (9-12), $F(7,178) = 4.95$, $p < .01$. Gender effects and the interaction of family status, age group and gender produced no significant results.

Main effects for family status and age grouping were examined using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each of the seven subscales of the Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI). The univariate data analyses presented in Table 2 demonstrated significant differences for three of the seven dependent variables.

Insert Table 2 about here

Children from homes in which a divorce has occurred differed significantly in their response to the issue of paternal blame than did children from intact homes (F (1,190) = 3.87, $p < .01$). Both family status and age grouping main effects were reflected in the variable measuring hope of reunification (F (1,190) = 16.50, $p < .01$), and age grouping alone accounted for the significant difference between groups on a measure of defensiveness (F (1,190) = 3,93, $p < .01$).

As the CAPSI is scored for adjustment (min. 0 - Max. 10) inspection of the mean scores in Table 3 demonstrated that children from intact homes considered paternal blame (PB) to be a much more difficult issue to adjust to than children who have been in a family in which a divorce has occurred. Children from intact homes perceived hope of reunification (HR) to be a most difficult issue to adjust to. The later latency age group of children from homes in which a divorce had occurred reported perceived better adjustment concerning hope of reunification than their younger counterparts. Children in the early latency age group, disregarding family status, reported more defensiveness about divorce than the older age group.

Insert Table 3 about here

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are consistent with previous published studies which indicated age is among the most important factors governing initial

responses to divorce by children. The data are also consistent with post 1970 research trends which conceptualize divorce as a series of complex processes with factors other than the divorce per se causing disturbances in children (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Amicability of parents following divorce, economic factors, moving to a new location are some of the additional factors contributing to children's divorce adjustment.

Although the children as a whole were defensive about issues associated with the divorce process, the early latency age children reported more defensiveness than the later latency age children. Examination of responses suggests that unrealistic fantasy may explain this outcome. Younger children believed that their absent parent will one day walk through the door and they will all be together again.

Research and intervention strategies are suggested by the highly significant outcome data of this study. Early latency children may have much less capacity to cope and quite different perceptions of the divorce of their parents than later latency age children. Younger children may have much more difficulty overcoming unrealistic expectations which are expressed as defensiveness or hope for the reunification of their parents. Later latency age children may be better able to cope and express anger and other reactions to the divorce of their parents. This may be expressed by statements indicating the responsibility for the divorce lies with the paternal figure.

Children from intact homes do not perceive the father's responsibility for causing the divorce as a situation they will have difficulty adjusting to. In contrast children from divorced homes place higher blame for the breakup of the family on the father. This suggests a change in children's perceptions as a result of experiencing their parents' divorce.

The hope of reunification is a common fantasy of children whose parents divorce. Younger children are especially vulnerable regardless of family status, as they have not developed skills to cope with the changes in family structure. The later latency divorce age group demonstrated an increase in perceived ability to cope with hope of reunification. Children from intact homes had not experienced anything except the two parent family structure and had difficulty conceptualizing a different family life.

The present study is exploratory in nature. Although a non-clinic population was used the voluntary nature of the study allows for the possibility of biased sampling and limits its generalizability. The data is independent of overlapping judges or knowledge of divorce status of the families but does depend on the self report of children and therefore dependent on their understanding and participation. The reliability and validity of current measures have not been well documented and it would be necessary to do replications before strongly accepting the results of this study. The inclusion of nine year old children in the later latency age category is consistent with other research but raises the possibility of overlapping ages. Analysis of this group however reveals that participation of nine year old children was limited and inclusion of their data did not change the results.

The present study however is supportive of a trend which is becoming increasingly commented upon: The need to ask the children themselves regarding their perceptions of the process of their parents' divorce. It is also supportive of the suggestion that children at different age groups are affected differently by the divorce of their parents. The highly significant outcome data urges those involved in helping children cope with divorce to plan for different intervention strategies with early and later latency age children. Opportunity

should be provided to focus on specific variables such as paternal blame, hope of reunification and defensiveness as needed by the children involved. These factors have implications on the design and modes of interventions which could be developed in order to help children better cope with this situational crisis.

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Table 1

MANOVA Results by Family Status Group, Developmental Age, and Gender

Effect	DF	F
Group	7,178	14.67*
Age	7,178	4.95*
Gender	7,178	0.39
Group X Age	7,178	0.42
Group X Gender	7,178	0.69
Age X Gender	7,178	0.69
Group X Age X Gender	7,178	0.32

* $p < .01$

Table 2

Univariate Analyses of CAPSI Subscales*

Subscale	Mean	SD	DF	F
Peer Ridicule and Avoidance	6.77	1.80	1,190	0.86
Paternal Blame	7.20	2.15	1,190	3.87**
Fear of Abandonment	7.96	2.51	1,190	0.36
Hope of Reunification	4.27	2.51	1,190	16.50**
Maternal Blame	8.70	1.74	1,190	0.87
Self Blame	7.77	2.17	1,190	1.15
Defensiveness	4.80	2.23	1,190	3.93**

* Lower means represent less adjustment. Higher means represent more adjustment.

** $p < .01$

Table 3

Means* and Standard Deviations of CAPSI Variables by Group, Age, and Gender

Variable	Divorced Younger Female Mean	S.D.	Divorced Younger Male Mean	S.D.	Divorced Older Female Mean	S.D.	Divorced Older Male Mean	S.D.
Peer ridicule and avoidance	6.79	1.14	6.75	1.91	7.16	2.21	7.20	2.78
Paternal blame	7.12	1.72	6.20	2.51	6.33	2.86	6.33	2.76
Fear of abandonment	8.04	1.48	7.75	1.42	8.16	2.01	8.25	1.48
Hope of reunification	4.62	3.37	5.00	2.44	6.91	2.63	7.33	2.35
Maternal blame	8.70	2.25	8.58	1.47	9.29	0.99	8.37	2.28
Self blame	7.62	2.24	7.66	2.14	8.37	2.14	8.50	1.91
Defensiveness	3.79	2.12	4.91	2.18	5.54	2.04	5.66	2.07
Total	46.70	6.25	46.91	6.24	51.70	7.53	51.70	6.06

* Lower means reflect less adjustment. Higher means reflect more adjustment.

Table 3, continued

Variable	Intact Younger Female Mean	S.D.	Intact Younger Male Mean	S.D.	Intact Older Female Mean	S.D.	Intact Older Male Mean	S.D.
Peer ridicule and avoidance	6.54	0.97	6.91	1.28	6.62	1.83	6.16	1.52
Paternal blame	7.79	1.69	8.37	0.82	8.20	1.84	7.25	2.23
Fear of abandonment	8.00	2.02	7.91	1.41	7.66	1.27	7.87	1.59
Hope of reunification	2.62	2.58	1.62	1.34	3.33	2.61	2.66	2.23
Maternal blame	9.00	1.06	8.25	1.42	8.66	2.20	8.70	1.62
Self blame	7.12	2.54	7.79	1.50	7.79	2.46	7.29	2.25
Defensiveness	4.00	2.46	3.50	2.50	5.66	2.11	5.33	2.25
Total	45.08	7.00	44.33	4.93	48.04	6.31	45.00	6.10

APPENDIX A

PROSPECTUS

Introduction

The rate of divorce in the Western World is increasing and current projections indicate that 25% of marriages in England and Wales will end in divorce (Dominian, 1979) and 40% of marriages in the United States will ultimately end in divorce if the divorce rate stabilizes at the 1974 level (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976). The instability of marriage has also become an important social problem in regions of the Soviet Union as the annual number of divorces has grown to almost 40% of the total marriages contracted during the same year (Tiit, 1982).

Alarmed by a dramatic rise in the divorce rate after the Civil War, many states began efforts to discourage divorce by setting residency requirements, restricting grounds for divorce and collecting statistics on divorce (Carter & Glick, 1976). In spite of these historic attempts, the divorce rate has steadily increased from less than two per 1,000 married couples after the Civil War to eighteen per 1,000 married couples approximately 100 years later (Jacobson, 1953; U.S. HEW, 1973).

The evolution of statistical reporting methods has influenced our perception of the magnitude of the divorce problem as divorces began to be reported by rate per 1,000 population rather than rate per 1,000 married couples; states such as Alaska and Hawaii were included in the reporting; annulments and non licensed marriages were included in estimates for some states and standardization techniques have become used to remove effects of changes in the age distribution of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

The divorce rate began in 1910 at .9 per 1,000 population; rose to 1.6 in 1920; 1.6 in 1930; 2.0 in 1940; 2.6 in 1950; 2.2 in 1960; 3.5 in 1970, and ended 1980 at 5.3 divorces per 1,000 population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981) leading to the suggestion that the U.S. divorce rate has far exceeded any other country (Cantor, 1982).

The increase in divorce has not been matched by a corresponding increase in marriage. In the last 70 years the marriage rate per 1,000 population began at 10.3 in 1910; rose to 12.0 in 1920; 9.2 in 1930; 12.1 in 1940; 11.1 in 1950; 8.5 in 1960; 10.6 in 1970, and ended 1980 at 10.9 marriages per 1,000 population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

The interaction between divorce and marriage rates is interesting inasmuch as in 1974 there were 2 divorces for every 5 marriages (McCary, 1975) while in 1976 the ratio had increased to 2 divorces for every 4 marriages (U.S. Public Health Services, 1976).

Although it seems safe to say that most persons in the United States, directly or indirectly, have been or will be affected by divorce or separation (Glick & Norton, 1976) the magnitude of the problems of divorce in our society might conceivably mask a traditional vital concern on the part of most people about the child in any divorce action initiated by one or both parents (O'Neill, 1976).

Hunt (1966) reports that in 1948, only 42% of divorcing people had children under 18 years of age, but by 1955, the figure had increased to 47%. Currently, 60% of divorcing couples have children (Bane, 1979), many of whom are under the age of 5 when divorce occurs (Westman, Cline, Swift, & Kramer, 1970).

Sprey (1969) has suggested the following reasons why the proportion of children in the population coming from divorced families is increasing: 1) The

belief may be disappearing that people should stay in a marriage for the sake of the children; 2) couples may have conceived children to bolster a shaky marriage; and 3) larger families may tend to seek divorces more frequently than has been the case in the past.

In 1976 when the divorce rate exceeded 5.0 per 1,000 population for the first time, the number of adults affected was 2,166,000, and the number of children under age 18 directly involved exceeded 1,117,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). This tripled the number of children involved in divorce 2 decades earlier (361,000 in 1956) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1979).

In the U.S.A. and Canada, 2,000,000 children were directly involved in divorce and separation during 1976 (Jenkin, 1978) and in the United States approximately 11,000,000 out of 66,000,000 children are living in single parent homes (Everly, 1977). 1,181,000 children were involved in divorce in 1979 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981) and current demographic predictions indicate that by 1990 one third of our nation's children will experience their parents' divorce before they reach the age of 18 (Glick, 1979).

The rising divorce rate and potential consequences for society in general and children in particular have not escaped the attention of the public at large. During the first 6 months of 1980, prominent media such as Newsweek and the New York Times ran cover stories on children of divorce (Emery, 1982). The academy award winner for the best motion picture in 1980 depicted the problems of marital separation and child custody (Kramer vs. Kramer), and the 1981 winner (Ordinary People) protrayed family conflict in a 2-parent household (Emery, 1982).

The feelings and concerns of the public at large have also been shared by members of the mental health community. Ackerman (1958) has noted that ". . .

marital conflict is of significance not only of itself but also as the epitome and the very core of disintegrative trends in family life and the harbinger of distorted emotional development in the offspring" (p. 149). A diversity of professional opinion has been expressed from the suggestion that whenever there is a problem child, there is a problem marriage (Framo, 1975) to the conclusion that a relationship between divorce and problems of children has yet to be demonstrated (Herzog & Sudia, 1973). More often than not, divorce and child problems have been found to be related (Anthony, 1974; Hetherington, 1972; McDermott, 1970; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Westman, Cline, Swift, & Kramer, 1970) and as recently as 1980, the National Institute of Mental Health solicited proposals on the topic of children of divorce (Emery, 1982).

Up to date, most studies have focused on the needs of adults in divorce and in large measure we have not learned what it is the child of divorce actually experiences. In this study, the perceptions of latency aged children will be examined using structured questionnaires. Kurder's (1981) observation of the importance of children's perceptions of divorce and the desirability of having psychometrically sound measures of children's divorce attitudes underscores the need for research in this area.

Review of the Literature

Perception of Divorce Prior to 1970

Prior to the 1970's, research on the effects of divorce on children tended to conceptualize divorce as an event with tragic consequences for many of its unwilling young participants.

Bowlby's (1944) study of 46 juvenile thieves referred to a child guidance clinic and 44 children also referred to a child guidance clinic who did not steal reinforced the psychoanalytic point of view that prolonged separation of a child

from his mother (or mother-substitute) during the first five years of life stands foremost among the causes of delinquent character development. Bowlby noted that in the literature "broken homes" were the specific events most widely remarked upon and he suggested that the term was more sociological than psychological and needed greater specificity in research. He called for joint research to investigate psychoanalytic and socioeconomic factors and concluded that genetics, ambivalent and anxious mothers, fathers who openly hate their children and recent traumatic events may well be of considerable importance in the development of unstable and maladapted children in general and that prolonged separations are a specific and very frequent cause of chronic delinquency.

The association between broken homes and delinquent character development was usually demonstrated by data which showed a much higher incidence of broken homes in specific populations than in the general population. In one of the investigations (Glueck & Glueck, 1950) 429 out of 966 juvenile delinquents came from broken homes. In 40% of the 429 (about 19% of the total) the break came before the child was five. Armstrong (1932) found that 29% of 600 runaway children had their homes broken before the age of 4, and an additional 28% experienced broken homes between 4 and 6 years of age.

The social and medical importance of broken homes in affecting adversely the mental health of the children nurtured in them became widely recognized by studies which reported that the incidence of parental deprivation in cases of schizophrenia varied between 34 and 40 percent (Pollock, Malzberg, & Fuller, 1939; Oltman, McGarry, & Friedman, 1952).

Pollock et al. (1939) also reported the incidence of parental deprivations in depressive states as 16.7% and 20%. Parental deprivation incidence rates of

48.9% in psychoneuroses and 47.7% in psychopathic personality were reported by Oltman et al. (1952).

Madow and Hardy (1947) found that among soldiers suffering from war neuroses 36% to 48% came from homes which had been broken before the patients were 16.

Batchelor and Napier (1953-1954) personally observed 200 attempted suicides admitted to a general hospital from 1950-52. 116 out of 200 came from broken homes and they noted that of the 4 teens who attempted suicide all 4 came from broken homes. Fifteen separate factors were identified as causes of deprivation and the authors concluded that the incidence of a history of a broken home is higher among suicidal individuals than it is in any type of adult nervous or mental illness which has so far been investigated.

Depression is often associated with object loss and mourning in early childhood. Caplan and Douglas (1969) studied 256 children on the treatment waiting list of the out-patient psychiatric clinic of the Montreal Children's Hospital. Histories of 2 groups were compared for the incidence of parental loss and for almost every type of separation studied (death, divorce, etc.) the percentage of depressed subjects was higher than that of the "mixed neurotic" control group.

The significance of the home for personality development of the child and the malevolent effects of the broken home have received considerable support including a study by the White House Conference of 1934. Empirical data has linked the broken home to delinquency (Monahan, 1960); schizophrenia (Hilgard & Newman, 1961); depression (Beck, Sethi, & Tuthill, 1963); mental disturbance among children in lower socioeconomic homes (Cobliner, 1963); accident-proneness in children (Krall, 1953); and in adverse performance on intelligence

and personality tests (Altus, 1958). However, other studies have found no relationship between broken homes and those factors (Burchinal, 1958; Myers & Roberts, 1959). Still others have attributed the relation to the operation of a third variable; for example, the relationship between schizophrenia and broken homes has been attributed to the extreme instability of the parents of schizophrenics (Nye, 1957). Employment of the mother outside the home has been associated with adjustment difficulties in childhood (Stolz, 1954; Wilkins, 1960) but here again contradictory results have been found (Stolz, 1960) suggesting no significant relationships have been demonstrated.

Tuckman and Regan (1966) noted many studies relied on test scores and ratings of children's adjustment rather than more objective behavioral criteria and that in general the broken home has been treated as a single entity in spite of great disparity in what constituted a broken home. Munro (1965) noted that much of the writing is on an intuitive level and based on a small number of retrospective cases. He further points out we do not know the normal level of parent loss in the general population and therefore our attempts to associate mental illness with a higher than normal rate of parental loss in childhood is suspect. Gregory (1956) points to the greater variability in frequency and etiology of broken homes and notes that fathers are almost always absent from the childhood home to a greater extent than mothers. He emphasizes the difficulty of defining a normal level or limits of variation of childhood parent-loss in the intact or broken home.

Despite these limitations, the helping professions have historically viewed divorced people as pathological and psychologically maladjusted (Fisher, 1973). A review of literature over the past 2 decades points to a growing realization

that factors other than the break up of the family per se are significant in causing disturbances in children (Despert, 1953; Goode, 1956; Rutter, 1971).

Broken homes and divorce itself have come to be seen as a complex cultural, social, legal, economic and psychological process (Laner, 1978; Pais & White, 1979; Price-Bonham & Balswich, 1980; Salts, 1979).

Elements of the process which have received the attention of researchers include stress associated with change (Holmes & Rae, 1967); the turbulence associated with divorce (Westman, Cline, Swift, & Kramer, 1970); society's prejudice against the single parent family (Burgess, 1973); same and opposite sex absence (Hetherington, 1972); racial differences (Hunt, 1972); urban-rural differences (Langner, 1969); physiological reactions (Reite, Short, Seiler, & Pauley, 1981); and inadequacy of children's mental health services (Edelman, 1981) which suggests that relatively few children receive any services at all.

Krell (1972) reports that anger, hostility and grief over a lost parent is often evident and Baker, Druckman and Flagle (1980) observe that children are rarely unaffected by divorce and in most cases their sadness, hurt and anger will be manifested at some point. Their survey of divorce reactions of children includes: faltering school work, behavioral problems, nightmares, changed eating habits, bedwetting, wanting to sleep with parents, headaches and other psychosomatic reactions. Children may engage in often futile attempts to reunite their parents by pleas, bribery, threats, tantrums, depressive symptoms or even suicidal gestures. Frequently used as pawns in an ongoing struggle between their parents, children may be torn between parents, leading to profound feelings of anxiety and guilt. In general, it often takes children longer to adjust to the divorce than parents, partly because the decision is not theirs, and they feel a lack of control and partly because they are at a more formative

stage, when the impact may affect developmental patterns. The suffering of youngsters during this stressful period is additionally difficult because their parents, who are dealing with their own divorce adjustment, may not have the emotional resources to provide them with the explanations and support they need.

Children's emotional condition and needs have tended to get lost or distorted during legal procedures between parents (Rogers, 1972) and children often get buffeted about in the conflicting situations brought on by warring parents (Robbins, 1974).

Berg and Kelly (1979) note parents' perceptions of children's divorce adjustment may be colored by their own psychological needs and defenses, making it unlikely that parents' and children's views of the child's divorce adjustment will be congruent. Damon (1977) warns against perceiving the child's divorce from an adult's perspective due to cognitive-developmental differences and Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (1973) suggest that the child's concept of time and fear of ambiguity require decisions to be made as expeditiously as possible.

Divorce as a Process after 1970

As the concept of divorce as a process has begun to be integrated with awareness of the unique perspective of the child involved, the opportunity for a more objective assessment of the needs and capabilities of the children involved has become possible.

A strong trend in post 1970 research suggests that despite individual differences, age and developmental stage appear to be the most important factors governing initial responses, the child's need of the parents, perception of the stress and the choice of coping and defensive strategies (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

As Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980) longitudinal study of 60 families and 136 children continued the children's responses fell with an unanticipated regularity into four age and developmental groupings: preschool and kindergarten children (three to five year olds); young school-age children (six to eight year olds); older school-age children (nine to twelve year olds); and adolescents (thirteen to eighteen year olds). Two of the four age and developmental groupings will be the focus of this study: young (six to eight) and older (nine to twelve) school age children.

The young school-age children reflected considerable maturation within a compressed time span when compared to preschool and kindergarten children. Drawings and clinical interviews suggested intellectual and emotional advances which increased the capacity to understand the meaning of the divorce as well as some of the specific implications. Unlike the preschool children who made extensive use of fantasy and denial the young school-age children were more intensely conscious of their sorrow than any other group in the study, and had great difficulty in obtaining relief (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

The older school-age children (nine to twelve) appeared to have benefited from a period of rapid growth and strengthening in ego as evidenced by a newly available repertoire of coping skills, a time of greatly enhanced capacity to understand a complex reality and to withstand stress without regression. This apparent developmental milestone occurred somewhere in the eighth or ninth term. Significant changes in relationships with parents were observed and the single feeling that most clearly distinguished this group from all the younger children was a fully conscious anger.

The personal development of school-age children has been approached from a variety of theoretical positions beginning with Freud and early psychoanalytic

theory which labeled this period, The Latent Stage of Personality Development, based on the observation that the school-age child is preoccupied with the challenges of school rather than play or sex (Munsinger, 1975).

Laplanche and Potalis (1973) formalized the definition of latency as a period which extends from the dissolution of infantile sexuality (at the age of five or six) to the onset of puberty, constituting a pause in the evolution of sexuality. This stage sees a decrease in sexual activity, the desexualization of object relationships and of the emotions (particularly the predominance of tenderness over sexual desire), and the emergence of such feelings as shame and disgust along with moral and aesthetic aspirations.

According to psychoanalytic theory the latency period has its origin in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex; it represents an intensification of repression which brings about an amnesia affecting the earliest years, a transformation of object-cathexis into identifications with the parents, and development of sublimations.

Erikson (1950) called the school-age years the stage of industry vs. inferiority. He sees the development of a sense of self as a primary task and believes the child must master the social and technical skills to succeed in school or face feelings of inferiority.

Piaget (1950) sees the child as shifting from the intuitive to the concrete operational stage of thought. New skills are the ability to consider more than one aspect of a situation at a time, the ability to ignore the perceptual aspects of a problem and concentrate on symbolic thinking; to categorize information in several different ways and to differentiate information better than before.

The school-age child can now decenter attention and comprehend how the parts of a problem are interrelated. The school-age child can also see how one

change may compensate for another and thus leave the total system unchanged. Conservation of weight, matter, number, and size in the face of perceptual changes in shape, distribution, and arrangement of materials is understood.

In addition, the school-age child is able to reverse logical operations and see that pouring liquid back and forth between containers does not change the volume even if the shape changes. Generally, children master the conservation of quantity by seven years of age, conservation of weight by nine years of age, and conservation of volume by eleven years.

One effect of the child's increased cognitive skills is a shift from simple moral arguments to more sophisticated rules of ethics.

Kohlberg (1971) believes the school-age child has moved from an individualistic orientation (preconventional morality) to a conventional morality which values being good, respecting authority, strict interpretation of rules and a belief that authority comes from outside the self.

Loevinger (1966) points to growing capacity and strength of various functions of the ego as elements of cognitive growth and moral conduct.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) indicate the differences in response to stress in general and to the divorce in particular, observed between those children in the six to eight and nine to twelve year old groups is not predicted by psychological theory and they indicate a need for replication in other studies and explanation of a significant distinction between children in the primary grades and those in the fourth or fifth grades.

In summary, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) point out there appear to be significant developmental differences in experiencing the divorcing process and the views of the children involved may be as different from each other as well as different from the perceptions of the adults involved.

Emery (1982) supports the need for replication and explanation and notes three common problems in current research: (1) biased sampling--usually from a clinic population; (2) non-independent data--that is overlapping judges or knowledge of divorce status; and (3) the use of measures which lack reliability and validity and distort the magnitude of the association between divorce and problems of children.

A concept used by Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) is that of attitude which may be defined as a learned and relatively enduring perception expressed or unexpressed, influencing a person to think or behave in a fairly predictable manner toward objects, persons, or situations. Cognitive and emotional factors are involved when they direct behavior. Attitudes are derived from childhood internalizations of a vivid experience or from other meaningful and impressive values.

The term entered the English language in 1668 to define the posture of a pointed figure. It replaced aptitude and became general in usage about 1710. In 1862, Herbert Spencer, English philosopher, used the term in the sense of "Attitude of mind."

Attitude scales are designed to achieve information about two dimensions: direction (favorable or unfavorable) and intensity (strength of feeling).

Most scales follow the construction methods of Louis Thurstone or Rensis Likert. Thurstone's method assigns scale values from 0.0 (extremely unfavorable opinions), through 5.5 (neutral statements) to 11.0 (extremely favorable attitudes) using 20 or more statements to obtain equal intervals of measurement. Likert's technique resembles a simple questionnaire with each statement rated on a 5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Wilkening, 1973).

As a result of the need for sound measures of children's attitudes, two structured questionnaires (Kelly & Berg, 1978; Reinhard, 1977) appeared in the literature, but their reliability and validity have not been well documented (Kurder, 1981).

Kelly and Berg (1978) tested 488 elementary and junior high school children to evaluate the utility of an instrument constructed to measure emotional and attitudinal reactions to separation and divorce. Test retest reliability was found to be .73 and internal consistency .71. The questions were able to differentiate significantly among groups of children with divorced parents, unhappy but intact families, and happy-intact families. One element, the family story test, was a structured-projective device based on affective and attitudinal responses commonly cited by professionals who work with children of divorce. This included: feelings of self-blame; fear of abandonment; hopes of reunification of parents; blaming mother for divorce; blaming father for divorce; viewing mother as the "bad" parent and father as the "good" parent; parents who degrade each other; feelings of being used as an informant; feelings of ridicule from other children and feelings of increased responsibility. Fifty-two questions were distributed across five story-picture panels according to their appropriateness for each picture's content. Specific items and response alternatives were presented to the children and they were asked to respond how they think the child in the picture story is thinking or feeling. Two additional fifteen item tests were administered, a fifteen item lie scale and a fifteen item family acceptance scale. Tests were group administered in classrooms by grade. Nine or ten days after initial testing, the Piers-Harris self-concept scale was adminstered. Significant differences were found between the three groups of students with the

children of intact-rejected families having higher mean scores, divorced families next, and intact-accepted families lowest.

Analysis resulted in substantial revisions in the test. Poor items were rewritten or eliminated and new items created. The projective nature of the test was abandoned in favor of simple self report. The most significant change involved the combination or elimination of many problem attitudes assessed. The revised test, the Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI) consists of 7 scales. To improve the test-retest coefficient, items were increased from four to ten for each scale. The seven scales are: peer ridicule and avoidance (PRA); paternal blame (PB); maternal blame (MB); self blame (SB); fear of abandonment (FA); hope of reunification (HR); and defensiveness (DF). 20-30 minutes of administration is required and the test has been used successfully with children as young as 5. Responses are rated for adjustment from 0 (no measured adjustment) to 10 (maximum measured adjustment).

Reinhard (1977) administered a questionnaire consisting of twelve biographic and demographic items, ninety-nine items describing various reactions to their divorced parents and two open-ended questions to forty-six children between age 12 and 18. The eighteen boys and twenty-eight girls did not score significantly different based on sex. The subjects were asked to respond to each item on a five point Likert scale. The ninety-nine reaction items were distributed among 10 sub-scales: news of the divorce, loss of parent, acceptance of parents, changes in family relationships, school performance, peer relationships, behavioral reaction, emotional responses, general reaction and post-divorce conflict.

Content validity was established by consensus among five experts. A split-half reliability coefficient of .83 was determined using the Spearman-Brown

prophecy formula. Reliability coefficients for each of the 10 sub-scales ranged from .13 to .54. The sample as a whole did not react to the divorce in a particularly negative way. While they would have preferred their parents resolve their problems in another way, on the whole they felt their decision to divorce was sensible. Subjects tended to see themselves as maturing faster but did not feel they had been adversely affected. The authors point out the voluntary nature of this experiment may have eliminated students with more negative attitudes about the divorce experience.

Instruments such as these can begin to assist us in looking at the cluster of interacting factors (Schlesinger, 1981) which may impact the adjustment of children of divorce, from the perspective of the child directly involved.

The numerous statistical and demographic studies of divorce indicate that, however regrettable it may be, divorce and its consequences are facts of contemporary life and represent a fairly stable trend (Duffy, 1981).

The work of Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) is among the notable and welcome few which examines dynamic aspects of the interpersonal adjustment process of children of divorce. They were struck by the pervasive sadness of the young school-age children (6 to 8 years old) who appeared to lack the extensive defense of fantasy utilized by younger preschool children. Usual coping strategies did not work and these children in particular were often overwhelmed by fear leading to disorganization, feelings of deprivation, yearning for the departed parent, inhibition of aggression at father, anger at the custodial mother, fantasies of responsibility and reconciliation, and conflicts in loyalty.

In contrast, an important milestone was assumed to have occurred somewhere in the eighth or ninth year as their findings point to the older school-age children (9 to 12 year olds) as having a newly available repertoire of coping

skills, a time of greatly enhanced capacity to understand a complex reality and to withstand stress without regression.

Learning what is experienced from the perspective of the child would seem to be both necessary and desirable elements of any integrated social response to the needs of children of divorce.

Purpose

This study is exploratory in nature. One of its main purposes is to indicate trends which will enable more indepth research in the future.

Children's expressed attitudes to the divorce process during early latency (age 6-8) and later latency (age 9-12) will be examined. This data should contribute to the findings of Kelly and Berg (1978), Reinhard (1977), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), add data to their clinical and empirical findings, and extend the generalizability of their findings to a broader population of children.

The following questions will be addressed: 1) Are early and later latency children who have undergone the divorce of their parents, different as a group in terms of their measured perceptions from children remaining in intact homes, and 2) Are male and female children who have undergone the divorce of their parents, different as a group in terms of their measured perceptions from children remaining in intact homes.

Method

Subjects

192 boys and girls between the ages of six and twelve will particpate in this study. Ninety-six will be early latency age (6-8) and ninety-six later latency (9-12). An approximately equal number of each sex shall be included. All children will be obtained on a voluntary basis through the Choctaw-Nicoma Park School

System and Tri City Youth and Family Center, Inc. both of whom serve the eastern portion of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. Approximately one-half of the children will be living in "intact" homes and will serve as controls for the "divorced" group. The "divorced" group will come from a family in which one of the parents has been granted a divorce but not remarried. Experimental subjects and controls will be matched for age, sex, intellectual performance, history of previous services, etc. Any children unable to be matched will be dropped from the study.

Procedure

The experimenter will solicit cooperation through teachers and parents to explain the project and solicit cooperation and permission. Exceptions will be noted and described. Teachers and Tri-City professional staff will be taught to administer the instruments by the examiner on an individual basis over two sessions.

Instruments

Two instruments will be employed in this study. First the Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory (CAPSI) (Berg, 1979) and the structured divorce questionnaire developed by Reinhard (1977) are both structured questionnaires designed to measure children's reactions to divorce. Reinhard's questionnaire consists of ten sub-scales yielding mean cumulative scores. Content validity and a reliability coefficient of .83 has been reported. Berg's CAPSI measures 7 subsections and yields group mean scores. Validity was reported based on between group comparisons and reliability coefficients of .73 and .71 are reported.

Design

The investigation will incorporate a 3-way completely crossed factorial design 2 (divorced/intact) X 2 (age 6-8/age 9-12) X 2 (male/female). Divorce is the main independent variable--children whose parents are divorced will be compared with children whose parents are not divorced. Additional variables are developmental age and gender. According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) early latency aged children and later latency age children show different initial responses and coping styles in attempting to cope with the divorce process while gender related differences were not remarkable at the time of the initial assessment.

	Divorce Group		Non-Divorce Group		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Early Latency (6-8)	24 subjects Cell A	24 subjects Cell B	24 subjects Cell E	24 subjects Cell F	N=96
Later Latency (9-12)	24 subjects Cell C	24 subjects Cell D	24 subjects Cell G	24 subjects Cell H	N=96
	N=96		N=96		

Data Analysis

Multivariate analysis of variance will be performed. Main effects will be the levels of family status and age. The other major factor is gender.

Multiple tests will be performed on cell means. Significant main effects for family status and developmental age are expected.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of the data a discussion of the results will be undertaken. As there are 7 to 16 dependent variables the possibility exists that some type I error may occur.

This investigation is intended to be exploratory in nature and one of its main purposes is to point toward future research.

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APPENDIX B

Children's Attitude Toward

Parental Separation Inventory

PLEASE NOTE:

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been filmed at the request of the author. They are available for consultation, however, in the author's university library.

These consist of pages:

APPENDIX B: 51-59

APPENDIX C: 61-70

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APPENDIX C

Structured Divorce Questionnaire

APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board Communications

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Title: Childrens Perceptions of The Divorce Process

Principal Investigator: Louis V. Lepak Jr. - Department of Education - Educational and Counseling Psychology

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Avraham Scherman

Proposed Starting Date: May 10, 1983 - Duration 6 months

1. The overall purpose is to survey the attitudes of children who have experienced their parents divorce using structured interview instruments. The primary objective is to increase knowledge by describing how the divorce process is experienced and perceived by the children who are directly involved.

2. The subject population to be used will be minors ages 7-12. Procedures for identifying/obtaining subjects will be public records (County Court), school records and voluntary identification. Recruitment from orginizations such as churches, parents groups etc. Other "vulnerable" categories such as mentally or physically infirm subjects will not be solicited.

No financial compensation will be involved and all subjects, (including their significant others) will be offered opportunites for consultation about any area of concern directly or indirectly related to the research.

Research procedures will be limited to the administration of two structured instruments by school counselors to students during the regular school day and by selected professionals to "other" children recruited through parent support groups in churchs, public records or other closely related sources. Other than in the public schools any other administration of the two instruments will be done in "normal" surroundings such as church or home.

3. Confidentiality will be assured by limiting and managing the number of individuals administering instruments and gathering data to professionally qualified individuals such as school counselors, school psychologists, psychometrists etc.

Subjects will be identifiable from raw data. This data will be stored in a locked cabinet by the investigator. Refined data will not be in a form which allows identification of any individual subject.

Raw data will be destroyed when no longer needed and no project publication will allow identification of individual subjects.

4. No known risks exist to any subjects that may participate in the project. No intervention or experimental manipulation of subjects is contemplated or planned.

5. Increased knowledge of how the divorce process is perceived by the children directly involved may contribute directly to an increase in the quality of decisions made on behalf of children by parents, attorneys, judges, families and treatment professionals involved with the children of divorce.

The University of Oklahoma at Norman

Office of Research Administration

May 16, 1983

Mr. Louis V. Lepak, Jr.
Department of Education

Dear Mr. Lepak:

At its meeting on Friday, May 13, 1983, the Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus reviewed your proposal, "Children's Perceptions of the Divorce Process." The Board deferred action on the proposal pending receipt of additional information:

a. The procedure to be used in administering the questionnaires to the students, especially the 7-year olds.
b. Data and/or other evidence that the questionnaires are appropriate (i.e., will produce valid data) for children 7-12 years of age.
c. Whether children will be screened to determine how long it has been since their parents' divorce and, if so, the minimum time factor to be used in this study.

In addition to this information, the Board has determined that it will require the written permission of the subjects and their schools, as well as that of the parents for approval of the work. Thus, please draft forms that you plan to use for these approvals and submit them with the other information requested.

Please submit the requested information in writing to me by June 6 if you wish it reviewed at the June 17 meeting of the Board. If you have questions, please contact me.

Please submit the requested information.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Elder
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board

ME/pw

cc. Dr. Avraham Shcerman, Education
Dr. E. C. Smith, Chair

3237 North Virginia
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

June 3, 1983

Mr. Mark Elder
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Administration
1000 Asp Avenue, Room 314
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

Dear Mr. Elder:

In response to the Institutional Review Board's request for additional material, I am submitting the following information:

a. The procedure used to administer the questionnaires to the students will follow the author's instructions unless experience dictates otherwise. Both instruments are suitable for group or individual administration, and have been found to take no longer than 20-30 minutes for each instrument. One author states that children eight and older have no difficulty reading and understanding the questionnaire, and children as young as five have been able to respond to questions when read to them (Children's Attitude Toward Parental Separation Inventory--CAPSI). The author of the second instrument states a study comparing the reactions of younger and older children could be of considerable interest and value. Therefore, the younger children (seven down) will have the questionnaire read to them under both individual and group administration. Clarification and elaboration consistent with the written directions are permitted.

   To maximize appropriate administration and minimize confounding effects, only professionals certified eligible to administer tests within the State of Oklahoma will give tests to the children, i.e. certified psychometrists, school psychologists, etc.

   No data was presented by the authors which suggested the questionnaires were harmful and/or inappropriate for children.

b. Both instruments were designed to assess existing attitudes (especially attitudinal problems) experienced by children who have or are experiencing their parents' divorce. Both are structured with careful attention to the construction of statements believed to represent those problem areas when endorsed by the children. Emphasis is on the cognitive dimension of the problem.

A summary of data from the CAPSI Manual and reference article (enclosed) suggests the need to identify and measure misconceptions has begun to appear as a potentially fruitful beginning in the study of children's reactions to divorce.

Reviews of 13 clinical case studies revealed substantial agreement regarding the attitudinal problems encountered by children. Thirteen attitudinal problems were referred to consistently and had apparent face validity. Statements were written to reflect the expression of the particular attitudes and five psychologists ranked 130 items into 13 categories. The six best rated items were again screened and reduced to four items in each category.

Having established some content validity a structured-projective test using line drawings of a child and the family dealing with marital problems were presented to 488 elementary and junior high children ranging in age from nine to 15 years of age. Group administration to 113 fourth graders, 90 fifth graders, 152 sixth graders and 133 eighth graders resulted in test-retest reliability of .73 and internal consistency of .71. The tests of reliability, validity and item analysis resulted in the elimination and rewriting of poor items, creation of new items and adoption of self report as opposed to the projective hypothesis. The revised test consists of six scales with 10 items to improve test-retest coefficients. A total test coefficient of .83 has been reported and modest evidence for construct validity is presented.

Additional means and standard deviations for 97 boys and girls age five to 17 are listed. No relationship of scores to gender were found.

Again the author states children eight and older have no difficulty reading and understanding the questions, and children as young as five have been able to respond to the questions when read to them. The author notes the instrument is still under development and should be restricted to research purposes.

The structured divorce questionnaire was developed to explore what common reactions were most reported by adolescents who were middle class and caucasian. Also gender differences were

an area of concern. A literature review had raised concerns about the effects of history and maturation, gender differences and the need for information about developmental factors within the child.

Four hundred court cases were reviewed and custodial parents contacted. Only a few responded, and additional subjects were referred by clergymen. Fifteen families participated in the prepilot investigation. Semi-structured interviews of two to four hours were conducted with the youth, and review and abstraction of actual statements formed the initial questionnaire. The unique content areas were suggested by the statements of the youth, and the instrument was administered to 15 subjects, most of whom had participated in the prepilot investigation. Feedback of these subjects was utilized in modifying the instrument into final form.

The study itself utilized 46 children between 12 and 18 who volunteered and were recruited from the pilot investigation, single parent groups and personal contacts of the investigator.

A 99 item questionnaire was developed for the study using a five point likert scale. The subjects were asked to read the item and check the appropriate response or circle an item if it did not apply to their situation. Scores were computed for each subscale and each item.

Four psychologists and one psychiatrist examined the instrument for nature and breath of content. The panel agreed the items appeared pertinent and the anticipated reactions appropriate.

A reliability coefficient of .83 was determined using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula. The reliability coefficients for each of the 10 scores ranged from .13 to .54 possibly as a function of the small number of items in each scale. No significant gender differences based on T-tests of mean cumulative scores was found.

The author suggests the size of the sample should be increased, other socio-economic groups included, and again notes it is possible the results might have been substantially different for children younger than 12 years of age, and that a study comparing the reactions of younger and older children could be of considerable interest and value. The reading procedure with children under eight will allow this possibility.

Microfiche copy of the structured divorce questionnaire was obtained from the ETS Test Collection Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

Enclosed are materials accompanying the two instruments. I am not aware of any data suggesting either of the instruments would place a child at risk.

c. Children will be screened to control for the length of time since parental divorce. The granting of a final decree of divorce will be the minimum time for inclusion in the study, and since divorce is many faceted, it is most likely that all of the children will have begun to experience the reality of the divorce a period of time before the legal dissolution occurs. Physical separation, emotional separation, social and economic changes usually occur before a final decree is granted.

The maximum time since a divorce has been granted is 18 months since the final decree was granted. This maximum time limit is designed to minimize confounding by history and maturation.

Drafts of permission forms are enclosed, and I would be most happy to be available by phone or attend the meeting of the Board if you desire. I can be reached at 390-8131 (work), or 528-3621 (home). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Louis V. Lepak, Jr.

LVL:lm

cc: Dr. Scherman

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project: Children's Perception of the Divorce Process

Investigator: Louis V. Lepak, Jr. 390-8131/528-3621

I, _____, authorize participation
(print name & title)
by school personnel in the study being conducted as part of a scientific investigation of the University of Oklahoma.

The purpose of the research is to identify and measure attitudes of children (especially problematic attitudes) who have experienced their parents' divorce.

I understand the parent/legal guardian and child will be asked to sign informed consent forms and no investigation will be conducted without signed consent.

Two instruments will be administered requiring a maximum testing time of one hour total, and only professionals certified to administer tests in the State of Oklahoma will administer the instruments.

I understand no risks are anticipated, and any participant is free to withdraw at any time.

School personnel will be asked to allow access to elementary and junior high classes for the administration of questionnaires and may be asked to confirm data about individual subjects only to ascertain correct age, gender, family status, etc. No other involvement of school personnel is anticipated, and additional permission must be given for additional involvement.

Mr. Lepak will be available at 390-8131 or 528-3621 to answer any questions or concerns about the project.

Witness _____ Signature _____

Date _____

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

YOUTH PERMISSION FORM

I, _____, agree to help with a study about
(print your name)

what children think about their parents' divorce. I will fill out two forms with some questions about my point of view. I understand my parent or legal guardian and school also have to give permission before I answer the questions. I do not have to be in the study, and can ask my parent, teacher or any person who talks with me any question I have at any time. I understand my answers will be kept private from everyone except the research team. If I have any questions, I can call or have someone call Mr. Lepak at 390-8131 or 528-3621.

_____ _____
Witness Signature

_____
Date

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Latency age children's perception of the divorce process

Investigator: Louis V. Lepak, Jr. 390-8131/528-3621

This is to certify that I, _____, give permission for my child or legal ward, _____, to participate in a research project as part of an authorized research program of the University of Oklahoma under the supervision of Louis V. Lepak, Jr.

The purpose of this research is to increase knowledge of the attitudes and perceptions of children ages seven through twelve who have experienced the divorce of their parents.

The children will be asked to participate in completing two questionnaires which have been developed by professionals for this purpose. Qualified school counselors or similar professionally trained staff will administer the questionnaires in normal surroundings (classroom, etc.), and the total time involved will be less than one hour. Additional information will be limited to the age, sex and length of time since the divorce was granted.

No mental or physical risks are anticipated, and I understand I may contact the investigator, Louis V. Lepak, Jr., at any time regarding any questions or concerns I may have by calling 390-8131 or 528-3621.

Potential benefits include increased knowledge of how my child in particular and children in general experience the divorce process and the attitudes they currently express about the divorce.

Information will be kept confidential, and only general, group results will be used for professional educational purposes. I am free to withdraw permission to participate at any time, and signing of this form does not waive any legal rights whatsoever.

_____ _____

Date Parent/Guardian Signature

The University of Oklahoma at Norman

Office of Research Administration

June 10, 1983

Mr. Louis V. Lepak, Jr.
Department of Education
University of Oklahoma

SUBJECT: IRB-NC Review of Proposal

Dear Mr. Lepak:

Dr. Eddie C. Smith, Chair of the Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus has reviewed and approved the additional information you submitted, and all the Board's questions were answered satisfactorily. Thus the use of human subjects in your project, "Children's Perceptions of the Divorce Process" is now fully approved.

This approval is for a period of 12 months from this date, provided that the research procedures are not changed significantly from those described in your "Summary of Research Involving Human Subjects" and attachments. Should you wish to deviate significantly from the described subject procedures, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for changes. If the research extends beyond 12 months, you must resubmit the project to the Board for review prior to the end of the approval period.

At the end of the research, you must submit a short report describing your use of human subjects in the research and the results obtained. Should the research extend beyond 12 months, a progress report must be submitted with the request for re-approval, and a final report must be submitted at the end of the research.

If you have questions, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Elder
Administrative Officer

ME/pw

cc: Dr. E. C. Smith, Chair, IRB-NC
IRB-NC Files
Dr. Avraham Shcerman, Education

The University of Oklahoma

GRADUATE COLLEGE AND
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION
1000 Asp Avenue, Rooms 313-314
Norman, Oklahoma 73019
(405) 325-3811 or 4757

June 1, 1984

TO: Mr. Louis V. Lepak, Jr., Department of Education

FROM: Pat Aguilera, Secretary to IRB Board Pat Aguilera

SUBJECT: Report on Research Using Human Subjects

This is to remind you that a brief report describing your use of human subjects and the results obtained on your research project, "Children's Perceptions of the Divorce Process," will be due on June 10, 1984.

If your project is not completed, you must furnish a progress report and apply for a new approval, as the original approval is for a twelve month period only. Thank you.

cc: Eddie C. Smith, Chair

3237 North Virginia
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

June 14, 1984

Dr. Eddie C. Smith, Chair
The University of Oklahoma
Graduate College and
Office of Research Administration
1000 Asp Avenue, Rooms 313-314
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

Attn: Bill Varley, Administrative Officer

Dear Mr. Varley:

My research project "Childrens Perceptions of the Divorce Process" has progressed to the point that 95% of the raw data has been collected. Initial statistical analysis has begun to discover trends in the data, and presentations have been made at two professional meetings this past academic year.

The procedures approved by the institutional review board have been followed and have been adequate to protect human subjects who participated in the study.

At this time I am requesting approval to continue the project up to December 10, 1984, at which time a final report will be submitted. Thank you for your consideration, and please call me at 390-8131 if I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Louis V. Lepak, Jr.

LVL:lm

cc: Dr. A. Scherman