INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®
ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STEPPARENT ROLE AND THEIR ROLE: HOW IT IMPACTS ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT TO LIVING IN STEPFAMILIES AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

by
Wasmia Al-Abbad

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA 2000
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Wasmia Al-Abbad entitled Adolescents' Perceptions of the Stepparent Role and Their Role: How It Impacts Adolescent Adjustment to Living in Stepfamilies and Their Academic Achievement and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Janice Streitmatter  
Date: 11/27/27

Dr. Lawrence Aleamoni  
Date: 11/28/27

Dr. Jerome V. D'Agostino  
Date: 11/29/27

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation Director  
Date: 11/27/27
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: [Signature]
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people have assisted me in accomplishing my dissertation and reaching my educational goals. First, I would like to thank all the members of my committee especially Dr. Streitmatter and Dr. Aleamoni for their help and support. I cannot thank them enough for helping me through all the obstacles and difficulties I encountered throughout my years at the University of Arizona. I am also extremely grateful of my family’s overwhelming support over the years. The family values and the importance of higher education instilled in me combined with their belief that I could achieve whatever goals I set have been an important influence in my life. For these reasons I would like to dedicate this paper to every member in my family for encouraging me through my life and to be all I can be. Finally, I would like to thank all my friends who provided assistance and necessary diversions.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce in Kuwait</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Disruption &amp; Remarriage in United States</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Approaches on Stepfamilies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Stress Theory</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Theory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Hypothesis</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of Study</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions Applied in the Study</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Divorce on Child Development</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Perspective of the Effects of Divorce on Children</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Differences in Divorced Families</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Timing of Parental Divorce on Adolescent’s Adjustment</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Transition From Adolescents’ Perspective</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Perspectives on Step-parenting</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Role Clarity</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelation of Family Disruption and Adolescent’s School Achievement</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Divorce and Adolescent’s Academic Achievement</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent Families and Adolescent’s Academic Achievement</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Conflict</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Relationship</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Differences in Stepfamilies</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent’s Satisfaction with the Stepfamily and Communication With Stepparent</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 57

Study Design .................................................................................. 57
Sampling ......................................................................................... 58
Demographic Information ........................................................... 58
Instrument ..................................................................................... 58
Procedures ..................................................................................... 60
Variables ....................................................................................... 61
Research Questions ....................................................................... 62
Statistical Analysis ......................................................................... 63

IV ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ................................................................. 66

Summary Sample Statistics .......................................................... 66
  Adolescent Demographic Characteristics ..................................... 66
  Adolescents Living in Stepfather Households .............................. 67
  Adolescents Living in Stepmother Households .............................. 68
Adolescents' Satisfaction and Communication Correlation .......... 73
Adolescents' Academic Achievement Correlation ....................... 73
  Adolescent GPA and Satisfaction Correlation ......................... 73
  Adolescent GPA and Communication Correlation ................. 74
Adolescents' Satisfaction with Stepfamily .................................... 77
  Type of Stepparent Family ........................................................ 77
  Adolescent's Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to
  Stepfamily ..................................................................................... 77
    Stepfather Household ........................................................... 77
    Stepmother Household ........................................................ 78
Adolescents' Communication with Stepparent ............................. 82
  Type of Stepparent Family ........................................................ 82
  Adolescents' Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to
  Stepfamily ..................................................................................... 82
    Stepfather Household ........................................................... 83
    Stepmother Household ........................................................ 83
Adolescents' Academic Achievement ............................................. 87
  Type of Stepparent Family ........................................................ 87
  Adolescents' Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to
  Stepfamily ..................................................................................... 87
    Stepfather Household ........................................................... 87
    Stepmother Household ........................................................ 88
Other Family Factors ...................................................................... 92
  Adolescents' Satisfaction and Other Family Factors ................... 92
  Adolescents' Communication and Other Family Factors .......... 92
  Adolescents' GPA and Other Family Factors ............................. 94
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Purpose and Method of Study</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Method of the Study</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study Results and Discussion</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Satisfaction with Stepfamily and Stepparent</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Relationship</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent’s Satisfaction and School Achievement Relationship</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Communication and School Achievement Relationship</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Family Satisfaction based on Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Family Satisfaction based on Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Communication based on Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Communication based on Adolescent’s Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Academic Achievement based on Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Academic Achievement based on Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ Satisfaction and Other Family Factors</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Communication and Other Family Factors</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents’ GPA and Other Family Factors</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implication of the Study Findings</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>Demographic Information Questionnaire Section</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>Adolescent-Stepparent Communication Form</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>Adolescent Satisfaction Form</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>Basic Information Form</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Divorce Rate in Kuwait</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family and Parent Scores By Number of Parenting Transition Group</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Adolescents By Gender for Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Adolescents By Gender and Age</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Reason Adolescent Lives With Stepparent By</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent’s Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Adolescents’ GPA for Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Time That Adolescents Have Been Living With</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stepparent for Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Frequency Distribution of Other Family Factors for Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pearson Product Moment Correlation and p-Value for Adolescents’ Average</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication and Satisfaction Score of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pearson Product Moment Correlation and p-Value for Adolescents’ Average</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction Score and GPA of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pearson Product Moment Correlation and p-Value for Adolescents’ Average</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Score and GPA of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on Adolescents’ Gender of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average Satisfaction in Stepfather</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continue: LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average Satisfaction in Stepmother Household</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Adolescents’ Gender of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average Communication in Stepfather Household</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average Communication in Stepmother Household</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Adolescents’ Gender of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Adolescents’ Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average GPA in Stepfather Household</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average GPA in Stepmother Household</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values for Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ Satisfaction of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values for Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ Communication for Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values for Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ GPA of Each Stepfamily Type</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This study aims at understanding stepfamily functioning from an adolescent's viewpoint in Kuwait to offer additional understanding of how members in stepfamilies interact. Stepfather-adolescent interaction as compared to the stepmother-adolescent interaction will be the main focus. Adolescent’s satisfaction and communication with stepparent are the measures applied to assess the adolescent’s adjustment to living with a stepparent. Additionally, how stepfamily satisfaction and communication relate to adolescents’ school achievement is explored.

A self-report questionnaire consisting of three sections was used, with separate forms for stepfather and stepmother households. Section one obtained demographic information of the subjects and their family. Section two is the stepparent-adolescent communication scale based on Barnes and Olson Inventory (1982). Section three is the satisfaction scale based on Olson and Wilson Inventory (1982).

The sample consisted of 215 adolescents, of which 31 males and 82 females live with a stepfather and 32 males and 70 females live with a stepmother.

Pearson product moment correlations were tested for significance of adolescents’ perception of their satisfaction with the stepfamily and communication with stepparent, and GPA for each stepparent group to determine if there were significant relationships between the dependent variables. T-tests for two independent population means were used for comparative analysis between stepfather and stepmother households to determine if adolescents’ stepfamily satisfaction, communication with stepparent, and
GPA was the same in both households. For each dependent variable namely, adolescents' satisfaction, communication with stepparent, and GPA, a two-way analysis of variance based on adolescent's gender and grade level at time of transition to stepparent family as representative of their developmental stage was performed for each stepparent group. Lastly, Chi-Square analyses of other family factors and the dependent variables were performed.

The results indicated a significant correlation between adolescents' satisfaction and communication with stepparent in both types of stepfamilies. Additionally, adolescents' average satisfaction response and GPA was significantly higher in stepfather households than in stepmother households. Other family demographic factors that related to adolescents' adjustment to the stepfamily environment were number of siblings, stepfather education level, and number of wives.

Limitations of the study and implications for future research and practice are discussed.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Divorce in Kuwait

Kuwait has earned the recognition as one of the most progressive and well-managed countries in the Middle East. It is considered a unique and exciting melting pot of people and traditions from throughout the world. Education in Kuwait is defined, implemented, and controlled by the state of Kuwait. This government management extends from kindergarten through the higher educational structure of Kuwait University and various Applied Colleges. Students have to maintain acceptable grades - C or above-in order to continue receiving government support.

Education in Kuwait consists of four years of primary, four years of intermediate, and four years of secondary school. It is based on a yearly system until the secondary school level where certain high schools have a semester educational system. Primary, intermediate, and secondary students are taught on a segregated basis with separate schools for girls and boys. Kindergarten and university-level instruction is provided on a co-educational basis (Teyber, 1992; Lambery & Lambery, 1992).

Prior to the Iraqi invasion in 1990, nearly 75% of the country's nearly 2.2 million (1.5 million after the Gulf War) residents lived in the Kuwait City metropolitan area, including the surrounding suburbs. The basic structure of society is centered upon the Islam religion. The divorce rate, as in most developing countries, has increased in recent years. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 the divorce rate doubled. The 1991 census reports that 1274 Kuwaitis (79.6%) and 326 non-Kuwaitis (20.4%) divorced for a
total of 1600 divorces. In 1992 the number of divorce cases documented were 1079 out of 4616 marriages (23%) in just six months between January and June (Table 1).

However, the divorce rate in 1993 has more than doubled to 4800 cases (Al-Motawa'a, 1993; Naser, 1992).

Several factors have contributed to this rise in Kuwaiti divorces. The most important reasons are due to social and political pressure. Al-Motawa'a (1993) has indicated the negative psychological effects on both the family and the children as a consequence of the Gulf War. The number of rapes during the war, which reached 3800 cases, brings feelings of shame and loss and many marriages have been severed for this reason. In addition, the same study has pointed out the increased number of students who have problems in school such as forgetfulness and distraction during their study time.

On the other hand, a study done by Althakeb (1997) indicates that the Kuwaiti divorce rate has not changed dramatically since 1990. It is below the divorce rate as compared to surrounding countries such as Egypt, Bahrain, and Indonesia but higher when compared to Syria, Iran, and Turkey. According to Althakeb, divorce in Kuwait occurs most often within the first two years of marriage.

Researchers such as Berhum (1977), Alfaisal (1991), Alkhateeb (1993), and Althakeb (1996) have investigated reasons behind divorce in Arab countries. For instance in Jordan, family interference, financial difficulties, absence of husband, or sexuality problems have been reported to be the core reasons for divorce (Berhum, 1997).
Table 1

Divorce Rate in Kuwait (Al-Motawa’a, 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Divorce Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuwaitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Saudi Arabia, Alfaisal (1991) & Alkhateeb (1993) report that relative interference, spouse abuse, age difference, and inability to have children were some problems couples encounter that lead to divorce. However, in Kuwait, reasons for divorce were mainly because of adultery, sexuality problems, spousal abuse, financial problems, education level, jealousy, polygamy, or psychological or physical problems (Althakeb, 1996). In the latter research, Althakeb investigated the relationship between divorce and other factors such as the length of marriage, the spouse education level, income, and spouse age when divorce has taken place. His research indicates that females, with lower education level, defined as no education to elementary education, tend to be more economically dependent on males. Therefore, they tend to continue living together with their spouses despite familial conflicts existing, especially if there are children involved. On the other hand, 49.4% with college degrees remained divorced.

Additionally, Althakeb (1999) investigated the after-divorce relationship between fathers, their children, and ex-spouses. Results indicated that 48.4% adolescents age 14 or older have little love or did not think of their fathers after divorce. Althakeb reasoned the unloving feeling of children toward their fathers as a reflection of their mother’s adverse feeling toward their ex-husband or adolescent’s exposure to pre and post divorce conflicts between their parents, or father not fulfilling his responsibility such as child support. In addition, Althakeb reported that 40% of divorced parents indicated children age 14 and older were doing well after divorce while 6.7% indicated more conflicts with their adolescent’s behavior.
Though previous research done in Kuwait focused mainly on divorce and its effects, whether on the parents or their children, no studies have been reported about remarried families in Kuwait and how these families function in the new family structure. It is important to add more understanding of what members in families with a stepparent may encounter, the relationship between children and their stepparent, and the effect of the stepfamily environment on children living in these families. Therefore, research in this area is needed to add further understanding of how members in stepfamilies especially adolescents cope with the transition to a new environment. The purpose of this study is to investigate and address this matter from the adolescents’ point of view. That is, how adolescents in Kuwait conceptualize living with a stepparent, their new roles, their stepparent’s role, and how these factors affect their adjustment at home and in school.

**Marital Disruption & Remarriage in United States**

The stepfamily is one of the fastest growing family types in advanced industrial nations. Glick (1989) estimates that about one third of the child population is expected to become a stepchild before the age of 18. Children in stepfamilies are significantly more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems, to receive professional psychological help, and to perform poorly in school or drop out compared to those in intact families (Bray et al., 1992; Hetherington & Jodl, 1994; Zill, 1988; Zill & Schoenborn, 1990).

Because separation and divorce rates are at least as high in second marriages as in first marriages, many children and parents become involved in a series of family life events. In most cases, divorce is often misconstrued as a circumscribed or terminal event
that ends when the judge drops the gavel. However, divorcing parents find that this event is but one phase in a series of family transitions (Teyber, 1992). Nearly eighty percent of men and seventy-five percent of women will eventually remarry, usually within three years after a divorce. Unfortunately, sixty percent of these remarriages will also end in divorce at some point. As a result of this high remarriage rate, twenty-five percent of children today will eventually spend some time living in a stepfamily (Teyber, 1992).

Coleman & Ganong (1997) assert that the construction of family life in stepfamilies is more complicated because there are more family members involved in the negotiations. These family members often bring widely varying prior family experiences to the deliberations with more than one generation involved in the negotiations. The reality of the remarried family, therefore, is a blend representing a composite of quite different realities and expectations, depending upon a number of factors, including the variety of roles that have to be created, defined, and/or negotiated within the family. The increased number of roles in stepfamilies including stepfathers and adolescent stepchildren, who are the focus of this study, contribute to negotiations of great complexity.

Coleman & Ganong (1997) add that many stepfamily roles such as authority and discipline are relatively unfamiliar to those just entering a stepfamily, and when this is so, expectations may be ambiguous. In addition, family members, especially adolescent stepchildren often find themselves in relationships for which they have neither names nor any clear ideas about how to proceed. Therefore, divorce and remarriage cannot be viewed as a single static life event, but as part of a complex chain of marital transitions.
and family reorganizations associated with alterations in family roles and relationships and the adjustment of family members (Hetherington, 1993).

**Theoretical Approaches on Stepfamilies**

**Family Stress Theory.** According to this theory, the adaptation of adolescents within remarried family households involves effective family adaptation to both normative and non-normative issues (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). Normative developmental tasks for remarried family households with adolescents include creating new interaction styles, routines, and celebrations that recognize the traditions of at least two previous family units (Hobart, 1987). Also, it includes addressing the lack of a shared history and complications associated with unresolved grief, anger, or crisis from earlier families, continuing relationships with parents not living in the household, adapting to developmental changes that occur over time, proving a balance between connectedness and autonomy for adolescents, and redefining existing parent-child relationships while building new relationships with new members in the family.

Family stress theory posits that all families including remarried family households, encounter stressors and that successful functioning depends, in part, on the family resources available during times of stress (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). Family resources such as the social support systems and the interaction patterns within the household relate to adolescent adaptations, including family satisfaction and adjustment to the new family environment (McCubbin et al., 1988). This theory leads to the Role Theory.
Role Theory. Role Theory perspective has been the theoretical approach utilized most often by researchers investigating stepparent-adolescent relationship. Nye and McLaughlin (1976) assert that family roles encompass the essential activities of family life. It follows that the more competently one spouse enacts these roles, the more rewards they provide for the other spouse. Role performance is a central part of marital and family happiness. Thus, the enactment of the stepfather role affects the quality of family relationships. Role theory contends that the ease with which roles are entered is determined, in part, by anticipatory socialization and lack of role conflict (Burr, 1973). Role conflict in stepfather families is defined as the amount of agreement between the mother and stepfather regarding the raising of the adolescent, the adolescent’s relationship with the non-custodial parent, and gender of the adolescent. Another factor that determines role performance is role reciprocity (Newman & Newman, 1980). Role reciprocity is defined as the extent to which each role is linked to one or more related roles, and how each role is partly defined by the other roles that support it. The role behaviors of the stepparent and adolescent are interdependent where each can only function in part as well as the other performs the reciprocal role. Thus the poorly defined roles within the stepfamily may detract from role reciprocity. The quality of the stepfather-adolescent relationship may be a product of unclear and poorly linked roles (Skopin, Newman, & McKenry, 1993). Role reciprocity can be explored by examining the relationship between the adolescent-stepfather. Adolescent's dissatisfaction is a good indicator of unhappiness, which can lead to difficulty adjusting to the stepfather family.
The three concepts from role theory—anticipatory socialization, role conflict, and role reciprocity—appear salient in the enactment of the stepfather role and have a useful application to this study.

Boundaries are also particularly important in delineating subsystems and generations, where healthy families have clear boundaries within the family, which enable members to fit and meet their needs for emotional harmony. Enmeshment and disengagement are terms that describe the extremes of the continuum of closeness of the family. A disengaged family lacks a sense of cohesion and unity (Bruning, 1993).

**Purpose of Study**

Family members, especially adolescents, may be more sensitive to changes, stresses, and opportunities presented by marital transitions at some developmental periods than others. The adolescence period is viewed as the most difficult time in which to have a remarriage occur (Bray, J. H., Berger, S. H., Boethell, C. L., & Maymi, J. R., 1989). Therefore, adolescents tend to be more vulnerable to the perturbations associated with entry into adolescence.

Even though adolescents are recognized as occupying a central place in definitions of the stepfamily as well as in its everyday life, mainstream research on the stepfamily has failed to give them more than perfunctory attention (Ritala-Koskinen, 1997). In addition, the life of adolescents in mainstream research is examined mainly from an adult point of view, while the perspectives opened up by adolescents on the stepfather are rarely discussed.
Finally, school is most often examined as a reflection of powerful antecedent trend in social conditions and a determinant of subsequent changes in reproduction and family life (Skolnick & Skolnick, 1993). The area of how family patterns and conflict relationships between stepfather and adolescents may effect adolescents’ adjustment to school has not been completely explored.

Therefore, it is important to examine how adolescents perceive this pattern of complex relationships in stepfamilies, how they define the stepparent’s role, how they define their role in the new family context, and how these perceptions may impact their behaviors through different stages of their life. Would the ambiguity in defining everyone’s role effect children’s behaviors? Would the new family pattern be stressful and irreversibly impact adolescents’ adjustment at home? Would the stressful stepfamily pattern have a profound impact on adolescents’ school adjustment?

Most prior research pertaining to stepfamily functioning done in United States has addressed the conflict adolescents have when they face the transition to a new family structure such as a stepfather. However, the research findings addressed in this paper were mainly drawn only from research in the United States. The only research that has been conducted in Kuwait was concerning divorce and its effects and no research was found that related to a transition to the stepfamily environment.

To establish a connection to the United States research findings and Kuwait family functioning, it is important to note that the life style in Kuwait has changed significantly since the Gulf War to assimilate the Western culture. This could contribute mainly to the shift in the perception of the family in Kuwait. For instance, following the
Gulf War, the entrance of women into the Kuwait workforce and acquiring higher education has increased, which allows women more participation socially and politically. The feelings of empowerment that occur with women maintaining greater social roles transfers to them desiring more input into family decisions. However, in a male-dominated social structure, these social and political roles women have achieved since the Gulf War can create conflicts not only culturally but also within the family. Hence, these factors are some of the components researchers such as Althakeb (1999) have found to contribute to the increase of divorce rates in Kuwait. Moreover, with the changes in the social structure, adolescents in Kuwait are becoming more independent than before. Like adolescents living in United States, adolescents in Kuwait who experience familial conflict have been found to have more behavioral problems at home and in school (Althakeb, 1999), which is consistent with the research findings found in United States. Therefore, since the focus of this study is on the stepfamily structure in Kuwait, it is expected to have similar findings related to adolescent-stepparent communication and satisfaction in Kuwait, as those found in United States.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine how adolescents perceive the quality of the relationship with their stepparents through direct and indirect communication. Hence, how stepparent-adolescent communication interrelate to adolescents’ satisfaction with the stepfamily life.
Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between adolescents' satisfaction and communication level in the stepfather family?
2. Is there a relationship between adolescents' satisfaction and communication level in the stepmother family?
3. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their level of satisfaction in the stepfather family?
4. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their satisfaction level in the stepmother family?
5. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their communication level in the stepfather family?
6. Is there a relationship between adolescent’s academic achievement and their communication level in the stepmother families?
7. Would there be a difference in adolescent’s communication level with stepparent between stepmother and stepfather families?
   7a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?
   7b. Is there a relationship based on the adolescents’ developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?
8. Would there be a difference in adolescent’s satisfaction level with the stepfamily environment between stepmother and stepfather families?
8a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?
8b. Is there a relationship based on adolescents’ developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?

9. Would there be a difference in adolescent’s academic achievement between stepmother and stepfather families?
   9a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?
   9b. Is there a relationship based on adolescents’ developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?

In addition to the above research questions, the following question will be examined:

10. Do other demographic factors such as number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, stepparent education level, reason for remarriage relate to adolescents’ satisfaction, communication or academic achievement in stepparent families.

Research Hypotheses

Based on these research questions it will be hypothesized that:

1. There is a positive correlation between adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily and communication level with the stepparent. This is based on the findings of Skopin, Newman, and McKenry (1993) that adolescents’ perception of the quality of stepfamily life relates to their relationship with stepparent.

2. There is a negative correlation between adolescents’ family satisfaction and their academic achievement since these variables are reverse coded (Very satisfied = 4 and GPA > 3.5 = 1). This is based on Downey findings (1995) that adolescents in
stepfamilies do not perform as well in school as adolescents living with biological parents.

3. There is a negative correlation between adolescent-stepparent communication and their academic achievement since these variables are reverse coded (Strongly agree = 5 and GPA > 3.5 = 1). This is based on Downey findings (1995) that adolescents in stepfamilies do not perform as well in school as adolescents living with biological parents.

4. Other family demographic factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level are significantly related to adolescents’ satisfaction level.

5. Other family demographic factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level are significantly related to adolescent-stepparent communication.

6. Other family demographic factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level are significantly related to adolescents’ academic achievement.

7. Adolescents living in stepfather families will have a significantly higher satisfaction level than adolescent living in stepmother families. This is based on Downey
findings (1995) that adolescents living in stepfather households adjust better to the
new family life than adolescents living in stepmother households.

8. There is a relationship between adolescents’ family satisfaction and adolescents’
gender and/or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household for each type
of stepparent household.

9. Adolescents living in stepfather households will have a significantly higher average
communication response than adolescents living in stepmother households. This is
based on Henry & Lovelace (1995) findings that ???.

10. There is a relationship between adolescents’ communication with their stepparents
and their gender and/or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household for
each type of stepparent household.

11. Adolescents living in stepfather households will have a significantly higher GPA
than adolescents living in stepmother households. This is based on Downey (1995)
findings that adolescents in stepfather households perform better in school than
adolescents living in stepmother households.

12. There is a relationship between adolescents’ GPA and adolescents’ gender and/or
their developmental stage at transition to stepparent household for each type of
stepparent household.

Significance of Study

The triadic relationship—stepfather-adolescent-school will be the focus. That is,
this paper will explore these relationships more closely of how the complex relationship
between the adolescent and stepparent relates to the adolescents’ cognitive development, communication, and finally their adjustment to the new family structure and school.

This research paper aims at finding key factors to understand this phenomenon from the adolescent’s perspective; that is, to find better resolutions for adolescents’ future success in school and improve their adjustment at home.

Assumptions

1. The sample of adolescents lives with their either stepfather or stepmother used in the study is representative.

2. Adolescents’ adjustment to the stepfather and stepmother households is based on their perception to the step parental environment measured by the quality of the adolescent-stepparent communication relations and adolescents satisfaction with stepfamily life.

3. Adolescents’ adjustment in school is defined by adolescent’s level of school achievement (GPA).

Limitations of Study

The influence of parenting style as a factor is not accounted for in this study. The socioeconomic factor and its impact on family relationships particularly when a stepfather is the financial provider in the family are not examined. Ethnicity as an important factor is not controlled for. The relationship between the biological parent and stepparent is not accounted for as a factor influencing adolescents’ perceptions of adjustment to the stepfamily. Neither is the adolescent’s relationship with the other
biological parent who he/she doesn’t reside accounted for as a factor influencing adolescents’ perceptions of adjustment to the stepfamily.

Definitions Applied in the Study

Stepfamily

It is used to define a family in which at least one of the adults is a stepparent. The stepchildren need not be living in the household. Beer (1992) also defines it as the intimate outsiders. This label evokes the image of stepparents as being members of the family as well as intruders who are not welcomed to the secrets and knowledge shared by family insiders. The existence of stepchildren from a previous marriage creates a complex family pattern irrespective of whether or not the stepchildren live in the household (Visher & Visher, 1979). A stepfamily can involve continuous relationships with a previous spouse for child custody and child support purposes.

Stepfamilies are also defined based on their structural complexity, whether only one spouse brings children from a previous marriage into the remarriage or both spouses have children from a previous marriage (Bruning, 1993).

Stepfather family

It is used to describe stepfamilies comprised of a biological mother and a stepfather.

Stepmother family

It is used to describe stepfamilies consisting of a biological father and stepmother.

Boundary ambiguity

This describes the uncertainty among family members regarding their perceptions about who is in or out of the family and who is performing what roles and tasks within the
family system (Boss & Greenberg, 1984). It is defined as a lack of clarity or misalignment of boundaries within the family. It has been related to increased family stress and overall family dysfunction (Boss & Greenburg, 1984; Minuchin, 1974). Some family members in stepfamilies lack clarity about appropriate and desired behavior. This uncertainty produces role ambiguity (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Gile-Sims, 1984) and stress regarding what the nature of their role(s) should be (e.g. should a stepparent be a disciplinarian or a supportive?), the consequences of role performance (e.g. how the stepchild will respond if the stepparent attempts to become a supportive). Because of this role ambiguity, stepfamily members may not know how to address each other and may be unsure of which household members are parts of the family (Fine & Schwebel, 1991). Furstenberg (1987) found that 15% of stepparents did not include residential stepchildren in their lists of family members.

Bonding
It is a family resource that refers to the degree of emotional ties among members of a household and the extent to which family members interact with each other (McCubbin et al., 1988).

Stepchildren
Those are the children who are brought to the family by the mother, father, stepmother, or stepfather and live in the same household.

Adolescent Development
It is the process where adolescents change physically, psychologically, and cognitively throughout their life. It ranges from 12 to 19 years of age. Adolescent developmental
stages include early adolescence 12-14 year old, middle adolescence 14-17 year old, and late adolescence 18 and older.

*Adolescent perception*

It is a state of mental process where adolescents perceive an event, interpret, and make sense of that event based on prior experiences.

*Adolescent’s Gender*

Gender is a variable that may be associated with the concept of the conflict as it affects the quality of the adolescent-stepparent relationship.

*Adolescent’s Role/Stepfather’s Role*

It is more common that children often reside with their mothers. Therefore, the complexity of relationships with new spouse and stepchildren, and defining new roles are of most importance in the stepfather family because of the conflict over territory and different lifestyles. Role clarity is very crucial in stepparent households because it defines each family members function.

*Divorce*

Divorce is a legal separation process between couples. This process may impact parents as well as their children. Conflict after divorce involves several factors including child support and child custody.

*Remarriage and stepfamilies*

This involves parents who have experienced divorce and remarry at some future time, thereby creating stepfamilies.

*Satisfaction*
It is the level of adolescent acceptance of the new roles created inside and outside the household through a stepparent.

*Adjustment*

It is used to describe the level of adjustment to the stepparent household environment.

*Stepparent-adolescent communication*

Communication describes the level of agreement between stepparent and adolescent. Stepparent-adolescent communication is used to measure adolescent’s adjustment to the new home environment.

*School achievement*

It defines how motivated adolescents are to achieve satisfactory level in school.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Remarried families are families in transition, representing just one transition in a long sequence of events, such as divorce, that follows in the wake of family disruption involving parents and children. Family members may be confronted with a number of major changes including assuming new roles and responsibilities and reorganization of household routines (Santrock & Sitterle, 1987).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, stepfamilies resulted primarily from remarriage following the death of a parent, while the contemporary stepfamily results primarily from remarriage following the divorce of the natural or biological parents. In 1981, 33 percent of all children under 18 in the United States did not live in a traditional two-parent family. By 1992 that figure had risen to 43 percent of children. Estimates are that at least half of all children today will spend some time in a single-parent family before they reach age 18 (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991).

Additionally, close to 20% of children under the age of 18 live with a stepparent, who in most cases is a stepfather (Cobb, 1997). Recent statistics indicates that two-thirds (2/3) of families in which children live with their biological mothers are first-married family units, nearly 1 in 10 are remarried families, 1 in 7 are families headed by divorced mothers, and 1 in 10 are headed by continuous single mothers (Acock & Demo, 1994).

Effects of Divorce on Child Development

In general, as a result of family disruption, studies have shown that children of divorced parents have more emotional and behavioral problems and perform poorer in
school than children who live with both their biological parents or with stepparents. Parents with psychological problems, for instance, are more likely to divorce and children from these households are more likely to have a rough time. In addition, some parents who eventually divorce have a long period of unpleasant conflict before separating. Household income and parental time often declines, separation anxiety, and increased conflicts can causes children to become hostile. Hence, divorce itself may cause child behavioral problems and impact their development.

When viewing the effects of divorce, children's development and the role of parents are as important to understand as the reasons why marital disruption may affect children in the long term. From a developmental perspective, children change over time, developing new skills and capacities and having different needs. Their response to their family disruption may differ depending on their age at the time of crises since parental roles change, as children grow older. Upon the family breakup, parents undergo stressors such as child support, coping with the new situation during and after divorce, parental conflict during and after divorce, which might in turn affect children's life at a later time.

Studies exploring the effects of divorce on children demonstrate that experiences children may encounter prior to divorce have a greater explanatory power in predicting children's future outcome. If the marriage begins to decline early, young children are more likely to experience the context of that decline, as their parents are less likely to stay together. This tendency on the part of parents during a vulnerable stage in the child's life increases the likelihood of negative consequences throughout their child's life.
Developmental Perspective of the Effects of Divorce on Children

As children grow older, they change in many ways, physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally. Developmentalists often identify four broad stages of development, infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Children undergo distinct transformations within each of these periods. It has been suggested that preschoolers, age 3 to 5, may be especially vulnerable to the stress of familial divorce because of their cognitive and social immaturity (Hetherington, 1981). However, the adolescent period is typically marked by a bid for greater autonomy, the need to achieve personal identity and individuation (Visher & Visher, 1979), and by increased parental disengagement and distancing (Baumrind, 1991).

Amato (1993) identified a set of theoretical explanations such as parental adjustment to separation and the degree of ongoing parental conflict that undergird the assumptions that marital disruption will have deleterious effects on children. On the other hand, Barber and Eccles (1992) point out that divorce could sometimes have beneficial consequences for children whose development has been thwarted by negative interaction in the nuclear family or whose growth is enhanced by new family roles following divorce. This more optimistic picture of post marital adjustment of children does not deny the reality that divorces often usher in a series of difficult circumstances for children. However, it recognizes the fact that considerable variation exists in families prior to divorce and that divorce itself is far from a random process (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994).
Children in divorced families have already attained precocious independence and the entrance of a stepparent may be seen as a threat to their autonomy. Autonomy is a much larger issue for early stage adolescents than for later stage ones and parents can either facilitate or hinder the growth of autonomy (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1990). The more role clarity among the family members, the less conflicts within the family and the greater the adolescent’s movement toward psychosocial maturity and vice versa.

Imagine a teenage boy who has been the man of the house for several years suddenly being asked to relinquish this status to a strange new male member in the family. No longer does the adolescent have the responsibilities that he used to have for his mother. Perhaps he complains bitterly about the tasks at the time, but he does have a recognized status in the home, which is now eliminated. In addition, with the teenager’s need for independence, the stepparent’s attempts to take a role of a parent can create severe conflicts. When an adolescent boy, for example, was required to call his stepfather “Dad,” he became psychotic over it. This familial conflict between stepfather and stepchildren profoundly effects children adjusting to the new family structure and creates behavioral problems in adolescence (Steinberg, 1990).

For adolescents, the series of events such as divorce and parental remarriage comes in addition to the changes introduced by puberty, moving to a new type of school, and rapidly changing social relations (Cobb, 1997). In addition, Dornbush, Ritter, and Steinberg (1991) believe that the influence parents and families have on the adolescent’s academic behavior is more indirect. Therefore, adolescents exposed to less adequate parenting are at risk for a number of psychological, academic, and behavioral problems
(McLoyd et al., 1994; Aber & Cicchetti, 1984; Egeland & Sroufe, 1981). However, children who experience divorce in middle childhood or early adolescence where remarriage does not immediately follow exhibit less dramatic behavioral consequences of the divorce (Amato et al., 1995).

Kurdek & Fine (1993) investigated the relationship between family structure and adolescents' perception of family climate. This study found that adolescents who did not experience any parenting transitions rated their family climates (warmth and conflict) more positively than did those who had experienced one or more parenting transition. Adolescents living with both biological parents reported more warmth than did those living with stepfathers. Adolescents living with both biological parents reported less conflict than those living with either a stepfather or a stepmother. In addition, adolescents living with a divorced mother reported less conflict than those living with a stepmother (Table 2).

However, another study done by Wojtkiewicz (1993) investigated the effects of length of time living in a non-intact family on high school graduation. The results showed that the more years spent in non-intact families, the lower the chance of graduating high school. Also, the effects of years spent in non-intact families did not vary much by family type at birth, age at experience, and gender. Children whose mothers were not married when they were born or children whose parents separated when the children were younger spend more years in non-intact families and thus are exposed to possible negative effects for longer periods than children whose parents separated when they were older. This is consistent with Hetherington’s study in 1981 that younger children are
more susceptible to family conflicts than older children. However, years in mother-stepfather families were negative for whites but not for blacks. Among whites, years spent in stepparent families is not any less negative than years spent in mother-only families. For blacks, the results show that while years spent in mother-only families lower the chances of high school graduation, years spent in mother-stepfather families have no significant effect.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Parenting Transition</th>
<th>0:TP</th>
<th>1:DM</th>
<th>1:DF</th>
<th>2:SF</th>
<th>2:SM</th>
<th>Multiple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21.27</td>
<td>20.33</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>20.54</td>
<td>22.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26.32</td>
<td>24.84</td>
<td>24.71</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>24.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>7.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>15.57</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>17.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TP=Two Parent, DM=Divorced mother, DF=Divorced Father, SF=Stepfather, SM=Stepmother
Gender Differences in Divorced Families

One of the studies investigating the long-term effects of divorce on gender differences is the work of McCabe (1997). These effects according to this study manifest themselves in increased heterosexual relationship difficulties and depression in young adulthood. The results suggest that females from divorced families experience higher levels of relationship difficulties and depression than females from intact families, which is consistent with Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) findings which states:

"Young adult daughters of divorced parents are prone to a delayed depression and experience increased relationship difficulties in young adulthood."

McCabe continues to explain the sleeper effect, where psychological symptomatology goes underground during late childhood and early adolescence, only to re-emerge in a new form in late adolescence and young adulthood. However, the possibility that the sleeper effect may not be a sleeper effect for the problems that these females are experiencing in the young adult years may have been present throughout development, but have gone undetected because they were manifested in less noticeable internalizing rather than externalizing behavior. The McCabe study found no significant differences between males from divorced families and intact families on either relationship difficulties or depression.

Effects of Timing of Parental Divorce on Adolescent’s Adjustment

Bulcroft & Bulcroft (1991) have assessed the effects of timing of divorce on the parent-child relationship in later life. The study found that the timing of divorce has a significant effect on the relation between family structure and young adolescent’s
appraisals of family climate and parenting behavior. For men, the earlier the divorce in the family life cycle the less the interaction between parent and their children. However, that was not the case for women. Bulcroft & Bulcroft explained that divorced women are expected to have higher rates of interaction with their children after divorce.

The length of marriage also plays an important factor for children adjusting to the new family. Numerous researches have suggested that the transition to living in stepfamilies is a stressful one, especially for adolescent stepchildren. Aspects of stepparent stress vary with the length of time in a stepfamily. In one study, researchers concluded that it takes time for the members in a stepfamily to develop a conflict relationship. The average length of the marriage in this study was 8 1/2 months, a period perhaps not long enough for serious difficulties to develop (Cobb, 1997). Also, Furstenberg (1987) found that those in long-lasting (more than seven years) stepfamilies reported less difficulty in disciplining their stepchildren and were more accepting of the viability of stepfamilies than were those stepfamilies lasting for less than seven years (Fine & Schwebel, 1991). However, the relation between the duration of the stepfamily and the quality of its functioning is not a simple one, because when children enter adolescence, stepfamilies may begin to experience more stress and function more poorly than they had earlier (Bray et al., 1989).

**Marital Transition From Adolescents’ Perspective**

Research on the effects of marital disruption on children, the type of behavior problems, and coping mechanisms differ for children of different ages, as demonstrated earlier. Hetherington, Stanley-Magan, & Anderson (1989) assert that younger children's
responses are mediated by their limited cognitive and social competencies, their
dependency on their parents, and their restriction to the home. During the interval
immediately following divorce, preschool children are less able to appraise accurately the
divorce situation, the motives and feelings of their parents, their own role in the divorce,
and possible outcomes. Thus, young children may blame themselves for the divorce, may
fear abandonment by both parents, and may misperceive fantasies of reconciliation

According to Wallerstein, Corbin, & Lewis (1988), young children at the time of
parental divorce may experience fewer memories of their parental conflict ten years after
divorce and will develop a close relationship with the custodial parent if they are not
encountering new personal or family stressors during this period of adjusting to the new
situation. However, those who had been adolescents and who retain memories of the
conflict and stress associated with the divorce may be more consciously troubled.
Adolescents experience considerable initial pain and anger when their parents divorce.
However, unlike younger children, adolescents are better able to accurately assign
responsibility for the divorce, to resolve loyalty conflicts, and to assess and cope with
additional stresses such as new family role definitions. Also, adolescents may show
greater maturity as they assume greater responsibilities after parental divorce and during
the entrance of new family when their parents remarry. Positive maturation during
adolescence period adjusting to the new situation will depend on school attainment and
constructive relationships outside the home with peer groups (Hetherington, Stanley-
Hagan, & Anderson, 1989). Children entering adolescence are confronted with changing
perceptions of their parents; a decreased dependence on parental control and establishing self monitoring; balancing parental, individual, and peer expectations; establishing autonomy and gaining power in decision making (Steinberg, 1985). For older adolescents the entry of a stepparent may not be as adversarial because late adolescents are anticipating their departure from the home and new young adult roles and relationships. The introduction of a stepparent may relieve responsibilities for emotional and economic support of their divorced parents (Hetherington & Anderson, 1987).

**General Perspectives on Step-Parenting**

The new term blended family has recently replaced stepfamily due to the negative connotation of the latter term. Stepfamilies appear to have occupied a position at the intersection of a number of social, economic, and cultural characteristics worldwide. They are defined as an outcome of pre-existing conflicts between spouses or death of a spouse and recreating new roles for members entering a new family structure. This is consistent with Ihinger-Tallman (1997) definition of remarried and step families as structural formation, transitions, and reformation of structure. The new shifting roles may create further tension among family members, especially between stepparents and stepchildren, which in turn will create problems between spouses.

When entering a stepfamily, every member in the family brings their unique experiences and perceptions into the environment. Marital quality and satisfaction were the two mostly reported variables by researches investigating stepfamily functioning. However, it has been argued that it is neither the structural complexity nor the presence or absence of children in the home that impacts the marital relationship. Rather, the ways
in which couples interact around these issues are the key to understanding marital relationships in general and marital relationships in remarriages specifically (Ihinger-Tallman, 1997). Children however, may affect marital quality by their beliefs about the stepparent’s role (Kurdek, 1990), spousal consensus over how to enact the stepparent role, and agreement on decisions pertaining to child rearing (Bray, Berger, & Boethel, 1995). It has been suggested by most research findings that if a stepparent and stepchild can work out a relationship that is mutually satisfying whether it be warm or detached, then not only is marital satisfaction enhanced but stepfamily adjustment also is fostered (Ihinger-Tallman, 1997).

Society places higher expectation of stepmother’s interactions with their stepchildren. As frequent interactions with children build closeness to others, it can also create tension and conflicts. Therefore, it is expected to see more conflict between stepmothers and stepchildren than between stepfathers and their stepchildren (Coleman & Ganong, 1997). For a stepfather-stepchildren relationship, it is not as overwhelming as for stepmother-stepchildren relationship. A contributing factor may be that fathers are often less involved in family activities in general, regardless of the family structure (Coleman & Ganong, 1997). Stepfathers may see their role with the stepchildren as quite peripheral to that of the children’s mother. Thus, stepfathers are more likely to feel less guilty if they are not actively involved with their stepchildren, although stepfathers who financially supported the stepchildren have more influence on family decision-making. In addition, stepchildren appear to appreciate their stepfather’s contributions and express awareness of some obligation on their part to accord their stepfather greater respect and
input into decisions about their lives (Ganong, Coleman, & Mistina, 1995). However, adolescents tend to perceive themselves as having more power than their stepfathers. In particular, it was found that when adolescents have alternative sources of financial support, they are less likely to accept the power position of the mother and stepfather (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). Therefore, it is concluded that the role of the stepfather in stepfamilies is perhaps even more ambiguous than that of the stepmother. It is the undocumented role obligation that stepfathers have to confirm to without being recognized by society.

In the Ganong, Coleman, & Mistina study (1995), stepchildren expressed strong emotions toward their stepfathers, some positive and some negative. They see their stepfather as a father figure and not only financial provider. Most previous research on stepfamilies were adult-oriented and anchored to the nuclear family ideology (Ritala-Koskinen, 1997). Stepchildren’s viewpoint can provide an important perspective into stepfamily literature and add more understanding of how stepfathers, in particular, function.

**Adolescent-Stepparent Role Clarity**

Role clarity among family members regarding each person’s role and how it affects others may have a profound impact on adolescents’ life. This impact will also vary for each adolescent at different stages in their lives, based on whether adolescents live with a stepparent or their biological parent, the adolescent’s age, gender, quality of stepparent relationship, experience prior to parental divorce, or the adolescent’s personality such as coping skills.
In one study, it was asserted that newly remarried mothers report poorer family communication, less effective problem resolution, less consistency in setting rules, less effective disciplining, and less emotional responsiveness. In addition, both remarried mothers and stepfathers reported less family cohesion and more poorly defined family roles and relationships in the early months of remarriage. Child-stepparent relationship appears to improve over time for children who are not yet adolescent at the time of the remarriage (Bray, 1988). With older children however, control and monitoring remain low and are related to externalizing disorders in adolescence. That’s probably because stepmothers and stepfathers take less active role in parenting than do custodial parents (Bray, 1988). For stepfathers, they appear to be less supportive and less authoritative toward their stepson than their stepdaughter and the basis for why stepfathers are more accepted by boys (Hetherington & Anderson, 1987). In addition, Skopin et al (1993) found a positive relationship of the quality in stepfather-adolescent relationship and the frequency of agreement between the stepfather and mother regarding the raising of the adolescent. The significant relationship between these two variables was related to both the stepfather and adolescent’s perception of the quality of their relationship.

The stepfather’s satisfaction with his remarriage was also significantly related to his perception of the quality of the stepfather-adolescent relationship but not significantly related to the adolescent’s perception of the quality of the relationship. Therefore, the role of husband and stepfather is reciprocal. Stepfathers who reported more happiness with their marriage perceived a higher quality stepfather-adolescent relationship. Skopin et al further elaborate that the adolescent perhaps is too far emotionally removed to assess this
relationship accurately because a more positive marital relationship may intrude even more on special roles the children have acquired while living in a single-parent home such as independence prior to entering a new family life style in a stepfamily.

In addition, it was found that the relationship between the gender of the adolescent and the quality of the stepfather-adolescent relationship—authority and discipline—as perceived by the stepfather and the adolescent was significant. Adolescent’s perception of stepfather-adolescent relationship depends on the level of their affection to the stepfather, the more they care, the worse they feel, which can be very stressful to the adolescent (Lutz, 1983).

The study of Skopin et al suggests that stepfather’s parental and marital roles were highly interdependent. Also, the stepfather’s ability to arrive at satisfactory agreement with their spouse in regard to child rearing was related to satisfaction in the parental role with the adolescent.

Interrelation of Family Disruption and Adolescent’s School Achievement

In regards to the effect of familial conflict upon school success, several studies suggested that a relationship exists between family structure and school performance (Gilner, 1988; Fraleigh, 1990; O’Byrne, 1991; Heyman, 1993). Several mechanisms exist through which marital conflict might have long-term negative consequences for children (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Stress resulting from familial conflict is likely to interfere with children’s ability to concentrate on schoolwork, which may decrease academic performance.
Parental Divorce and Adolescent's Academic Achievement. A number of studies have provided evidence that early stage adolescents experiencing divorce will develop behavioral problems such as maladjustment to the new transitional life. Adolescent girls who experience a divorce before they were six more frequently reported skipping school than did girls from intact families or girls whose parents divorced when they were between the ages of six and nine (Frost & Pakiz, 1990). Also, Furstenberg and Teitler (1994) when measuring the education attainment of children of divorced parents found that children whose parents separated are less likely to complete high school, less likely to attend college, and more likely to be neither employed nor in school. In addition, children are more likely to begin family formation early, which is consistent with Frost and Pakiz findings. Thus, such children are more likely to express discontent with their lives in early adulthood.

This is consistent with the systems perspective that family and school dynamics effect one another in a reciprocal manner; that is, the ecological context of the relationships among the family members and their consequences might result in affecting adolescents' adjustment in school. Many students may experience difficulties adjusting to the school environment not because they lack intelligence or ability, but often because they lack academic motivation.

Different investigators have examined this area and emphasize how crucial the early adolescent years are for development (Petersen, 1988; Eccles, Midgley, & Adler 1984). It is believed that the kinds of changes students typically experience during the transition to a new family structure such as divorce as well as to a new school level must
be viewed from a perspective of the standard environment influences approach—a stage-environment fit approach (Eccles & Midgley, 1989).

According to person-environment fit approach, there are negative motivational consequences of being in an environment that does not fit well with one's needs (Hunt, 1975; Mitchell, 1969). Related to the latter perspective, the stage-environment fit may explain the lack of motivational behaviors that adolescents might have in their early years and how that may conflict with their school adjustment (Eccles, et al., 1993). School transition for instance at this period of life may have especially negative consequences for adolescents who experience familial conflict at the same time.

Stepparent Families and Adolescent’s Academic Achievement. Children living in stepfamily environment may encounter problems adjusting as their counterpart children in divorced families. Downey (1995) attempted to investigate the effect of step parental household on adolescents' academic adjustment. The study indicated that parental resources such as financial and cultural prove to be an effective mediator of the effect of living in a stepparent household on academic achievement. In addition, the researcher suggests that characteristics such as parent’s education, income, and race can contribute to the difference in school performance between children in stepfather and stepmother families. The study demonstrates that adolescent boys and girls appear to do better in stepfather families than children in stepmother families.

It is important to note that most studies on the effect of the family environment on adolescent school adjustment are done on either intact families or divorced families. There are few studies that specifically address the stepfather-adolescent relationship and
adolescent’s adjustment in school. Also, there is a lack of literature that has investigated the triadic relationships such as stepfather-stepchildren-school adjustment especially during adolescence. Therefore, there is a need to explore the impact of the stepfather-adolescent relationship and its impact on the adolescent’s development and adjustment to the home environment and school achievement.

**Adolescent-Stepparent Conflict**

As demonstrated earlier, the normative changes and stresses associated with the transition to adolescence may be magnified for an adolescent experiencing a marital transition (Hetherington & Anderson, 1987). Children in stepfamilies have different feelings than those in intact families. For children with stepparents, love and hate, rivalry and competition, and insecurity and the search for identity are magnified. This transition to a new family pattern frequently represents a loss of a close parent-child relationship, with the child feeling rejected or abandoned. The child must now share the biological parent with one or more new individuals in the same household (Visher & Visher, 1979). Parish (1988) reports that parents were perceived to act significantly more lovingly toward one another if they were currently married and not divorced. However, this study was done on members of intact families. Therefore, there is a lack of significant information in the literature of how young adolescents would perceive their stepparent such as a stepfather especially from the adolescent viewpoint.

It is important to note that, with respect to the adjustment of children in stepfamilies, much of the literature is based on clinical findings (Fine, 1986). However, several studies have suggested that adolescents have more difficulty adjusting in
stepfamilies than do younger children (Fine, Donnelly, & Voydanoff, 1991; Lutz, 1983). Adolescent stepchildren may have a particularly stressful transition to living in stepfamilies (Fine, Donnelly, & Voydanoff, 1991). One study done by Lutz (1983) investigated what adolescents believed to be the stressful and non-stressful aspects of stepfamily living. Adolescents between 12 and 18 years reported that issues pertaining to divided loyalties and discipline were perceived as most stressful, whereas issues pertaining to social attitude and being a member of two households were perceived to be least stressful. This is consistent with the earlier studies such as Bowerman and Irish (1962) and Duberman (1975), which state that the quality of stepparent-stepchild relationships was lower for adolescents than for younger, school-age children. In stepfather families, non-custodial mothers remained in closer contact with their biological children than non-custodial fathers, and this contact may hamper the development of stepmother-stepchildren relationships if stepchildren have difficulty cognitively accepting loyalty to two mothers (Ihinger-Tallman, 1988). In addition, children in stepfamilies behaved less positively toward their stepparents than children in nuclear families towards biological parents (Bray et al., 1989), which is consistent with Barber and Eccles (1992) findings. Similarly, Pink and Wampler (1985) found that adolescent stepchildren and stepfathers reported more negative evaluation of their relationships than did fathers and adolescents in nuclear families.

However, in research done by Ambert (1986) stepfathers appear to have stronger relationships with children than stepmothers. In addition, stepfathers may be less likely to experience such role conflict with their stepchildren. Moreover, in exceptional cases,
stepfathers may even have an easier time rearing and finding satisfaction with their stepchildren after the arrival of a new child. However, we believe that is not the case with adolescent stepchildren.

**Adolescent-Stepparent Relationship**

Adolescents' reactions to stepfathers vary considerably with their gender frequently improving conditions at home for boys, and just as frequently worsening them for girls (Hetherington, 1989; Needle, Su, & Doherty, 1990). The transition has been found to be easier for boys. However, boys in remarriages have been found to exhibit little difference in their behavior at home or at school from boys in intact families. In the same study, males adjusted best in remarriages when their mother remarried prior to adolescence. More conflicts between adolescents and their stepparents are found in families with a stepmother rather than a stepfather (Pasley & Ihenger-Tallman, 1989). In addition, a study of nearly 90 stepfather families with at least one adolescent shows adolescents' problems centered mostly on issues of discipline and authority (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). The majority of adolescents stated that they would move out if they had problems with their stepfathers. As one stated, “See what things might change, try and get along with him. If it doesn’t work out and it is possible, move in with your father, but only as a last resort.” From the latter statement, we sense the desire adolescents have to conquer the problems they may encounter with their stepfather choosing to live with their biological father as a last resort.
Gender Differences in Stepfamilies

In regards to gender differences, Vuchinich, et al (1991) found that girls, age 12 to 14 have more difficulty interacting with stepfathers and adjusting to stepfamilies than do boys. Research also indicates that the most difficult step-relationship is that between stepmothers and stepdaughters (Duberman, 1973). For instance, a 16-year-old girl who used to do the housework and cooking for her father after her mother’s death now has a stepmother. The girl feels replaced and crowded into a very small corner (Visher & Visher, 1979).

Because adolescents have developed to the point where they have become differentiated from their parents and are cognitively mature enough to observe what is going on around them psychologically, they can figure out that their parents and stepparents are themselves feeling insecure in their new roles. The expectation that a child will instantly love a stepparent brings unhappiness to the child. Children may know that it takes time for trust and caring to develop. They may become withdrawn and build a protective wall to insure a distance from any new care taking adult, and by exhibiting an “I don’t care” attitude. Any expectation of affection towards a stepfather is met with hostility on the adolescent’s part. Separating from the family and establishing roles apart can be more difficult for adolescents in stepfamilies. Confusion over role models can lead to added tension for adolescents. An attempt at asking these children to be a participating member of the family at the stage of personal development that requires loosing emotional ties with the family may produce a collision course. This can be
averted only if the adults in the teenager’s life will allow them considerable personal space and distance from the family (Visher & Visher, 1979).

On the other hand, this emotional conflict and the feeling of uncertainty during adolescent development may produce adverse behavior such as unmotivational desire to school.

**Adolescent’s Satisfaction with the Stepfamily and Communication with Stepparent**

Most research literature suggested that families headed by a single parent and remarried families experience higher conflict and lower cohesiveness than nuclear families. However, most studies of parental divorce and remarriage generally have reported no relationship or an inconsistent relationship between stepchild status and psychological adjustment (Bray, 1988). They suggest that children’s adjustment to stepfamilies maybe a function of the ability of the family members to adjust their parenting style and the family environment to meet the needs of members in a changed, nontraditional context (Bonnie & Lyons, 1993). Therefore, these research findings have been explored further to examine whether parenting style in divorced and stepfamilies connect in anyway to adolescents’ adjustment with the family environment and to academic achievement. In Bonnie & Lyons (1993) study, it was found that adolescents who live with stepfathers were not experiencing high confliction cohesiveness in the family. This research finding was inconsistent with Hetherington (1989) and Bray (1988) studies that suggested higher conflict and lower cohesiveness in remarried families. Therefore, further research is needed to better understand this phenomenon. Lamborn et al (1991) examined three family structures, intact, mother-only, and stepfather families.
They found that adolescent's family structure did not moderate the relations between parenting style and psychosocial development, school achievement, and problem behavior. There was no relationship between parenting style and internalized distress in either mother-only or stepfather family types. They suggest that parenting style such as parental warmth and demands levels may vary for stepfather families and single parent families. For stepfather families, Hetherington (1981) in a six-year follow-up study found that disengagement, characterized by low-warmth, control, monitoring, and discipline were the most common parenting patterns. These finding are consistent with previous research finding of stepfather parenting style.

In general, cohesiveness is likely to be a process that operates differently in remarried families than in intact ones (Bonnie & Lyons, 1993). Stepparents report significantly less frequent activities and engage in fewer positive interactions with their children. Although adolescents do not report a decrease in support from their mothers following remarriage, stepchildren perceive the family as a whole to be less cohesive (Bray, 1988). Low levels of conflict in the family however, promote adjustment to developmental change, especially if this is associated with high cohesiveness in the family (Steinberg, 1990). Nevertheless, adolescents place less value on warm relationships with their stepfathers than they would with their biological fathers. Therefore, family cohesion may be less important to adjustment in these families (Bonnie, & Lyons, 1993).

In relation to adolescent's satisfaction to the family life, family stress theory proposes that a variety of family qualities serve as resources during times of stress
(McCubbin et al., 1988). The availability of family interaction in stepfamilies that encourage continuity and perseverance can help members adapt to the demands associated with the family transition and in turn, stress.

Bonding is a family resource that refers to the degree of emotional ties among members of a household and the extent to which family members interact with each other (McCubbin et al., 1988). Bonding is consistently related to adolescent family life satisfaction and adaptation in remarried family households (Henry & Lovelance, 1995). Flexibility in modifying family roles, rules, and interaction patterns is an important factor that leads to satisfaction and better adjustment to the family environment. Lower flexibility was found associated with lower quality stepfather-adolescent relationship (Pink & Wampler, 1985), which could hinder adolescents' adaptation to the new family.

Previous research on the adolescent's satisfaction in the family associated with age was higher in older adolescents (Henry, 1994). However, another study showed no significant relationships between demographic variables such as adolescents' age, time in the remarried family, and adolescents' gender, with family life satisfaction (Henry & Lovelance, 1995). Parental educational level was the only demographic variable that showed a significant positive relation to satisfaction with the family.

In addition, research found that adolescents in stepfather families have greater family life satisfaction that those living with stepmother families (Kurdek & Fine, 1993). Role clarity in the family, adolescents and stepfathers expectations of how each should behave based on ones beliefs of these defined roles, and the perceived role behavior of adolescents and stepfathers that is expected to be performed in stepfamily context are all
variables related to satisfaction and adaptation to the new family. Despite the fact that some research asserts no correlation between stepfather engagement in their stepchildren lives with adolescent’s satisfaction and adjustment in the family is because of their contention with their independency learned from being in a single parent family prior to entering stepfather family. However, stepfathers who are more active parents expressed more satisfaction with their family lives and in turn affect their stepchildren satisfaction and adjustment to the family lives (Fine, Ganong, and Coleman, 1997).

Summary

From the research review in the United States, there were few studies on stepfather-adolescent relationship, especially ones considering the adolescent’s perspective toward their stepfather. In Kuwait however, no studies pertaining to stepfamilies in general or the consequences of the transition to a new family structure such as stepmother or stepfather households were found. Divorce and its effects on family member was the only topic discussed in Kuwaiti research. These findings in Kuwait pertaining to divorce reported that the divorce rate is increasing and it has negative effects on both parents and children, socially, cognitively, and academically (Althakeb, 1999). This is consistent with the research findings in United States conducted on families experiencing divorce. In regards to stepfamily functioning, for the social changes over the years that have occurred within Kuwaiti families pertaining to family decisions among family members, we speculate that there will be similarities in these research findings with those in the United States about stepfamily functioning. It is important to mention that the findings of this paper will establish a new dimension related
to stepfamily structure in relation to adolescents’ adjustment to the new family and to their academic success by focusing on the adolescent’s perception. Thereby it offers a literature basis for further studies.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is intended to investigate the adolescents' perceptions of the transition to a new family style taking into the account the new roles. The focus of this study is the adolescent living with a stepfather and the adolescent living with a stepmother. Variables such as adolescents' satisfaction, adolescent-stepparent communication, and school achievement are considered to assess how well adolescents adjust in the new stepfamily environment. Comparison analyses procedures were applied to determine any differences in the two types of stepparent households, which are adolescents living with stepfathers and the adolescents living with stepmothers. Additionally, a correlation analysis was used to assess significant relationships among the variables of the study for each type of stepparent household.

Study Design

This research was designed to examine adolescents' perception toward their stepfather's role and its relation to their family satisfaction, communication with the stepfather, and academic achievement based on adolescent's gender, developmental stage at transition to a stepparent family, number of siblings and stepsiblings, reason with stepparent, and stepparent education level and whether these measures varied in comparison to stepmother households. It provides a comparative analysis between the perceived adolescent-stepparent relationship of stepfather households and stepmother households. Only quantitative methods were applied.
Sampling

A random sample of Kuwaiti students was obtained from different junior high and high schools (12 to 18 years), of both genders to insure better generalization of the findings. 113 students from stepfather families and 102 students from stepmother families participated in this study. Only subjects living on a daily basis with a stepparent and biological parent were included in this study. The subjects were divided into two groups: stepfather and stepmother families. Initially, in each family type, adolescents were sub grouped by gender. Then each sub group was divided into three groups based on adolescent's developmental stage at transition to a stepparent household: pre-adolescence, early adolescence, and mid to late adolescence based on the adolescents' grade level at transition to the stepfamily household.

Demographic Information

Adolescents' age, gender, grade level, type of stepparent household, current GPA, whether adolescent experienced the death or divorce of one of the biological parents, number of siblings and stepsiblings, the length of time with stepparent, and biological parent and stepparent education level were obtained.

Instrument

To measure the adolescent-stepparent relationship in this study, a survey consisting of three sections: 1) demographics, 2) adolescent-stepparent communication, and 3) adolescent family satisfaction were administered. Two forms of the questionnaire were applied: one for stepmother households and another for stepfather households.
Section one was to determine the demographic variable factors mentioned above. Appendix A contains the demographic questions posed in this section.

Section two and three of the survey instrument was based on established questionnaires to assess two aspects of the adolescents’ perceptions of family functioning: Family Satisfaction (Olson & Wilson, 1982) and Parent-Adolescent Communication (Barnes & Olson, 1982). The Cronbach alpha reliability measure for the Olson & Wilson satisfaction survey was .95 and for the Barnes & Olson communication survey was .88. However, these instruments have only been administered in the Western culture. In order to demonstrate that the instrument used in this study measured the constructs of Kuwaiti adolescents’ perception of stepfamily satisfaction and stepparent communication, it was necessary to modify and administer it to Kuwaiti adolescents living with a stepparent in a pilot study for reliability purposes. The pilot study consisted of 22 subjects between the ages of 12 and 18 of which 11 were male and 11 were female adolescent members of stepfamilies. The survey instrument was administered to these subjects and the measures used were highly reliable. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .8752 for the adolescent communication questionnaire and .9400 for the adolescent satisfaction questionnaire.

Section two was used to assess adolescents’ perceived communication level with the stepparent. This was to emphasize the importance of communication as an aspect of quality of interpersonal relationships with others. Goffman (1959) in developing his ideas on symbolic interaction viewed communication as central to the symbolic presentations that comprise all human interactions. Thus, communication was considered
important for it demonstrates how family members exchange information among family members to establish a network of communication, which may lead to quality relationships especially between adolescent and stepparent on a daily basis. Prior research has evidenced the belief that good communication skills were crucial to satisfaction with family relationships (Barnes & Olson, 1982). This section of the survey instrument entailed 21 statements about adolescents’ perceived communication with the stepparent whose response was a five-point level Likert scale from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Appendix B contains the questions for this section of the questionnaire for both stepmother households and stepfather households. The adolescents’ average communication score from this section was used in the statistical analysis.

The third section, satisfaction, was used to assess adolescents’ perceived satisfaction with the stepfamily environment. It was composed of 25 questions whose responses were a four-point level Likert scale from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Appendix C contains the questions for this section of the survey instrument for both stepfather form and stepmother form. The adolescents’ average satisfaction score from this section was used in the statistical analysis.

**Procedures**

In this study, in order to obtain a representative sample, a list of all schools in Kuwait was obtained from the Ministry of Education. A random number of junior high schools and high schools from all districts in Kuwait were selected. A letter of authorization was obtained from the Ministry of Education to access these schools. A
team of three college students was constructed to assist for data collection from schools. The team was given the instructions on how to acquire the desired sample from schools and how to administer the questionnaire to students.

A basic information form was distributed to the students in these schools to obtain the desired sample (Appendix D). The main purpose of the study was explained to the students and all students were required to agree to participate in the study. Students were categorized into two groups: stepfather families and stepmother families. The questionnaires were administered to all participants in these two categories with separate forms for stepfather and stepmother participants. The results of the Cronbach alpha reliability measure of the 215 subjects' responses were .8657 for the adolescent-stepparent communication form and .9397 for the adolescent satisfaction form.

Variables

The dependent variables in this study were subjects' average satisfaction and communication score to stepparent family based on section two and three of the survey instrument and school achievement as measured by GPA. The independent variables were the demographic characteristics. These variables include: gender, grade level, whether adolescent experienced the death or divorce of one of the biological parents, number of siblings and stepsiblings, the length of time with stepparent, and stepparent education level.
Research Questions

The following research questions were considered:

1. Is there a relationship between adolescents' satisfaction and communication level in stepfather family?

2. Is there a relationship between adolescents' satisfaction and communication level in stepmother family?

3. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their level of satisfaction in stepfather family?

4. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their satisfaction level in stepmother families?

5. Is there a relationship between adolescent’s academic achievement and their communication level in stepmother families?

6. Is there a relationship between adolescents' academic achievement and their communication level in stepfather families?

7. Would there be a difference in adolescent’s communication level with stepparent between stepmother and stepfather families?

   7a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?

   7b. Is there a relationship based on the adolescents’ developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?

8. Would there be a difference in adolescent’s satisfaction level between stepmother and stepfather families?

   8a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?
8b. Is there a relationship based on the adolescents' developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?

9. Would there be a difference in adolescent's academic achievement between stepmother and stepfather families?

9a. Is there a relationship based on gender of the adolescent?

9b. Is there a relationship based on adolescents' developmental stage at transition to stepfamily?

In addition to the above research questions, the following question will be examined:

10. Do other demographic factors such as number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, stepparent education level, reason for remarriage relate to adolescents' satisfaction, communication level or academic achievement in stepparent families?

**Statistical Analyses**

Initially, a Pearson product moment correlation will be tested for significance of adolescents' perception of their satisfaction with the stepparent family and communication with the stepparent for each stepparent group. The statistics used for the calculation will be the average satisfaction score for each adolescent based on the 25 questions in Section 3 of the questionnaire and the average communication score based on the 21 questions in Section 2 of the questionnaire.

A Pearson product moment correlation will be tested for significance of a relationship between adolescents' GPA and adolescents' perception of their satisfaction with the stepfamily for each stepparent group. The statistics used for the calculation will be the average satisfaction score for each adolescent based on the 25 questions in Section
3 of the questionnaire and the GPA response from the demographic section of the questionnaire. Another Pearson product moment correlation will be tested for significance of a relationship between adolescents’ GPA and adolescents’ perception of their communication with the stepparent for each stepparent group. The statistics used for the calculations will be the average communication score for each adolescent based on the 21 questions in Section 2 of the questionnaire and categorical GPA response in the demographic section of the questionnaire.

A comparison procedure was conducted of adolescents’ perception of their satisfaction to the stepfather family, communication with stepfather, and academic success. Specifically, whether adolescents living with a stepfather experience higher communication and satisfaction in the family environment and school than adolescents living with a stepmother was examined. The comparative analysis applied for adolescents’ perceived satisfaction and communication level and GPA was a t-test for two independent population means.

Additionally, the subjects of each stepfamily type were analyzed by a two-way analysis of variance based on gender and grade level at time of transition to stepparent family as representative of the developmental stage at transition for each stepfamily type. This procedure will determine if adolescent’s gender or developmental stage at transition to stepparent family are significant factors in determining adolescent’s perception of satisfaction and communication with the stepparent and school achievement for each type of stepfamily.
Lastly, Chi-square tests were applied to determine if other family demographic variables are related with adolescents' perceived satisfaction with the stepfamily, communication level with stepparent, and GPA.

The following chapter will state each hypothesis, statistical analysis, and results of each test.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter provides the research hypotheses, results of the statistical analyses performed and interpretation of the results. It is divided into seven sections: 1) Sample summary statistics; 2) Adolescents' satisfaction and communication correlation; 3) Adolescents' academic achievement correlation; 4) Adolescents' satisfaction with stepfamily; 5) Adolescents' communication with stepparent; 6) Adolescents' academic achievement; and 7) Other family factors.

Sample Summary Statistics

This section provides the summary statistics of the 215 Kuwaiti adolescents sampled in the study based on frequency distributions.

Adolescent Demographic Characteristics. Of the 215 study participants, 63 were males and 152 were females of which 113 were living in a stepfather household and 102 were living in a stepmother household (Table 3). The adolescent's age composition was 31.6% were between 12-14 years, 37.7% were between 15-16 years, 26.5% were between 17-18 years and 4.2% were 19 years or older. Table 4 illustrates the frequency of adolescents' age by gender, where 74.6% adolescent males fall between the age of 12 to 14 year old and 45.4% fall between the ages of 15 to 16 year old for the adolescent females. Academic success as measured by current GPA relative frequencies were 7.4% have 3.5 or higher, 17.7% have from 3.0 to 3.5, 31.2% have from 2.5 to 3.0, and 43.7% have less than a 2.5. Majority of the sampled adolescents were in a stepfamily environment due to the divorce of their biological parents, 81.4%, with only 18.6%
reporting death of biological parent as reason. Table 5 illustrates the frequency for the reason living with stepparent for males and females. It shows that 88.9% males and 78.3% females were living with a stepparent for the reason of parental divorce and 11.1% males and 21.7% females were living with a stepparent for the reason of parental death.

As to the time that adolescents had been living in a stepfamily environment, 12.6% responded less than a year, 6.5% responded one year, 12.1% for two years, and 68.8% more than two years.

**Adolescents Living in Stepfather Households.** Of the 113 adolescents living with a stepfather, 31 were males and 82 were females. The age composition was 37.2% were between 12-14 years, 40.7% were between 15-16 years, 19.5% were between 17-18 years and 2.7% were 19 years or older. Academic success as measured by current GPA relative frequencies were 10.6% have 3.5 or higher, 23.9% have from 3.0 to 3.5, 33.6% have from 2.5 to 3.0, and 31.9% have less than a 2.5. Table 6 illustrates this frequency distribution of adolescents' GPA for each stepfamily type. The average communication score was 3.1037 (SD = .7505) and the average satisfaction score was 2.8779 (SD = .5616). As to the time that adolescents had been living with their stepfather, 8.0% responded less than a year, 9.7% responded one year, 10.6% for two years, and 71.7% more than two years (Table 7). Concurrently, the developmental stage at transition to stepfather household as measured by adolescents' grade level at transition was 26.5% preadolescence, 55.8% early adolescence, 15% mid adolescence, and 2.7% late adolescence. The other family demographic frequencies of number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, number of wives, and stepparent education level are illustrated in Table 8.
Adolescents Living in Stepmother Households. Of the 102 adolescents living with a stepmother, 32 were males and 70 were females. The age composition was 25.5% were between 12-14 years, 34.3% were between 15-16 years, 34.3% were between 17-18 years and 5.9% were 19 years or older. Academic success as measured by current GPA relative frequencies were 3.9% have 3.5 or higher, 10.8% have from 3.0 to 3.5, 28.4% have from 2.5 to 3.0, and 56.9% have less than a 2.5. Table 6 illustrates the frequency distribution of adolescents' GPA for each stepfamily type. The average communication score was 2.9379 (SD = .842) and the average satisfaction score was 2.6749 (SD = .7572). As to the time that adolescents had been living with their stepmother, 17.6% responded less than a year, 2.9% responded one year, 13.7% for two years, and 65.7% more than two years (Table 7). Concurrently, the developmental stage at transition to stepmother household as measured by adolescents' grade level at transition was 29.4% preadolescence, 35.3% early adolescence, 25.5% mid adolescence, and 9.8% late adolescence. The other family demographic frequencies of number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, number of wives, and stepparent education level are illustrated in Table 8.
Table 3

**Frequency Distribution of Adolescents by Gender For Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

**Frequency Distribution of Adolescents by Gender and Age:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-14 Year Old</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16 Year Old</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18 Year Old</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older than 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5**

**Frequency Distribution of Reason Adolescent Lives With Stepparent by Adolescent’s Gender:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Male N</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Female N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Divorce</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of one parent</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6**

**Frequency Distribution of Adolescents’ GPA For Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Stepfather %</th>
<th>Stepfather N</th>
<th>Stepmother %</th>
<th>Stepmother N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0-3.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-3.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0-2.5</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2.5</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

**Frequency Distribution of Time Adolescents Have Been Living With Stepparent for Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Stepfather %</th>
<th>Stepmother %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 years</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8

**Frequency Distribution of Other Family Factors for Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of siblings living in household</th>
<th>Stepfather</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No siblings</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sibling</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 siblings</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 siblings</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of stepsiblings living in household</th>
<th>Stepfather</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No stepsiblings</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 stepsibling</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 stepsiblings</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 stepsiblings</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of wives in household</th>
<th>Stepfather</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 wife</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 wives</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 wives</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Biological Parent’s Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stepfather</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary level</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stepparent’s Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stepfather</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary level</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adolescent Satisfaction and Communication Correlation

This section provides the correlation analysis of adolescents’ perception of satisfaction with stepfamily environment and communication level with stepparent for each stepparent group. The hypothesis is that there is a significant positive correlation between adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily and communication level with the stepparent. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated using the average adolescent satisfaction score and average communication score for each stepparent group. For stepfather households, the correlation between adolescent satisfaction and communication was $r = 0.711, p < 0.001$ and for stepmother households, the correlation was $r = 0.555, p < 0.001$. These results indicate there is a significant positive correlation between adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily environment and communication level with stepparent regardless of type of stepparent household. Table 9 illustrates these results.

Adolescents’ Academic Achievement Correlation

In this section correlation analysis of adolescents’ academic success as measured by current GPA to average satisfaction response and average communication level response is provided. It is divided into two subsections: correlation analysis between GPA and average adolescents’ satisfaction for each stepfamily type and correlation analysis between GPA and average adolescents’ communication for each stepfamily type.

Adolescent GPA and Satisfaction Correlation. The hypothesis is there is a significant negative correlation between adolescents’ GPA and average satisfaction response since these variables have reverse coding ($1 = \text{GPA} > 3.5, 4 = \text{Very Satisfied}$).
A Pearson product moment correlation was tested for significance for each type of stepparent household. For stepfather households, there was a positive correlation between adolescents' GPA and average satisfaction response with $r = .160$ and $p = .045$. This result indicates that as adolescents' satisfaction with stepfather household increases, the GPA decreases. For stepmother households, there was no significant correlation $r = - .10$, $p = .159$. Table 10 illustrates these results.

**Adolescent GPA and Communication Correlation.** The hypothesis is there is a significant negative correlation between adolescents' GPA and average communication response since these variables have reverse coding ($1 = \text{GPA} > 3.5$, $5 = \text{Strongly Agree}$). A Pearson product moment correlation was tested for significance for each type of stepparent household. For stepfather households, there was no significant correlation, $r = .120$, $p = .103$. For stepmother households, there was no significant correlation, $r = -.01$, $p = .888$. Table 11 illustrates these results.
### Table 9

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation and p-Value for Adolescents' Average Communication and Satisfaction Score of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p (one-tail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather household</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother household</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of significance = .01**

### Table 10

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation and p-Value for Adolescents' Average Satisfaction Score and GPA of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p (one-tail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather household</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.045*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother household</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Level of significance = .05*
Table 11

Pearson product moment correlation and p-value for adolescents' average communication score and GPA of each stepfamily type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p (one-tail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather household</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother household</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05
Adolescents' Satisfaction with Stepfamily

In this section, a comparative analysis of adolescents' satisfaction with stepfamily will be presented. It has two subsections: 1) Adolescents’ satisfaction level based on type of stepparent family and 2) Adolescents’ satisfaction level based on adolescents’ gender and developmental stage at transition to stepfamily.

**Type of Stepparent Family.** The hypothesis is that adolescents who live in stepfather households will have a significantly higher average satisfaction response than adolescents who live in stepmother households. The average adolescent satisfaction response for stepfather households was $\bar{x} = 2.878$ (SD = .5616) and for stepmother households was $\bar{x} = 2.675$ (SD = .7572). Table 12 presents these results. A t-test of two independent population means was applied to test this hypothesis with $t = 2.246$, d.f. = 213 and $p = .013$. This result indicates that adolescents’ average satisfaction with stepfather households is significantly higher than with stepmother households.

**Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily.** A two-way analysis of variance procedure was applied to each stepfamily type to determine if adolescents’ gender or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were significant factors of adolescents’ satisfaction to stepparent household. An interaction effect between these factors was not analyzed because the adolescents’ average satisfaction sample size for certain developmental stages at transition to stepparent household for both genders was less than three.

**Stepfather household.** The results suggest that neither adolescent’s gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepfather household are significant factors of
adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfather household. Table 13 and 14 illustrate these marginal means. The male and female mean for satisfaction with stepfamily life in the stepfather household indicates no difference between them. Table 15 reports the two-way analysis of variance results.

Stepmother household. The results suggest that neither adolescent’s gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepmother household are significant factors of adolescents’ satisfaction with stepmother household. Table 13 and 14 illustrate the marginal means. The male and female mean for satisfaction with stepfamily life in the stepmother household indicates no difference between them. Table 16 reports the two-way analysis of variance results.
### Table 12

**Adolescents' Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>2.878</td>
<td>.5616</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother</td>
<td>2.675</td>
<td>.7572</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13

**Adolescents' Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Adolescents' Gender of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2.937</td>
<td>.6819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2.856</td>
<td>.5119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

Adolescents' Average Satisfaction, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescence (&lt; 6th grade)</td>
<td>2.908</td>
<td>.6937</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Adolescence (6th – 8th grade)</td>
<td>2.658</td>
<td>.5466</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Adolescence (9th – 10th grade)</td>
<td>2.833</td>
<td>.4028</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Adolescence (11th – 12th grade)</td>
<td>3.107</td>
<td>.0924</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 15

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents' Average Satisfaction in Stepfather Household:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.383</td>
<td>.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage at transition to stepfamily</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05

### Table 16

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents' Average Satisfaction in Stepmother Household:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage at transition to stepfamily</td>
<td>.07496</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05
Adolescents’ Communication with Stepparent

In this section, a comparative analysis of adolescents’ communication with stepparent will be presented. It has two subsections: 1) Adolescents’ communication based on type of stepparent family and 2) Adolescents’ communication based on adolescents’ gender and developmental stage at transition to stepfamily.

Type of Stepparent Family. The hypothesis is that adolescents who live in stepfather households will have a significantly higher average communication response than adolescents who live in stepmother households. The average adolescent communication response for stepfather households was $\bar{x} = 3.104$ (SD = .7505) and for stepmother households was $\bar{x} = 2.938$ (SD = .842). Table 17 presents adolescents’ average communication, standard deviation and sample size for each type of stepfamily. A t-test of two independent population means was applied to test this hypothesis with $t = 1.53$, d.f. = 213 and $p = .064$. This result suggests that adolescents’ average communication with stepfathers is not significantly higher than with stepmothers.

Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily. A two-way analysis of variance procedure was applied to each type of stepfamily household to determine if adolescents’ gender or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were significant factors of adolescents’ communication with stepparent. An interaction effect between these factors was not analyzed because the adolescents’ average satisfaction sample size for certain developmental stages at transition to stepparent household for both genders was less than three.
Stepfather household. The results suggest neither adolescent’s gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepfather household are significant factors of adolescents’ communication with stepfather. Table 18 and 19 illustrates the marginal means. The male and female average communication response with stepfather indicates no difference between them. Table 20 reports the two-way analysis of variance results. Adolescents’ gender or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were not significant factors related to adolescents’ communication with stepfathers.

Stepmother household. The results suggest neither adolescent’s gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepmother household are significant factors of adolescents’ communication with stepmother. Table 18 and 19 illustrates the marginal means. The male and female average communication response with stepmother indicates no difference between them. Table 21 reports the two-way analysis of variance results. Adolescents’ gender or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were not significant factors related to adolescents’ communication with stepmothers.
### Table 17

**Adolescents' Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>3.104</td>
<td>.7505</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother</td>
<td>2.938</td>
<td>.8420</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 18

**Adolescents' Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Adolescents' Gender of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>3.283</td>
<td>.9105</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3.036</td>
<td>.6744</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19

**Adolescents' Average Communication, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescence (&lt; 6th grade)</td>
<td>3.291</td>
<td>.9245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Adolescence (6th - 8th grade)</td>
<td>3.070</td>
<td>.7163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Adolescence (9th - 10th grade)</td>
<td>2.776</td>
<td>.3332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Adolescence (11th - 12th grade)</td>
<td>3.794</td>
<td>.4050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents' Communication in Stepfather Household.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily</td>
<td>.863</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.579</td>
<td>.199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05

Table 21

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ Average Communication in Stepmother Household.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.0153</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage at transition to stepfamily</td>
<td>.09069</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05
Adolescents' Academic Achievement

In this section, a comparative analysis of adolescents' academic achievement will be presented. It has three subsections: 1) Academic achievement based on type of stepparent family and 2) Academic achievement based on adolescents' gender and developmental stage at transition to stepfamily.

**Type of Stepparent Family.** The hypothesis is that adolescents' GPA is significantly higher in stepfather households than stepmother households. The average adolescent GPA for stepfather households was $\bar{x} = 2.87$ (SD = .99) and for stepmother households was $\bar{x} = 3.38$ (SD = .83). Table 22 illustrates the results. A t-test of two independent population means was applied to test this hypothesis with $t = -4.113$, d.f. = 213 and $p = .000$. This result suggests that adolescents' average GPA in stepfather households is significantly higher than in stepmother households since a higher GPA is indicated by a lower response value.

**Adolescents' Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily.** The hypothesis is that adolescents' gender or developmental stages at transition to stepparent household are significant factors of adolescents' GPA for each type of stepparent household. An interaction effect between these factors was not analyzed because the adolescents' average satisfaction sample size for certain developmental stages at transition to stepparent household for both genders was less than three.

**Stepfather household.** The results suggest that neither adolescent's gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepfather household are significant factors of adolescents' GPA. Table 23 and 24 illustrates the marginal means. The male and female
average GPA in stepfather households indicates no difference between them. Table 25 reports the two-way analysis of variance results.

*Stepmother household.* The results suggest neither adolescent’s gender nor developmental stages at transition to stepmother household are significant factors of adolescents’ GPA. Table 23 and 24 illustrates the marginal means. The male and female average GPA in stepmother household indicates no difference between them. Table 26 reports the two-way analysis of variance results.
Table 22

**Adolescents’ Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepmother</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23

**Adolescents’ Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Adolescents’ Gender of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24

**Adolescents' Average GPA, Standard Deviation and Sample Size Based on Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily of Each Stepfamily Type:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Stepfather Household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescence (&lt; 6th grade)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Adolescence (6th – 8th grade)</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Adolescence (9th – 10th grade)</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Adolescence (11th – 12th grade)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ GPA in Stepfather Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.04067</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage at transition to stepfamily</td>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.767</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05

Table 26

**Two-Way ANOVA Results for Adolescents’ GPA in Stepmother Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.271</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage at transition to stepfamily</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.137</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of significance = .05
Other Family Factors

This section provides the Chi-Square analysis of other family factors to adolescent satisfaction with stepfamily, adolescent-stepparent communication, and academic achievement.

Adolescents' Satisfaction and Other Family Factors. Chi-Square tests were performed to determine if other family factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level, were related to adolescents’ average satisfaction response based on type of stepparent household. For stepfather households, the only significant factor was stepfather’s education level with $\chi = 9.67$, df = 4 and $p = .046$. For stepmother households, there were no significant family demographic factors. Table 27 illustrates the results of the Chi-Square tests for both stepparent households.

Adolescents' Communication and Other Family Factors. Chi-Square tests were performed to determine if other family factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level, were related to adolescents’ average communication response based on type of stepparent household. For stepfather households, there were no significant family demographic factors. For stepmother households, the only significant factor was number of siblings with $\chi = 13.13$, df = 3 and $p = .004$. Table 28 illustrates the results of the Chi-Square tests for both stepparent households.
Table 27

Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values for Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ Satisfaction of Each Stepfamily Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Stepfather household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi )</td>
<td>( p )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Siblings</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stepsiblings</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with Stepparent</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wives</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent Education Level</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>.046*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Level of significance = .05

Table 28

Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values of Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ Communication of Each Stepfamily Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Stepfather household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi )</td>
<td>( p )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Siblings</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stepsiblings</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with Stepparent</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wives</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent Education Level</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Level of significance = .01
Adolescents' GPA and Other Family Factors. Chi-Square tests were performed to determine if other family factors, specifically number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level, were related to adolescents' GPA based on type of stepparent household. For stepfather households, the only significant family demographic factor was number of siblings with $\chi^2 = 16.46$, df = 6 and $p = .011$. For stepmother households, the significant factor was number of wives with $\chi^2 = 6.50$, df = 2 and $p = .039$. Table 29 illustrates the results of the Chi-Square tests for both stepparent households.
Table 29

Chi-Square Statistics and p-Values of Other Family Factors and Adolescents’ GPA of Each Stepfamily Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Stepfather household</th>
<th>Stepmother Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Siblings</td>
<td>16.46</td>
<td>.011*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stepsiblings</td>
<td>11.06</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with Stepparent</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wives</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent Education Level</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Level of significance = .05
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the purpose and methods of the study. It will be followed by a discussion of the study results as they relate to prior research with a summary of the overall implication of the findings. Finally, the study limitations will be addressed with recommendations for future research.

Review of Purpose and Method of Study

Purpose of the Study. The main purpose of this study was to compare adolescents in two stepfamily structures in order to determine whether adolescents living with families headed by stepfathers were comparable to adolescents living with stepmother families in the country of Kuwait. It investigated adolescents’ perceptions of the transition to a new family style taking into the account the new roles assigned to the new members in the family such as the stepchildren and their stepparents. The adolescent living with a stepfather and the adolescent living with the stepmother were the focus. Variables such as adolescents’ satisfaction to the new environment, adolescent-stepparent communication and school achievement were examined and any relationship between these variables in order to assess how well adolescents accommodate in the new stepfamily environment and how well they were adjusted at home and in school.

The specific objectives we initialized were:

1. To determine whether adolescents perceive their stepfamily environment differently, taking into account the adolescents’ perception to stepfather’s roles, stepmother’s roles, and their roles in the family.
2. To determine whether adolescents’ satisfaction to their new family life and communication with their stepparent, as the main factors to adjusting to the stepfamily, differ in stepfather and stepmother families.

3. To determine whether adolescents’ perception of stepfamily functioning was associated with their developmental stage at the time of transition to the stepfamily household, pre-adolescence (< 6th grade), early adolescence (6th - 8th grade), mid adolescence (9th - 10th grade), and late adolescence (11th - 12th grade).

4. To determine whether gender was a factor related to adolescents’ satisfaction with family life and communication with stepparent.

5. To determine whether school achievement was related to adolescents’ satisfaction with family life and communication with stepparent.

6. To determine other family demographic factors that could be related to the adolescents’ satisfaction with family life, communication with their stepparent and their school achievement. These factors were reason for stepparent – death or divorce, educational level of the stepparent, number of wives, and number of siblings and stepsiblings living in the same household.

**Method of the Study.** Only adolescents between the ages of 12 to 18 years old from stepmother households and stepfather households have participated in this study. The sample consists of two hundreds and fifteen (215) adolescents of which 31 males and 82 females live in stepfather households and 32 males and 70 females live in stepmother households. The adolescents from the two different types of stepfamilies were compared on measures including two forms, one for adolescents living with stepmothers and
another form for adolescents living with stepfathers. The two forms were comprised of the same aspects and constructs, that of demographic information, adolescent-stepparent communication, and adolescent satisfaction in the stepfamily.

This survey instrument was used to investigate adolescents’ level of adjustment in stepfather families and stepmother families in relation to other variables such as adolescents’ school achievement, adolescents’ gender, and developmental stage at transition to the new family. Other family demographic information was recorded for all subjects. Correlation analysis, t-test of two independent population means, two-way analysis of variance and Chi-square test of independence were used to examine variables related to the two types of stepfamily structures.

Study Results and Discussion

Each research hypothesis will be reviewed with its results. Previous research findings regarding each research hypothesis will be compared to this study’s research findings and discussed.

Adolescents’ Satisfaction with Stepfamily and Stepparent Communication Relationship. The first research hypothesis states that there is a positive correlation between adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily and communication level with the stepparent. The hypothesis is supported in the study.

As hypothesized, the results of this study showed a significant positive relationship between adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily environment and communication level with stepparent in stepfather households and stepmother households. That is, the more satisfaction adolescents have living in a stepparent
household, the better communication level and better quality relationship with their stepparents. However, the Pearson product moment correlation for stepfather households was higher than stepmother households.

The results were consistent with previous research findings that communication skills were crucial to satisfaction with family relationships (Barnes & Olson, 1982; Skopin et al, 1993). In addition, a number of research findings assert that the relationship between adolescents and their stepfathers was better than with their stepmothers (Ganong, Coleman, & Mistina, 1995). This may be because adolescents express different emotions towards a stepfather compared to their feelings towards a stepmother. That is, stepfathers in general allow more space, less restricted rules and more freedom compared to stepmothers, which can influence adolescents' perceptions of each stepparent type and thus the quality of relationship with them.

**Adolescent's Family Satisfaction and School Achievement Relationship.** The second research hypothesis states that there is a negative correlation between adolescents' family satisfaction response and adolescents' GPA, since these variables are reverse coded (4 = extremely satisfied, 1 = GPA=> 3.5). The hypothesis was not supported for stepfather households.

The results suggested a significant positive correlation between adolescents' family satisfaction and adolescents' academic achievement level in stepfather households. For stepmother households, there was a negative correlation between these two variables as hypothesized but it was not significant.
The results were consistent with previous research findings that children in stepfamily households did not perform as well in school as children growing up with both biological parents (Downey, 1995). The correlation between adolescents' satisfaction and their school achievement can be contributed to the availability of resources in the stepfamily household such as parental time devoted to stepchildren and the stepparent education level (Henry & Lovelance, 1995).

In addition, for stepfather households in Kuwait, the positive correlation between adolescents' satisfaction and their low GPA could be due to adolescents feeling more satisfied when their stepfather doesn't have high expectations academically. Therefore the adolescent can become apathetic toward their education. This notion was supported by Ganong, Coleman, & Mistina (1995) when they asserted that the relationship between adolescents and their stepfathers is not as negative as compared to their relationship toward their stepmothers. That is perhaps because stepfathers are not as involved and attentive in the daily activities with their stepchildren and this creates less tension.

**Adolescent-Stepparent Communication and School Achievement Relationship.**

The third hypothesis states that there was a negative correlation between adolescents' GPA and average communication response, since these variables have reverse coding (5 = strongly disagree, 1 = GPA=> 3.5). The research hypothesis was not supported by the findings. A Pearson product moment correlation analyses indicated that for both stepfather households and stepmother households there was no significant implication that adolescents-stepparent communication relates to adolescents' academic achievement.
This result supports Astone and McLanahan (1991) study that the mediating factors of the relationship between family structure and educational accounted for a small amount, approximately 10% of the difference in graduation rates among stepchildren and children in households containing both mother and father. However, research done by Downey (1995) indicated that the quality of relationship between stepparent and stepchild may be strained and stepparent may not readily provide resources such as time or the child may not be willing to receive them. These factors can contribute to stepchildren's low school achievement.

Differences in the findings in this study and previous studies calls for further research in this area to explain the relationship between adolescent' academic achievement and family relationship to better assess these variables among stepfamilies.

Adolescents’ Family Satisfaction Based on Stepfamily Type. The fourth research hypothesis states that adolescents who live in stepfather households will have greater satisfaction than adolescents living in stepmother households. The study findings support the research hypothesis. Results indicated that the average adolescents’ family satisfaction was significantly higher in stepfather households than with stepmothers.

This result supports Henry & Lovelance and (1995) Colman & Ganong (1997) findings that in stepfather households, the relationship between stepparent and stepchildren is not as overwhelming as for stepmother households. A contributing factor may be that stepfathers are often less involved in family activities in general and more permissive toward their stepchildren (Kurdek, 1993) compared to stepmothers.
These studies findings appear consistent with current research results. Combining the adolescents' need for a balance between connectedness and autonomy with stepfathers who typically have more permissive parenting and less interaction may explain why adolescents living in stepfather households have greater satisfaction than those living with stepmothers. This could be especially true if stepchildren find an alternative resource for emotional support through peers or their biological parents not living with them, which can ease the tension in stepfamily households. Additionally, in stepfather households the biological mother can serve as a mediator to alleviate the tension between the adolescent and stepfather. This may be another reason why adolescents feel better and adjust better in stepfather households compared to stepmother households. However, it could not be assumed in all cases.

Adolescents' Family Satisfaction Based on Adolescents' Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily. The fifth research hypothesis states that adolescents' gender and/or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household are significant factors of adolescents' family satisfaction. This hypothesis is not supported by the study findings. A two-way analysis of variance of the adolescents in each type of stepparent household suggested that adolescents' gender and developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were not significant factors for either stepparent household.

These results are consistent with other research findings that family resources in relation to adolescents' family life satisfaction in remarried family households found no significant correlation between adolescents' age or adolescents’ gender and their
satisfaction with stepfamily life (Henry and Lovelance, 1995). However, another study examined the interrelation between stepparent gender and the gender of stepchildren. These findings argued that children are more distraught by a disrupted relationship with the biological parent of the same sex than by one of the opposite sex (Santrock, Richard, & Gary, 1982). Therefore, there is a need for further research to confirm whether there is a relation between the variables of stepparent gender, stepchildren gender, and the quality of the adolescent-stepparent relationship.

**Adolescent-Stepparent Communication Based on Stepfamily Type.** The sixth hypothesis stated that adolescents who live in stepfather households have a significantly higher average communication response than adolescents who live in stepmother households. The findings do not support the research hypothesis.

A t-test of two independent population means showed that adolescents' average communication level with stepfathers was not significantly higher than with stepmothers. The results did not support previous research findings that adolescents communicate with their stepfathers better than with their stepmothers (Downey, 1995). This seems like it didn’t matter who the adolescents lived with, whether a stepfather or a stepmother. It was probably more important to the adolescents to be satisfied with the stepfamily environment than who the stepparent could be.

**Adolescents’ Communication based on Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily.** The seventh hypothesis states that adolescents’ gender and/or developmental stage at transition to stepparent household are significant factors of
adolescents’ communication with their stepparents. The hypothesis was not supported by the findings.

The results of the two-way analysis of variance suggested that adolescent’s gender and developmental stage at transition to stepparent household were not significant factors of the adolescents’ communication with stepparent for either type of stepparent household.

This is consistent with previous findings which have noted no significant relation of adolescent’ satisfaction with their gender or their age (Henry & Lovelance, 1995; Skopin, Newman, and McKenry, 1993).

Adolescents’ Academic Achievement Based on Stepfamily Type. The eighth research hypothesis stated that adolescents’ GPA would be significantly higher in stepfather households than stepmother households. The hypothesis is supported by the findings.

A t-test of two independent population means indicated that adolescents’ academic achievement level as measured by their GPA was significantly higher for stepfather households than stepmother households.

The results support the previous research findings that boys and girls tend to fare better academically in mother/stepfather households than in father/stepmother (Downey, 1995). This could be true since adolescents feel more satisfied living with stepfathers than with stepmothers, which explains why adolescents achieve a better academic performance in stepfather households.
Adolescents’ Academic Achievement Based on Adolescents’ Gender and Developmental Stage at Transition to Stepfamily. The ninth hypothesis stated that adolescents’ gender and developmental stage at transition to stepparent family are significant factors of adolescents’ GPA for each type of stepparent household. The hypothesis is not supported by the findings.

A two-way analysis of variance for each type of stepparent household indicated that adolescents’ gender and developmental stage at transition to stepfamily were not significant factors of the adolescents’ GPA in both stepfamily types.

This is consistent with previous research findings that found no relation between adolescents’ gender and their school outcome (Downey, 1995). In addition, it was found only 1 of 21 interaction terms was statistically significant, about what would occur by chance, which was for student’s educational expectations and was negative, suggesting a disadvantage to girls living in stepfather households and boys living in stepmother households (Downey, 1995).

Adolescents’ Satisfaction and Other Family Factors. The eleventh hypothesis states that other family demographic factors are related to adolescents’ satisfaction with stepfamily. These family factors were number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level. The hypothesis is only partially supported in the study.

Results indicated that adolescents’ satisfaction response and stepfather’s education level were related. In stepmother households, no significant family factors were present.
The results did not support the previous research findings, which stated that demographic variables such as stepparent educational level yielded no significant relationship with overall adolescent family life satisfaction. Only parent education level was found to be related to adolescent family life satisfaction (Henry & Lovelace, 1995). Possible reasons why this study's results differ from other studies might be because it was implemented in a different culture than the American culture. Additionally, other studies may have samples with had different stepfather educational characteristics than this study, which could contribute to the difference in the research findings.

Given the importance of adolescent family life satisfaction for adolescent adaptation and parent-adolescent relations, such results highlight the need for further examination of factors within remarried family households that relate to adolescent family life satisfaction (Henry, 1994).

Adolescent-Stepparent Communication and Other Family Factors. The twelfth research hypothesis states that other family factors are related to adolescent-stepparent communication. These family factors were number of siblings, number of stepsiblings, reason for stepparent (divorce or death of biological parent), number of wives, and stepparent education level. The hypothesis was supported only in stepmother households.

The study finding suggests that in stepmother households the number of siblings had a significant relation to adolescent-stepmother communication level. For stepfather households, none of the demographic family factors were significant.
This study’s finding is similar to the Ganong and Coleman (1993) study on stepsiblings. Their results indicated that the presence of stepsiblings in a household is a greater problem for both parents and children in the family. This could occur because of jealousy, problems of sharing space, or competition.

**Adolescents’ GPA and Other Family Factors.** The thirteenth hypothesis states that other family demographic factors are related to adolescents’ academic achievement in stepparent families. The hypothesis was partially supported by the study findings.

Results of this study suggested that number of siblings had a significant relation with adolescents’ academic achievement in stepfather households. Additionally, number of wives had a significant relation with adolescents’ GPA in stepmother households.

The results support the notion that social support presented by other members in the family such as siblings and stepsiblings can relate strongly to adolescents’ adaptation to the family (Ganong & Coleman, 1993; Phillips, 1997). As to the results for the stepmother households, prior studies done in the United States, where monogamy is the norm, would not be relevant. However, cultural norms in Kuwait place the primary responsibility of children’s academic success on mothers, which appear to be consistent with these results.

**Implication of the Study Findings**

This study should provide better understanding of how stepfamilies in Kuwait function. Since stepfamilies function differently than other family structures, only a comparison was applied within stepfather household and stepmother households to add better generalization within stepfamilies and how its members interact. Relationships
between variables such as adolescent’s satisfaction to the stepfamily life, adolescent-stepparent communication quality, and adolescents’ academic achievement were chosen as measures for adolescents’ adjustment to the stepfamily environment. Gender of adolescents and their developmental stage at transition to the stepfamily household were analyzed for their importance in adolescents’ development and the quality of adolescent’s relationship with their stepparents.

This study is to emphasize Ganong & Coleman (1993) in their meta-analytic study of the importance of examining gender as an important variable in stepfamily structure. In addition, Ganong & Coleman stressed the fact that comparison groups of children from other family structures were needed so that we could know whether this outcome would be true only in stepfamilies.

Finally, this study’s findings will add a literature basis for stepfamilies in Kuwait.

Limitations of the Study

1. The influence of parenting style as a factor is not accounted for in this study.
2. The socioeconomic factor and its impact on family relationships particularly when a stepfather is the financial provider in the family are not examined.
3. Ethnicity as an important factor is not controlled for.
4. The relationship between the biological parent and stepparent is not accounted for as a factor influencing adolescents’ perceptions of adjustment to the stepfamily.
5. The adolescent’s relationship with the other biological parent who he/she doesn’t reside with is not accounted for as a factor influencing adolescents’ perceptions of their adjustment to the stepfamily.


Recommendations for Future Research

The number of subjects in this study was mostly female, 31 male, 82 female from stepfather families and 32 male, 70 females from stepmother families. There is a need for further research studies based on a larger sample of male subjects from stepfather and stepmother households.

Additionally, this study only addresses the adolescents' perspective of the stepfamily. There is a need for further research studies from the parent and stepparent's perspective in Kuwait.
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION

Please tell me about yourself.

**PLEASE CHECK [X] IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX:**

1. Your Age is:
   □ 12-14  □ 15-16  □ 17-18  □ Older

2. Your Gender is:
   □ M  □ F

3. Your education level is:
   □ 6th grade  □ 7th grade  □ 8th grade
   □ 9th grade  □ Sophomore  □ Junior  □ Senior

4. Your accumulative GPA is:
   □ 4.00-3.5  □ below 3.5-3.0  □ below 3.0-2.5  □ below 2.5

5. Tell me who lives with you in the house (Check as many as applied):
   Yes  No
   □  □  Grand Parents
   □  □  Father and stepmother
   □  □  Mother and stepfather
   □  □  Mother
   □  □  Father
   □  □  Brother(s)
   □  □  Sister(s)
   □  □  Step-sibling(s)
   □  □  Uncle/Aunt
   □  □  Others (please specify) ________

6. You live with a stepfather because of your biological parent's
   □ Death  □ Divorce
7. How long since you lived with your stepfather?
   □ Less than a year  □ One year  □ Two years  □ More than two years
   □ Do not live with my stepfather

8. Do you have siblings living with the family?
   □ Yes  □ No
   (If "No", skip question number 9)

9. How many siblings living with you in the family?
   □ None  □ One sibling  □ Two siblings  □ More (specify)________ Siblings

10. Do you have stepsiblings living with the family?
    □ Yes  □ No
    (If "No", skip question number 11)

11. How many stepsiblings living with you in the family?
    □ None  □ One stepsibling  □ Two stepsiblings  □ More (specify)________ stepsiblings

12. Your mother’s level of education is:
    □ University  □ Some University  □ Community College  □ Some Community College
    □ High School  □ Some High School  □ Tech. Education  □ Secondary  □ Elementary
    □ No Education  □ Other (specify)_____

13. Your stepfather’s level of education is:
    □ University  □ Some University  □ Community College  □ Some Community College
    □ High School  □ Some High School  □ Tech. Education  □ Secondary  □ Elementary
    □ No Education  □ Other (specify)_____
APPENDIX B

Adolescent-Stepparent Communication Form
(Barnes & Olson, 1982)

SECTION II: ADOLESCENT-STEPFATHER COMMUNICATION

**PLEASE CIRCLE ONE** of the 5 possible responses that is appropriate for each statement:

1. I can discuss my beliefs with my stepfather without feeling restrained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I can discuss my beliefs with my stepfather without feeling embarrassed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my stepfather tells me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. My stepfather is a good listener.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I am sometimes afraid to ask my stepfather for what I want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. My stepfather has a tendency to say things to me, which would be better left unsaid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. My stepfather can tell how I am feeling without asking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I am very satisfied with how my stepfather and I talk together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. If I were in trouble, I could tell my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PLEASE CIRCLE ONE of the 5 possible responses that is appropriate for each statement:**

10. I openly show affection to my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. When we are having a problem, I often give my stepfather the silent treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. I am careful about what I say to my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. When talking to my stepfather, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. My stepfather tries to understand my point of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. There are topics I avoid discussing with my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. I find it easy to discuss problems with my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
19. My stepfather nags me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My stepfather insults me when she/he is angry with me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. I can express my true feelings about things to my stepfather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Adolescent Satisfaction Form
(Olson & Wilson, 1982)

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:

1. How close you feel to the rest of your family?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

2. Your ability to say what you want in your family?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

3. Your family's ability to try new things?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

4. Your ability to express your opinion?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

5. Your input regarding major family decisions?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

6. How family members consult each other on personal decisions?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

7. How the family considers your suggestions to resolving problems?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

8. The fairness of discipline in your family?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

9. How the family tries new ways of dealing with problems?
   - Extremely Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Dissatisfied
   - Somewhat Satisfied
   - Extremely Satisfied

10. How family members go along with what the family decides to do?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

11. How everyone shares responsibilities in the family?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

12. How rules can be changed in the family?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

13. How much input you have regarding discipline in the family?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

14. How clear the rules are in the family?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

15. How often your stepfather make decisions in your family?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied

16. How much your mother and stepfather argue with each other?
    - Extremely Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Dissatisfied
    - Somewhat Satisfied
    - Extremely Satisfied
**PLEASE CIRCLE ONE** of the 4 possible responses that is appropriate for each statement:

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:

17. How fair the criticism is in your family?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

18. The amount of time you spend with your family?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

19. The way family members can talk together to solve family problems?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

20. Your freedom to be alone when you want to?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

21. How the chores are assigned in your family?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

22. Your family's acceptance of your friends?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

23. How clear it is what your family expects of you?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

24. How often you make decisions as a family, rather than individually?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

25. The number of fun things your family does together?
   Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

Open Question:
With whom would you rather live with?

☐ Father ☐ Mother ☐ With someone else

Why?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Thanks for your participation.

*******************************************************************************
APPENDIX D

Basic Information Form

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

STUDENT'S NAME: ..............................................

SCHOOL: ......................................................

GRADE: .........................................................

AGE: .........................................................

☐ 12-14  ☐ 15-16  ☐ 17-18  ☐ OLDER

GENDER:

☐ MALE  ☐ FEMALE

WHOM DO YOU LIVE WITH:

Yes  No

☐ ☐ Biological father and mother

☐ ☐ Mother only

☐ ☐ Father only

☐ ☐ Stepfather and biological mother

☐ ☐ Stepmother and biological father

☐ ☐ Relatives (uncle, aunt, grandmother, grandfather, brother/sister)

DOES YOUR FATHER OR STEPFATHER HAVE MORE THAN ONE WIFE?

☐ YES  ☐ NO

IF YES, HOW MANY STEPMOTHERS LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD? _______

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.
REFERENCES


development. In A. Booth & J. Dunn (Eds.), Stepfamilies: Who benefits? Who does not?
(pp. 55-79). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Heyman, J. R. (1993). The relationship between family structures as defined by
parental marital status, family structure histories, gender, and various academic outcomes
for seventh-grade students in private schools. Dissertation Abstracts International, 45(2),
718. Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

Issues, 8, 259-277.

before it was tried. Review of Educational Research, 45, 209-230.


In Irene Levin and Marvin B. Sussman (Eds.), History, research, and policy, (pp. 19-39).
NC: Haworth Press.

distress of newly married mothers and stepfathers. Journal of Marriage and the Family,
52, 81-85.

adolescent’s appraisals of family climate and parenting behavior. Journal of Family
Issues, 14(2), 279-290.

Lambery, R, & Lambery, E. (Eds.) (1992). The Other Kuwait. Worthington, Ohio:
Lee R. Lambert & Associates.

competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian,

367-375.

children: Depression and heterosexual relationship difficulties in the young adult years.
Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 27(1-2), 123-134.


