

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON RISK BEHAVIOURS AND ALCOHOL
CONSUMPTION.

An Investigation into the Effect of Parental Divorce on Risk Behaviours and
Alcohol Consumption

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Bachelor of Arts in Psychology 2019/20

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my family who have always pushed and encouraged me to pursue my goals in life. Without the continued emotional and financial support of my parents the attainment of a degree would not have been possible. I hope I can make both of my parents proud by completing this degree. I would also like to give a massive thanks to all my friends inside and outside of college who got me through this final year with their constant support. I would like to give an extensive thanks to my supervisor Dr Fearghal O'Brien who has been patient, enthusiastic and motivated me the whole way throughout the formation of my study and showed considerable patience with his assistance. I would also like to thank my final year project lecturer Michelle Kelly, who put in so much effort, assistance and guidance to all of us in our times of need.

Abstract

It has been suggested that effects of parental divorce have on-going long-term consequences for those who were exposed to such adversities in childhood. This current study is interested in looking at the effect of divorce on adults in their levels of risk-taking behaviour and alcohol consumption levels. A sample of 331 participants were recruited via multiple social media platforms. Participants completed the DOSPERT scale for evaluating their levels of risk-taking behaviour and the AUDIT-C questionnaire to evaluate their levels of alcohol consumption. Two-way between group ANOVA's were carried out to investigate if there was an existing interaction effect between the independent variables (Gender and coming from a divorced family or not) and the dependent variables (risk behaviours and alcohol consumption) and also a main effect from each independent variable alone. A significant interaction was found only between gender and coming from a divorced family or not, on financial risk taking. There were also significant differences between males and females with males consistently scoring higher in risk behaviours and alcohol consumption. Further research regarding the effects of parental divorce on those in adulthood is necessary and would assist in helping determine if the effects of parental divorce are short-term or long-term.

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON RISK BEHAVIOURS AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

Introduction

In a lot of cases Divorce is not only the ending of a marriage but it can lead to the breakdown and the dissolution of a family unit. Throughout recent years there has been an increase in the interest on the effects that divorce/separation of parents have on children and adults. Researchers study the effect it has on one's education, mental health, alcoholic intake, drug use and many other topics. Although this study will specifically look at effects of divorce/separation on alcohol intake and the likelihood of taking risks in adulthood, it is widely known that the first two decades of one's life is the most crucial point for one's development both mentally and physically. Going through adversities like parental divorce/separation in this period of your life can have a detrimental effect on one's mental health such as, onset of mental health disorders and also in later life can lead to heavy alcohol consumption (Kessler et al., 2010; Keyes, Hatzenbuehler & Hasin, 2011), One study has said that the long-term consequences due to parental divorce are more serious for adulthood attainment and quality of life compared to those short-term effects found in childhood such as emotional and social problems (Amato & Keith (1991a)). These findings suggest how important it is to reduce the effects of such adversities in childhood and to thus; reduce the negative consequences in their subsequent life. Recent research finds that there is a major increase in the amount of divorces throughout Ireland in modern years and the possible effects they may be having on their children while emerging into adulthood. In Ireland from 2011 to 2016 the rate of separated or divorced adults increased by 8.9%. With such a growing increase in the rates of divorce it can be deemed an important rationale to look further into the effects of parental divorce.

It is fair to say that there is a plethora of research available on the effects of parental divorce in childhood but there is fewer research available which helps to describe these

ongoing effects into early adulthood and the life course of adulthood. Earlier studies show that clinicians suggested that when asking children and young adults there was a reported intense negative affect about their parent's divorce (Kalter, 1987; Wallerstein, 1991; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1997). Although observations like such can lead to a contradiction in existing empirical research which some have led to conclusion that latent psychological disorders are prevalent and tend to emerge as those emerge into adulthood after their parents' divorce (Huurre, Junkkari & Aro, 2006; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1997)

In recent years there has been a growing interest into researching the effects parental divorce on risk taking behaviours, This in turn, has led to the dominant view that risk taking can lead to a representation of a single personality trait or even a small bundle of sub traits (e.g., impulsivity and sensation seeking; Hansen & Breivik, 2001). A major amount of studies take a closer look at risk taking behaviours such as, alcohol intake and substance use in childhood leading on to adulthood. From earlier years Wolfinger, (1998) found that coming from a divorced family highly increases your chances of being a smoker and in the case of males, this also increases their chances of being a problem drinker. When reviewing literature on this topic from more recent years it is evident that these results are strongly consistent throughout the years with many studies finding that those who come from divorced families have higher alcohol intake levels and a higher rate of alcohol dependence (Huurre, T et al., 2010 ;Jackson, Rogers & Sartor, 2016; Pilowsky, Keyes & Hasin, 2009; Strine et al., 2012). A longitudinal study which assessed participants from early adolescence to adulthood found there was a higher risk of those from divorced families engaging in behaviours such as drinking, there was a decrease in the level of significance as they emerged into adulthood and were no longer significant (Thuen, Breivik, Wold, & Ulveseter, 2015). Similar to this, Kaur

(2015) established that marital status is not a strong predictor of young adults engaging in risky behaviours. However to contradict those findings a large scale study investigating effects of parental divorce on alcohol use suggest that divorce predicts an increased level of early alcohol use but it was also linked with a reduced onset of symptoms of alcohol dependence (Grant et al., 2015).

Within the research of effects of divorce there is a large insight into the health risks on those effected by divorce. A variable that is consistently investigated is Depression. Gilman, Kawachi, Fitzmaurice and Buka, (2003) found that those whose parents divorced in early childhood were twice as much at risk of depression in adulthood compared to those from intact families. Hemminki and Chen (2006) used Swedish data to conduct a study on the impacts of divorce on adult offspring physical health. They suggested that parental divorce can lead to the increased chances of contracting many types of cancer. They suggest that contracting the different forms of cancer may be due to an increase in alcohol and tobacco use and also an increase in sexual activity.

Divorcing of parents is found to not only have a direct effect on one's health but it is also said to have an effect on other factors associated to health risks including, social relationships, psychosocial functioning and health practices like alcohol intake or smoking (Gilman et al., 2003; Huurre et al 2006; Kirby, 2002; Thompson Jr, Lizardi, Keyes & Hasin, 2008). When considering social risks being affected by divorce Novak, Hammarstrom, and Ahlgren, (2007) found that those coming from a divorced background as a child their levels of smoking were higher in adulthood due to the adversities they were subjected to at home as well as by the influence of their peers during their childhood. This can be considered as a social risk as they are being influenced by their social environment around them. Although there is a lack of research in this area, it is a motivation of this study to examine if they are

more inclined to take more social risks if they come from a divorced family or not. Similarly, a study conducted by Schilling, Aseltine and Gore (2007) found that those who came from more socially disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to face adverse childhood experiences. Thus, their findings also complied with existing research indicate that there is a strong association between childhood adversity and antisocial behaviour and drug use during the transition into adulthood (Chapman, Dube & Anda, 2007; Dube et al., 2005)

In relation to financial risks in adulthood being influenced by the status of their parents relationship, Borden, Lee, Serido, and Collins, (2008) found that college students/emerging adults who came from divorced families were more inclined to have a higher rate of credit card debt compared to those who came from families with a higher more stable level of income. Although controversially, Eldar-Avidan, Haj-Yahia, and Greenbaum, (2009), suggests that young adults who have high resilience rates benefited more positively from the divorce of their parents in areas such as developmental maturity and learning how to use the resources around them and available to them to take responsibilities of different situations they may find themselves in.

As this study will look at the differences between genders on these topics, it is also important to take a look at the existing research available on the differences between males and females and the effects of divorce on each gender. Huurre et al., (2006) were interested in finding out the long-term psychosocial effects of parental divorce from adolescences to adulthood while also looking at gender differences. The study suggests that both genders that came from divorced families were more inclined to suffer more with negative life events and also subject themselves to more risky health related behaviours. The findings of this study are consistent with previous study findings that there are no gender differences (Amato and Keith

1991b; Jónsson, Njarðvik, Ólafsdóttir and Grétarsson, 2000; Rodgers et al. 1997; VanderValk, Spruijt, De Goede, Maas & Meeus, 2005). Although Hill, Yeung and Duncam, (2001) believe that there are gender differences that one gender is affected differently by parental divorce than the other. As the findings for gender differences varying it is a reasoning behind investigating the gender differences between those from divorced and non-divorced families.

Rationale

When considering all the above literature and beyond it helps to identify both the aims/objectives and the rationale of this study. The aims considered for this study are to firstly identify if there is a significant difference in levels of risk taking in areas of; Ethical, Health/Safety, Social, Recreational and Financial and also a significant difference in the level of alcohol intake in those who come from families of divorced parents. Another aim of this study is to see if there are gender differences between males and females when testing these variables to see if one gender is more effected by divorce than another. There are many possible rationales for this study. Firstly there is a lack of research when identifying the use of risk behaviours on a level of ; Ethical Risks, Financial risks and also social risks. It is hoped that this study will help develop interest in doing more research into such area. As mentioned above before there is literature which suggests that there is no gender differences in the effect of parental divorce although one study shows to disagree with this finding, this study will find if in Ireland there is a gender difference on the effect of parental divorce. The last rationale behind this study is that there is very little research carried out within Ireland on the effects of parental divorce on adulthood and it is hard to compare results from one country to another as many countries have very different ways of living and they also have different religious and

cultural beliefs etc. With greater understanding of the above independent variables and the effects they have it can be used to help those from divorced families deal with the adversities they were faced with as a child and get a better understanding as to why they may act or think differently in moral or even social dilemmas. This study attempts to gauge the strength of the effect of parental divorce on adults in terms of risk behaviours and levels of alcohol consumption.

Research Aims and Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of parental divorce on alcohol consumption and risk taking behaviours in adults in an effort to further our understanding in an area that has thus far yielded varying results.

Research questions include:

- Does parental divorce have an effect on levels alcohol consumption?
- Does parental divorce have an effect on risk taking behaviours?
- Are there any differences between genders from divorced and non-divorced families?

Therefore the hypotheses for the following study are;

H1; Parental divorce will have a negative effect on adults levels of risk behaviours.

H2; There will be a higher level of alcohol intake from those of divorced families.

H3; Males and females will significantly differ on their levels of the outcome variables risk behaviours and alcohol consumption.

Methods

Participants

For the following study, participants were recruited through convenience sampling and snowball sampling, both of which are considered non-rando sampling techniques meaning all individuals in the population do not have an equal chance of being chosen. Convenience sampling was first used by sharing a link to the survey on the researchers Facebook and Instagram account. This method of sampling also leads to snowball sampling as friends and family members will then share this link to further friends and family members that the researcher cannot access. A total of n=332 participants were gathered in total. Participants were aged from 18 years and older, although one participant gave an invalid age of 17 and their data has been withdrawn therefore only n=331 participants data will be used for data analysis (Males, n=73; Females, n =255 and prefer not to say, n=4) ranging from 18 to 62 years of age with a mean age of 29.77 (SD=534). This sample was gathered through the online resources mentioned above. Participants were also divided into two separate groups; divorced, n=137 and non-divorced n=136.

Materials

Participants took part in this study through an online questionnaire that was created by using the web app Google Documents. When all results were submitted and noted, they were then transferred to a Microsoft excel sheet which was then exerted into an SPSS file. To measure the two independent variables the DOSPERT Scale and the AUDIT-C scale were used.

DOSPERT scale.

The first variable to be measured was risk behaviours which was broken down into 5 sub-groups; Ethical, Financial, Health&Safety, Recreational and Social risks. To measure the levels of risk taking in these sub-groups the DOSPERT scale was used.

The DOSPERT scale is a psychometric scale which aids the assessment of risk taking behaviours in the above sub-groups (Blais & Weber, 2006). Weber, et al., 2002 reported that in their original 48 item DOSPERT scale is has an internal consistency reliability score ranging from .70 to .84. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .85. Participants will answer the likely hood of them taking part in the domain specific activity by using a 7- point Likert scale from 1 (*Extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*Extremely likely*). All item ratings are then added up across all items of a given subscale to obtain subscale scores. Therefore, this means the higher you score there is an increased likelihood you are willing to take risks in that given domain. (*See Appendix A*)

The AUDIT-C questionnaire. In order to gather data on alcohol consumption the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) which was created by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to assess Alcohol Consumption, drinking behaviours and alcohol related problems through a 10-item scoring survey. The AUDIT has been validated across all genders and many ranges of racial/ethnic groups. A systematic review of the psychometric properties of the AUDIT questionnaire presented that the AUDIT-C proved to be more efficient in results compared to the AUDIT that also presented stronger results than the original counterparts. One study evaluated the psychometrics properties of many abbreviated versions of the AUDIT and found that the AUDIT-C obtained the highest internal consistency (alpha of .84) (Gómez et al., 2005). In this current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .65. Therefore, to suit this study the questionnaire was modified by using the AUDIT- C

questionnaire which is the first 3 questions of the questionnaire to assess only levels of alcohol consumption. It is recommended that a score above 3 or more points on the AUDIT-C, or a report of having six or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion ever in the last year should lead to a more detailed analysis of one's levels of alcohol consumption and related problems with such (i.e. completion of the full questionnaire). A chart was also supplied to participants so they can identify the meaning of one standardised alcoholic drink. (*See Appendix B*)

Design

The research design of this study was a cross-sectional, correlational. between-groups design as it was based on a set of data from one group of people at a specific time with all the data being collected in a quantitative nature. This study had three independent variables; Alcohol Consumption, Gender and Risk Behaviours, the dependent variable for this study was whether your parents were divorced or not. Descriptive statistics were run to calculate the mean, standard error mean, median, standard deviation and range for all variables. Further inferential statistics gave a more in-depth analysis of the data. Two way between group ANOVA's were conducted to measure the interaction effect and main effect of gender and coming from a divorced and non-divorced family on alcohol consumptions and risk-taking behaviours on 5 separate subscales (Ethical, Financial, Health & Safety, Social and Recreational).

Procedure.

The questionnaire which was used in this study was distributed online, inviting participants to partake in the study. When participants accessed the link to the questionnaire, study information and briefing materials were shown. The information sheet outlined the nature of the study, the purpose of what it aimed to do and the inclusion and exclusion criteria of anyone willing to partake in the study. In the information sheet all participants were informed

that all data collected would be 100% anonymized which therefore meant that after completion of the survey your data, participants would not be able to withdraw their data or withdraw their consent to partake in the study. Participants were also given contact information for the researcher and the supervisor if they had any confusion or doubts about taking part in the study. Following reading this information, participants were asked if they understood the information given and if they could confirm and consent that they were over the age of 18 and that they understood they could not withdraw after submission of their data. For participation it is necessary that all questions were answered to continue to each part of the survey. The survey took less than 10 minutes to complete and once completed participants were redirected to a debriefing sheet. In the debriefing sheet the aims of the study were reiterated once again and participants were thanked for their participation. They were also given additional information, contacts and helplines they could reach out to if they have been upset by the study. They were also reminded for the final time that after submission they could not withdraw their data but that due to the nature of the study, they would not be identifiable as it was fully anonymized.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

From the output in the descriptive statistics of the categorical variables we know that there are 73 males (22.1 per cent) and 255 (77 per cent) in the sample and 3 (.9 per cent) people who preferred not to identify their gender, there was also data missing from 1 respondent giving a total of 332 participants. For the variable age we have information from 332 participants, ranging in age from 18 to 62, with a mean of 29.77 and SD of 9.726. (See *Table 1*).

In the Tests of Normality table, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic was used to identify if the data for these variables was normally distributed. All variables obtained a score lower than ($p < .05$) suggesting the violation of the assumption of normality although sometimes this can be common for a larger sample group. Further information for the continuous variables can be found below.

Table 1

Descriptive of all categorical variables.

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender		
Male	73	22.1
Female	255	77.0
DivorcedOrNot		
Yes	137	50.2
No	136	49.8

Table 2

Descriptive statistic of all continuous variables

	Std. Error	Median	SD	Range
	Mean			
Age	.534	27.00	9.726	17- 62
Total Social	.345	29.00	6.292	12- 42
Total Ethical	.312	12.00	5.67	6 - 33
Total	.486	16.00	17.82	6- 42
Recreational				
Total	.323	11.00	5.89	6 – 40
Financial				
Total	.394	19.00	7.17	6 - 38
Health&Safety				
Total Alcohol	.134	5.00	2.44	0 - 12

Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis 1

Two-way between groups ANOVA's were carried out on all scales of risk behaviours and for alcohol consumption levels. Two way ANOVA's allows you to look at the interaction effect between two independent variables on the dependent variable and also for a main effect from each independent variable on the dependent variable.

A two-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family on the level of Social risk taking scores. Participants were divided into two groups according to their gender male and female. The interaction effect between males and female and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family was not statistically significant, $F(1,266) = .857, p = .35$. There was no statistically significant main effect for either gender or coming from a divorced or non-divorced family. These results indicate that there was no significant difference in Social risk scores dependent on whether participants were male or female or no statistical difference whether you were from a divorced or non-divorced family and no significant interaction between participants gender and having divorced parents or not.

Table 3

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Social scores as the criterion.

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	4379.291	.943	.000
Gender	1	1.660	.006	.199
DivorcedOrNot	1	.069	.000	.792
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	.857	.003	.355
Error	266			

A two way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family on the level of ethical risk taking scores. The interaction effect between gender and coming from a divorced or a non-divorced family was not statistically significant, $F(1,266) = .204, p = .652$. There was a statistically

significant main effect for gender with males ($M=17.41$, $SD= 6.34$) scoring higher than females ($M=12.31$, $SD= 4.64$), $F(1,266) = 49.22$, $p= .00$; with an effect size that was large (partial eta squared= .156). The main effect of being from a divorced family or not did not reach statistical significance, $F(1,266)= .956$, $p= .329$. These results indicate that there was significant difference in ethical risk taking scores dependent on whether you were male or female, but there was no significant difference between coming from a divorced or non-divorced family and also no significant interaction between gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family.

Table 4

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Ethical scores as the criterion.

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	1635.001	.860	.000
Gender	1	49.22	.156	.000
DivorcedOrNot	1	.956	.004	.329
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	.204	.001	.652
Error	266			

A two way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family on the level Recreational risk taking scores. The interaction effect between gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family was not statistically significant, $F(1,266)= .020$, $p= .889$. There was a statistically significant main effect for gender again with males ($M= 24.25$, $SD=9.29$) scoring higher than females ($M= 16.45$, $SD= 7.95$), $F(1,266)= 41.75$, $p= .000$; with a large effect size (partial eta squared =.136). The main effect of being from a divorced family or not did not reach statistical

significance, $F(1,266) = .058$, $p = .809$. These results indicate that there was a significant difference in Recreational risk scores depending on gender, but there was no significant difference between coming from a divorced or non-divorced families and no interaction between those two independent variables.

Table 5

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Recreational scores as the criterion

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	1144.830	.811	.000
Gender	1	41.752	.136	.000
DivorcedOrNot	1	.058	.000	.809
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	.020	.000	.889
Error	266			

A two way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family on the level of Financial risk taking scores. The interaction effect between gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family was statistically significant $F(1,266) = 11,27$, $p = .001$. As there is an interaction effect between the two independent variables you cannot simply interpret the main of each independent variable on the dependent variable. There was also a statistically main effect for gender with males ($M=16.66$, $SD=7.51$) scoring higher than females ($M=11.11$, $SD= 4.50$), $F(1,266) = 46.079$, $p = .001$ having a large effect size (partial eta squared = .148) and also a statistically significant main effect for coming from a divorced ($M=13.33$, $SD= 6.61$) scoring

higher than those from non- divorced family ($M=11.52$, $SD= 4.84$), $F(1,266)= 13.36$, $p= .001$ with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .048). These results indicate that the influence of coming from a divorced family or non-divorced family depends on whether you are male or female.

Table 6

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Financial scores as the criterion.

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	1310.171	.831	.001
Gender	1	46.079	.148	.001
DivorcedOrNot	1	13.356	.048	.001
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	11.273	.041	.001
Error	266			

A two way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced on the level of Health & Safety risk taking scores. The interaction effect between gender and coming from a divorced and non-divorced family was not statistically significant, $F (1, 266) = .074$, $p= .785$. There was a statistically significant main effect for gender with males ($M=24.55$, $SD= 6.97$) scoring higher than females ($M=18.95$, $SD= 6.63$), $F (1,266) = 34.44$, $p= .001$; with a medium effect size (partial eta squared =.115). The main effect of being from a divorced or non-divorced family did not reach statistical significance, $F(1,266)= .862$, $p= .354$. These results indicate that there was a significant difference in Health and Safety risk scores depending on gender but there was no

significant difference on whether they came from a divorced or non-divorced family, and no significant interaction between gender and whether your parents were divorced or not.

Table 7

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Health & Safety scores as the criterion.

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	2007.704	.883	.001
Gender	1	34.447	.115	.001
DivorcedOrNot	1	.862	.003	.354
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	.074	.001	.785
Error	266			

Hypothesis 2

A two-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to first explore the impact of gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family on levels of alcohol consumption.

Participants were divided into two groups for gender; Male and Female. They were also classified as coming from a divorced or non-divorced family. The interaction effect between gender and coming from a divorced or non-divorced family was not significant ($F(1, 266) = 0.42, p = .516$). There was a statistically significant main effect for type of gender with males ($M = 6.42, SD = 2.37$) scoring higher than females ($M = 5.24, SD = 2.34$), $F(1, 266) = 11.04, p = .001$); however the effect size was small (partial eta squared = .04). The main effect for being from a divorced family or not did not reach statistical significance $F(1, 266) = 1.26, p = .263$. These results indicate that there was a significant difference in Alcohol consumption scores

depending on gender, but there was no significant difference between coming from a divorced or non-divorced family, and no significant interaction between these variables either.

Table 8

Two way between groups ANOVA results using Alcohol as the criterion.

	<i>df</i>	F	η_p^2	P
(Intercept)	1	1171.542	.815	.000
Gender	1	11.042	.040	.001
DivorcedOrNot	1	1.257	.005	.263
GenderxDivorcedOrNot	1	.423	.002	.516
Error	266			

Discussion

This study helps to offer an insight into some of the major effects of parental divorce in adulthood in terms of alcohol consumption and the likelihood of partaking in risky behaviours. The examination of how strong these effects are, helps to shape an idea on how those from divorced families are more at risk to life adversities. The research adds a unique perspective on the effect of parental divorce in shaping how adults can part take in risky behaviours and a change in their levels of alcohol consumption.

The primary goal for this study was to investigate if differences exist in levels of risk taking behaviour and levels of alcohol consumption from those from divorced and non-divorced families among an Irish population. Accordingly, several hypotheses were constructed for the current research in hopes of exemplifying and expanding on previous findings but within an Irish context.

The first hypothesis of this study desired to determine whether parental divorce will have a negative effect on adults levels of risk behaviours, which was not supported by the data output from the two-way between group ANOVA's that was ran and thus the hypothesis was rejected. Although this study looked at risk behaviours in a whole, it was broken down into 5 different subscales. The majority of these subscales found no statistical difference between those from divorced and non-divorced families apart from financial risks. Results show that there was a statistical difference between the interaction effect of males and females from divorced and non-divorced families on financial risk scores but also a main effect for each of these independent variables on financial scores. For this reason we only partially rejected this hypothesis. Zuckerman and Kuhlman, (2000) carried out a study to look at personality and risk-taking with common biosocial factors. They found that compared to females, males scored higher on taking financial risks . However, this study was published 20

years ago and it is hard to represent this data to the wider population due to the advancement in different methods of learning ways to obtain financial knowledge and have a more positive attitude towards their finances (Borden, Lee, Serido & Collins, 2008; Sapienza, Zingales & Maestripieri, 2009).

With respect to the second hypothesis, it sought to determine if those from divorced families had higher levels of alcohol intake. To do so, another two-way between groups ANOVA was conducted and from the interpretation output there was no significant interaction between these variables and there was no main effect for these independent variables on the dependent variable singularly. For this reason the hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between those who came from divorced families and non-divorced families on their levels of alcohol intake which is inconsistent with a majority of existing research. Some studies have been found which are consistent with this study's findings, one study carried out by Yang et al., (2007) where investigating the effects of socioeconomic and psychosocial exposures across the life course on alcohol consumption in adulthood and found there was no significant effect. However reliability of this study is to be questioned as their sample only consisted of males aged 42,48,52 or 60 years. Therefore it is difficult to represent these results to the wider population. However a few years prior to this a study found that although there was a weak relationship between parental separation and alcohol consumption at 23 years of age there was a greater relationship between these, at age 33 (Hope, Power & Rodgers, 1998). Although this study represents a sample from over 20 years ago, it is difficult to assert that these findings are reliable due to changes in society over time. Despite that, there has been more recent research conducted which suggests differently to this studies results, that there is indeed a negative effect of parental divorce on alcohol consumption levels (Caleyachetty et al., 2016; Jackson,

Rogers & Sartor, 2016; Thompson Jr, Lizardi, Keyes & Hasin, 2008; Thompson, Alonzo, Grant & Hasin, 2013). The possible reasoning behind the link between parental divorce and alcohol intake could be due to the fact that people turn to unhealthy behaviours such as drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes to help cope with their levels of stress. On the other hand it may also be due to learnt behaviour at a young age due to the lack of parental supervision (Tucker et al., 1995).

The third and final hypothesis for this study was to determine whether or not males and females will differ on their levels of the outcome variables alcohol consumption and risk behaviours. By analysing all of the output data from the two-way ANOVA's that were ran for all dependent variables in this study it was found that gender had a statistical difference in; Alcohol consumption, ethical risks, financial risks, recreational risks and health & safety risks. The statistical analysis inferred that males consistently scored higher in all variables compared to females apart from social risk taking where no statistical difference was found, for this reason we accept the null hypothesis. These findings are both consistent and inconsistent with existing research as there is a large variance in research that some believe there is gender differences and other not, that males are more inclined to part take in risky behaviours and have higher levels of alcohol intake compared to females. In earlier years a meta-analysis of over 150 studies was conducted to identify gender differences in risk taking and it was found that indeed males take more risks compared to females (Byrnes, Miller & Schafer,1999). One study by Gardner and Steinberg,(2005) found that when tested, males were significantly more effected by the weight of risky activities compared to females and also weighted the benefits of risk taking when in a group setting. Many other studies have found such results with males being more inclined to risk taking and consuming more alcohol

than females (Nicholson, Soane, Fenton-O'Creevy & Willman, 2005; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2004; Weber, Blais, & Betz, 2002; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000)

Future Implications

The current study suggests there are significant differences between males and females in their levels of likelihood to part take in risk-taking behaviours and to also have higher levels of alcohol intake but that there is no differences between those from divorced and non-divorced families apart from taking financial risks. It is important to address these gender differences in the big variances in mean scores between males and females to identify why these variances are occurring. It is also important to note how there was no statistical significance found in this study between those from divorced and non-divorced as research says otherwise. Researchers could develop findings on such topic by conducting more longitudinal research to get an in-depth look at the risk factors, short-term and long-term risk factors for those who are exposed to parental divorce from early childhood all the way through to adulthood.

Strengths and Limitations

This study was aimed at highlighting the gender differences and the differences between those from divorced and non-divorced families differ in risk taking behaviours and alcohol consumption. This study adds to the already existing vastamount of research regarding the effects of parental divorce on risk behaviours and alcohol consumption. The differences in males and females scoring differently with males consistently scoring higher aligns with previous findings (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema, 2004; Weber, Blais & Betz, 2002) which aids in the projection of gaining more solid conclusions in this area of research.

However, the study is not without its limitations. Firstly, this study was a correlational design and therefore no causal relationship could be inferred. Secondly there is the potential of self-selection bias due to this study using self-report measures within the survey. This means that some participants responses may be based on their feelings at the specific time they completed the survey rather than their overall feelings. Another primary limitation of this study is the uneven gender split with majority of participants being female (77%). Also the sample size could have been larger but due to the lack of facilities and time the sample size that was recruited was suited to this study. However there was an even split in the sample in regards to those from divorced and non-divorced families which was in favour for this study.

Future Research

One of the compelling points that can be taken from this study was how it had such a high reliability of the DOSPERT scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .85) and the AUDIT-C scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .65). It can then be said that the methodology that was used for this research provides a solid framework for future possible researchers to carry out a study similar to this study in hope of finding more consistent and reliable data. Future research should also look into conducting a qualitative design to observe the participants body language, tone of voice etc to establish responses which have a less chance of being biased towards themselves. Additionally, future researchers could also adapt a longitudinal design to this study to get a more in-depth insight into the long term consequences of going through such early life adversities.

Conclusion

This study helped to provide clear information on the gender differences and differences of coming from a divorced or non-divorced family. The statistical significance of the gender differences on levels of alcohol consumption and likelihood of part-taking in risk-

taking behaviour has important implications for future research as they could begin to investigate why these differences exist? (e.g. lack or paternal/maternal figure in the house, lack of parental supervision etc) It also aids the area of research by taking a more comprehensive look as to if divorce only effects childhood or does it lead on to effect adulthood also. As financial risk taking was the only risk taking behaviour which had a relationship with being from a divorced or non-divorced family it is suggested that future researchers take a further look at these findings and conduct their own analysis. The arrangement of the significant findings within this study and existing research, as well as the reliable measures they have laid both a solid groundwork and a base for the evolvement of future research into the topic of the effects of divorce, while illuminating the lack of research in the effects of divorce on financial risk taking.

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON RISK BEHAVIOURS AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

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Appendix A

Dospert Scale

Domain-Specific Risk-Taking (Adult) Scale — RT scale

For each of the following statements, please indicate the likelihood that you would engage in the described activity or behaviour if you were to find yourself in that situation. Provide a rating from *Extremely Unlikely* to *Extremely Likely*, using the following scale: [Scales are shown in Table A.]

1. Admitting that your tastes are different from those of a friend. (S)
2. Going camping in the wilderness. (R)
3. Betting a day's income at the horse races. (F)
4. Investing 10% of your annual income in a moderate growth mutual fund. (F)
5. Drinking heavily at a social function. (H/S)
6. Taking some questionable deductions on your income tax return. (E)
7. Disagreeing with an authority figure on a major issue. (S)
8. Betting a day's income at a high-stake poker game. (F)
9. Having an affair with a married man/woman. (E)
10. Passing off somebody else's work as your own. (E)
11. Going down a ski run that is beyond your ability. (R)
12. Investing 5% of your annual income in a very speculative stock. (F)
13. Going whitewater rafting at high water in the spring. (R)
14. Betting a day's income on the outcome of a sporting event (F)

15. Engaging in unprotected sex. (H/S)
16. Revealing a friend's secret to someone else. (E)
17. Driving a car without wearing a seat belt. (H/S)
18. Investing 10% of your annual income in a new business venture. (F)
19. Taking a skydiving class. (R)
20. Riding a motorcycle without a helmet. (H/S)
21. Choosing a career that you truly enjoy over a more secure one.
22. Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work. (S)

23. Sunbathing without sunscreen. (H/S)
24. Bungee jumping off a tall bridge. (R)
25. Piloting a small plane. (R)
26. Walking home alone at night in an unsafe area of town. (H/S)
27. Moving to a city far away from your extended family. (S)
28. Starting a new career in your mid-thirties. (S)
29. Leaving your young children alone at home while running an errand. (E)

30. Not returning a wallet you found that contains \$200. (E)

Note. E = Ethical, F = Financial, H/S = Health/Safety, R = Recreational, and S = Social.

Appendix B

AUDIT-C Questionnaire

In the score total box below please indicate the score which suits you best for each question. E.g How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? If your answer is monthly or less you will put '1' in the total score box. A page below identifies the different standard alcoholic drink quantities below please refer.



Q.1 How often do you have a drink?

1. 0= Never
2. 1= Monthly or less
3. 2= 2 to 4 times a month
4. 3= 2-3 times a week
5. 4= 4 or more times a week

Q.2 How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

1. 0= 1 or 2

2. 1= 3 or 4 drinks

3. 2= 5 or 6 drinks

4. 3= 7 to 9 drinks

5. 4= 10 or more

Q.3 How often do you have 5 or more drinks in one occasion?

1. 0= Never

2. 1= Less than monthly

3. 2= Monthly

4. 3= Weekly

5. 4= Daily or almost daily

Appendix C

Demographics

Q.1 What is your gender?

1= Female

2= Male

3= Prefer not to say

Q.2 What age are you?

Q.3 Which of these best describes your parents' living situation?

1= My parents still live together

2= My parents no longer live together and have separated in the last 1-4 years.

3= My parents no longer live together and have separated more than 4 years ago.

4= My parents no longer live together due to bereavement

5= My parents have never live together

Appendix D

Information sheet /Consent form/ Debriefing sheet

The topic of this study is to examine the effects of parental divorce on risk behaviours and alcohol intake in adults. The study will involve you the participant to answer the following questions which will take no longer than 10 minutes. By taking part in this study you are doing so voluntarily and there is full anonymity for all participants. You can withdraw from this study during completion although after submission of responses you can no longer withdraw your data as all data is stored anonymously and is unidentifiable.

By clicking next you are consenting to take part in this study, confirming you are 18 years or older and understand that after submission you can no longer withdraw your data.

This study is designed to examine the effects that parental divorce or separation has on adults behaviour. Previous work has shown that it has an increasing effect on their alcohol intake, and other risk behaviours such as gambling. Here, our interest was to see the extent of these effects on the adults and to compare mean scores between males and female.

The experiment consists of participants filling out a questionnaire compiled of questions regarding to the independent variable for this study of parents current marital status and its effects on the dependent variables of Ethical Risks, Financial Risks, Health/Safety Risks, Social Risks, Recreational Risks and Alcohol intake.

For each participant we will calculate the mean percentage of score on their levels for the different forms of risk taking. If the experimental hypothesis is supported there will be a significant difference between both conditions. The null hypothesis is that there will be no significant difference.

Before submitting your responses please ensure that you understand when you submit these answers you can no longer withdraw your data from this study.

Thank you for your time...

Amy Carroll.

If you are feeling anyway affected by carrying out this study please avail of the following contact information listed below;

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Walk in my shoes -Helpline number - 01 249 3555 Email address – help@walkinmyshoes.ie