

Paternal Influences on Daughters' Heterosexual Relationship Socialization: Attachment Style and Disposition toward Marriage

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ABSTRACT. A common perception is that fathers play an important, if not distinct, role in influencing their young daughters' future, heterosexual relationships, though the means by which paternal influence and relational outcomes are linked is unclear. The current study explores associations between positive paternal influences (paternal support, a father's treatment of the daughter's mother) and attachment styles and dispositions toward marriage (beliefs, attitudes, intentions) of young adult women, with emphasis on unique associations for the father-daughter dyad compared to other parent-child pairings. A multivariate multiple regression and follow-up regression models yielded some but limited support for unique associations between fathers and daughters. Especially apparent, however, was the tendency for a daughter to be attracted to relationship partners who reminded her of her father when she reported higher levels of positive paternal influences from her childhood.

A growing body of research has demonstrated that having a present, involved, and caring father corresponds with a variety of healthy outcomes for children (see reviews by Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, Lamb, 2000; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Some outcomes may vary depending on the gender of a child in that fathers tend to interact with or differentially influence male and female children in distinct ways (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Lovas, 2005; Nielsen, 2007; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Updegraff, McHale, Crouter, & Kupanoff, 2001). This research typically reveals that fathers have less direct, intense, and physical involvement with girls than boys. Furthermore, research specific to daughters' outcomes has been dominated by a focus on sexually abusive and otherwise negative relationships (Morgan, Wilcoxon, & Satcher, 2003; Nielsen, 2005), thus limiting understanding of healthy father-daughter interaction.

A major theoretical emphasis within the father-daughter literature has been the role a father plays for his daughter's future heterosexual, romantic relationships (e.g., Goulter & Minninger, 1993; Kavalier, 1988; Williamson, 2004). Within such literature, it is commonly suspected that daughters generalize their experiences with their fathers to boys and men as potential romantic partners and husbands. This assertion is generally more speculative than empirical, and the exact means by which this generalization process occurs are not clear. If indeed fathers play a critical role in the future marital success of their daughters, understanding this role—in light of contemporary societal concerns about high divorce rates and subsequent family instability—may enhance efforts toward encouraging effective premarital preparation. Such an understanding may also contribute to efforts aimed at developing and improving parenting interventions that seek to deter the intergenerational transmission of family dysfunction. The purpose of the current study was to further the investigation of how childhood paternal influences relate to future marital success of daughters. Specifically, it focused on daughters' attachment styles and on several key beliefs/attitudes/intentions (*disposition* for short) relevant to an eventual marital relationship of young, single adult daughters.

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Review of Literature

Paternal involvement literature has focused on the variety of ways that fathers interact with their daughters that yield positive child outcomes. Paternal support has been associated with lower levels/degrees of negative outcomes, such as childhood depression (Dubowitz et al., 2001), distress (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1990), delinquency (Kosterman, Haggerty, Spoth, & Redmond, 2004), and early onset of sexual behavior (Regnerus & Luchies, 2006) during adolescence, and emotional hostility during young adulthood (Nicholas & Bieber, 1996). However, relatively little research has specifically focused on long-term effects of the father-daughter relationship on daughters' future outcomes (Morgan et al., 2003; Perkins, 2001).

Romantic relationship socialization. There are reasons to suspect that fathers can make an important contribution to the eventual romantic relationships of their daughters, and that it is different from the contribution of mothers, and different from fathers' contributions to their sons. As noted, there is a tendency for mothers and fathers to interact in some distinct ways with their daughters. It is possible that because of this tendency fathers are particularly salient for specific domains of their daughters' development (Laible, Carlo, & Raffaelli, 2004). Gender may also influence the roles and type of interaction in the home that can shape unique father-daughter relationship characteristics (Russell & Saebel, 1997). For example, in predicting a child's self-esteem, physical affection from fathers mattered much more for daughters' outcomes than for sons' (Barber & Thomas, 1986; Duncan, Hill, & Jeung, 1996). Similarly, spending time with their fathers was strongly related to school-aged girls' feelings of closeness with their fathers, but that was much less the case for boys (Crouter & Crowley, 1990). Prosocial parenting from fathers predicted less childhood delinquency by daughters—but comparable maternal influences were not associated with this outcome (Kosterman et al., 2004). Overall, these studies illustrate that fathers can serve some distinct functions in the lives of daughters, demonstrating the plausibility that fathers likewise contribute uniquely to their daughters' eventual marital functioning.

According to Reciprocal Role Theory (Johnson, 1975), daughters learn to behave in ways that complement a father's masculine behavior, thus shaping their future behavior with other males. Paired with a Psychodynamic perspective, this socialization process would be especially salient for a daughter's future relationships because her father is her "first love," and she may even fantasize romantically about him (Freud, 1988; Williamson, 2004). Though relatively sparse, some research exists that is consistent with this reasoning. For example, adults have shown a tendency to select romantic partners with similar eye and hair colors as their opposite-sex parent (Little, Penton-Voak, Burt, & Perrett, 2003). Also, those born to older parents (age 30 or older) were more likely than those born to younger parents to find older faces of the opposite sex attractive, suggesting that childhood attraction to one's opposite-sex parent (and thus the age of the face influencing what is perceived as attractive) may be generalized to potential relationship partners (Perrett et al., 2002). Additionally, women with more positive childhood relationships with their parents were more likely to identify stimulus faces as attractive that shared similar features with their own father's features (Wiszevska, Pawlowski, & Boothroyd, 2007). Fathers may make a lasting impression on their daughters' romantic preferences, though relatively little is known about what factors in the father-daughter relationship account for this connection. However, it is likely that more supportive and less abusive fathering nurture positive

assumptions and expectations about relations with males, though this assertion has been made based more on anecdotes and clinical observations than empirical research (Perrett et al., 2002).

In addition to the nature of relationship a daughter experiences with her father, what she observes about her father's marriage-related behavior also may be influential on her future relationships. Consistent with Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), a father's relationship with the daughter's mother may model heterosexual interaction that the daughter accepts as normal or desirable (or undesirable) and then generalizes to future romantic relationships. Arguably, daughters would pay special attention to a father's treatment of her mother to learn how good men treat a wife (Freud, 1988). A close look at the reviewed body of research reveals that parental marital characteristics have typically been measured as a dyadic unit (e.g., overall marital quality or conflict), without isolating a father's treatment of the mother. Thus, potential specific associations between a father's modeling of how to treat a wife and the daughter's romantic relationship-related outcomes have typically been untested.

From socialization to future relationships. Though fathers are arguably in a unique position to influence daughters' heterosexual relationships, understanding how such influence transfers to the future relationships requires continued exploration (Mounts, 2008). One possible means for this transfer is through beliefs and assumptions daughters have about relationships (especially marriage). Studies show that unrealistic relationship beliefs relate to relational distress and dissatisfaction (Addis & Bernard, 2002; McNulty & Karney, 2004; Stackert & Bursik, 2003), as well as communication and conflict resolution behaviors within relationships (Bradbury & Fincham, 1993; Vangelisti & Alexander, 2002). Premarital literature has identified common expectations about getting married that could impact future marital adjustment. These include the belief that spouses are destined or meant for each other (Knee, 1998) and that couples should prove their relationship will work before marriage (Larson, 1992). These types of beliefs can be influenced by the nature of relationships in one's family of origin (Hall, 2006; Weigel, 2007). Attitudes toward the importance of marriage are also influenced by what children experience and observe in the home (Musick & Bumpass, 1999; Riggio & Weisner, 2008). For reasons already discussed, fathers particularly would be influential on daughters' overall *disposition* (beliefs, attitudes, intentions) related to heterosexual, romantic relationships.

A second key means of paternal influence on a daughter's future relationships is attachment styles. Sensitive, consistent parenting results in healthier attachments that shape children's future styles of attaching with others (Ainsworth, 1982). These styles are relevant to marriage in that they influence one's choice of a mate (Collins & Read, 1990), how one copes with interpersonal conflict (Feeney, 1998), and marital adjustment (Gallo & Smith, 2001). The development of these styles can also be influenced by modeling of parents' romantic/marital relationships (Platt, Nalbone, Casanova, & Wetchler, 2008). In light of the father-daughter literature and theory reviewed above, one might expect that a daughter's attachment style would be influenced particularly by her relationship with her father, including the type of marital behavior modeled by her father. Similar to the research noted above regarding beliefs and attitudes, studies that investigated attachment styles as they related to parents' marital dynamics have typically measured it in such a way that limited the ability to isolate and compare the father-daughter dyad to other parent-child combinations.

The current study was designed to identify connections between young women's childhood experiences with fathers and how the young women approach relationships and concepts relevant to a future marriage, and to identify if any such connections are unique for father-daughter relationships. Specifically, paternal support for daughters and the father's treatment toward a

daughter's mother would be expected to be especially relevant to the daughter's disposition toward marriage and attachment styles, compared to the influences of maternal support and a mother's treatment of a father. These paternal influences would also be more pronounced for daughters than for sons.

Based on common beliefs, expectations, and intentions identified in the literature reviewed above, several specific constructs were selected for consideration for links between paternal influences and eventual marriage-related outcomes, all with the anticipation that the links will be more or exclusively true for father-daughter relationship. The first construct is attachment style, and it is anticipated that high levels of parental support and positive spousal treatment will be associated with more security in attachment styles. The second construct is the salience assigned to eventually marrying (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992). It is anticipated that positive paternal influence would be related to a greater desire to marry, based on the reasoning that the daughter would have more positive assumptions about a long-term heterosexual relationship by generalizing her experience with her father to other men. The third construct is the expectation to cohabit before marriage (Larson, 1992), and it is anticipated that positive paternal influences may result in a lesser desire to or lesser approval of cohabitation, which would be consistent with prior research on cohabitation in general (Musick & Bumpass, 1999; Thornton, 1991). The fourth construct is a sense of destiny in finding a spouse (Knee, 1998). This is a common mate-selection issue but it is unclear how the paternal influences would relate to it. For example, positive paternal influences could lead to more romanticization of marriage, and thus a greater sense of destiny. Alternatively, the positive influences could lead to healthier individual outcomes (mental health, identity development) that may coincide with more realistic beliefs about mate selection. The final construct is the expectation to marry a spouse similar to one's opposite-sex parent (Freud, 1927). It is anticipated that positive paternal influences (paternal support, the father's treatment of the mother) would relate to a greater propensity to have this expectation, which would be consistent with the reviewed theory.

Method

Participants

Participants were elicited among students at a relatively large Midwestern university. An email message was sent to the email accounts of all attending undergraduate and graduate students that explained the purpose of the study and included a link to an online survey. This population was invited because this general age group is often involved in meaningful dating relationships—some of which may turn into marriages—and is old enough for marriage to be a salient issue in their lives (for most young adults). A total of 1,584 unmarried students completed the survey. A subsample was selected that would be most appropriate for the purposes of this study; namely, students older than 30 (1.5% of unmarried sample) were eliminated to create a sample of young adults not especially far removed from their childhood experiences. Also, because the study focused on issues only testable in two-parent, heterosexual households, only students that grew up primarily with two opposite-sex parents (including an adoptive or step-parent if such a parent was one of the two primary parents during childhood) were retained in the sample. Thus, the final sample included 1,214 (307 male, 907 female) students. Males were included in the sample for comparison purposes (e.g., to see if the father-daughter correlations differed from father-son correlations). Participants ranged from 18 to 30 years old ($M = 21.08$,

$SD = 2.05$). The sample was 95% white, 1.2% African American, and less than one percent each from several other ethnic groups. The composition of the university was approximately 88% white and 4% African American (other percentages were more similar), indicating that disproportionately fewer African-American students volunteered to complete the survey (before students who grew up in a single-parent home were eliminated, 2% of the sample was African American, suggesting that most of the underrepresentation was due to opting not to participate).

Measures

Background characteristics. Items from the Family Background Questionnaire (Melchert & Sayger, 1998) were used to gather information about participants' age, gender, ethnicity, and mothers' and fathers' education levels—to be used as control variables. A “parental education” variable was adopted that averaged the mother's and father's education levels (two 5-point Likert-type scales) into a single 5-point Likert-type scale ($\alpha = .67$). Because of limited racial diversity within the sample, a dichotomous variable was constructed to represent White and Nonwhite participants (White = 1, Nonwhite = 0). Age was transformed (squared) to create a more normally-distributed variable.

Attachment styles. The Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) was used to measure attachment style. This measure included four brief paragraphs, each of which describes a distinct style of attachment: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissive. Participants responded on a scale from 1 (“not at all like me”) to 7 (“very much like me”) for each of the items.

Disposition toward marriage. Several items were created to capture a variety of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions that are relevant to premarital courtship and mate selection issues identified in the literature review. *Marital Salience* was measured by the statement, “Think about your future goals. How much would it bother you if you did not get married?”—from Axinn and Thornton, 1992. *Marital Destiny* was measured by the statement, “Truly happy marriages happen only when two people who are meant for each other get married,”—adapted from Larson, 1992. *Cohabitation Intention* was measured by the following statement created for this study, “I will probably live with a romantic partner to whom I am not married.” Finally, *Intergenerational Attraction* was measured by the following statement created for this study, “I tend to be attracted to people who remind me of my opposite-sex parent, so I will probably marry someone like that.” Possible responses for each of these items ranged from “not true at all” (or “not at all” for the first item) to “very true” (or “very much” for the first item) on a 5-point scale (higher scores connote greater agreement).

Perceived parents' relationship characteristics. A measure to capture young adults' recollections of their parents' relationship was adapted from similar scales used in previous research that contained several descriptors of the relationship (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992). However, for this study, the father's treatment of the mother and the mother's treatment of the father were measured separately—10 items for each parent. The items represented a range of behaviors related to affection, romance, leisure time, patience during disagreement, and so forth. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from “not well at all” to “very well” regarding how well each descriptor described each parent's treatment of the other parent. Because these items were highly intercorrelated, three items were eliminated for each parent and the remaining seven items were scaled together ($\alpha = .92$ for fathers and $\alpha = .91$ for mothers) that represented a general positive treatment from one parent to the other. The remaining items

included, “With patience over disagreements,” “Included [him/her] in [his/her] leisure time (free time) and interests,” “Romantically,” “With respect,” “Valued [his/her] opinion,” “As a true partner,” and, “With affection.” The scores of each set of seven items were averaged for the father-treated-mother scale ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .90$) and the mother-treated-father scale ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .84$).

Perceived parental support. Measures from a previous study that analyzed parental support constructs were used to measure maternal and paternal support (see Amato & Booth, 1997). All ten items (five for each parent) were rated on 5-point scales. Items ascertained the perceived frequency of certain parental behaviors while the participant was growing up, such as helping with personal problems, showing affection, and talking together. Scale reliabilities for maternal support items ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .86$, $\alpha = .82$) and paternal support items ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .89$, $\alpha = .84$) were sufficient.

Results

Bivariate correlations were tested among all of the variables, separately by gender (see Table 1). Results generally indicate that control (background), attachment, and disposition toward marriage variables were related to the parental (spousal treatment and parental support) variables. There appears to be some differences when comparing the correlations by gender, though such potential differences will be tested statistically in subsequent analyses. A series of multivariate strategies were necessary to test eventually for the main focus of this study: distinct father-daughter associations of variables. First, a multivariate multiple regression was used to test if the overall associations between the set of parental influence variables (conceptualized as independent variables) and the set of expectations/intentions and attachment styles variables (conceptualized as outcome or dependent variables) were statistically significant. This multivariate procedure accounts for shared variance among the independent variables as they correlate with the set of outcome variables. This procedure thus takes into account that paternal and maternal support tend to be significantly correlated (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000), as are parents' relationship quality and levels of parental support for children (Cowan, Cowen, & Kerig, 1993). To be able to test for distinct father-daughter associations and associations of other parent-child pairings, child gender and gender interactions with each of the father and mother variables were also included as independent variables. Thus, this procedure acts as an omnibus test for the sets of variables, while controlling for intercorrelations among the parental influence variables and gender interactions (Haase & Ellis, 1987; Lutz & Eckert, 1994). Should the model identify significant associations between a parental influence (independent) variable and the set of dependent variables, it would be justifiable to conduct the second stage of the analyses, which would be subsequent individual regression analyses with each significant parental influence (independent) variable. Separate procedures would identify associations of each outcome variable (e.g., attachment style, marriage intention) with that particular parental variable while controlling for shared variance among the outcome variables (Haase & Ellis, 1987; Lutz & Eckert, 1994). Finally, significant gender of parent by gender of child interactions would be explored by separate regression analyses for females and males with each father/mother variable, which would thus indicate the nature of any distinct father-daughter relationship outcomes.

The multivariate multiple regression included several control variables (age, race, and parental education) with the set of outcome variables. The analysis revealed that father-to-mother

treatment ($F(8, 1194) = 3.77, p < .001$), mother-to-father treatment ($F(8, 1194) = 2.83, p < .01$), paternal support ($F(8, 1194) = 9.22, p < .001$), maternal support ($F(8, 1194) = 5.03, p < .001$), father-to-mother treatment by child gender interaction ($F(8, 1194) = 2.77, p < .01$), mother-to-father treatment by child gender interaction ($F(8, 1194) = 2.93, p < .001$), paternal support by child gender interaction ($F(8, 1194) = 3.05, p < .01$), and maternal support by child gender interaction were all statistically correlated with the set of dependent variables ($F(8, 1194) = 3.00, p < .01$). This pattern suggests that each parental influence variable explains unique variance when predicting the outcome variables and that gender of child and parent were also relevant in predicting outcome variables.

As a result, each of the parental influence variables was then regressed separately on the set of outcome (and control) variables, including child gender interactions with each of the outcome variables. Significant statistical interactions would signify that a given parental influence variable (e.g., paternal support) was differentially related to a given outcome variable based on whether or not the child was a son or daughter. Such interactions would also justify conducting separate regressions for each child gender to investigate the distinct patterns among significant variables. Table 2 includes the regression coefficients associated with each parental influence variable. Each model was statistically significant. For father-to-mother treatment ($F(24, 1189) = 11.91, p < .001$), better treatment was associated (regardless of child gender) with a more secure attachment style, greater *marital salience*, less *cohabitation intention*, greater *intergenerational attraction*, and a significant child gender interaction effect with *intergenerational attraction*. An investigation of the interaction (separate regressions for each gender) revealed a linear association for females ($b = .31, p < .001$)—meaning that females who reported better treatment from father to mother also reported being more attracted to someone like their father—but no association for males ($b = .07, p = .20$). For comparison purposes, mother-to-father treatment ($F(24, 1189) = 8.16, p < .001$) was also significant, in that better treatment was associated (regardless of child gender) with a more secure attachment style, a more dismissive attachment style, greater *marital salience*, less *cohabitation intention*, greater *intergenerational attraction*, and a significant child gender interaction effects with a fearful attachment style. Investigating the interaction revealed that for males only, better treatment from mother to father was associated with a less fearful attachment style.

For paternal support ($F(24, 1189) = 13.03, p < .001$), greater support was associated with a more secure attachment style, less *marital destiny*, greater *intergenerational attraction*, and a significant child gender interaction effect with *intergenerational attraction*. Investigating the interaction revealed that for females ($b = .34, p < .001$) but not males ($b = .06, p = .5$), greater paternal support was associated with being attracted to people that reminded them of their opposite-sex parent. For comparison purposes, maternal support ($F(24, 1189) = 7.44, p < .001$) was also significant, indicating greater support being associated with a more secure attachment style and a significant child gender interaction effect with *intergenerational attraction*. Investigating the interaction revealed that for males only, greater paternal support was associated with being attracted to people that reminded them of their opposite-sex parent. These findings suggest that in some cases the gender of parent-gender of child pairing was relevant to the association between the parental influence and child outcome variables. Because of the lack of main and interaction effects regarding the father variables, there would be no justification for conducting a complete analysis with just fathers and daughters aside from the individual investigations of the isolated significant interaction effects reported above.

Discussion

This study explored links between positive paternal influences from childhood—perceptions of paternal support and positive father-to-mother relationship behavior—and child outcomes that have possible implications for young adult women’s future marital stability and functioning. For the sake of comparison, data from sons and perceptions about mothers by all participants were also included to enable testing for unique father-daughter associations with the outcome variables. These outcomes consisted of attachment styles and several key beliefs/attitudes/intentions (*disposition*) related to getting married. Though the results of this study have limits to generalizability due to convenience sampling procedures and the nature of the homogenous sample, the results speak to outcomes related to certain parent-child processes (especially in regard to father-daughter relationships) that have received limited empirical analysis despite significant theoretical attention and commonly-expressed assumptions among lay observers. Overall, the results of the study suggested that paternal support and positive father-to-mother treatment were related to the attachment styles and some *disposition* toward marriage variables of young adult daughters, and that the specific combination of parent gender and child gender was somewhat relevant to how these sets of variables were related.

Regarding attachment styles as a means for transmitting paternal influences to daughters’ heterosexual relationships, fathers’ treatment of mothers and paternal support were associated with more secure attachment styles for their children (regardless of gender), verifying that fathers are also relevant for their offspring’s romantic attachments (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). However, these associations were typically not moderated by child gender. There may be limits to the theoretical tenets about father-daughter relationships upon which this study is based—at least in terms of attachment styles—or limits to the measures used. Perhaps broader and more sophisticated measures that represent nuanced attachment-oriented behaviors would capture distinctions for the father-daughter pairing among the tested constructs. It may also be the case that the nature of attachment is such that children do not generalize their working models based on the gender of the parent that helped shape those models. Rather, children may internalize a general sense about ones worthiness as a relationship partner and the responsiveness of other people (working models of self and others) in a non-gender-specific way. For example, attachment styles relate to how people interact with peers during childhood and adolescence in ways that do not seem to be related to peer gender (Kosi & Shaver, 1997; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005)—though it appears that peer gender has not typically been specifically taken into account in much attachment research. It is also possible that the attachment framework may not be a particularly useful way to conceptualize distinct, gendered parental contributions to their children’s romantic relationships, though there may be room for future theory refinement that specifically addresses distinctions among the various parent gender-child gender pairings.

Regarding the other means of parental influence, disposition toward marriage variables were related in anticipated ways (without taking child gender into account) to one or both of the two paternal influence variables. Specifically, offspring with a more supportive father placed more importance in getting married, were less likely to intend to cohabit nonmaritally, and were more attracted to someone who reminded them of their opposite sex parent. Those who had perceived that the father treated the mother well were less likely to believe in destiny regarding finding a mate and were more attracted to someone who reminded them of their opposite sex parent. These findings suggest that mate-selection-type beliefs and intentions are influenced by what children

experience directly from and through observation of their fathers (and to a somewhat lesser degree, their mothers). It is also evident that the modeling variables (treatment of other parent) were related to only certain of the disposition variables while the support variables were related exclusively to others. This pattern suggests that certain types of parental influence are more important to some outcomes than others. Thus, when investigating how parents can influence their children's future romantic relationships, focusing on a variety of family-of-origin constructs concurrently may illuminate details about the multifaceted processes involved with relationship socialization, and how those facets are interrelated.

The central focus of this study, however, was on fathers and daughters. Fathers and mothers had distinct influences on several of the disposition outcome variables for the sample as a whole. However, there was an absence of consistent gender interaction effects, indicating that child gender was not central to the nature of these results. Yet, there were a few exceptions, one being arguably the most robust and pertinent finding in these analyses. Specifically, the *intergenerational attraction* variable was clearly relevant to child gender. Female participants (but not male participants) who reported more positive father-to-mother treatment indicated that they were attracted to others who reminded them of their fathers. The same finding was true for paternal support. This cross-gender pattern was less true for the mother-son pairs. It is noteworthy that the *intergenerational attraction* was not inherent in parent-child relationships because it only corresponded with positive and supporting parental influences (a positive correlation), suggesting that daughters may intentionally (or perhaps subconsciously) seek out or attract potential mates who remind them of their fathers *because* they were good fathers. Mate choice would represent a clear means by which a father's influence during childhood can shape the eventual marriage of his daughter—should the daughter follow through with marrying a man who reminds her of her father. Such a phenomenon could be beneficial in terms of transmitting desirable family characteristics across generations, if indeed the traits that daughters are attracted to in their caring fathers are the very traits they find similar in attractive potential mates. Or, daughters may simply be attracted to men who visually resemble their caring fathers because men that look like their fathers trigger the positive feelings the daughters experienced with their similar-looking fathers, thus associating those positive feelings (interpreting them as *love*) with the presence of the new man. More precise methods and measurement could help illuminate details about whether daughters purposefully select similar mates due to recognized similarities or if their mate selection preferences operate on levels outside of their immediate awareness. Regardless of the process, selecting a mate who reminds a daughter of her father—a man who was supportive of his wife and daughter (otherwise she would be less likely to be attracted to men like him)—would be a unique father-daughter relationship outcome with implications for her future marriage.

Overall, these findings lend very modest support for the case that daughters' attachment styles and assumptions/attitudes are uniquely influenced by their fathers, at least in terms of the particular constructs investigated in this study. There are a number of limits to the measures in that single-item indicators may have been unsuccessful in representing the constructs of interest or constructs that might be more relevant. Additional, thorough research with more elaborate measures may more effectively test the tenets of these theories. Nevertheless, the correlations between the *intergenerational attraction* variable and the parental influences may represent important family processes related to the mate-selection choices of children, especially regarding fathers and daughters. This information may be especially enlightening to fathers who perceive their relationship with a daughter as somehow less meaningful or influential than a relationship

with a son in terms of how fathers influence their children's future (Hall & Tift, 2007). Parents may also better appreciate how their treatment of one another could have lasting effects on their children's relationship choices. Prospective research may be especially suitable for identifying the processes involved in socializing children for future relationships, and the potential role that gender plays in these processes.

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Table 1

Bivariate Correlations of all Variables for Males (n = 307) and Females (n = 907)

Males (<i>n</i> = 307)	M	SD	Females (<i>n</i> = 907)							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	4.59	0.22	—	-.10**	.01	.01	-.02	-.04	.09*	-.08*
2. White	0.95	0.22	-.06	—	.06	.01	-.07*	.02	-.02	.02
3. Parental Education	3.34	0.98	.04	.01	—	.04	-.06	-.06	-.01	-.04
4. Secure Attach Style	4.41	1.68	-.01	.02	.05	—	-.65***	-.15***	-.15***	.08*
5. Fearful Attach Style	3.90	1.99	-.06	.01	-.03	-.62**	—	.14***	.21***	-.09**
6. Preoccupied Attach Style	3.42	1.88	-.08	-.08	.03	-.10	.23***	—	-.18***	.13**
7. Dismissive Attach Style	3.70	1.74	.04	-.08	.01	-.21***	.15**	-.16**	—	-.26***
8. Mar. Salience	3.86	1.13	-.08	.08	.02	.19**	-.14*	.16**	-.37***	—
9. Mar. Destiny	2.91	1.15	-.12**	-.14*	.02	.10	.05	.06	-.13*	.16**
11. Cohabitation. Intent	2.76	1.48	.17**	-.06	-.04	-.08	.10	-.02	.14*	-.18**
13. Intergen. Attraction	2.57	1.24	.03	-.04	.07	.05	-.10	.10	-.09	.14*
14. Father treats mom well	3.87	0.90	-.12*	.04	.25***	.15**	-.15**	-.01	-.11*	.23**
15. Mother treats dad well	3.97	0.84	-.10	.06	.16**	.21***	-.26***	-.05	-.12*	.20***
16. Paternal support	3.24	0.89	-.02	-.05	.22***	.31**	-.31***	-.07	-.10	.16**
17. Maternal support	3.91	0.86	.03	-.02	.10	.32***	-.27***	-.08	-.07	.12*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 1 (cont.)

Bivariate Correlations of all Variables for Males (n = 307) and Females (n = 907)

Males (n = 307)	Females (n = 907)						
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age	-.13***	.12***	.02	-.09**	-.07*	-.05	-.09**
2. White	-.04	-.02	.04	.07*	.08*	.03	.09*
3. Parental Education	-.06	-.09*	.08*	.20***	.18**	.17***	.12***
4. Secure Attach Style	.01	-.01	.10**	.17***	.12**	.25***	.22***
5. Fearful Attach Style	.08*	.01	-.05	.15***	-.06	-.19***	-.18**
6. Preoccupied Attach Style	.07*	.05	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.07*	-.09**
7. Dismissive Attach Style	-.07*	.11**	-.03	-.03	.01	-.05	-.04
8. Mar. Salience	.19***	-.22***	.12***	.12**	.14***	.09**	.11**
9. Mar. Destiny	—	-.10**	.04	.01	.05	-.06	.03
11. Cohabitation. Intent	-.11	—	-.02	-.13**	-.15***	-.08*	-.10**
13. Intergen. Attraction	.03	.04	—	.35***	.23**	.37**	.06
14. Father treats mom well	.05	-.21***	.12*	—	.72***	.56***	.19***
15. Mother treats dad well	.04	-.19**	.17**	.74***	—	.35***	.39***
16. Paternal support	.01	-.12*	.12*	.57***	.42***	—	.32***
17. Maternal support	.04	-.06	.27***	.19**	.34***	.46***	—

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2

Regression Coefficients for each Child Outcome Variable and the Parental Variables

	Father treats mother well		Mother treats father well		Paternal support		Maternal support	
	B	<i>b</i>	B	<i>b</i>	B	<i>b</i>	B	<i>b</i>
Controls								
Age	-.35	-.09**	-.26	-.07*	-.23	-.06*	-.19	-.05
White	.09	.02	.20	.05	-.11	-.03	.17	.04
Parental Education	.16	.18***	.13	.15***	.13	.15***	.08	.09**
Gender (male=1)	.80	.32	.92	.48*	.60	.29	-.64	-.36
Attachment Styles								
Secure	.05	.10*	.06	.12**	.10	.19***	.08	.16***
Fearful	-.02	-.06	.01	.03	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.06
Preoccupied	.01	.01	-.00	-.01	-.01	-.02	-.03	-.06
Dismissive	.02	.04	.03	.07*	.06	.01	.01	.03
Marital Disposition								
Marital Salience	.06	.07*	.09	.11**	.04	.05	.07	.09
Marital Destiny	-.02	-.03	.01	.02	-.06	-.08*	.01	.01
Cohabitation Intent	-.06	-.09**	-.06	-.11***	-.03	-.05	-.04	-.07
Intergen. Attraction	.23	.32***	.13	.19***	.24	.33***	.01	.02
Gender Interactions								
Secure x Gender	-.03	-.07	-.03	-.09	-.01	-.03	.03	.07
Fear x Gender	.00	.00	-.08	-.19*	-.06	-.13	-.01	-.02
Dismiss. x Gender	-.03	-.05	-.04	-.09	-.00	-.02	.00	.01
Preocc. x Gender	-.03	-.06	-.02	-.05	-.02	-.03	.00	-.01
Salience x Gender	.05	.09	-.01	-.01	.03	.06	-.04	-.08
Destiny x Gender	.01	.02	-.01	-.01	.03	.05	.00	.00
Cohab. Int. x Gender	-.04	-.06	-.01	-.03	.00	.00	.03	.04
Inter. Attr. x Gender	-.17	-.22***	-.03	-.05	-.18	-.24***	.17	.23***
R Square	.19		.14		.21		.13	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001