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ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND FOSTER YOUH IN AN
ACADEMIC SETTING

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to examine the attributions people make for children of divorce and foster youth in an academic setting. There is a large area of study that examines the expectations teachers have of children with a label. Most of the research concerns a psychopathology label; however, there is a gap in the literature in examining biases towards children with the label of divorce or foster care. The current aim is to study if people have these biases when attributing reasons for the child's success or failure in the classroom. The hypothesis is that participants will rate foster youth differently compared to children from intact and divorce homes on both success and failure performance.

Each participant was presented with a child of an intact family, a child of a divorce family, and a child of a foster family varying in race and gender. The participants rated attributions for failure or success on a Likert scale. The results were analyzed based on the differences in attributional ratings for success and failure performance. Findings supported the hypothesis in that participants rated failure performance for the foster child higher than the other two labels of divorce and intact, possibly indicating an influence of implicit biases. This suggests that participants were more confident in their attributional ratings for the foster child's failure performance than success performance. The findings of this study should be replicated and applied to a sample using teachers.

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Introduction

Stereotypes are used as templates when evaluating or making judgments about others and, if too simplistic, they stereotypes can negatively influence individuals to have biased perceptions of reality (Miller, 1982). In *Public Opinion* (1922), the journalist Walter Lippmann stated that stereotyping is present within everyone; it is a reflection of the culture, language, and the manner of thinking of the individual. This socialization of stereotypes may lead individuals to form expectations and attributions that are not indicative of the individual being evaluated. That is, they the person making the judgment prematurely reach conclusions without gathering person specific information. An example of this process Keene (2011) gives is an individual may know a family from the south who enjoys sweet potato pie; this individual then believes that all southern families enjoy sweet potato pie. Individuals have may been socialized this way throughout their interactions with others from the south and environmental factors that may have influenced this conclusion. Social psychological research has shown that beliefs have the power to create a “reality” for that person based on what they perceive of the group or individual (Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996; Miller, 1982). In stereotyping individuals, people assume they know information about others based solely on few certain defining characteristics. The current study focuses on applying these theories regarding the judgments made about children who come from atypical backgrounds.

The Influence of Stereotypes on Responses

Stereotypes have expectations attached to them, which can then lead to emotions and behavioral responses to individuals (Epstein and Schlesinger, 1996). Stereotypes have been

studied using select groups for which society may have preconceived ideas and examined how these ideas influence responses. For example, society has preconceived ideas about women who live in poverty that influence how professionals treat them and/or make judgments about them. The negative interactions that the professionals have with these women are counterproductive to having an effective helping relationship (Azar, 1996).

When applying this theory to how parents interact with their children, there is also research that supports that having unrealistic expectations and negative attributions toward children's behavior may contribute to the parent's having an aversive response to their own child. The child's behavior may not correspond with the parent's unrealistic expectation, therefore contributing to the parent's aversive response and negative attributions for the child's behavior. Studies indeed have shown that parents' unrealistic expectations and negative attributional biases can result in harsher parenting practices (Azar & Weinzierl, 2005). Stereotypes can be seen as short cuts, making interpersonal interactions more efficient, because it is not possible for an individual to assimilate all of the information in a particular situation and often individuals selectively perceive some features over others (Epstein and Schlesinger, 1996). This can also cause problems. People can have predetermined ideas of what an interaction is likely to be and they may be the most receptive to information that agrees with their expectations and ignore that which is not (Miller, 1982). Again in the context of parenting, if the parent has an overall perception that children (as a group) are "out to annoy their parents," they will use more forceful parenting strategies and also selectively attend to the negative actions of their child (Morton, Twentyman, & Azar, 1988).

Expectations in the Classroom

Researchers have begun to explore stereotypes in school settings, such as examining whether teachers selectively attend to the negative behaviors when they hold negative views about the children in their classrooms. Giving a label to a child that has negative connotations, a negatively based stereotype, attached to them may affect a teacher's assessment of the child. This could then affect teachers' interactions with the child and thus the child's outcomes academically.

An early study by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) showed how labels of children given to a teacher could affect the child's performance. The teachers in this study were presented with two groups of children: one group was labeled "spurters" in that they were predicated to grow substantially academically throughout the course of the year, and the other group did not receive a label. These labels were randomly assigned. In the year of the experiment, the experimental group labeled as "spurters" showed greater intellectual development according to their increase in IQ scores. The researchers assumed that the changes in intellectual development measured by the teachers were due to treating the experimental group differently than the control. The finding was interpreted as the teacher's getting the label led to differential treatment academically that led to better performance or worse performance. This effect has thus been known as the Pygmalion Effect. The study provided evidence that an individual's expectations of another's behavior may serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968). This could mean that labels lead to expectations and responses that may affect how teachers interact with the child.

Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) findings were the basis for another study examining teacher expectations and their influence on children (Jussim, 1989). The author states that

teachers often develop distinct assumptions about the performance of the students they teach early in the school year. Previous research has supported that students who were expected to be higher achievers at the beginning of the year surpassed those who were thought to be lower achievers by the end of the year (Brophy & Good, 1974; Crano & Mellon, 1978, Humphreys & Stubbs, 1977; Williams, 1976). In Jussim's study, the teachers held this expectation at the beginning of the school year, and at the end, the students confirmed the teachers' expectations. A possible reason for the confirmation of the teachers' expectations may be due to the child receiving the higher achiever label because they were harder working students. However, the study contributes the confirmation of the teachers' expectations to self-fulfilling prophecies. A perceptual bias, which is the inclination to interpret or explain students' actions as linked to their expectations, may influence why people confirm expectations with self-fulfilling prophecies (Jussim, 1989). More directly linked to the study we will describe here, a teacher who is aware of a child's home life may have specific expectations how this child will perform, essentially making an attribution to the cause of the child's actions to be due to the home life situation. The focus of the present study is what the attributions are when people have these expectations.

Whether biases in the classroom towards children of atypical backgrounds exist has been an area of some study. Specifically, studies have examined whether giving a risk label that is attached to background information on a child can negatively influence how the teacher may treat or react to the child's behaviors, such as labeling a child with a psychopathological disorder. Fox and Stinnett (1996) discovered that teachers rated a child who had psychopathological labels, like conduct disorder and socially maladjusted, to have more disruption in their classrooms and lower overall adjustment than children with similar behaviors who were not given a label.

However, not much of the literature has focused on background labels that are associated with family disruption in the home, such as a divorce and foster care label. There is little research based on biases in an academic setting for both of these labels. Family disruption can mean a variety of factors, but the focus of this study seeks to examine the risk label associated with children of divorce and foster care children. This population is at a great risk for academic and social problems, and teacher biases may be affecting their academic performance in the classroom (Amato, 2001; Kelly & Emery, 2003). Children of divorce and foster youth experience hurdles in the classroom, and some of their negative academic experiences could be due to the risk labels attached to them. As a consequence of such labels, teachers may then on average, without accurate information, automatically attribute the child's success or failure in the classroom to reasons that differ from children who do not carry a family disruption label. These reasons may then lead to differential treatment for the children from family disruption. This study will examine if a label of family disruption, either a history of parental divorce, or being placed in foster care, leads to negative expectations, which may influence attributions for the child's academic performance in the classroom.

Biases: Children of Divorce and Foster Youth

There is research that explores the notion that children of divorce and foster youth have struggled academically in the classroom, but there is little research examining the reasons teachers believe children from disrupted families succeed or fail academically. This section will review the empirical work on each and then describe the study planned, which integrates the two.

Research has shown that teachers have perceived expectations of children of divorce. This evidence is apparent in a study by Guttman, Lazar, and Karni (2008) who replicated a study from 1988. In the study, they examined how teachers and 8th grade students evaluated a child

based on the knowledge that the child is from a family of divorce. The participants watched a film of the child and were given information that the child either lived with one parent or two. The participants then rated the child's functioning in academic, emotional, and social areas on a Likert scale. The study showed that the teachers continually made less favorable attributions towards the children of divorce, in emotional, social, and especially in assuming the academic functioning of the child of divorce to be significantly worse than the child from the intact family.

Similar to research done on children of divorce, a study on foster youth and academics focused on whether foster children experience biases in the classroom. A study by Martin and Jackson (2002) surveyed young adults who had spent at least a year in the care system. These participants came from disadvantaged families, representing many of the population who are in care. The participants were asked a series of open-ended questions in an interview. One question specifically asked how the children thought their teachers perceived them. About a third of the sample emphasized the need for children in foster care to overcome stereotypes casted upon them in the classroom. The participants said that teachers need to become more aware of the unjust labels of being disruptive and lower in intelligence they give foster youth. The participants continued to stress the importance for teachers to help the child realize his or her true potential. In addition to foster youth reporting they feel less adequate in the classroom than other children, there is statistical research to support that foster youth tend to be seen as performing poorer academically. According to the National Factsheet on the Education Outcomes of Children in Foster Care (2014), foster youth are 2.5 to 3.5 times as likely to receive special education compared to others and only about 50% complete high school by age 18. The research on both children of divorce and foster youth exhibit teachers' expectations of the child and how this may affect their interaction and the perceived effects of biases in the classroom.

The Present Study

Previous research has examined how children of divorce are judged by others. We also know that foster children perceive biases in their treatment in the classroom. However, there is little research examining the present aim of the current study. The current study is examining whether attributions are different when making judgments about the performance of a child from foster care compared to a child of divorced family or a child of an intact family. The study explored both internal and external attributions for both success and failure performance in an academic setting. The hypothesis is that participants will rate children of a foster care family differently in internal and external attributions compared to children from a divorce family and children from an intact family on success and failure performance. If others appraise children's performance differently when the child succeeds or fails, specifically for of a foster care family, there are implications for how teachers interact with children of foster care in an academic setting.

In addition to the main aim of the study, it is also expected that children of divorce would be rated similarly to children of an intact family. This hypothesis was based on findings that show that children of divorce do not have the same biases seen them in earlier work where divorce is less common (Guttman, Lazar, and Karni, 2008). This study will examine if there is a presence of biases for children from divorce families that may affect how people attribute a child's success or failure performance in an academic setting.

Methods

Participants:

The participants were 128 university undergraduate students with 42 male and 85 female. Background information on participants are provided in Table 1, including information on sex, race, year in college. The participants were given class research credit for participating in the study.

Measures:

Child Emotional Faces Picture Set (NIMH-ChEFS) (Egger, et al., 2011) is a stimulus set of pictures of children depicting emotional expressions. The present study will use the facial stimuli of the children in the set, varying the race and gender of the children used. Additionally, the facial stimuli used will be of the pictures depicting direct gaze with children displaying neutral emotion. For the pictures that were deemed valid, ChEFS yielded an overall percent agreement of 94.8% with a Kappa of .94 (Egger, et al., 2011). This is comparable and even greater than the proportion correct in other facial picture sets. The ChEFS picture set has about 482 pictures of children ranging in ages from 10-17; due to its tested validity and range of photos, the set is deemed appropriate in studying facial expressions of children. For the present study, the facial stimuli pictures chosen will be children closer to the younger age of the spectrum, females and males, and white and black children. The participant will be presented with a picture from the ChEFS set ranging in gender and race, with a short vignette about the child following the picture. The facial stimuli will allow the participants to picture a child as they read the vignette and attribution measure. The child pictured may influence the participant to rate the child a certain way due to the gender or race. This will help test if the participants have biases towards females or males and black or white children.

The Children's Experiences in School, revised Teacher Version (CESR-Teacher Version) (Cote and Azar, 1997) is a revised 10-item questionnaire to measure participants' attributions to the child's success or failure in the classroom. Each question has a scenario of a child's performance on an academic task in school. Following each question are four reasons why the child succeeded or failed. The original measure was 20-items measuring parents' attributions, but it has been altered for use by teachers to assess the attributions teachers make towards children's academic success or failure in a classroom. In the altered measure, there will be scenarios that demonstrate successful outcomes for the child (the child gets a good grade in the class) and scenarios demonstrating failure outcomes (the child misses problems on his/her homework).

The format for which the participants will respond will be presented three different times to evaluate variation in responses. The first time, the response will be presented as an open-ended question where the participants will write in their own reason for why they think the child succeeded or failed. The second time, the participants will respond using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale consists of asking the participant whether they strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), are neutral (N), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA) that the specific attribute contributed to the child's success or failure. The third time, the participants will have to rank order each attribution, rating the most important attribution as 1 and the least important attribution as 4. However, for the present study, only data from the Likert scale will be analyzed.

Attributions will vary for each question presented. However, there are four main categories of explanations. The attribution presented may be the stable characteristics of the person, the effort given by the child, the difficulty of the task, and the power and influence from others (Cote & Azar, 1997). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all of the subscales had a majority

ranging between .63 and .89. (Cote & Azar, 1997). The scores are very similar to or higher than other attribution measures' reliability scores that are commonly used with children (i.e. Connell, 1985; Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965; Siegel, 1990).

Procedure:

The participants were recruited from introductory psychology courses and their participation occurred over a website for collecting research data called Qualtrics. After completing a consent form, participants were then asked to respond to a questionnaire on demographics. The questions of interest included the participant's sex, race, year in college, GPA, and previous personal experience with foster care or divorce, which is presented after they take the survey.

After answering the questions on demographics, the participants were then presented with the picture from the CheFS measure, with the CESR attributions measure following. They were presented with a picture of a child from the ChEFS measure with a short description of the child that explains that the child is new to the school and comes from a specific family background. The vignette will describe the child's home life; there will be three variations of home life: the child is from a typical background, the child lives with one parent due to a divorce, or the child is in foster care. The vignette will state the child's name, the home life label of the child, and end with that he/she is new to the school. Following the description of the child, will be six questions that give the participant a scenario of the performance of the child, and the participant then has to answer accordingly.

Results

Demographic Data

Demographic data on sex, race, and year in college for participants are shown in Table 1. All 128 participants provided complete responses. Of those participants, 66.4% were female and 72.7% were white. In order to gain a sense of participants personal experience with family disruption, participants were asked if they experienced family disruptions including the two types of divorce and foster care targeted in this study. It was found that 69.11% reported they came from intact families. Only 1 participant (.81%) indicated he/she had experience with foster care and 21.95% indicated they had parents who were divorced. For the present study, these demographics were not included in the analysis due to time constraints.

Data on Ratings Made for Children's Academic Performance Based on Home Life Status Label:

Means and standard deviations for attributions on the CESR-Teacher Version for each home life status of foster, divorce, and intact are displayed in Table 2 and Table 3. A within-subjects, repeated measures ANOVA (home life status of child x success/failure performance x internal/external attributions) was done to examine if there are differences present for home life status labels. Results from the ANOVA indicate that there were statistically main effects for home life status [$F(2,101) = 21.25, p < .001$], ratings of success and failure performance [$F(1,102) = 5.48, p = .021$], and internal and external attributions [$F(1,102) = 7.04, p = .009$]. There was not a significant interaction between status and internal and external attributions [$F(2,101) = .99, p = .38$]. There was a significant interaction between status and success and failure performance [$F(2,101) = 23.06, p <$

.001] and a significant interaction among success and failure performance and internal and external attributions [$F(1,102) = 44.39, p < .001$] (Table 4). Additionally, a significant three-way interaction was found between home life status, ratings on success and failure tasks, and ratings on internal and external attributions [$F(2,101) = 6.86, p = .002$] (Table 4).

Post Hoc Group Differences Results

Given that there was a significant three-way interaction, the focus of the post hoc analyses' interpretations are based on results from the three-way interaction. Where significant findings occurred, post hoc tests were done in order to test the hypothesis that participants would rate the child from a foster care family differently than the child from an intact family and a child from a divorced family. For the three-way interaction between status and internal/external attributions and success/failure performance ratings, Tukey tests were run. Similar to prior work on attributions for children's academic performance, the findings from the current study indicate that people make different attributions for success and failure performance. Also, different status labels of foster, divorce, and intact indicated a change in ratings for the success and failure performance. The post hoc tests indicate that there was a significant difference between means for the foster child compared to means for the divorce child and the intact child ($p < .001$). Specifically, there was a significant difference between the means for the foster child compared to the means of the intact child on failure performance. This supports the hypothesis that participants rate reasons for the performance of foster care children were rated significantly differently than for those of the divorce and intact groups of children in internal and external attributions for failure performance. The differences between the foster child compared to

the divorce child and intact child can be seen visually in Figures 1, 2, and 3 comparing the graphs of success and failure performance based on internal and external attributions

The post hoc tests also indicated the similarities between the means for the intact child and divorce child for both internal and external attributions in both success and failure performance; these similarities can be seen visually when comparing Figure 1 and Figure 2. The difference between these means is only .005, not proving to be significant. With these two groups, participants rated reasons for failure performance lower than reasons for success performance. This may show that participants were more confident in attributing reasons for the success of the child instead of the failure of the child for these two groups of children.

There was a significant finding when examining the means of the attributions for foster children for of external attributions for failure performance. Participants had stronger ratings for external attributions for failure performance and weaker ratings for external attributions for success performance. This finding indicates that participants were more confident when attributing external attributions for failure performance for the foster child. That is, they were more likely to rate a reason external to the child to explain why he/she failed than rating an external reason for why the child succeeded.

Discussion

This study examined whether undergraduate students rate foster youth differently compared to children of divorce and children from intact families when making judgments about their academic performance. Findings supported that the reasons given for foster children's performance in an academic setting significantly differ from those for children in divorced and intact families when it comes to success and failure performance. When it came to making judgments about failures, there was a significant difference between the child from foster care compared to the child from divorced family and the child from intact family on both external and internal attributions. The findings indicate that participants rated performance on failure performance stronger for the foster child than the intact child and divorce child for both internal and external attributions.

Within failure situations for the foster child, participants rated external factors, such as the test was hard, to better explain the reason for the foster child's failure. This suggests that people may attribute the academic shortcomings of a foster child as due to factors outside the child's control, such as his/her home life situation, participants do so more strongly than they do for divorce or intact family children. However, with this finding, there seemed to be little difference between the means of the ratings of internal and external attributions in the failure performance of the foster child. If we had just looked at internal attributions, we would think that participants blamed the internal characteristics of the child for his/her failure, such as the

child didn't listen very carefully in class. The participants had stronger ratings for internal attributions for the failure performances of the foster child than for the other two groups of children. If we had just looked at external attributions, we would think that participants blamed reasons external to the child when the child failed, such as the teacher didn't explain it very well. When we look at both of the means of internal and external attributions, we see that they rated the child of foster care only slightly differently in both internal and external attributions for failure performance. It is perplexing that this group was rated differently from the other two groups for both internal and external attributions. Participants seem to have been unable to differentiate significantly whether the child failed due to internal reasons or if the child failed due to external reasons when assessing failure performance. Additionally, there is range in the standard deviation for the means of the ratings of failure performance of the foster child; across the sample, participants seemed to vary in their ratings of internal and external attributions for failure performance. The correlation between internal and external attributions for the failure performance of the foster child is .84, which is a strong correlation. From these findings, we may conclude that people have gathered less information about this specific group of children, and therefore cannot make definitive ratings for their performance.

Overall, in relation to the prediction of the present study, the foster label did affect the ratings made for foster children in that participants made stronger ratings in comparison to the divorce child and intact child for failure performance for both internal and external attributions. This indicates that participants are more rigid about their attributions for children of foster care in failure performances. Participants may have firmer beliefs about one group of children (foster children) compared to other children. They are more willing to make a stronger, definitive statements in regards to foster children's failure performance. This may be worrisome because

the participants are not basing these ratings on any other information other than the label of foster care. It appears to be a response bias for the specific category of foster children. The findings suggest that this group may be at risk for having adults appraise their performance in biased ways in an academic setting. The stronger ratings for the failure performance of the foster child in comparison to the other two groups may suggest that participants have a stereotype about foster children failing academically. People may believe that foster children are more likely to fail. This belief or stereotype may create a shortcut that is used when making attributions for the failure performance of the foster child. If they believe a foster child is more likely to fail, they will have stronger ratings about why the child failed. Overall, the findings must be viewed cautiously, because the participants were college students, but this group may be similar to new teachers in the field of education.

For the divorce child and intact child, there was no significant difference between the two groups so we could not reject the null. The appearance of little difference between the two groups indicates that people may be viewing reasons for success or failure in the classroom for these groups more equally, that is that there is little to no difference in attributional ratings between children from divorced families and children from intact families. In addition, the findings suggest, as found in a recent study, that children of divorce do not face the same biases from adults as earlier work demonstrated when divorce was less common (Guttman, Lazar, and Karni, 2008). When the authors replicated the study, they too found that the students who rated the divorce child did not rate the divorce child differently academically compared to a child from an intact home. This same finding occurred with this undergraduate sample. This may reflect that divorce is becoming more common, so people have more information to base their

appraisals on and don't have damage stereotype. 21.95% of the participants came from a family of divorce, so these participants, as well as others, may not see themselves to be "atypical."

Study results revealed that judgments made by participants have implicit biases when it comes to foster children. Participants had a tendency to rate failure performances stronger for the foster child, indicating that an implicit bias is present when assessing success tasks versus failure performance for this group of children. These implicit biases therefore influenced the attribution rating specifically for the foster child.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the participants recruited, the measure used, and the questions that were left unanswered. A majority (68.11%) of the participants came from intact families. This could have affected their ratings because a majority of the participants have not had a personal experience with divorce or foster care. A more mixed sample that represented a variety of home life experiences may have more accurately deemed if the general population, including those from family disruption, has biases of these groups.

Additionally, the participants recruited for this study were undergraduate students in introductory psychology course. These participants may not understand the classroom environment and interactions, so they may have answered the questions differently. A study should be replicated using education majors who plan to work with children in an academic setting.

For this particular study, the Children's Experiences in School, revised Teacher Version (CESR-Teacher Version) was altered in order to adapt to this study's specific aim. This specific questionnaire may not have covered enough of a variety of attributions to truly assess

participant bias. For example, further research could examine how likely people are to attribute a child's success or failure based on the child's vulnerability (i.e. the child was sick). This may test what participants believe is the reasoning behind the child succeeding or failing.

Additionally, the study only tested what participants thought of children who were elementary school aged. Further studies may examine the differences between different age groups.

There were aspects of the project that were not included in the analyses due to time restrictions. It would have been worth examining the differences in attributions based on the participant's personal home life (intact, divorce, or foster). There was not enough of a foster sample to examine this, but it could have been examined by comparing intact to divorce.

Additionally, the race and gender of the visual stimuli was not examined for this pilot study.

Future analyses are planned to test if the child stimuli's race or gender affected participants' responses.

Future Research

Future research should conduct this study specifically with teachers to see if bias found generalizes to this group. This "pilot" study indicated that implicit biases and possible stereotypes or shortcuts an individual might have are present amongst the general population. While the present study brings to light the issues of bias towards foster care children, it is important to examine this specifically with teachers who will directly come in contact with children from differing homes and have to ensure successful academic development for all children in the classroom. If the findings hold true with the teacher population, then teachers must become aware of these implicit biases. By remaining aware, the teacher realizes external factors may be contributing to a foster child's failure, but the teacher should not drastically alter the interactions based on this bias. If teachers

are aware, they can work with the child specifically without allowing them to “slide by” based on these external factors. Building from this study on beliefs, researchers should expand and examine the effect bias can have on the teachers’ interactions. By understanding teacher to child interactions, we can better understand how these biases come into play.

Other studies have suggested training programs for teachers, specifically with children of divorce and those deemed at risk (Post, et al., 2004; Strauss and McGann, 1987). The focus of these training programs is that the teacher is the one with the problem (i.e. stereotypes and implicit biases) and not the child. By focusing on the changes in teacher behavior, these programs may create a more successful academic environment.

Implications

The findings from this study indicate that implicit biases and stereotypes, are present when examining the academic performance of foster youth. If these biases also apply to teachers, then foster youth may also be experiencing differential treatment from their teachers unknowingly. While this could have possible benefits, such as the teacher realizes the child’s disrupted home life may be the reason why the child is not succeeding academically, it can also have negative outcomes, such as when the child misses out on normative assignments and is not held to the same standard as other students in the classroom. By studying teachers, the results from this study would further be strengthened and support the idea of urgency for insuring the creation of an equal environment. The results supported the primary hypothesis in that foster youth are rated differently than their counterparts from intact and divorce homes when they fail in an academic setting.

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Table 1

Demographics

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Gender	85 (66.4)	42 (32.8)	1 (.8)	128 (100)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	68 (53.1)	24 (18.8)	1 (.8)	93 (72.7)
Black	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	4 (3.1)
Asian	6 (4.7)	11 (8.6)	0 (0)	17 (13.3)
Hispanic	4 (3.1)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	6 (4.7)
Other	5 (3.9)	3 (2.3)	0 (0)	8 (6.3)
Year in College				
1 st year	66 (51.6)	25 (19.5)	1 (.8)	92 (71.9)
2 nd year	9 (7.0)	9 (7.0)	0 (0)	18 (14)
3 rd year	6 (4.7)	4 (3.1)	0 (0)	10 (7.8)
4 th year	4 (3.1)	3 (2.3)	0 (0)	7 (5.5)
More than 4 th	0 (0)	1 (.8)	0 (0)	1 (.8)

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Success Performance

	Foster		Divorce		Intact	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Success Performance Attributions Towards Child						
Internal Attributions	22.84	3.32	23.00	3.28	23.44	3.12
External Attributions	20.57	3.07	20.89	3.25	20.35	3.01

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Failure Tasks

	Foster		Divorce		Intact	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Failure Performance Attributions Towards Child						
Internal Attributions	24.33	9.67	18.67	3.51	18.17	3.35
External Attributions	25.57	10.77	19.17	3.44	19.83	3.69

Main effects comparison: a versus b, $p < .01$

Table 4

ANOVA Summary Table

	F(df)	p
Trends		
1. status	21.25 (2,101)	0.00**
2. success/failure	5.48 (1,102)	0.021*
3. internal/external	7.04 (1,102)	0.009*
Interactions		
status X success/failure	23.06 (1,102)	0.000**
status X internal/external	44.39 (2, 101)	0.376
status X success/failure X internal/external	6.88 (1,102)	0.002*

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

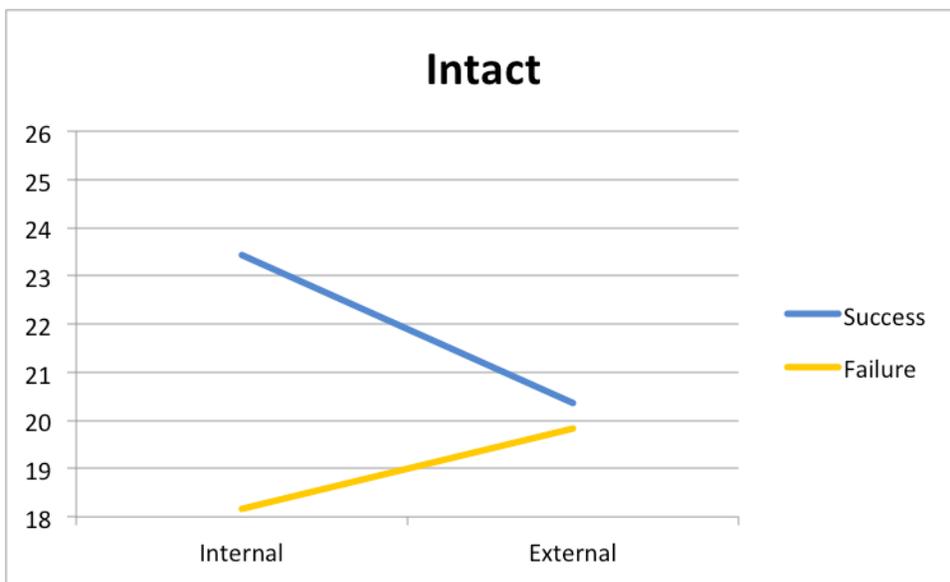


Figure 1. Ratings of internal and external attributions on success and failure performance for children from intact families

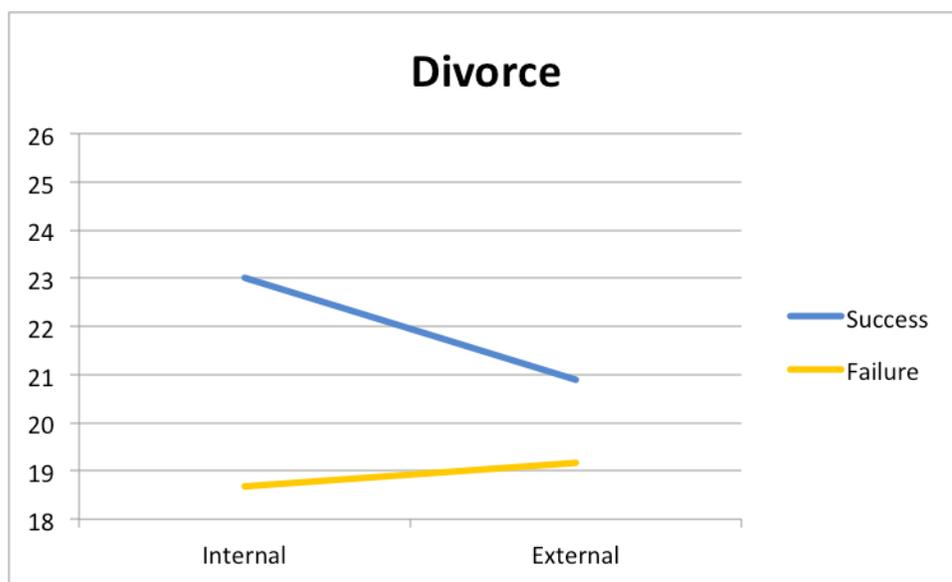


Figure 2. Ratings of internal and external attributions on success and failure performance for children from divorced families .

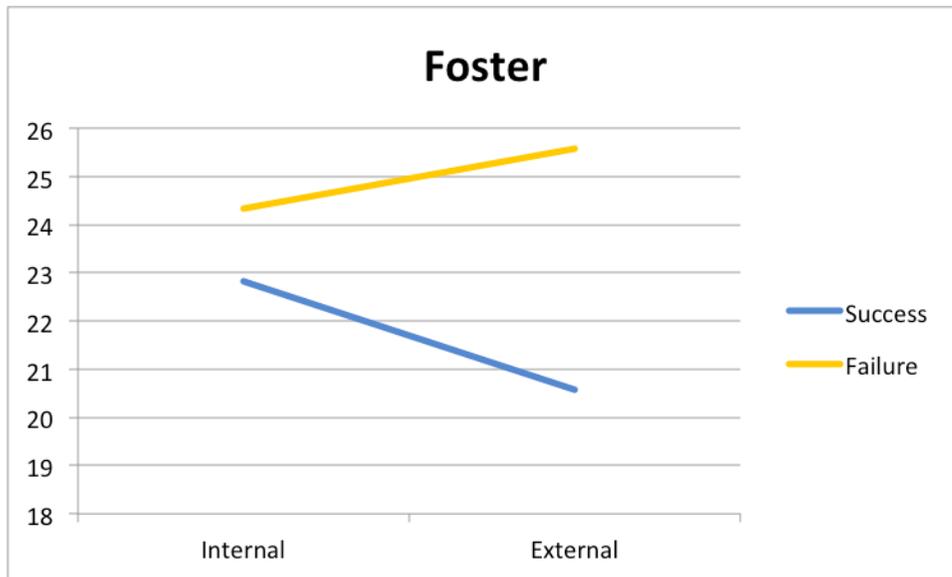


Figure 3. Ratings of internal and external attributions on success and failure performance for foster children.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Children's Experiences in School: Parent Version (adapted) (revised)

SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = Neutral A = agree SA = strongly agree

The child misses a lot of problems on his/her homework. Why?

The **teacher** grades unfairly. SD D N A SA

The problems were hard. SD D N A SA

He/she's not good at answering problems. SD D N A SA

He/she didn't work hard enough on it. SD D N A SA

The child has trouble understanding something at school. Why?

He/she didn't listen very carefully in class. SD D N A SA

He/she's not good at understanding things in school. SD D N A SA

The **teacher** didn't explain it very well. SD D N A SA

The topic is a difficult one. SD D N A SA

The teacher gives the child a good grade in class. Why?

He/she tried very hard in class. SD D N A SA

He/she got help with his/her school work. SD D N A SA

He/she is good at learning things in school. SD D N A SA

The class is easy. SD D N A SA

The child tells you that during class he/she answered one of **the teacher's questions** correctly. Why?

The teacher asks fair questions. SD D N A SA

The question was simple. SD D N A SA

He/she is good at answering questions. SD D N A SA

He/she listened carefully during class. SD D N A SA

The child does very poorly on a test. Why?

He/she's not very good at learning things. SD D N A SA

The **teacher** made the test too hard. SD D N A SA

He/she didn't have enough time. SD D N A SA

He/she didn't try hard enough. SD D N A SA

The teacher teaches something new in class and the child understands it quickly. Why?

He/she is good at understanding things. SD D N A SA

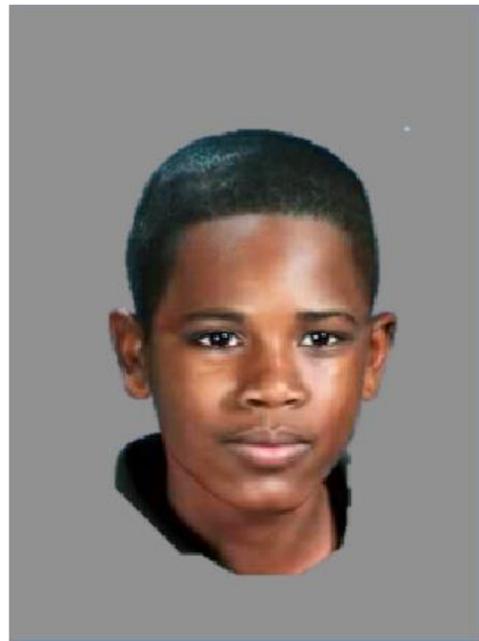
The teacher explained it very clearly. SD D N A SA

The lesson was easy. SD D N A SA

He/she tried hard to understand it. SD D N A SA

Appendix B: Visual Stimuli

Child Emotional Faces Picture Set



ACADEMIC VITA

Academic Vita of Samantha Etzi
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