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Predictors of General and Dating-Related Conflict Among Parents and Middle Adolescents: The Active Role of the Adolescent

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Predictors of General and Dating-Related Conflict Among Parents and Middle Adolescents: The Active Role of the Adolescent

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Those of us driven by the desire to integrate what we know often take on tasks larger than necessary. When faced with deadlines, our initial products leave our hands still in process. The meaning and potential of our work are only minimally captured in the written words released for the scrutiny of others.

This dissertation represents the first step in a long journey of conceptualizing and exploring an alternative model for advancing the understanding of parent-adolescent relationships. Completion of this step would not have been possible without the patient and unwavering support of several key people.

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Abstract

PREDICTORS OF GENERAL AND DATING-RELATED CONFLICT AMONG PARENTS AND MIDDLE ADOLESCENTS: THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE ADOLESCENT

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Current treatments of parent-adolescent conflict and autonomy development neglect the active role adolescents can play in managing conflict. The present study tests a conceptual model based on developmental theory. Dating is postulated as a salient source of conflict for parents and middle adolescents. Adolescents will utilize cognitive strategies to achieve dating-related goals. These strategies include both neutral (talking and selective disclosure) and negative (lying and using friends to cover for you) forms of filtering information parents receive in order to achieve their dating-related goals. General developmental and domain-specific factors were postulated to directly affect as well as moderate the effects of this

selective sharing of information on conflict frequency and intensity. These moderators included intrapersonal (desire for autonomy and importance of boy/girlfriend) and dyadic (cohesion and dating rule satisfaction) factors.

This model was tested with a diverse sample of 325 10th and 12th graders attending public high schools in suburban and rural settings. Only adolescents in current dating relationships were included. Results provide support for the conceptualization of adolescents as active managers of conflict. The degree to which adolescents filter information about dating in order to achieve their dating-related goals affects both the frequency and intensity of conflict. However, intrapersonal and dyadic variables moderate these effects. The proposed set of predictors accounted for as much as 40% of the variance in intensity of dating-related conflict, and as little as 28 percent of the variance in the frequency of general conflict. The importance of developmentally-relevant, domain-specific measurement of conflict was demonstrated. The significant grade and gender interactions with the variables in the model suggest the importance of examining developmental and socialization influences on conflict processes.

Introduction

Current treatments of normative development emphasize relationships as the context in which development occurs. During adolescence, individuation and autonomy development take place within the context of ongoing family relationships. Relationships with parents are transformed rather than severed as the physical, cognitive, and social changes of adolescence occur. Realignment of ongoing relationships and individuation rather than separation and independence describe the outcomes of these changes.

Conflict is viewed as the means by which changes in the parent-adolescent relationship are achieved. In contrast to psychoanalytic conceptualizations of conflict as hormonally driven, current treatments of conflict reflect a social-cognitive perspective. Conflict is conceptualized as the result of differences in perceptions and expectancies regarding behavior or decision-making control (Collins, 1990; Smetana, 1988). Conflict functions as a signal for needed changes in the parent-adolescent patterns of behavior and regulation. As currently viewed, resolution of conflict via discussion permits individuation and autonomy

development to occur at the same time parental influence is maintained. Thus, the parent-adolescent relationship is transformed and maintained across time rather than severed.

The view that resolution of differences occurs through communication is embedded in Baumrind's (1991)authoritative parenting style paradigm. The increased perspective-taking abilities of the adolescent contribute to the potential for greater mutuality and negotiation with parents. Disagreements occur, discussion and negotiation follow, parents grant greater control, and autonomy develops while warm supportive relationships endure.

However, results of multiple studies suggest that although negotiation is the ideal response to disagreements, it is not the normative response. It has been demonstrated that (a) standoffs and power assertions are the normative method of parent-adolescent conflict resolution (Montemayor, 1983); (b) few high school-aged adolescents demonstrate the highest level of perspective-taking abilities (Peterson & Leigh, 1990); and finally, (c) even among white middle-class parents, authoritative parenting is not the predominant style (Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1993). Yet, mild conflict is normative, parent-adolescent relationships are transformed, individuation and autonomy develop, and most adolescents become mature, well-functioning adults. This suggests another factor influences this process.

I suggest that the increased cognitive capacities of middle adolescents may be used not in mutual decision making, but for filtering the information parents receive about domains of behavior considered personal or about goals with which parents may interfere. The effects of this on conflict can be either positive or negative. This active role of the adolescent in managing the flow of information has not been explored. Conflict around dating during middle adolescence provides an ideal context for investigating the adolescent's role in conflict management.

Dating has not been a focal topic in conflict research. Instruments measuring normative conflict include dating among the list of "mundane conflicts," such as chores, homework, and curfew. However, current work on linkages across parent and peer contexts (Parke & Ladd, 1992) suggest that changes occurring in one context potentially influence changes in other contexts. Given the salience of opposite gender relationships during adolescence, the developmental task of integrating sexual and social roles (Sullivan, 1953), and the interpersonal nature of dating, the treatment of dating-related conflict as mundane ignores the developmental tasks and concerns of middle adolescents.

This study focuses on dating as a source of conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship. It is a first step in investigating a conceptual model that is grounded in

developmental theory and research. This model for the study of parent-adolescent conflict (a) focuses on the adolescents' active role in conflict management and (b) posits the importance of dating relationships to the realignment of the parent-adolescent relationship and to the development of autonomy. The active role middle adolescents play in managing conflict about dating via information management is the portion of the model examined in this study.

Literature Review

In this section, I will first give a brief overview of how conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship has been conceptualized in different theoretical orientations. Next, I will review the current social-cognitive view of the relationship between conflict and autonomy development. Then, I will review the scant literature on opposite gender and dating relationships during adolescence. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the conceptual and methodological problems that need to be addressed in research on dating and conflict.

Overview of Changes in Research on Adolescence

Adolescence is no longer by definition a period of storm and stress as early theorists like G. Stanley Hall (1904) and Anna Freud (1958) presupposed. Up until recently, individual development was seen as the product of the internal forces which drove and shaped behavior. For psychoanalytically-oriented theorists, intrapsychic conflict defined adolescence, and was assumed to be the product of raging hormones. This internal conflict inevitably led to turmoil within the family. Healthy development required

physical separation and emotional detachment from parents. Physical separation resolved the incestual problems; emotional detachment resolved the dependency problems. Conflict was the mechanism that ensured this severing of the parent-child relationship and produced a mature, independent adult.

Neo-analysts, represented by Peter Blos (1962), retained the focus on separation from parents but emphasized individuation rather than separation. From this perspective, the cognitive de-idealization of parents results in a psychological detachment from parents as the child develops a clear sense of self as individual. Conflict remains the mechanism, but it is more psychological in nature and less overtly disruptive. Individuation is the product of a psychological or emotional detachment made possible by the de-idealization of the parents and achieved through conflict.

Recent research embodies different assumptions and emphases (Collins, 1990; Steinberg, 1990). Theories of continuity and change are embodied in concepts like connectedness and individuality, rather than the disjunctive constructs of separation and detachment. Theoretical constructs of attachment and autonomy have been extended into the adolescent years, as a more developmental and dialectical approach has been adopted.

Individual development is seen as the result of an ongoing, dynamic process occurring between individuals who are affecting and being affected by one another. Healthy development occurs within the family, as parent-child relationships are transformed to more mature, adult-like relationships, a process which continues into adulthood. Neither physical separation nor emotional detachment are seen as inevitable, necessary, or healthy. Healthy independence incorporates both connectedness and individuation (Cooper & Grotevant, 1983; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986).

Conflict is conceptualized as a continuous aspect of parent-child relationships rather than a disjunctive characteristic of parent-adolescent relationships. Conflicts occur regularly over mundane matters, not major value-based differences (Montemayor, 1983, 1985). When family relations during adolescence are marked by extreme conflict (approximately 20% of families), the conflict has typically been ongoing and is not the product of "adolescence" per se. Individuation is conceptualized as a cognitive event which occurs within the context of warm and supportive family relationships and is accompanied by behavioral and affective changes in both parents and adolescents. As Cooper (1988) states, "conflict can function constructively when it co-occurs with the

subjective conditions of trust and closeness and their behavioral expressions." (p. 183)

Current research on the role of conflict in transforming family relationships and advancing adolescent development focuses on describing the processes and determinants of conflict, and on testing the links between conflict, individual development, and family realignment. The focus is on congruencies and discrepancies in perspectives, and is based in social-cognitive theory. (An important exception to the social-cognitive approach to conflict and individuation is represented by Steinberg's sociobiological theory and emotional distancing hypothesis (see Steinberg, 1987, 1990, for further discussion).

Adolescence is characterized by a transformation or realignment of the parent-adolescent relationship, rather than disjuncture. A bilateral realignment of perspectives and expectancies evolves over time in ongoing close relationships (Collins, 1990). Conflict functions as a signal that, due to the physical, cognitive, and social changes of adolescence, a realignment of the parent-child relationship needs to occur. When this realignment occurs, healthy individual development (individuation and autonomy) is the outcome. Papini and Sebby (1988) suggest that "conflict creates awareness of differences in perspective between family members" (p. 13) and leads to greater

autonomy. Supportive interactions create awareness of similarities and lead to emotional interdependence or cohesion.

Ongoing conflict and developmental problems occur when parents cannot adapt to the changes of adolescence (Eccles et al., 1993; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986). Research on the link between conflict, realignment, and autonomy development is addressed in the next section.

Autonomy and Conflict

Contemporary researchers focus on the process through which individuation occurs and autonomy develops while positive connections with parents are maintained. This reflects an important shift from a more individual developmental focus to a more context-relational approach in the study of adolescent development (Kreppner, 1994; Paikoff & Collins, 1991). Conflict is conceptualized as the context in which parent-adolescent relationships are transformed to more mutual, adult-like ones, and individual autonomy is attained (Collins, 1988; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986).

Autonomy is a multi-dimensional construct (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). With the notable exception of Steinberg's neo-analytic/sociobiological interpretation of conflict and autonomy, social-cognitive frameworks dominate discussion of the link between conflict, autonomy, and realignment. Individuation is hypothesized to have a

social-cognitive dimension. How adolescents think about their parents and their relationship to them changes (Laursen & Collins, 1994). Autonomy is seen as a by-product of successful individuation. It is this body of research to which I will now turn.

Douvan and Adelson (1966) discussed three dimensions or forms of autonomy: emotional, behavioral, and value autonomy. Although this division is heuristically useful for organizing research, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Emotional Autonomy. Emotional autonomy refers to the establishment of more adult-like and less childish close relationships. Such relationships are characterized by emotional self-reliance (Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Emotional autonomy has been investigated more than other forms. This reflects the influence of psychoanalytic assumptions about storm and stress as normative and necessary for healthy development (see Douvan & Adelson, 1966 as an example). Steinberg and Silverberg's (1986) "emotional distancing hypothesis" has generated much discussion and research. They hypothesize that while separation via rebellion per se does not occur, emotional distancing does, particularly during early adolescence. Less closeness and less warmth are found in parent and adolescent interactions during early adolescence than during

the preceding or following periods. Emotional distancing is seen particularly with boys and is linked to the healthy development of autonomy. Girls' autonomy, however, seems to develop better in family relationships marked by closeness and warmth. Girls, surprisingly, scored higher on all measures of emotional autonomy than boys (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986).

The measurement of emotional autonomy via the survey instrument Steinberg and Silverberg devised has been challenged. Ryan and Lynch (1989) argue that what is being measured is unhealthy detachment from parents rather than adaptive distancing. There is disagreement in the field at this time concerning what emotional autonomy measures are tapping and, in fact, over what "autonomy" is.

Behavioral Autonomy. Behavioral autonomy refers to self-regulation or self-governance. Normative conflict or "perturbations" are assumed to provide a context in which transformation or realignment of family relationships are worked out. From a social cognitive perspective, conflict functions as a signal that parents and adolescents hold discrepant views of the adolescent's capacities for autonomous action or decision making. Discrepancies in expectations regarding the timing of autonomous decision making are measured across a range of normative behaviors. This approach to conflict is based on the increased

perspective-taking abilities of the adolescent and on the close relationships framework posited by Cooper (1988). The assumed realignment that occurs across time has not been empirically documented (Collins, 1991).

Collins and Laursen (1992) argue that in close relationships expectancies regarding each other's behavior are formed over time and guide actions and reactions to one another. During times of transition, especially when rapid multiple changes occur, past behavior becomes an unreliable predictor of actions and responses, and new expectancies based on the perceived changes may not yet be appropriate. Intraindividual discrepancies between expected and actual behavior result in conflict over issues of autonomy. Interindividual discrepancies in expectations are also expected to lead to conflict during transitions.

Preliminary findings presented by Collins and Luebker (1993) suggest that early adolescence (13-15 year-olds) is a time when individual expectancies regarding the timing of responsibilities (choice of clothes, hairstyles) and behaviors (dating, smoking, drinking) show low concordance for parents and adolescents. Early adolescents engage in activities and assume decision-making responsibilities without their mothers' knowledge, as well as disagree on appropriate timing of behaviors and responsibilities to a

greater degree than 16- and 17-year-olds. How frequently these "takeovers" occur was not specified.

Collins (1990) notes that early adolescence has been viewed as the time in which to study discrepant viewpoints during times of transition. However, at other times of transition, similar processes are likely to occur. He does not specify examples.

Wood (1993) has documented that parents and middle adolescents agree on the order of behaviors over which behavioral autonomy will be granted, but disagree about both the proper timing of independent decision making and the actual achievement of such decision making. Expectations of sons are consistently earlier than those of mothers. Boys see themselves as having more control than mothers report. Given Collins and Luebker's (1993) findings, boys may take over more control than mothers are aware.

Holmbeck and O'Donnell (1991) propose that parents and adolescents go through cycles of "discrepancies ---> perturbations--->realignment---> adaptation" throughout early and middle adolescence across a variety of different autonomy-related issues. They focus on congruences and discrepancies between 1) mothers' and adolescents' perceptions of who is currently in charge of decision making within the family, and 2) the mother's and adolescent's desire for autonomous decision making in the future.

Discrepancies in either area are expected to be accompanied by higher levels of family conflict.

In a short-term longitudinal study (six months), Holmbeck and O'Donnell (1991) found that the greatest increases in adolescent-reported conflict and decreases in family cohesion at Time 2 were found with mothers and adolescents who reported the greatest discrepancies in their reports of current decision-making control at Time 1. Adolescents who reported being more in charge of decisions (relative to peers in the sample) reported less conflict with mothers and more emotional detachment at both Time 1 and Time 2. Only mothers were utilized since they are believed to be the primary socializers.

Regarding desire for autonomy, adolescents at Time 1 and Time 2 reported greater emotional detachment from mothers who were less willing to grant autonomy than adolescents desired. At Time 1, adolescents reported less frequent conflicts when they desired more autonomy than mothers were willing to give; this finding was difficult to explain and may be attributable to small sample size and measurement issues. These findings support the link between discrepancies and conflict. Since measures of actual relationship realignment were not included, the overall conceptual model could not be tested.

Holmbeck and Hill (1991), as well as Eccles et al. (1993), suggest that conflict is exacerbated when there is a poor match between the changing needs of the adolescent and the parents' behaviors. Problems with autonomy are assumed to be due to the inability of parents to respond to the basic changes of puberty. The role the adolescent plays in exacerbating or diminishing conflict has not been explored.

Research that addresses how parent-adolescent conflict might vary as a function of investment in a goal is rare. It seems likely that what is considered worth fighting for would affect parent-child conflict levels. Laursen & Koplas (1994) argue that conflict over issues adolescents designate as serious is different than other conflict. Serious conflicts involve higher intensity of emotions. They contrast serious, however, with playful, which does not seem to be a developmentally meaningful distinction if one is looking at the relationship between autonomy and conflict.

The preliminary data reported by Koplas and Laursen (1994) suggest, however, that negative affect may be the best discriminator of conflict regardless of how conflicts are resolved or what consequences conflict holds. (This is consistent with Smetana's finding that measures of frequency and intensity produced conflicting results regarding changes in conflict across adolescence.) Conflicts about topics adolescents designate as important elicited more anger and

more coercion than those not designated as important. Unfortunately, data are not yet available on what topics adolescents most frequently designated as important.

Papini and Sebby (1988) identify repetitiveness rather than content per se as the dimension of conflict best accounting for the intensity of conflicts over autonomy related issues. Choice of friends, sex, and drinking produced the most persistent conflicts and "redundant communication" of the 44 items sampled. Girls had more intense conflict with parents over these redundant concerns than did boys. Girls also reported greater self-disclosure.

Value Autonomy. Value autonomy refers to the establishment of one's own views on ideas, such as politics, religion, and morality. This dimension of autonomy is achieved later than either emotional or behavioral autonomy (i.e., late adolescence). Smetana's work with early and middle adolescents exemplifies this area of research, and provides another perspective on discrepancies as determinants of conflict (Smetana, 1988, 1991, 1993). Her work emphasizes conflicting motivations of parents and adolescents.

In Smetana's social-cognitive model, conflict is conceptualized as a context for debates over developing autonomy and as a signal of "a need to coordinate conflicting perspectives" regarding areas of jurisdiction

(Smetana, 1991). Smetana cites Turiel (1983), Nucci (1981), and Tisak and Turiel (1986), as the bases for her social cognitive view of autonomy. Smetana defines four distinct domains of jurisdiction, or decision-making control: moral (acts defined as prescriptively wrong because they affect the rights or welfare of others); conventional (arbitrary and consensually agreed-upon behavioral uniformities that structure social interactions within social systems); personal (actions that have consequences only to the actor and are viewed as beyond societal regulation and moral concern); and multifaceted (issues containing conventional and personal components). Prudential issues (acts with immediate, negative, and obvious consequences to oneself which include issues of safety, harm to oneself, comfort, and health; described as "all right, but foolish") are also considered multifaceted (Smetana, 1993).

Multifaceted issues provide the most fertile grounds for disagreements, since parents tend to interpret these issues as more conventional and adolescents tend to see them as more personal. Examples of multifaceted issues include failure to clean one's room, a boy wearing an earring, seeing a friend parents don't like, inviting a boy or girlfriend over when parents are gone, and (prudential issues) drinking alcohol or driving with inexperienced drivers. Adolescents of all ages are more likely to reason

about multifaceted issues as personal and define them as under their own jurisdiction, while parents are more likely to reason conventionally and define the same issues as under parental authority (Smetana, 1993).

In a study utilizing 102 adolescent-parent pairs (grades 5-12) from two-parent intact families, Smetana (1993) found that although adolescents and parents agreed upon the issues that caused conflict (self-generated lists), 50% of the adolescents' justifications for the disagreements were appeals to personal jurisdiction while 48% of the mothers' and 44% of the fathers' explanations were social-conventional. When asked to give counterarguments, adolescents demonstrated they could effectively take the perspective of their parents, but they reinterpreted the issues as personal. Similarly, parents understood but chose to reject their adolescents' personal perspective in favor of conventional interpretations.

Boys' ability to take the perspective of their parents appears to increase with age, while the pattern with girls is less clear. Eleventh and twelfth grade boys offered significantly more conventional counterarguments (65%) than did fifth through eighth grade boys (34%). Early adolescent girls (seventh and eighth graders) offered significantly fewer conventional arguments than either preadolescent (56%) or late adolescent (39%) girls.

Analyses of videotaped discussions of self-selected conflict issues and interview data produced several interesting findings. Relationships between family social interaction styles, reasoning, age, and conflict frequency and severity were analyzed separately by gender. First, self-reported conflicts in families with boys in 9th and 10th grade were more severe than in families with younger (5th through 8th grade) and older (11th and 12th grade) boys, and severe conflicts were the most frequent. No comparable pattern was found among girls. However, frequency of conflict for both boys and girls decreased with age. This suggests that different dimensions of conflict (frequency and intensity) may predict different outcomes.

Second, personal reasoning (arguing for one's personal rights) was a more positive manifestation of autonomy for girls than for boys, while personal reasoning for boys decreased with age. Third, close relationships appeared to facilitate development of self-reliance for girls but not for boys. Family cohesion is a positive factor, therefore, for girls. These results on cohesion are similar to Steinberg's. Smetana, like other researchers, concludes that autonomy may have a different meaning for girls than it does for boys.

It is noteworthy that Smetana (1993) reported that "only authoritative parents consistently maintained clear

and appropriate boundaries between moral, conventional, and personal issues in their judgments" (p. 10). This clarity is what is expected to facilitate discussion, explanation, and negotiation of complex issues and appropriate boundaries with adolescents. Defining the boundaries too permissively (permissive parenting) or too rigidly (authoritarian parenting) might prevent negotiation of boundaries, and hinder healthy development.

Problems with the Current Conceptualization of Conflict

The underlying assumption in current treatments of parent-adolescent conflict is that conflict functions as a signal to parents that there are discrepancies between (a) how the adolescent sees him/herself and how the parent sees the adolescent, and (b) between the autonomy needs of the adolescent (desire for autonomy) and the opportunities made available by the parents. When parents respond to these signals by verbally "renegotiating" rules, autonomy needs are met and the parent-adolescent relationship moves toward more mutual decision-making power. This results in increased behavioral autonomy.

Empirical results, as well as knowledge of normative changes during adolescence, suggest that this hypothesized process of change via negotiation is an "ideal" based on the authoritative parenting paradigm, rather than a normative process. The assumed process of change via "renegotiation"

is inadequate in three ways. First, the majority of conflicts end in standoffs and power plays (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Montemayor, 1983), not discussions that produce mutually agreeable solutions.

Second, the majority of parents are not authoritative. Steinberg et al. (1993) reported that only 25% of the 2619 white, two-parent, middle-class families who participated in his survey study were categorized as authoritative. Percentages were lower in other groups. Smetana's findings from interview and observational data are similar.

Third, the unilateral emphasis on parents as directors of this change process reflects a "social mold" perspective which ignores the potentially active role of the adolescent. The developing cognitive abilities of middle adolescents, particularly increased perspective taking, permit them to play active roles in managing conflict. As Smetana's research reveals, adolescents can readily take the perspective of their parents, but do not accept it as valid for them. This ability can be utilized to avoid conflict, as well as to participate in negotiating a compromise. The dual potential of cognitive developmental growth has not been addressed in conflict research.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) remind us that adolescents must be open to the influence of their parents for successful negotiation to occur. Given the increasing

emphasis on personal jurisdiction and privacy, it seems probable that adolescents would define certain areas as under their own jurisdiction, and not be anxious to share information or be open to parental involvement input regarding these. Their increased perspective-taking abilities would permit them to filter the information to which their parents have access. One area that adolescents may designate as personal and private is dating.

Dating and Opposite Gender Relationships as Conflict Issues

In this section I will review published studies and working papers that address dating during early and middle adolescence. I will begin by defining dating as a developmental phenomenon. I will then present findings that support three main points: (a) Dating and opposite gender relationships constitute salient developmental tasks for middle adolescents, as Sullivan (1953) argued; therefore, adolescents have vested interests in achieving their goals when conflicts arise concerning dating-related behavior; (b) Conceptions of dating held by parents and adolescents are discrepant, and therefore, potential sources of conflict; (c) Dating relationships represent a social role transition that involves change at multiple levels; therefore, conflict between parents and adolescents is expected.

Although articulated separately, these three points are interrelated and, therefore, addressed simultaneously in the

review. For heuristic purposes, the literature review is divided into published studies and unpublished working papers.

Dating as an Unaddressed Developmental Topic

Mastering relationships with opposite gender peers is one of the primary developmental tasks of adolescence (Sullivan, 1953). It involves integrating sexual and social needs. Surprisingly, there is little research on how this task is managed or on dating as the context in which this task may be negotiated. Steinberg (1993) states, "it is almost embarrassing to say that we know virtually nothing about the impact or significance of dating relationships for adolescent development" (p. 339).

Most existing research on dating utilizes college students and adults. When dating among school-aged adolescents has been researched, early adolescents have typically been used. With this population, dating is conceptualized as either a marker for precocious sexual activity and risk-taking behaviors (Miller, McCoy, & Olson, 1986), or as one of multiple cumulative stressors encountered during early adolescence (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Dating during middle adolescence, when opposite gender relationships become salient and dating becomes normative, has received almost no recent attention. In fact, little research exists in which dating is

conceptualized as developmentally normative social behavior, or as a role transition that occurs within the context of changing family relationships.

Theoretically-based research and conceptual models to guide research on dating are limited. The development of intimacy has been addressed in a "theory of romantic relationships" (Furman & Wehner, 1992; Wehner, 1992). This approach is grounded in attachment theory and Sullivan's developmental theory. Using a behavioral systems model, the researchers hypothesize that as adolescents gain experience across time and partners, they develop a view of relationships and a style that integrates attachment, caregiving, and affiliative behavioral systems. The hierarchy of importance of relationships changes with development as romantic partner replaces parent as the internalized attachment figure.

While this focus is clearly developmental, the behavioral process by which mastery of opposite gender relationships takes place within an existing network of ongoing close relationships is unaddressed. Furthermore, the model is based on research with girls only. It does not address issues of autonomy development, nor does it address what Hill and Holmbeck (1986) call the "bumps and potholes" of changing parent-adolescent relationships.

Aneshensel and Gore (1991) have proposed a model that

holds more promise for exploring the links among dating, conflict, autonomy, and relationship realignment. Although located in the stress literature and not cited in developmental literature, this model provides a conceptualization of dating as a developmental transition which occurs within an existing network of close relationships.

Dating is conceived of as a normative transition that requires role restructuring and, therefore, evokes stress. This stress is the product not only of the ambiguity in personal role behavior as dating partner, but also of the consequent restructuring of other social relationships, such as those with same gender friends and possibly parents. Aneshensel and Gore cite Smetana's (1988) work on autonomy as the foundation for this model. They also cite Pearlin's (1983) concept of role restructuring and the shared and unshared normative stress associated with particular life-stages. Empirical results of their study will be presented later.

Although not addressed by Aneshensel and Gore, the theoretical link between role restructuring and autonomy development is suggested by Hill and Holmbeck (1986) who cite Coser's (1975) chapter entitled "The Complexity of Roles as Seedbed of Individual Autonomy." Coser argues that each person has a role-set comprised of multiple role

partners. Role partners may differ in status and have different degrees of interest in and expectations of the person. These differences challenge the person to articulate his or her role relative to multiple and contradictory expectations. The more complex the challenge posed, the more autonomous the person may become as a result of managing these differences.

Hill and Holmbeck argue that complex role demands contribute to autonomy development because adolescents must become adept at recognizing and articulating differences in perspectives (Smetana's [1993] research suggests they can), tolerating discrepant points of view, and empathizing with persons at different status levels. Parents who explain their perspective (authoritative parents) demonstrate that individuals are distinct and pass along the value and act of explaining. This also supports autonomy development.

Based on this perspective, I am suggesting that dating conceptualized as a social role transition increases the complexity of roles and competing expectations that adolescents must manage. As such, dating involves a transition which is not as distinct as the physical changes on which research has focused (pubertal or school transitions), but is likely to involve discrepant expectations due to multiple changes and, therefore, potential conflict. This conceptualization of dating as a

social role transition serves as the basis for this study of the predictors of dating-related conflict.

The current study is not a test of Aneshensel and Gore's model. I am utilizing their conceptualization of dating as a social role transition that results in multiple changes within both the individual and the social network in which the adolescent is embedded.

Importance of Dating: Published Studies

Some important descriptive information about dating is found in classic large scale studies of adolescence (Douvan & Adelson, 1969; Kandel & Lesser, 1972; Offer, 1969) and in recent studies focusing on stress (Aneshensel & Gore, 1991).

In a 17-nation study Gibson et al. (1991) report that courtship/dating ranked fifth among the top 13 human problems cited in open-ended questioning of adolescents and adults living in advantaged countries (n = 5,491) and sixth by adolescents in disadvantaged countries (n = 1,209). Females ranked this problem higher than males. By contrast, sexuality per se was cited infrequently. This pattern of responses did not differ across SES and gender.

Kandel and Lesser (1972) found that dating was one of only three items where perceptions of importance were more highly correlated across adolescents in Sweden and the United States than between parents and adolescents within either country. While adolescents consistently rated dating

relationships as very important, parents in both countries rated dating as far less important. Kinloch (1970, as reported in Papini & Sebby, 1988) found that dating is the most persistent conflict for girls and parents, while Offer (1969) reported that curfew is the most frequent conflict for boys and their parents.

Based on their studies of emotional development and stress during adolescence, Larson and Asmussen (1991) argue that opposite gender relations are the new area of what matters to adolescents. While activities elicit the most intense emotions among pre-adolescents, friends do so for adolescents. The biggest new domain of positive and negative emotions, real and fantasized, is romantic relationships.

When questioned about feelings, early adolescents demonstrated "more cognitively advanced and emotional explanations" within this area. Larson and Asmussen conclude that the effect is "almost entirely due to opposite sex relations....Based on our findings, disappointments in love represent one of the major sources of distress, strain, and perhaps psychiatric disorder in adolescence." (p. 38)

Peterson, Stremmler, & Rice (1992) report that late adolescents/young adults (i.e., college students) cite romantic relationship breakups as the primary reason for psychological lows during high school. Similarly, LaGrand

(1989) found in a study of 4000 college students (aged 17-24) from five different institutions of higher learning that breakups of their most recent love affairs were cited as the most recent major loss by 27% of the sample. Often the intensity of loss experienced was minimized by the young adults' support network, which added to the grief process.

Aneshensel and Gore (1991), using the stress model described above, interviewed adolescents about the effects of dating on friendships. They found that adolescent same-gender friendships undergo restructuring as a result of dating-initiated changes in activities, time allocation, and social groups. The changes affect both the dater and the nondating friend, and lead to "mismatches between the expected, desired, and actual levels of shared activities" (p. 67). Aneshensel and Gore speculated that self-disclosure among female close friends is difficult to continue when one friend begins dating earlier than the other. While the new dater is interested in boys and defining her new role as dater/girlfriend, the nondater may be uninterested or unable to meet the friend's new needs. As a result of diminished time for her, the nondater may feel she cannot rely on her friend to be there for her. This concurrent change in the friendship relationship contributes to the stress encountered by the new dater.

Aneshensel and Gore hypothesize that a similar process

of restructuring occurs with the parent-adolescent relationship as a result of dating, however, they offer no specifics about what might be involved.

Taken together, these studies suggest that (a) opposite gender relationships are a topic of major importance to adolescents; (b) from adolescents' perspective, parents do not appreciate the importance of these relationships; and (c) dating relationships represent a developmental transition involving multiple levels of change within the person and within the network of ongoing relationships.

Other than Kandel and Lesser's work, research on parents' perceptions is almost totally lacking. In a working paper, Feiring (1992) reports that while mothers of 15-year-olds were fairly knowledgeable about who their children's same gender friends are, they have little knowledge of the extent of their daughters' interactions with opposite gender friends. Information about parents' knowledge about or views of dating during middle adolescence was not found.

Research-in-Progress: Dating and Opposite Gender Relationships. Within the context of an ongoing longitudinal study of families with children who are now adolescents, Feiring (1992) is collecting data on views of romance held by 15-year-olds. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 117 white middle-class adolescents

participating in the study since infancy. While dating relationships are relatively short-lived (average 3 months as compared to 1 year for best friends), these relationships are intense in terms of time and energy expended. Daily contact in person and/or by phone is the norm. Unlike friendships, romantic relationships are characterized by a type of intense fascination, as reflected in the quality of enthusiasm brought to that section of the interview.

Reported gender similarities and differences support the conceptualization of dating as a social role transition. Although males and females agree about the most important aspects of dating, there are also sufficient differences across the gender groups to suggest that managing opposite gender relationships presents a new challenge. Although both males and females value companionship, personality, and physical attractiveness, males emphasize psychophysical aspects more (companionship and physical attraction) and females emphasize psychosocial aspects more (support and intimacy). Males and females agree that time commitments and interpersonal disagreements are salient disadvantages. These findings are consistent with Sullivan's theory that the major challenge of adolescence is to integrate physical sexuality and social relationships. The challenge, however, appears to be experienced differently by males and females.

A note of caution: Great caution should be exercised

in drawing generalizations based on these preliminary results. Not only is the sample limited in all aspects of diversity, it is composed of families stable enough to have participated in an ongoing longitudinal study for 15 years. Additional limitations are addressed in the measurement issues section.

A new longitudinal research study is underway in Canada investigating the hypothesized shift from parents to friends to romantic partners as attachment figures. Several surprising preliminary findings were recently reported (Connolly & Johnson, 1993). Participants initially included 1044 high school students, grades 9 - 12, from predominantly white, middle-class families. Forty-two percent reported having a current romantic partner. Of these relationships, 19% were less than 4 months in duration, 36% 4-12 months, 31% 13-36 months, and 14% more than 36 months. The percent of long-term relationships was termed "surprising."

Regardless of length of relationship, adolescents with a romantic partner viewed their parents as significantly higher on emotional support (enhancement of self worth); this finding was in the opposite direction than expected. Daters involved in romantic relationships 4 months or longer perceived less intimacy shared with best friends; friendships of daters in shorter relationships were not affected.

In a follow-up study (sample undefined), perceptions of sources of instrumental and emotional support (best friends, parents, and romantic partners) were compared across romantic relationship duration and age groups. Regarding relationships with parents, romantic friend was rated higher than parents on intimacy, and for older adolescents only, on companionship. Parents were rated higher than romantic friend on affection and reliable alliance. Length of relationship did not affect these ratings.

For adolescents with romantic relationships shorter than 4 months, best friend was consistently rated higher than romantic partners. Rankings were inconsistent for adolescents in the 4-12 month category; types of support provided by different sources varied as a function of gender and age. Romantic partner was consistently rated higher than best friend only in relationships exceeding a year in length.

Although produced in a study with a different theoretical orientation, these findings support the conceptualization of dating as a social role transition. They suggest that in the context of long-term relationships (one year or more) the transition is achieved, and behavior patterns with parents, adolescents, and friends find a new balance. The finding that having a romantic partner increased perceived support (enhancement of self) from

parents regardless of length of relationships is an ambiguous finding. It is consistent with the current view that parents continue as important sources of affection, instrumental aid, and especially reliable alliance throughout adolescence. (See Lempers & Lempers, 1992, as an example.) However, it appears at odds with the view that dating is perceived differently by parents and adolescents and may be a source of conflict.

This finding may be an artifact of the sample utilized. Only adolescents who rated mothers as important people were used for these analyses. Also, the large proportion of long-term daters (45% were in relationships over a year in duration) may have biased results. Connolly and Johnson conclude that length of relationship is an important dimension of dating to measure. The validity of that recommendation is tested in this current study.

Dating as a Catalyst for Conflict . Current tools that assess conflict list dating along with curfew, homework, and dress. I propose that (a) dating-related conflict represents a different type of conflict, one in which adolescents and parents have different but high investments, and that (b dating-related conflict during middle adolescence plays a unique role in autonomy development. Dating functions as a catalyst for the development of autonomy because it represents a new relationship context in

which multiple developmental issues are worked out. In dating relationships adolescents begin to experience themselves as independent persons in adult heterosexual relationships outside the family. Through these relationships, they learn how to integrate social and sexual aspects of self (Sullivan 1953), a task in which parents do not play active supportive roles. For the majority of youth, the future result of this learning is physical separation from their family of birth and the eventual establishment of a new family unit. Given the apparent importance of dating to adolescents (Feiring, 1993) and the adaptive outcome of opposite gender relationships (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986), adolescents are likely to be highly invested in this exploration. Furthermore, they are likely, as my pilot data suggests, to define dating relationships as a private area of their expanding social world, an area under their personal jurisdiction.

By contrast, parents in our society are likely to be invested in issues of protection because of fears about sexuality and because of their conventional views of jurisdictional control over multidimensional issues (Smetana, 1993). This protective goal is particularly likely for parents with younger adolescents and with girls. When adolescents take over control in areas in which parents are highly vested (those which optimize their children's

future prospects), then parents are likely to consider conflict with their children worthwhile (Goodnow, 1993). Additionally, the importance of dating to adolescents is not understood by adults (Kandel & Lesser, 1972). Under these conditions, the probability of conflict is high and of mutual understanding via discussion and negotiation is low. This may be particularly true during the initiation of dating and/or the early stages of diverse dating relationships.

However, conflict may result not only from dating-specific issues, but also from changes in adolescents' priorities. Among friends, conflict arises because of changes in the dater's priorities. Within families, homework, chores, hobbies, curfew, and family events may take second place to new salient dating relationships. Parents may respond to dating-related changes in behavior by increased monitoring of things they consider important to the adolescent's security or future. Increased conflict, therefore, is likely in areas where jurisdiction had not been an issue.

Adolescents must be open to parental input for influence to occur (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and for renegotiation of decision-making control via communication to effectively occur (Smetana, 1993). Given differences in goals, assessments of the importance of dating, and

perceptions of areas of jurisdiction, in addition to adolescents' emphasis on privacy and parents' potentially increased monitoring, conflict is probable. Under these circumstances, renegotiation via discussion is likely to be difficult.

Description of the Current Study

I propose that the importance of dating relationships to adolescents promotes active utilization of strategies to achieve their ends when adolescents come into conflict with parents over issues that limit access to what is important. Adolescents' tendency to define multifaceted issues as within their personal jurisdiction earlier than parents (Smetana, 1993; Ward, 1993) and to assume more control than parents believe they have granted or adolescents have achieved (Collins & Luebker, 1993) suggests adolescents may exercise more decision-making power than parents have given or are aware.

The possibility that parents attempt to exert direct and indirect control over daters because of their desire to protect and influence their adolescents' futures may amplify the potential for conflict. Information from parents was not collected in either the present study or the pilot. However, in the pilot study, males reported that parents increase their emphasis on homework as a means of limiting time spent on the phone with their girlfriends. Given

adolescents' emerging perspective-taking abilities (Smetana, 1989) and the de-idealization of parents as all-knowing and powerful authority figures (Steinberg, 1990), middle adolescents are equipped and motivated to take over control to accomplish what they are invested in if parents are perceived as obstacles. They can take control in neutral ways, such as through selective sharing of information about dating-related activities, reduced communication, or avoidance of topics they know will lead to conflict over domains of jurisdiction. They may also take control in more negative ways, such as through lying or using siblings and friends to cover for them so they can accomplish their dating-related goals. The effect of this takeover on conflict will depend on multiple factors.

Dating-related conflicts between parents and adolescents offer a rich ground to test hypotheses about strategies used by active and powerful participants in the management of conflict in parent-adolescent relationships.

This study is the first step in testing a developmentally-grounded conceptual model for addressing the contribution of parent-adolescent conflict to autonomy development. This study focuses on the active role of the adolescent in conflict. If this model is adequate, conflict among daters will vary as a function of selectivity in communications with parents. Satisfaction with dating rules

is used as a measure of the congruence between parents' and adolescents' understanding of the importance of dating relationships. If satisfaction with rules is low, it is assumed that issues around dating have not been worked out. Both selectivity and conflict are expected to be high.

Two types of selectivity are assessed: neutral and negative. Neutral selectivity refers to selective sharing of information. Negative selectivity refers to deceit. Both general developmental factors and dating-related factors are expected to moderate the effects of selectivity on conflict. Moderating factors include the following: intrapersonal (desire for autonomy, importance of dating), dyadic (family cohesion, dating rule satisfaction), and contextual (length of dating relationship). Desire for autonomy and cohesion are the general developmental factors, and importance of dating, dating rule satisfaction, and length of the relationship are the dating-related factors.

Because of the hypothesized connection between actual dating and conflict, the sample is limited to adolescents in dating relationships at the time of data collection.

Methodological Problems

The overriding problem encountered in designing a study that focuses on dating is the lack of theories, models, and published empirical research. Research on normative conflict is also in its early stages (Collins & Laursen,

1992). Specific methodological issues that result from this void fall into three general categories: construct definition, sample selection, and instrumentation. There are, however, many more problems than highlighted here.

Construct Definition. There is no agreed upon understanding of what dating means. Furman and Wehner (1992) equate dating with a romantic other relationship. This assumes that dating and romance are equivalent across developmental time. The differences among dating as social activity, dating as relationship, and dating as romance need to be addressed. Similarly, the different functions of dating need to be made explicit. The function of dating has changed across historical time. There is now less emphasis on courtship and more on social activity. Pilot testing suggests that adolescents are aware of these differences in definition and function, and respond literally to the terms used. How constructs are operationalized and how items assessing these constructs are worded affect the results one obtains.

The different stages of dating as a relationship need to assessed. The categorical classification of dater versus nondater is inadequate. Results from Connolly and Johnson's (1993) work suggest that length of dating relationship is important. Given the intensity of the dating relationships reported by adolescents (Feiring, 1992), length of dating

relationship by itself may also be inadequate. However, it provides a starting point grounded in empirical findings.

Construct and definitional problems are also encountered with conflict. Research suggests that conflict has multiple dimensions and that multiple processes are involved. When these dimensions and processes are ignored, conflicting results are reported (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Smetana, 1991). Frequency and intensity represent two measures of one of these processes. Both are important and need to be measured separately. Additionally, conflict may vary as a function of the topics used to measure it.

Sample Selection. Research on dating completed in the past 15 years has utilized small homogeneous samples of convenience. Given the increasing diversity of the adolescent population and the multiple developmental changes that occur from pre-adolescence to late adolescence, large samples of current daters at different grade levels are needed. Retrospective data gathered from 18-year-olds who dated sometime during the last three years and have been participants since birth in a longitudinal study (Feiring 1993) provide helpful starting points, but are not adequate for generalizations about dating as a developmental phenomenon. The same is true about the usefulness of data generated by studies that utilize 9th through 12th graders

and do not recognize effects of developmental and contextual differences among them.

Gender differences on relationship issues (Sharabany, Gershoni, & Hofman, 1981) and conflict appear to be strong. Furman and Wehner (1992), whose theory of romantic relationships is widely discussed, use only females. Interesting males in studies of relationships is difficult, as Aneshensel, who used both males and females, confirmed (personal communication, 1993). In order to collect data that represent both males and females, innovative techniques for recruiting large representative samples are needed.

Instrumentation. No standardized or even widely used measurement instrument for studies of dating exists besides the Network of Relationships Inventory used by Furman and Wehner (1992). The NRI is based on attachment theory and a hypothesized change in the hierarchy of personal relationships across time. It does not permit study of the processes by which change occurs.

Furthermore, no agreed-upon terminology regarding dating exists. The same terms are used differently and embody different conceptualizations of the functions of dating. Casual versus serious can refer to length of time (Furman, Wehner, & Underwood, 1994) or level of commitment (Feldman, Araujo, & Winsler, 1994). Comparison of even preliminary results, therefore, is difficult.

Measuring conflict holds similar challenges, since the important dimensions of conflict are just being articulated. Steinberg's Parent-Adolescent Conflict Scale (Steinberg, 1987) is a widely used measure of conflict. This 17-item list of normative topics of conflict assesses intensity of conflict in the last two weeks, but not frequency of occurrence. Many of the items older high school students no longer discuss with their parents (what time to be in bed), and younger adolescents have not yet discussed (use of car). Issues around relationships, which developmental theory suggests are focal for adolescents, are poorly represented in this list.

Proposed Developmental Components of the Model. Adolescents play an active role in conflict management and this role has been neglected in studies of parent-adolescent conflict. Research has concentrated on general psychological constructs that affect level of conflict, such as the hypothesized intraindividual condition, desire for autonomy, or the dyadic condition, family cohesion. Researchers have not looked at the behavior of adolescents in response to these hypothesized conditions.

The assumption guiding research on changes in the level of parent-adolescent conflict across time has been that conflict management has been the result of parents responding to adolescents' need for autonomy by initiating a

renegotiation of more appropriate rules. Baumrind's (1991) authoritative parenting represents this type of parenting style. When autonomy needs are met, conflict is reduced until further negotiation is needed.

Based on developmental theory, I argue that Baumrind's authoritative parenting paradigm is too narrow to encompass the complex dynamics of parent-child conflict during adolescence. First, authoritative parenting represents a social mold perspective (Peterson & Leigh, 1990) that ignores the bi-directional influences that operate in changes in conflict across time, particularly as the child develops perspective-taking capacities (Smetana, 1993). Second, negotiation is not normative even among white middle-class families with adolescents (Smetana, 1993; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1993).

The model tested in this study suggests that in order to understand parent-child conflict one must consider the developmental stage of the child. This proposed model addresses developmental stage in six ways. First, it focuses on the potentially active role the adolescent can play in conflict management. Adolescents have the ability to take their parents' perspective (Smetana, 1991). This enables them to filter the information available to parents. If they are effective at information management, conflict can be avoided. If they are not, conflict may increase.

Second, this model acknowledges that by middle adolescence, the de-idealization of parents has most likely occurred (Blos 1962; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986). Parents are no longer the primary means of affirming the goodness of ones unique self (Brown, Clasen, & Eicher, 1986). Peers take on a more central role. This change in the function of parents opens the possibility that less positive modes of communication, such as lying and covering behavior, may be seen as acceptable means of achieving developmentally important goals. Smetana's (1988) moral autonomy framework suggests that adolescents and parents will agree on issues of moral values. In focus group discussions concerning dating, however, adolescents freely admitted to lying and covering behavior.

Third, this model acknowledges the special developmental task that adolescents face, namely, managing opposite gender relationships. Opposite gender relationships take on developmental significance (Sullivan, 1953) and become salient sources of interest during adolescence (Larson & Asmussen, 1991). I argue that these developmentally charged interests activate the utilization of strategies to attain dating-related goals. In addition to more neutral strategies, such as avoiding talking about dating or selectively sharing information, lying and covering may be seen as acceptable methods of reducing

expected conflict and achieving dating-related goals. This is consistent with rational decision-making theory (see Gardner & Herman, 1990).

Fourth, understanding parent-adolescent conflict processes requires that both general conflict and changes in dating-specific conflict be assessed. The mismatch between parents' broader concerns (success in school, development of abilities, time as a family, success in later life) and adolescents' more immediate and focused concerns (negotiating opposite gender relationships) is expected to produce conflict. Dating during middle adolescence will affect how parents and adolescents deal with the normative areas of jurisdiction typically measured in general conflict inventories. Strategies will be evoked by the adolescent to deal with these areas of conflict as well.

Utilization of these strategies will be a function of both hypothesized general developmental factors believed to contribute to conflict, such as desire for autonomy and family cohesion, but also of dating-specific factors, such as importance of boy/girlfriend, dating rule satisfaction, and relationship length. Including these dating-specific factors will clarify the processes driving parent-adolescent conflict. It is quite possible that although the frequency of general conflict remains constant across adolescence, the topics of conflict change. What is worth fighting for

changes. Therefore, the active role the adolescent plays in conflict management will be most vividly seen in conflict measures that are domain-specific.

Fifth, the developmental importance of dating during middle adolescence should be evident both in the frequency and the intensity of parent-adolescent conflict. The effectiveness of an adolescent's use of strategies to avoid conflict is dependent not only on the adolescent, but also on the parent. For this reason, measures of both desire for autonomy (intraindividual) and family cohesion (dyadic) are included in this model.

Both frequency and intensity of conflict are included as separate dimensions of conflict. The frequency of conflict may vary according to both the qualitative methods utilized by adolescents in managing conflict and the effectiveness of parents in detecting these methods. Socialization may also affect the expression of conflict (Bell & Bell, 1983; Maccoby, 1988). The intensity of conflict when it occurs should be more uniform. I argue that dating relationships increase the drive for autonomy and thus the seriousness of disagreements (importance and investment) about areas of jurisdiction over behavior defined as personal.

Finally, grade and gender differences are treated not as global categories that uniformly produce predictable

differences in outcomes, but rather as markers for general developmental differences (grade) and socialization differences (gender) that interact with other contextual factors in complex ways. Dating will have different meaning to 10th graders and their parents than to 12th graders and their parents. Across time, the salience of dating as a social role transition changes, as perhaps do the strategies parents and adolescents utilize in response to that change.

Similarly, dating as a social role transition will have different meanings for females and for their parents than it will have for males and their parents. All these differences will affect the utility of any set of factors hypothesized to predict conflict in parent-adolescent relationships. Thus, subgroup differences in predictors as well as outcomes must be addressed within grade and across gender.

Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS 1: Among current daters, the following variables will predict the frequency of recent general conflict and dating-related conflict among parents and adolescents: cohesion, desire for autonomy, dating importance, dating rule satisfaction, and length of current dating relationship.

Specifically, conflict frequency will be positively related to desire for autonomy and dating importance, and negatively related to cohesion, dating rule satisfaction, and length of relationship.

Given the scant research on intensity of conflict among parents and adolescents, relationships between intensity of conflict and these variables will be examined in an exploratory manner.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Among current daters, negative selectivity will be positively related to the frequency of recent general conflict and dating-related conflict. Because negative selectivity is conceptualized as a maladaptive form of communication, the relationship between negative

selectivity and both recent general conflict and dating-related conflict is expected to be positive.

Neutral selectivity is defined as an aspect of developmental growth. How it is utilized and what effects it will have on conflict will be influenced by other factors; therefore, no main effects are hypothesized for neutral selectivity.

HYPOTHESIS 3: The relationship between neutral and negative selectivity and the frequency of recent general conflict and dating-related conflict will be moderated by desire for autonomy, cohesion, dating importance, dating rule satisfaction, and length of current dating relationship. The hypothesized directions of effect are based on the results of pilot data.

Specifically, both neutral and negative selectivity will be positively related to the frequency of recent conflict and dating-related conflict when a) dating importance or desire for autonomy is high; and b) when cohesion, dating rule satisfaction, or length of dating relationship is low.

The effects of the moderators on intensity of conflict will be examined in an exploratory manner.

HYPOTHESIS 4: Gender is conceptualized as a marker for differences in socialization and grade as a marker for differences in development and experience. Main effects for

gender and grade are not expected; however, gender and grade differences in the relationships among selectivity, the proposed moderators, and conflict are expected.

Given the inconsistent findings in the literature, the effects of gender and grade will be examined in an exploratory manner.

Method

Participants

This study is part of PROJECT SOS, a longitudinal study designed and implemented by Carol Murray and this author. PROJECT SOS is a study of significant others in adolescents' lives. Tenth and 12th graders (*N* = 839) from all seven high schools in one county in the Southeastern United States completed questionnaires for this first wave of data collection. Active consent was obtained from both parents and adolescents (see Appendix A).

For this study, students meeting the following criteria were used for analyses: (a) in a current dating relationship for 36 months or less and not engaged, married, or single parents themselves; (b) lived in an intact, step-parent, or single-parent family; (c) completed all relevant measures used in the analyses. Students meeting these criteria included 141 tenth graders (*M* age = 14.7 years, *SD* = .43) and 184 twelfth graders (*M* age = 16.7, *SD* = .44). The sample is diverse in regards to gender (73% female) and race (73% Caucasian, 18% African American, 4% Asian, 5% other). Although the majority were from intact, two-parent

families (61%), 25% were from single-parent families, and 14% were from step-parent families. Adolescents living in other family structures were excluded on theoretical and statistical bases. Seventy-one percent of the students attended schools serving predominantly suburban areas, while the remaining students attended schools in relatively rural areas. While the median educational level of the fathers included a college degree, 26% had a high school education or less. The mothers' median education level was some college or professional training, with 27% having only high school educations.

Procedure

Because policies and preferences regarding data collection differed across schools, data were collected either in group testing situations during or after school hours (35%), or through take-home packets completed at home and returned to the school. Directions were standardized across all administrations.

Incentives for returning consent forms and completed surveys were given. Drawings for prizes occurred at three stages of the study: in individual schools for return of consent forms by the designated date, for participation when data collection was occurring at the school, and finally, upon completion of data collection at all seven participating schools. Local merchants donated prizes to

serve as incentives for participation. Prizes that would be of high interest to both males and females were solicited.

Instruments

The PROJECT SOS survey booklet is composed of Parts A and B, each of which can function independently, and Part C, which includes the demographics and two standardized instruments. Parts A and B each take approximately 40 minutes to complete. Because of the open-response format, the Significant Other Inventory Revised for Adolescents (SOIR-A) was administered as Part A so responses would not be biased. Data from Part A are not used in these analyses.

Part B of the survey is composed of the Juggling Adolescent Relationships Survey [JARS]. JARS, developed by this author, is designed primarily to do two things: (a) provide descriptive information on dating during middle adolescence; and (b) to assess the impact of dating relationships primarily on relationships with parents, best friends, and opposite gender friends. Information on dating history and parent-adolescent conflict is collected from all students. Standardized as well as new measures are included. (See Appendix B for a copy of JARS.)

Students who are presently dating or who dated during the current or preceding school year complete the entire instrument. Students not meeting these dating-specific criteria are directed to skip certain sections.

JARS was pilot tested with two groups of 10th through 12th graders attending private, gender-segregated schools (males = 105, females = 117). Students completed the instrument in classes and provided written critiques of it. The next day the investigator discussed students' critiques and views on dating with them during class time. Revisions were made in JARS based mainly on this qualitative feedback and further reviews of the literature.

Conflict. Conflict is measured on two levels, global and domain-specific. Two dimensions are measured: recent general conflict and dating-related conflict. The Parent-Adolescent Conflict Scale (Steinberg, 1987) assesses the intensity of **recent general conflict** (the last two weeks) over normative mundane topics. Because current research suggests that frequency and intensity represent different dimensions of conflict, this scale was revised to include ratings of the frequency rather than just occurrence (YES/NO) as well as the intensity of conflict. Frequency of recent general conflict and intensity of recent general conflict are utilized as two outcome variables in the analyses. Based on pilot testing, a response category of NEVER was added to address the problem of answers being skipped by middle adolescents because specific items are considered age-inappropriate or inapplicable. Reliability (Cronbach alpha) was .81 for the frequency measure and .78

for the intensity measure. (See Appendix B, page 170).

An 18-item conflict measure was designed for this study to measure **dating-related conflict**. This measure assesses perceived increases in the frequency of conflict when dating and the perceived intensity of these conflicts. Reliability (Cronbach alpha) in a pilot study (n = 63) using this instrument was .88. Frequency of reported increases in dating-specific conflict (α = .87) and the intensity of these conflicts (α = .87) were utilized as two separate outcome variables in the analyses. (See Appendix B, page 178).

Selectivity. Selectivity in communication with parents about dating relationships is assessed by four individual items (5-point Likert scales) representing two types of selectivity: neutral and negative. Responses range from almost never/never to either several times a week or more, or almost always. Items are intended to assess the frequency with which adolescents filter information to their parents to achieve their dating-related goals.

Neutral Selectivity is assessed by two items: **Talking** (When I am dating, I talk with my parent(s) about my relationship...) and **Selective Disclosure** (I am selective in what I tell my parent(s) about my girl/boyfriend relationship [I pick what I let my parents know]...). (See Appendix B, page 177, for selectivity items.)

Negative Selectivity is assessed by two items: **Lying** (I feel I must lie to my parent(s) to get to do what I want with my boy/girlfriend....) and **Covering** (I get my friends, brother, or sister to cover for me so I can do what I want with my girl/boyfriend....).

General Developmental Moderators. **Desire for Autonomy** (**DFA**) (O'Donnell & Holmbeck, 1989; Holmbeck & O'Donnell, 1991) is a 17-item standardized measured used to assess satisfaction with the amount of control one has over one's own behavior. Reliability (Cronbach alpha) on the slightly modified version used in this study was .81. (See Appendix B, page 173).

Cohesion was measured using the cohesion subscale from the Family Environment Scale, Second Edition (Moos, 1986). This instrument measures individuals' perceptions of the amount of time and support shared in families. Reliability (Cronbach alpha) in the current study was .72.

Domain-Specific Moderators. Individual items (5-point Likert scales: not at all to very) measured **Importance of Having a Girl/Boyfriend** (Overall, how important to you is having a boy/girlfriend this year?) and **Satisfaction with Dating Rules** (How satisfied are you with the dating rules your parents have set?). Satisfaction with dating rules is conceptualized as a domain-specific measure of desire for autonomy. It represents how well parents and adolescents

have dealt with dating as an autonomy-related issue. (See Appendix B, page 175.)

LENGTH OF DATING RELATIONSHIP is calculated using the actual month and year the dating relationship began and the month and year the survey was completed.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Predictors. Means and standard deviations were calculated for all subjects, and then compared for subjects grouped by grade and then by gender using two-way analyses of variance (see Table 1). There were no significant grade by gender interactions on any of the predictor variables. However, there were main effects of grade or gender.

With regard to the selectivity variables, amount of talking did not differ by grade, but did differ significantly by gender. Males talked with their parents about their dating relationships significantly less than females. Tenth graders reported significantly higher selective disclosure than did 12th graders. Females and males did not differ in selective disclosure. There were no grade or gender differences on lying and covering. As seen on Table 1, the frequencies of reported lying and covering were quite low. Selective disclosure was endorsed more frequently.

Scores for desire for autonomy (DFA) are total scale scores. Scores ranged from 41 - 85 with the scale midpoint

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor Variables:

Differences by Grade and Gender

		Grade		Gender		
	All (N=324)	10 (n=141)	12 (n=183)	Girls (n=237)	Boys (n=87)	F
Predictors						
Talking	3.31 (1.46)	3.23 (1.48)	3.37 (1.44)	3.19 (1.46)	3.66 (1.41)	F_g (1,324) = 6.60[a]
Disclosure	3.31 (1.41)	3.22 (1.42)	2.84 (1.39)	3.00 (1.42)	3.01 (1.39)	F_{grd} (1,318) = 5.27[a]
Lying	1.81 (1.25)	1.85 (1.27)	1.78 (1.23)	1.85 (1.26)	1.70 (1.21)	
Covering	1.43 (.95)	1.44 (.98)	1.42 (.93)	1.47 (1.00)	1.30 (.76)	
Importance	3.81 (1.10)	3.77 (1.08)	3.85 (1.11)	3.75 (1.09)	3.99 (1.10)	F_g (1,306) = 2.76[+]
DFA	55.96 (6.55)	56.23 (5.52)	55.75 (7.27)	56.08 (6.08)	55.64 (7.71)	
Cohesion	5.65 (2.35)	5.49 (2.37)	5.78 (2.33)	5.55 (2.35)	5.93 (2.34)	

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor Variables:

Differences by Grade and Gender

		Grade		Gender		
	All (N=324)	10 (n=141)	12 (n=183)	Girls (n=237)	Boys (n=87)	F
Predictors						
Date Rules	3.57	3.29	3.79	3.48	3.81	F_{grd} (1,306) = 12.08[c]
	(1.31)	(1.34)	(1.25)	(1.35)	(1.19)	
Length	7.26	6.53	7.81	7.71	6.02	F_{grd} (1,310) = 2.95[+]
	(7.62)	(7.26)	(7.86)	(7.87)	(6.77)	F_{g} (1,310) = 4.15[a]

Note. n's in each analysis vary due to missing data. [+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

being 51. Total scale scores above 51 represent desire for greater control over behavior, while scores under 51 represent desire for less control. The group mean for DFA was 56.

Scores for cohesion are total scale scores on the cohesion subscale of Moos' Family Environment Scale. Scores ranged from 0 - 9. The mean of 5.65 is lower than what is typically seen in studies utilizing this measure with parents (Kliewer, personal communication, 1994). Neither grade nor gender produced significant differences.

On satisfaction with dating rules, 12th graders reported significantly higher levels of rule satisfaction than 10th graders. Gender differences were not significant.

The mean number of months dating was 7.26. Similar to Feiring's (1993) sample, 49% reported relationship lengths of four months or less. As seen on Table 1, variability was high. As in Connolly and Johnson's (1993) Canadian sample, females reported significantly longer relationships than males, and seniors tended to report longer relationships than sophomores.

Outcomes. Four measures of conflict have been created from the two scales used in this study. As seen in Table 2, analyses revealed only one significant grade or gender difference across the four conflict measures. Tenth graders reported more frequent recent conflict with parents than

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Outcome Variables:

Differences by Grade and Gender

		Grade		Gender		
	All (N=324)	10 (n=141)	12 (n=183)	Girls (n=237)	Boys (n=87)	F
Outcomes						
RCFRQ	14.29 (8.36)	15.49 (8.52)	13.37 (8.14)	14.27 (8.40)	14.36 (8.31)	F_{grd} (1,306) = 6.51[a]
RCINT	1.52 (.41)	1.55 (.40)	1.49 (.42)	1.53 (.41)	1.48 (.43)	
DCFRQ	4.48 (3.70)	4.84 (3.61)	4.20 (3.75)	4.52 (3.65)	4.36 (3.84)	
DCINT	1.35 (.39)	1.40 (.41)	1.31 (.38)	1.38 (.41)	1.27 (.34)	F_{grd} (1,286) = 3.23[+] F_{g} (1,286) = 3.58[+]

Note. n's in each analysis vary due to missing data. RCFRQ = recent conflict frequency, RCINT = recent conflict intensity, DCFRQ = dating-related conflict, DCINT = intensity of dating-related conflict. [+]p < .10. [a]p < .05.

12th graders reported. Additionally, analyses suggest that 10th graders and females tended to report more intense recent conflicts. This is consistent with Smetana's (1991) findings on intensity of conflict among females and parents.

Correlational Statistics

As expected, most predictor variables were significantly correlated (see Table 3). Two-tail significance testing revealed that correlations among predictors were generally medium, according to Cohen and Cohen's (1983) definition of effect size: small (.10), medium (.30), and large (.50). The two negative selectivity variables (lying and covering) were correlated at .57, thus supporting their grouping as a single dimension of selectivity. The two positive selectivity variables were correlated at .36. Interestingly, lying and selective disclosure were correlated at .45; covering and selective disclosure were correlated at .33.

Family cohesion was not significantly correlated with covering, but was significantly and negatively correlated with the other three selectivity variables. There was a significant positive correlation between cohesion and date rule satisfaction, thus supporting the interpretation of dating rule satisfaction as a measure of the success with which parents and adolescents have dealt with dating as an

Table 3

Intercorrelations of the Predictor Variables

Variables:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Talking	---								
2. Lying	.21[c]	---							
3. Covering	.23[c]	.57[c]	---						
4. Disclosure	.36[c]	.45[c]	.33[c]	---					
5. Length	.06	-.11	-.07	-.02	---				
6. Importance	-.05	.11	.05	.05	.01	---			
7. DFA	.15[b]	.23[c]	.21[c]	.21[c]	-.12	.12	---		
8. Cohesion	-.31[c]	-.22[c]	-.15	-.31[c]	-.02	.02	-.07	---	
9. Date Rules	-.31[c]	-.38[c]	-.30[c]	-.32[c]	.10	.03	-.24[c]	.32[c]	---

Note. $n = 325$. [b]$p < .01$. [c]$p < .001$.

autonomy-related issue. Neither the length of the dating relationship nor the importance of having a boy/girlfriend was significantly correlated with the other predictors.

As expected, correlations among the outcome variables were all significant (See Table 4). With the exception of the two intensity measures, correlations among outcomes were moderate, thus suggesting that different dimensions of conflict are being tapped. The strong correlation between the two intensity measures was not surprising. The two intensity scales ask the same question: How heated was the discussion? The two frequency measures address different dimensions of frequency. One measure concerns frequency of recent conflict while the second assesses increased conflict when dating. Although the zero-order correlation between the two intensity measures was high, moderators are expected to interact differently with each.

When zero-order correlations of predictors and outcomes were examined (see Table 5), differences and similarities were found. All four conflict measures were significantly and negatively correlated with dating rule satisfaction. No conflict measure was significantly correlated with either relationship length or importance of boy/girlfriend. Frequency of recent conflict was significantly correlated with both negative selectivity variables but neither neutral selectivity variable. By contrast, dating-related conflict

Table 4

Intercorrelations of the Outcome Variables

Correlations:	RCFRQ	RCINT	DCFRQ	DCINT
RCFRQ	---			
RCINT	.25[c]	---		
DCFRQ	.33[c]	.26[c]	---	
DCINT	.26[c]	.62[c]	.43[c]	---

Note. n's vary from 276 to 305. RCFRQ = recent conflict frequency, RCINT = recent conflict intensity, DCFRQ = dating-related conflict, DCINT = intensity of dating-related conflict. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

Table 5

Correlations of the Predictors and Outcomes

Correlations:	RCFRQ (n=304)	RCINT (n=298)	DCFRQ (n=305)	DCINT (n=276)
Talking	-.02	.24[c]	.08	.21[c]
Lying	.15[b]	.24[c]	.32[c]	.31[c]
Covering	.15[b]	.21[c]	.09	.21[c]
Disclosure	.15	.40[c]	.26[c]	.33[c]
Length	-.13	-.08	.02	-.04
Importance	.01	.02	.05	.06
DFA	.21[c]	.22[c]	.14	.25[c]
Cohesion	.04	-.38[c]	-.20[c]	-.39[c]
Date Rules	-.22[c]	-.27[c]	-.38[c]	-.42[c]

Note. n's in each analysis vary due to missing data. RCFRQ = recent conflict frequency, RCINT = recent conflict intensity, DCFRQ = increased dating-related conflict, DCINT = dating-related conflict intensity. [b]$p < .01$. [c]$p < .001$.

was significantly correlated with one neutral (selective disclosure) and one negative (lying) selectivity variable. Only frequency of recent conflict was significantly and positively correlated with DFA, while increased dating-related conflict was significantly and negatively correlated with cohesion.

The two measures of intensity of conflict were significantly correlated with all predictors except length of dating relationship and importance of girl/boyfriend. As expected, the directions of the correlations for the two intensity measures were the same, while the strength of the correlations varied.

Differences in correlations between predictors and similar outcomes (frequency and intensity) support my assumption that conflict about dating is qualitatively different than conflict about mundane things such as homework and chores.

Regression Analyses

Plan of Analyses. To test my conceptual model which postulates that the effects of selectivity on conflict will be moderated by individual, dyadic, and contextual variables, eight hierarchical regressions were run, each containing 8 steps and 33 predictor or interaction terms. The four dependent variables were: frequency of recent conflict, intensity of recent conflict, increased dating-

related conflict, intensity of dating-related conflict. For each dependent variable, separate regressions were conducted for neutral (talking and selective disclosure) and negative (lying and covering behavior) selectivity variables, thus producing eight regressions. The remaining independent variables included: the importance of having a boy/girlfriend [importance], desire for autonomy [DFA], family cohesion [cohesion], satisfaction with dating rules [dating rule satisfaction], and length of dating relationship [relationship length]. Standard procedures for testing moderator effects were utilized (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen & Cohen, 1983). To reduce multicollinearity problems, all continuous level predictors were centered. Tolerance was tested at each step of each regression. Cook's D test for multivariate outliers revealed no significant outliers.

The order of entry of the independent variables was consistent across all regressions, as evident in Tables 6 - 13. Grade and gender were entered at Step 1. Preliminary analyses indicated no significant differences by family structure (intact, single parent, stepparent), therefore, family structure was not included in the analyses. Two selectivity variables (either neutral or negative) were entered on the second step. Based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, hypothesized moderators were grouped according to realms of influence and entered on Steps 3 - 5.

Intraindividual variables (importance and DFA) were treated as proximal influences and entered first, followed by dyadic family variables (cohesion and dating rule satisfaction). Next, length of dating relationship, a variable more distal to the parent-adolescent relationship, was entered.

The effects of moderators on selectivity were then tested by constructing interaction terms which crossed each selectivity item with each moderator, thus creating 10 terms. These interaction terms were entered on Step 6. Interaction terms crossing each predictor and moderator variable with grade and separately with gender were entered at the final two steps, Steps 7 and 8.

Rather than conducting analyses separately by grade and gender groupings, this plan of analyses was chosen for two reasons. First, no accepted statistical procedure exists for comparing regression results; thus, the significance of identified grade or gender differences cannot be determined. Second, estimates of power indicated that given the large number of variables (33) and the relatively small number of male participants (n = 87) separate regressions by gender would be problematic. Three-way interactions of grade and gender and a predictor were not tested since preliminary analyses indicated no significant grade by gender interactions on any of the dependent or independent variables. Additionally power was a concern.

Overview of Section. In this section I will first present an overview of the R^2 changes for all eight regressions and their relevance to the overall model being examined. I will then discuss results of individual regressions to examine the central hypotheses of this study, namely that the effects of selectivity on frequency and intensity of conflict are moderated by intraindividual, dyadic, and contextual variables, and gender and grade differences in the influence of these moderators on conflict exist. Moderating variables represent developmentally relevant global factors (desire for autonomy and cohesion) and domain-specific factors (importance of boy/girlfriend, dating rule satisfaction, and length of dating relationship). Moderators with significant betas when all variables have been entered in the equation are discussed individually. To avoid unnecessary repetition, moderators and interaction terms that are insignificant are presented in summary form at the end of this section. Tables 6 - 13 contain complete summaries of each regression.

It should be noted that the beta weights reported on these tables are from the final step of the regression equations and, therefore, reflect the unique contribution of each variable. This strategy was chosen because model building was a focus of the dissertation.

Overview of Hierarchical Regression Results. All eight regression models were significant at $p < .001$. In seven of the eight regressions, the selectivity variables produced significant R^2 changes, although the direction of effect of these variables differed across the dependent variables. Overall, the hypothesis that adolescents play an active role in conflict management was supported.

In six of the eight regressions, intraindividual moderators (importance of boy/girlfriend and DFA) entered at Step 3 produced significant increases in variance. In all eight regressions, dyadic moderators (cohesion and dating rule satisfaction) entered at Step 4 produced additional significant R^2 changes. In none of the regressions did the contextual variable (dating relationship length) reach significance. Overall, the importance of intraindividual and dyadic variables as predictors of conflict frequency and intensity was supported. The importance of relationship length was not supported. Moderator results are addressed in the next section.

Individual Regressions. To examine the hypotheses that the effects of selectivity on conflict frequency and intensity depend on the hypothesized moderators and that differences by grade and gender are significant, standardized beta weights at the final step were examined for each regression. In a moderator model, significant

interaction terms indicate that the slopes of the regression lines are different. Different slopes are the result of either differences in the magnitude or the direction of the relationship between independent variables. Therefore, to interpret significant interaction effects, results are plotted, using one standard deviation above and below the mean to establish high and low groups (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Because the neutral selectivity variable **talking** did not contribute to predicted variance in any of the eight regressions, no discussion of it will occur until the discussion section. Significant interactions with grade and gender will be reported, but the reader is reminded that a priori directions were not predicted so caution must be exercised in interpreting these interactions.

The first four regressions use measures of recent conflict, while the last four regressions use measures of dating-related conflict. Within each of these two sets, the first two regressions use frequency of conflict as the dependent variable, and the last two regressions use intensity of conflict as the dependent variable.

In regressions 1 and 2, the dependent variable was perceptions of frequency of recent general conflict. For Regression 1, frequency of recent conflict was regressed on the neutral selectivity variables (talking and selective

disclosure) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 24% of the total variance (see Table 6).

As seen in Figure 1, satisfaction with dating rules moderated effects of disclosure on frequency of recent conflict. Contrary to prediction, for those low on dating rule satisfaction relative to others in the study, selective disclosure was negatively related to frequency of recent conflict. Thus, as selective disclosure increased for these adolescents, conflict decreased. When dating rule satisfaction was high, however, selective disclosure was positively related to conflict.

It should be noted that this plot, as well as all other plots in these analyses, reflect the interaction of the two variables when the remaining predictor and moderator variables are held constant at the mean and all other terms are in the analyses. Plotting these interactions when other variables in the equation are at values other than the mean would most likely result in different regression lines.

There was a significant main effect for desire for autonomy (DFA) as predicted, and a significant interaction between DFA and gender. As seen in Figure 2, the prediction slope was steep and positive for females and slightly positive for males. Thus, the relationship between DFA and conflict was particularly strong for females. Contrary to

Table 6

Regression of Frequency of Recent Conflict on Neutral Selectivity and Moderators

	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Variables				
Step 1	---	.02	3.58[a]	
Gender				.01
Grade				-.09
Step 2	.04	.02	2.85[+]	
Talking				-.13
Disclosure				.09
Step 3	.08	.04	6.16[b]	
Importance				.04
Desire for Autonomy				.38[c]
Step 4	.11	.03	5.46[b]	
Cohesion				.13
Date Rules				-.05
Step 5	.12	.00	1.56	
Relationship Length				.07
Step 6	.16	.05	1.64[+]	
Talking X Importance				.03
Talking X Rules				-.12[+]
Talking X Length				.08
Talking X DFA				.06
Talking X Cohesion				.06
Disclose X Importance				-.12[+]
Disclose X Rules				.19[b]
Disclose X Length				-.06
Disclose X DFA				-.02
Disclose X Cohesion				.02

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.18	.02	.89	
Talking X Grade				-.05
Disclose X Grade				-.04
Importance X Grade				-.03
Rules X Grade				-.14
Length X Grade				-.13
DFA X Grade				-.09
Cohesion X Grade				-.01
Step 8	.24	.06	3.09[b]	
Talking X Gender				.10
Disclose X Gender				.08
Importance X Gender				-.09
Rules X Gender				-.03
Length X Gender				-.10
DFA X Gender				-.18[a]
Cohesion X Gender				-.14[+]

(R^2 = .24, F (33,271) = 2.64, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

[+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

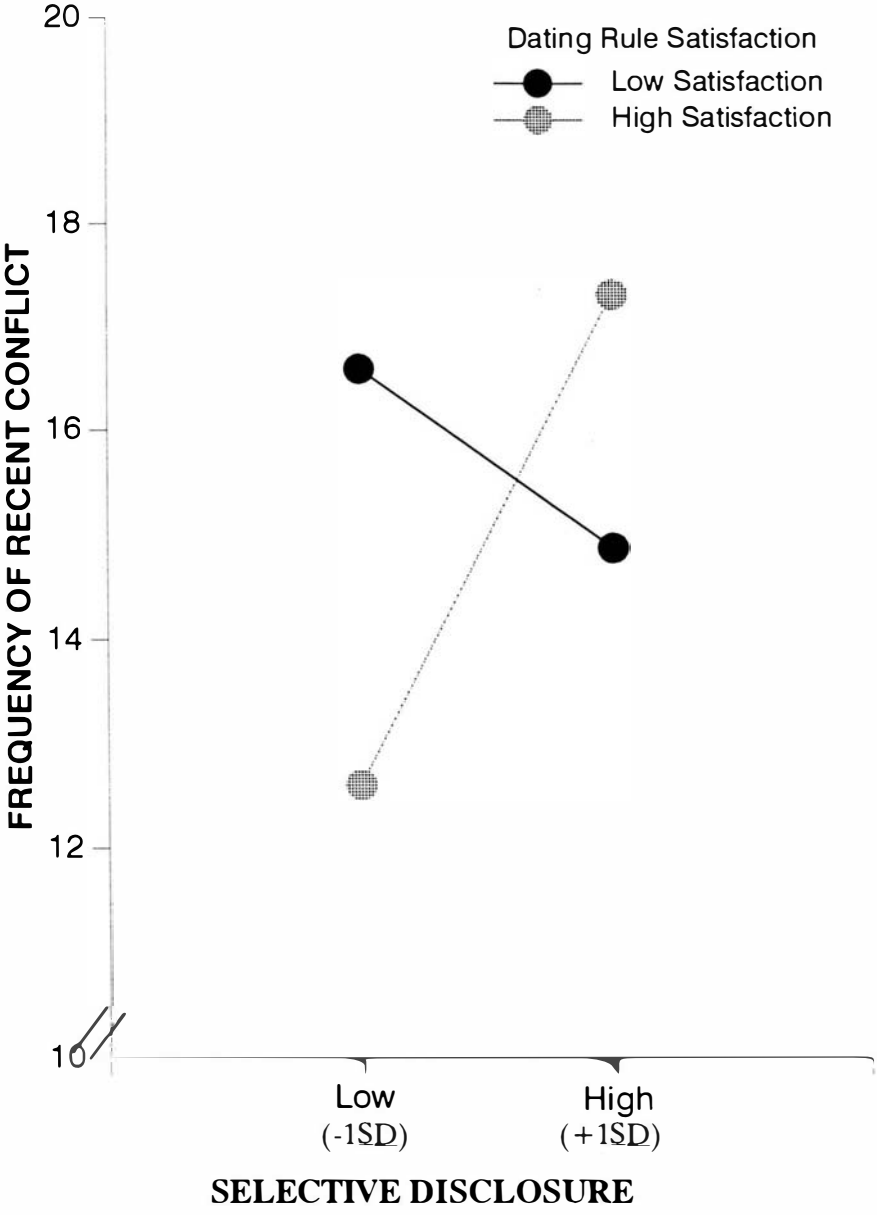

Figure 1. Dating rule satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and the frequency of recent conflict (neutral selectivity).

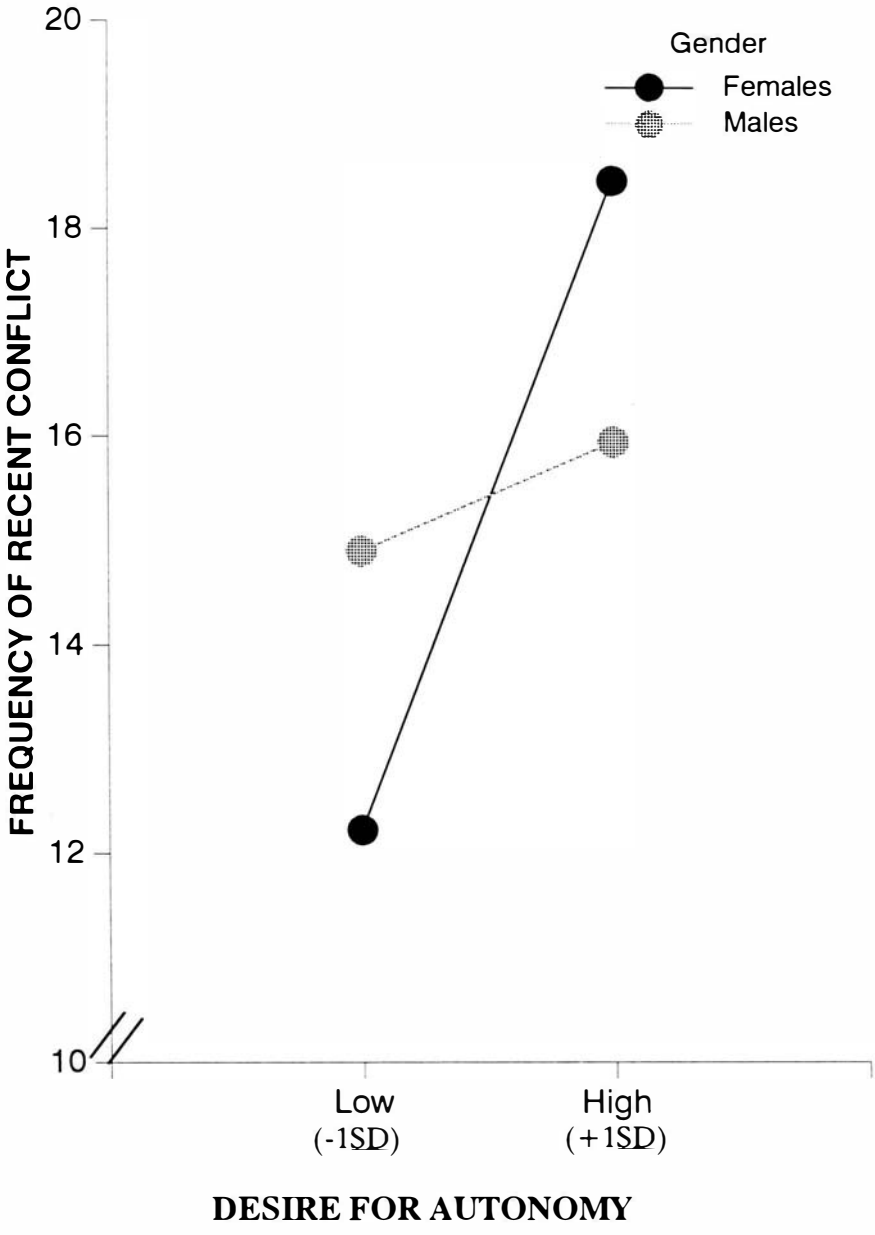

Figure 2. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between desire for autonomy and the frequency of recent conflict (neutral selectivity).

predictions, DFA did not moderate the effects of either selectivity variable on frequency of recent conflict.

For Regression 2, frequency of recent conflict was regressed on the negative selectivity variables (lying and covering) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 26% of the total variance (see Table 7).

The effects of both negative selectivity variables on conflict were moderated by desire for autonomy, but the pattern of effects was not the same. For those high on DFA relative to others in the study, there was no relationship between lying and frequency of recent conflict (see Figure 3). The steep regression slope for those low on DFA indicated a positive relationship between lying and frequency of conflict. The point of intersection of the two slopes suggests that levels of recent conflict frequency were equivalent for those high and low on desire for autonomy when reported lying was high.

By contrast, as seen in Figure 4, a positive relationship existed between covering and conflict for subjects high on desire for autonomy relative to other subjects in the study, and a negative relationship existed for those low on these measures. For those high on DFA, using peers to cover for them so they can do what they want

Table 7

Regression of Frequency of Recent Conflict on Negative Selectivity and Moderators

	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Variables				
Step 1	---	.02	3.82[a]	
Gender				.01
Grade				-.09
Step 2	.05	.03	4.55[a]	
Lying				.23[+]
Covering				-.03
Step 3	.08	.03	4.82[b]	
Importance				.06
Desire for Autonomy				.20[+]
Step 4	.11	.02	4.08[a]	
Cohesion				.15
Date Rules				.04
Step 5	.11	.00	1.64	
Relationship Length				.04
Step 6	.19	.08	2.64[b]	
Lying X Importance				.07
Lying X Rules				.11
Lying X Length				-.09
Lying X DFA				-.22[b]
Lying X Cohesion				-.06
Covering X Importance				.09
Covering X Rules				.00
Covering X Length				.11
Covering X DFA				.29[c]
Covering X Cohesion				.20[a]

(table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.21	.02	1.01	
Lying X Grade				-.15
Covering X Grade				.10
Importance X Grade				.00
Rules X Grade				-.19[a]
Length X Grade				-.13
DFA X Grade				.03
Cohesion X Grade				.04
Step 8	.26	.05	2.45[a]	
Lying X Gender				-.02
Covering X Gender				.01
Importance X Gender				-.10
Rules X Gender				-.08
Length X Gender				-.05
DFA X Gender				-.16[a]
Cohesion X Gender				-.18[b]

(R^2 = .26, F (33,270) = 2.81, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

[+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

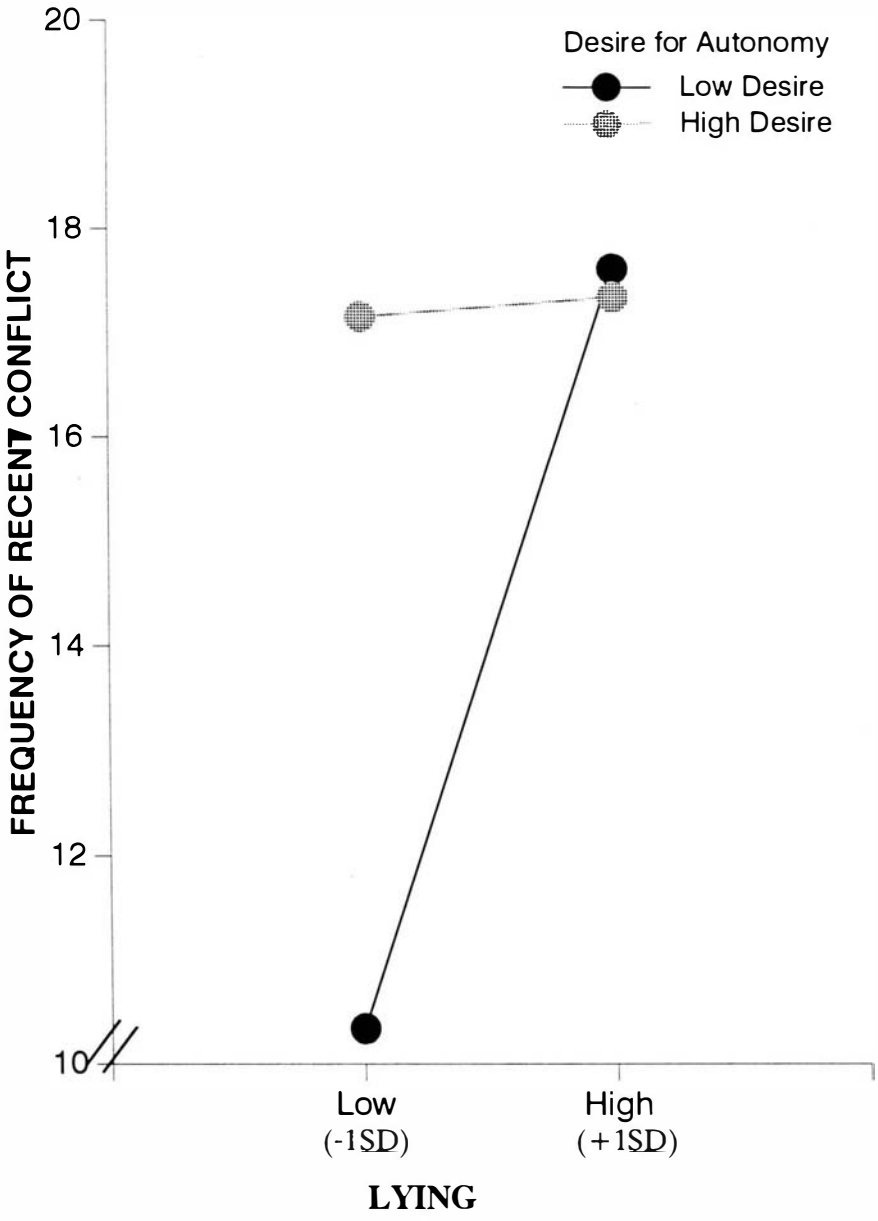

Figure 3. Desire for autonomy as a moderator of the relationship between lying and the frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

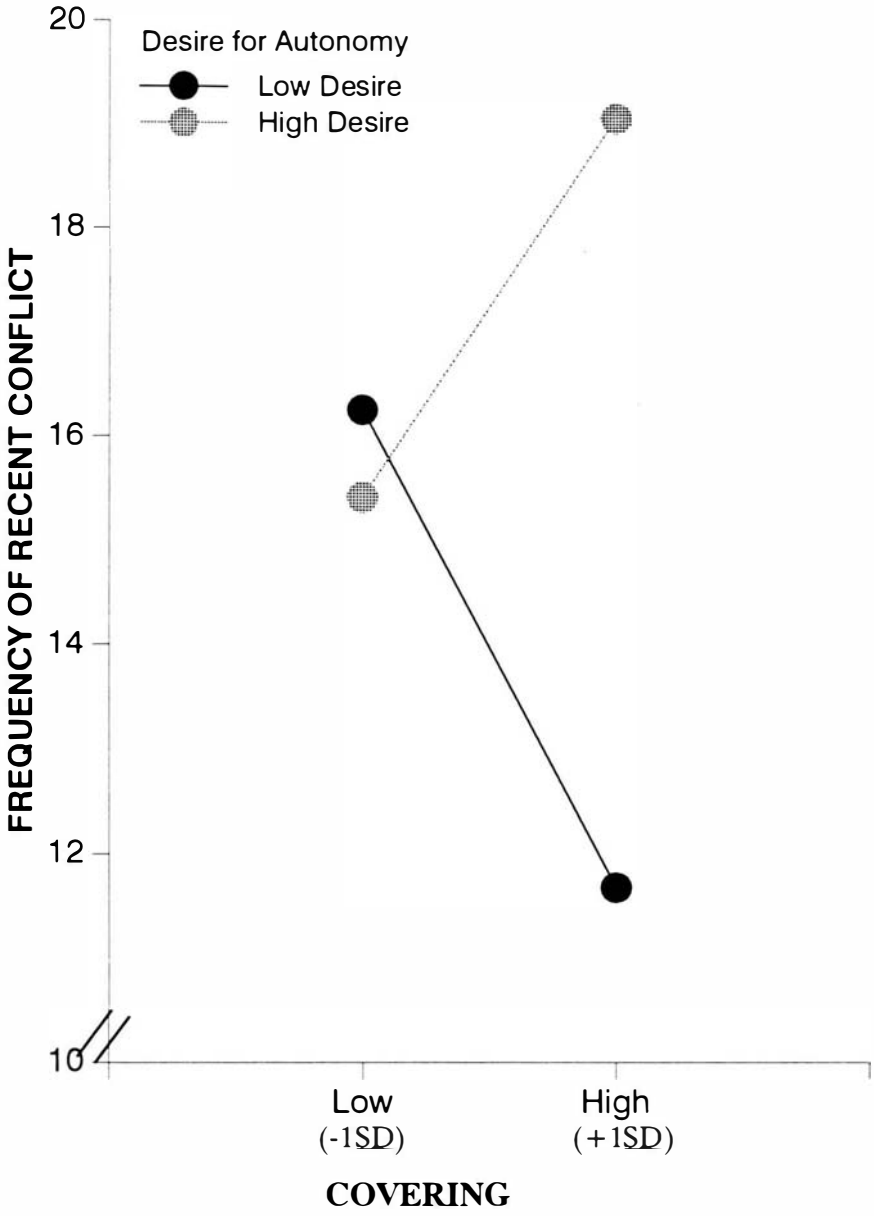

Figure 4. Desire for autonomy as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and the frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

with their dating partners was positively associated with frequency of conflict, supporting my hypothesis.

The same pattern was found for the relationship between covering and frequency of recent conflict when moderated by cohesion. Contrary to my hypothesis, for those low on cohesion, covering negatively predicted conflict; for those high on cohesion the relationship was positive (see Figure 5).

Three additional interactions were significant: dating rule satisfaction X grade, DFA X gender, and cohesion X gender. As seen by the steep negative slope for 12th graders in Figure 6, dating rule satisfaction was negatively related to conflict frequency for 12th graders, but appeared to be weakly related to conflict frequency for 10th graders. For males, high levels of DFA predicted low levels of recent conflict frequency, but for females, DFA was positively related to conflict (see Figure 7). The same gender differentiated pattern occurred for cohesion: high cohesion predicted low recent conflict frequency for males but high conflict frequency for females (see Figure 8). These gender differences in the effects of desire for autonomy and cohesion as predictors of conflict are consistent with results reported by Smetana (1991) and Steinberg (1987).

For Regressions 3 and 4, perceptions of intensity of recent conflict was the dependent variable. In Regression

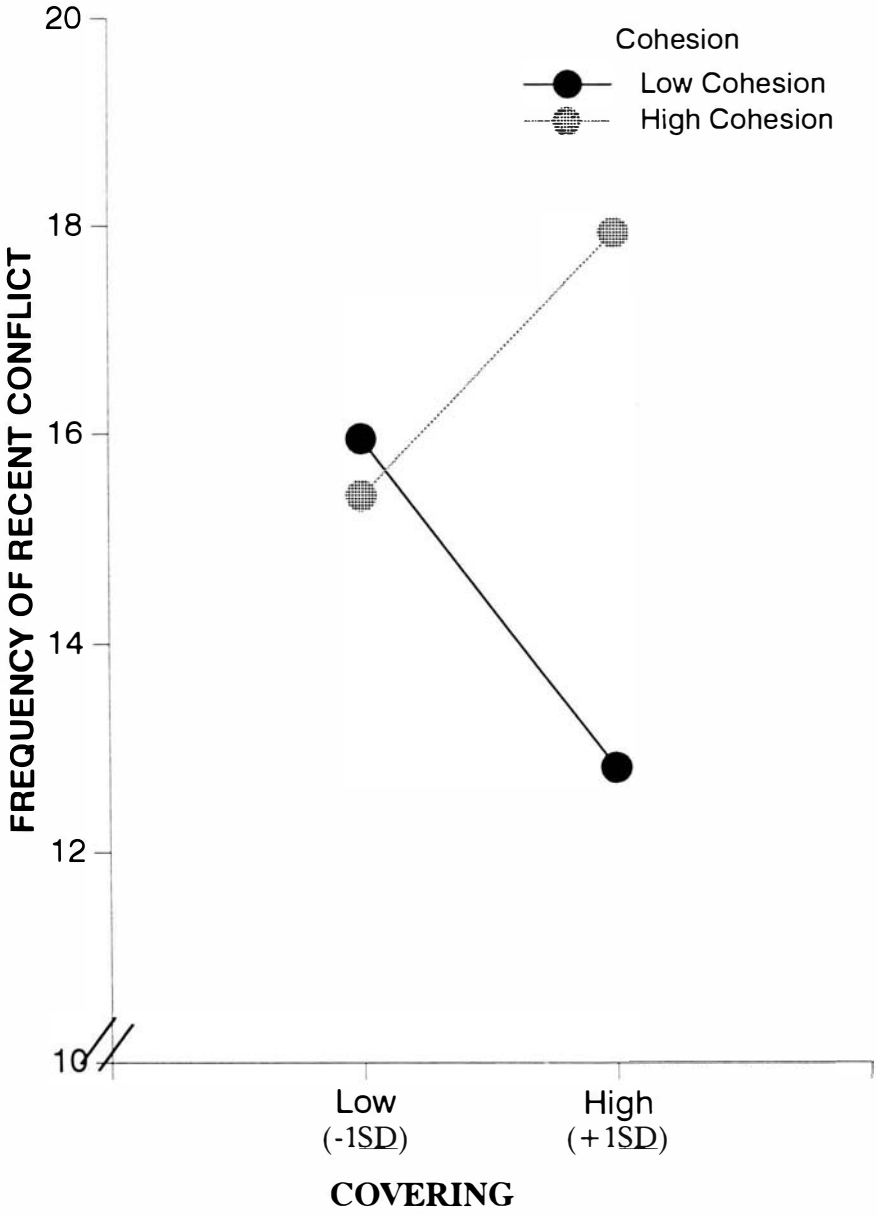

Figure 5. Cohesion as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and the frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

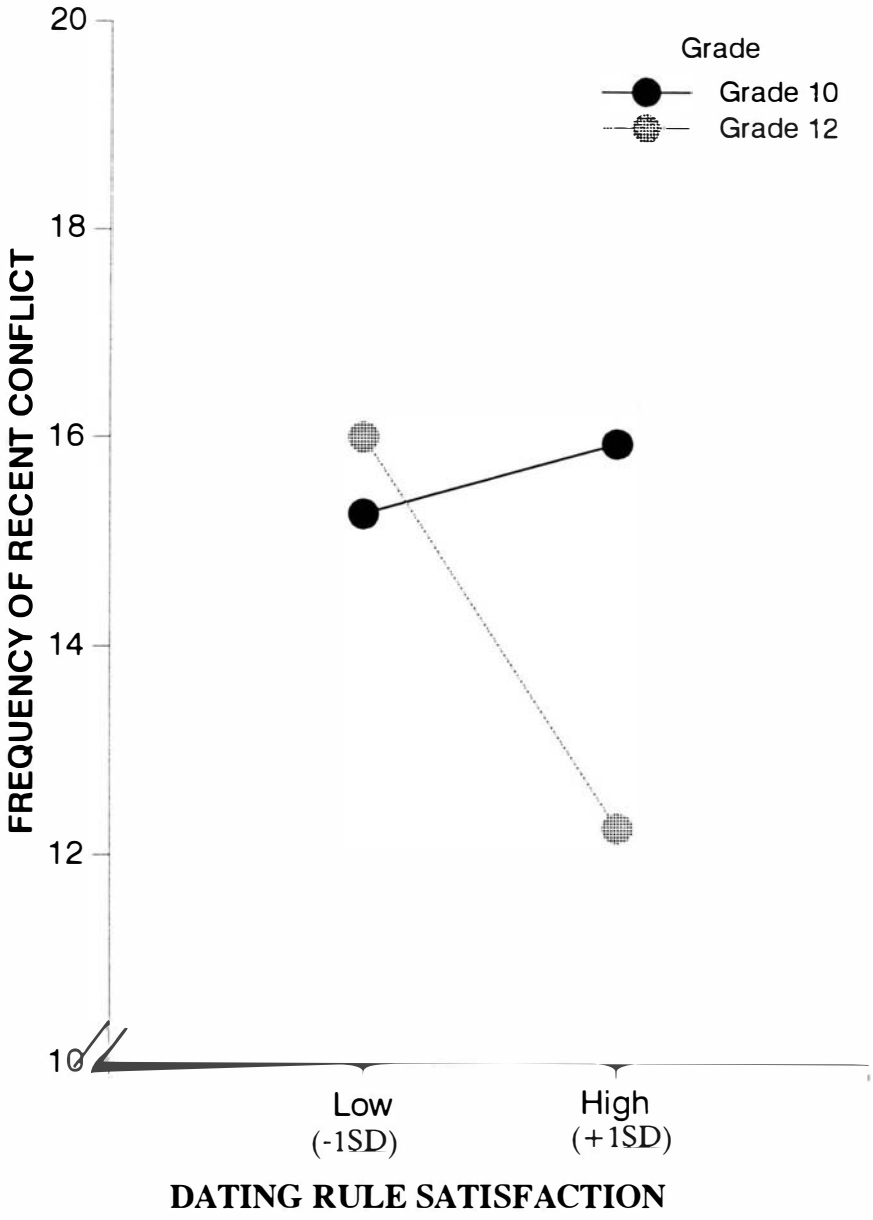

Figure 6. Dating rule satisfaction as a moderator of the relationship between grade and the frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

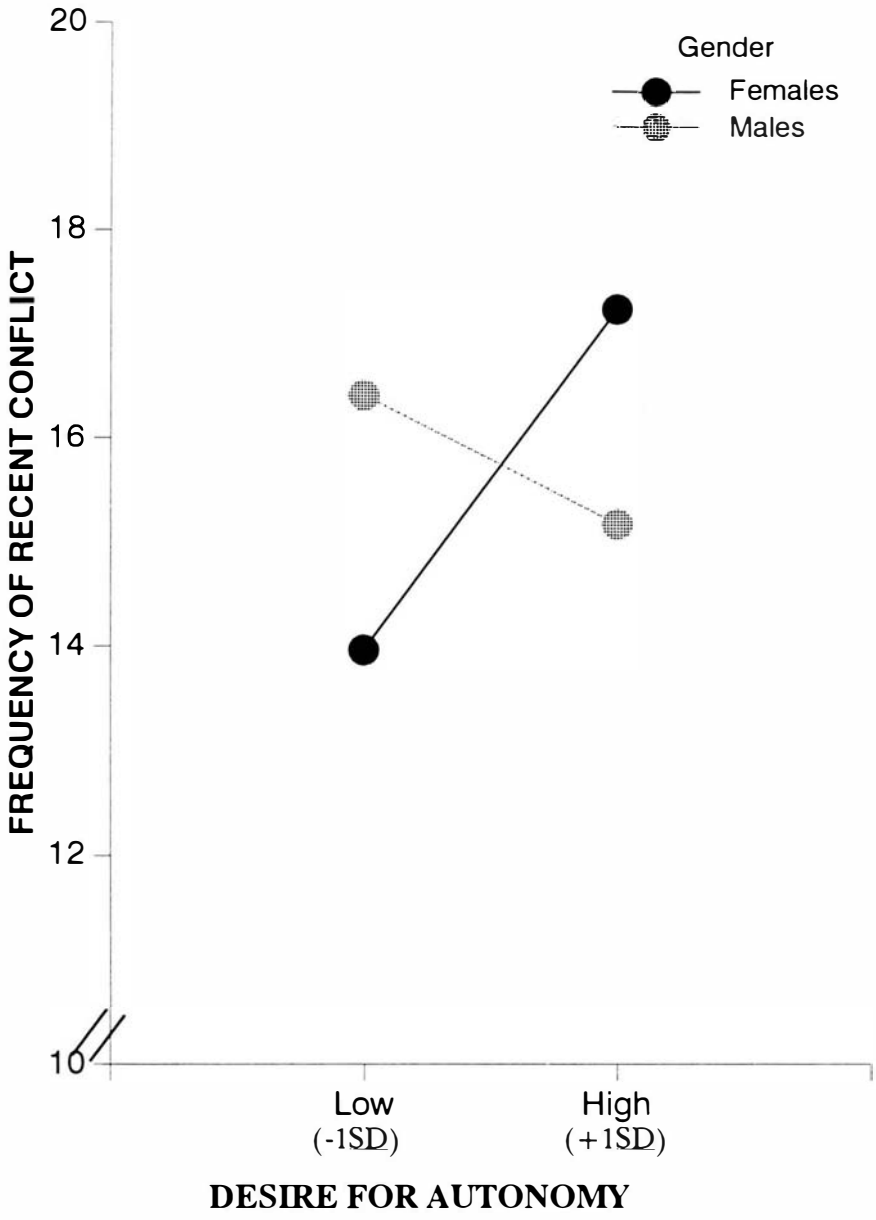

Figure 7. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between desire for autonomy and the frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

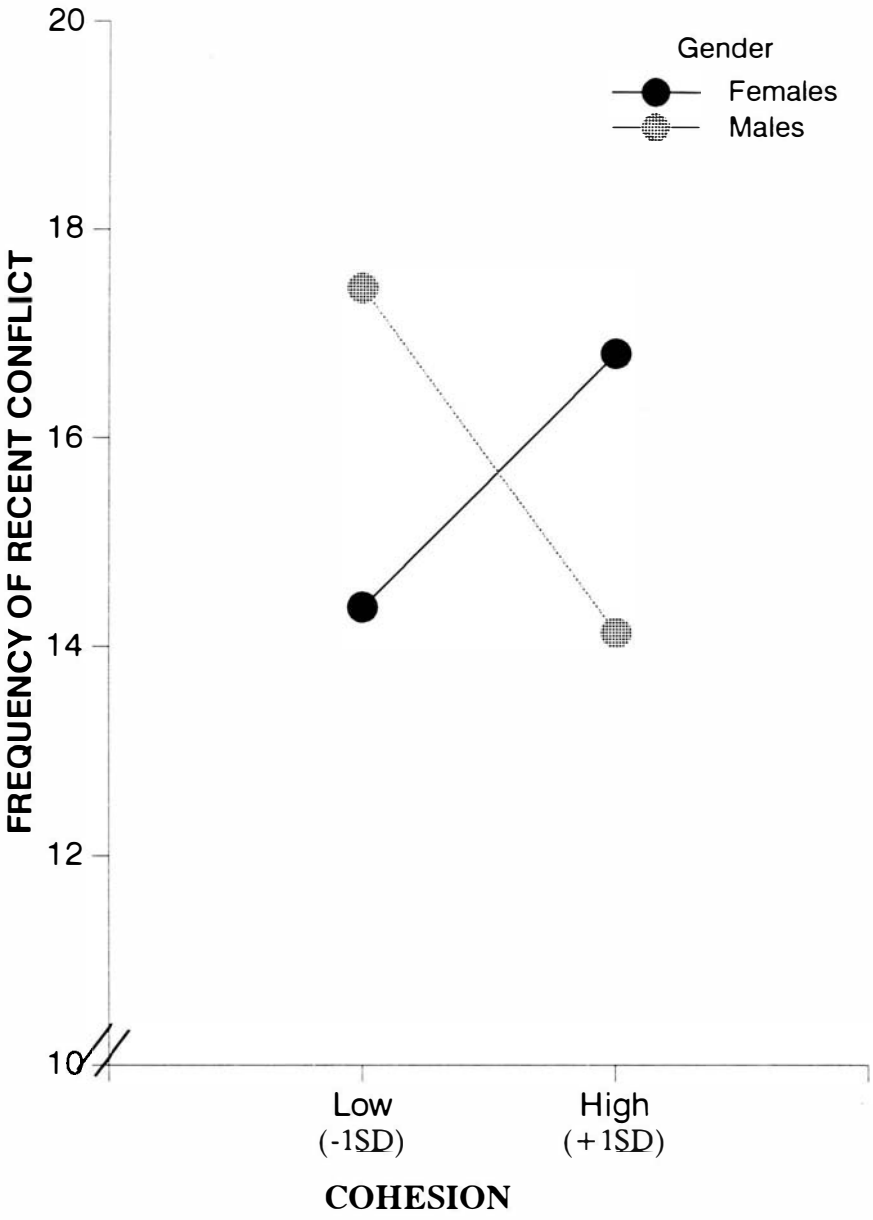

Figure 8. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between cohesion and frequency of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

3, perceived intensity of recent conflict was regressed on neutral selectivity (talking and selective disclosure) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 32% of the total variance (see Table 8). Disclosure, desire for autonomy, and cohesion were all positively related to intensity of recent conflict. There were no significant interactions.

For Regression 4, perceived intensity of recent conflict was regressed on negative selectivity (lying and covering) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 28% of the variance (see Table 9). As seen in Figure 9, the importance of boy/girlfriend moderated the relationship between covering and conflict. When dating importance was high, the relationship between covering and intensity of recent conflict was negative. The inverse was true for those for whom importance was low: high covering behavior was related to high levels of conflict. Lying did not contribute significantly to the prediction of intensity of recent conflict. Desire for autonomy was positively related to intensity of recent conflict, and cohesion was negatively related. Neither moderated effects of lying or covering.

Regressions 5 and 6 used the dependent variable frequency of dating-related conflict. For Regression 5, dating-related conflict was regressed on neutral selectivity

Table 8

Regression of Intensity of Recent Conflict on Neutral Selectivity and Moderators

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 1	---	.01	1.59	
Gender				-.07
Grade				.00
Step 2	.18	.17	29.93[c]	
Talking				.06
Disclosure				.26[b]
Step 3	.20	.02	3.12[a]	
Importance				-.02
Desire for Autonomy				.33[c]
Step 4	.26	.06	12.49[c]	
Cohesion				-.24[a]
Date Rules				.01
Step 5	.26	.00	1.72	
Relationship Length				-.06
Step 6	.30	.03	1.30	
Talking X Importance				.02
Talking X Rules				.03
Talking X Length				-.01
Talking X DFA				-.09
Talking X Cohesion				-.04
Disclose X Importance				-.09
Disclose X Rules				.09
Disclose X Length				.06
Disclose X DFA				.00
Disclose X Cohesion				-.11[+]

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.31	.01	.71	
Talking X Grade				-.05
Disclose X Grade				.02
Importance X Grade				.03
Rules X Grade				.01
Length X Grade				.03
DFA X Grade				-.16
Cohesion X Grade				.02
Step 8	.32	.01	.79	
Talking X Gender				.05
Disclose X Gender				-.03
Importance X Gender				-.02
Rules X Gender				-.07
Length X Gender				-.09
DFA X Gender				-.08
Cohesion X Gender				.01

(R^2 = .32, F (33,265) = 3.83, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

$^{+}p < .10$. $^{a}p < .05$. $^{b}p < .01$. $^{c}p < .001$.

Table 9

Regression of Intensity of Recent Conflict on Negative Selectivity and Moderators

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 1	---	.01	1.55	
Gender				-.03
Grade				-.02
Step 2	.08	.06	10.29[c]	
Lying				.20
Covering				.00
Step 3	.10	.02	4.00[a]	
Importance				-.05
Desire for Autonomy				.33[b]
Step 4	.21	.11	20.05[c]	
Cohesion				-.32[c]
Date Rules				-.02
Step 5	.21	.00	.83	
Relationship Length				.00
Step 6	.24	.03	1.21	
Lying X Importance				-.06
Lying X Rules				.07
Lying X Length				-.00
Lying X DFA				.02
Lying X Cohesion				.01
Covering X Importance				-.17[a]
Covering X Rules				.00
Covering X Length				.00
Covering X DFA				-.02
Covering X Cohesion				-.01

(table continues)

Table 9 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.26	.02	.99	
Lying X Grade				-.19
Covering X Grade				.10
Importance X Grade				.07
Rules X Grade				-.02
Length X Grade				-.04
DFA X Grade				-.14
Cohesion X Grade				.02
Step 8	.28	.01	.77	
Lying X Gender				.02
Covering X Gender				-.01
Importance X Gender				-.04
Rules X Gender				-.09
Length X Gender				-.08
DFA X Gender				-.09
Cohesion X Gender				-.03

(R^2 = .28, F (33,264) = 3.09, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

$^{+}p < .10$. $^{a}p < .05$. $^{b}p < .01$. $^{c}p < .001$.

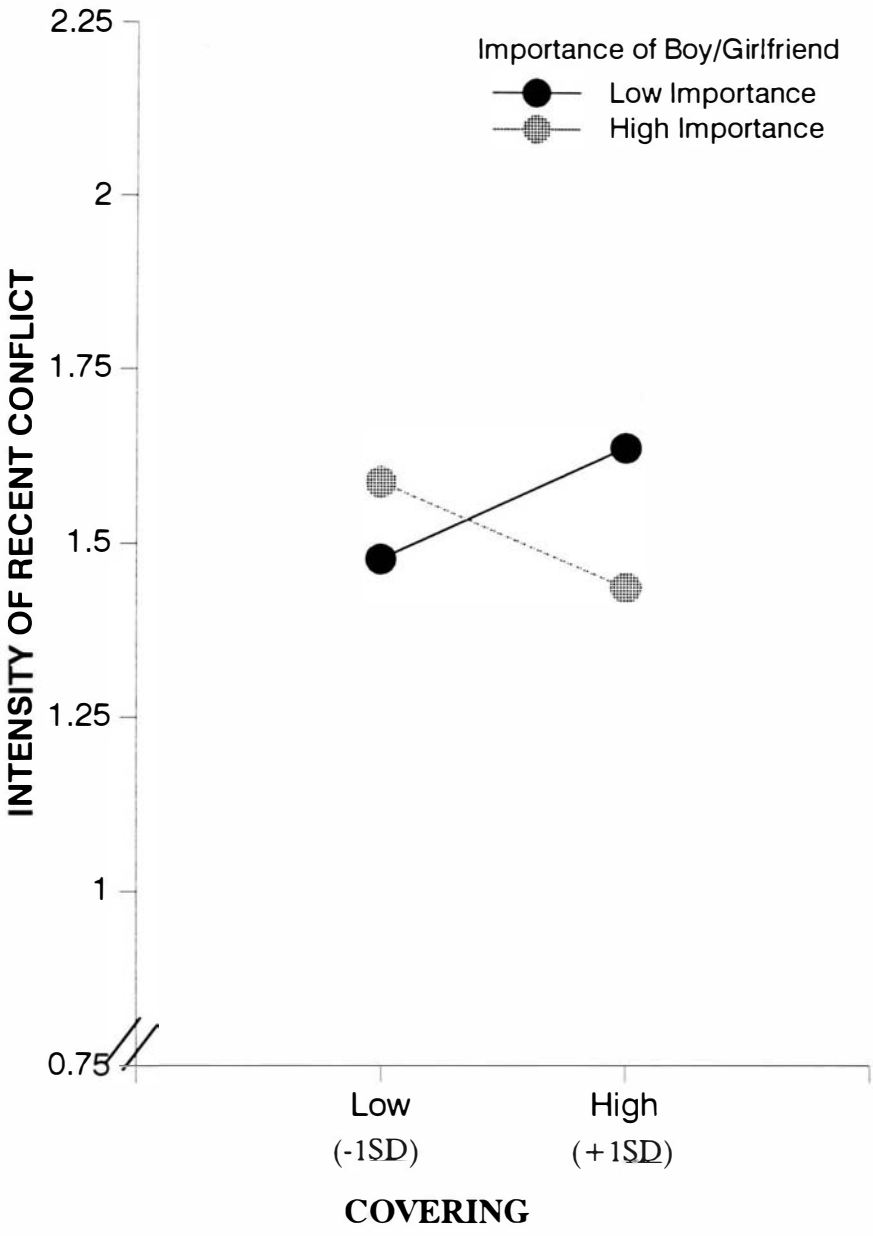

Figure 9. Importance of boy/girlfriend as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and the intensity of recent conflict (negative selectivity).

(talking and selective disclosure) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 30% of the total variance (see Table 10).

As Figure 10 indicates, for subjects low on DFA relative to other participants, selective disclosure was positively related to perceived dating-related conflict. In contrast, and contrary to my hypothesis, for subjects high on DFA, selective disclosure and conflict were not related.

Family cohesion contributed significantly and positively to the prediction of dating-related conflict, but did not, as predicted, moderate effects of neutral selectivity on conflict.

Significant differences by grade were found in the relationship between dating rule satisfaction and selective disclosure. Dating rule satisfaction was negatively related (but not significantly related as predicted) to increased dating-related conflict, but this relationship was stronger for 12th graders than 10th graders (see Figure 11).

Significant differences by gender emerged in the relationships of dating rule satisfaction and desire for autonomy to increased dating-related conflict. As seen in Figure 12, low rule satisfaction was negatively (but not significantly) related to higher reports of increased dating-related conflict for both genders, but the relationship was stronger for males than for females.

Table 10

Regression of Frequency of Dating-Related Conflict on Neutral Selectivity and Moderators

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 1	---	.01	1.05	
Gender				.08
Grade				.01
Step 2	.07	.06	9.55[c]	
Talking				-.10
Disclosure				.15[+]
Step 3	.07	.01	1.31	
Importance				.01
Desire for Autonomy				.07
Step 4	.18	.11	19.08[c]	
Cohesion				-.20[a]
Date Rules				-.11
Step 5	.18	.00	1.79	
Relationship Length				-.02
Step 6	.22	.04	1.49	
Talking X Importance				-.02
Talking X Rules				.06
Talking X Length				-.10
Talking X DFA				-.10[+]
Talking X Cohesion				-.11[+]
Disclose X Importance				.01
Disclose X Rules				-.03
Disclose X Length				.06
Disclose X DFA				-.16[a]
Disclose X Cohesion				.11[+]

(table continues)

Table 10 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.26	.03	1.73	
Talking X Grade				-.04
Disclose X Grade				-.03
Importance X Grade				.01
Rules X Grade				-.23[b]
Length X Grade				.14[+]
DFA X Grade				.11
Cohesion X Grade				.08
Step 8	.30	.05	2.53[a]	
Talking X Gender				-.11
Disclose X Gender				.08
Importance X Gender				.05
Rules X Gender				-.20[b]
Length X Gender				-.00
DFA X Gender				-.18[a]
Cohesion X Gender				.04

(R^2 = .30, F (33,272) = 3.58, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

[+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

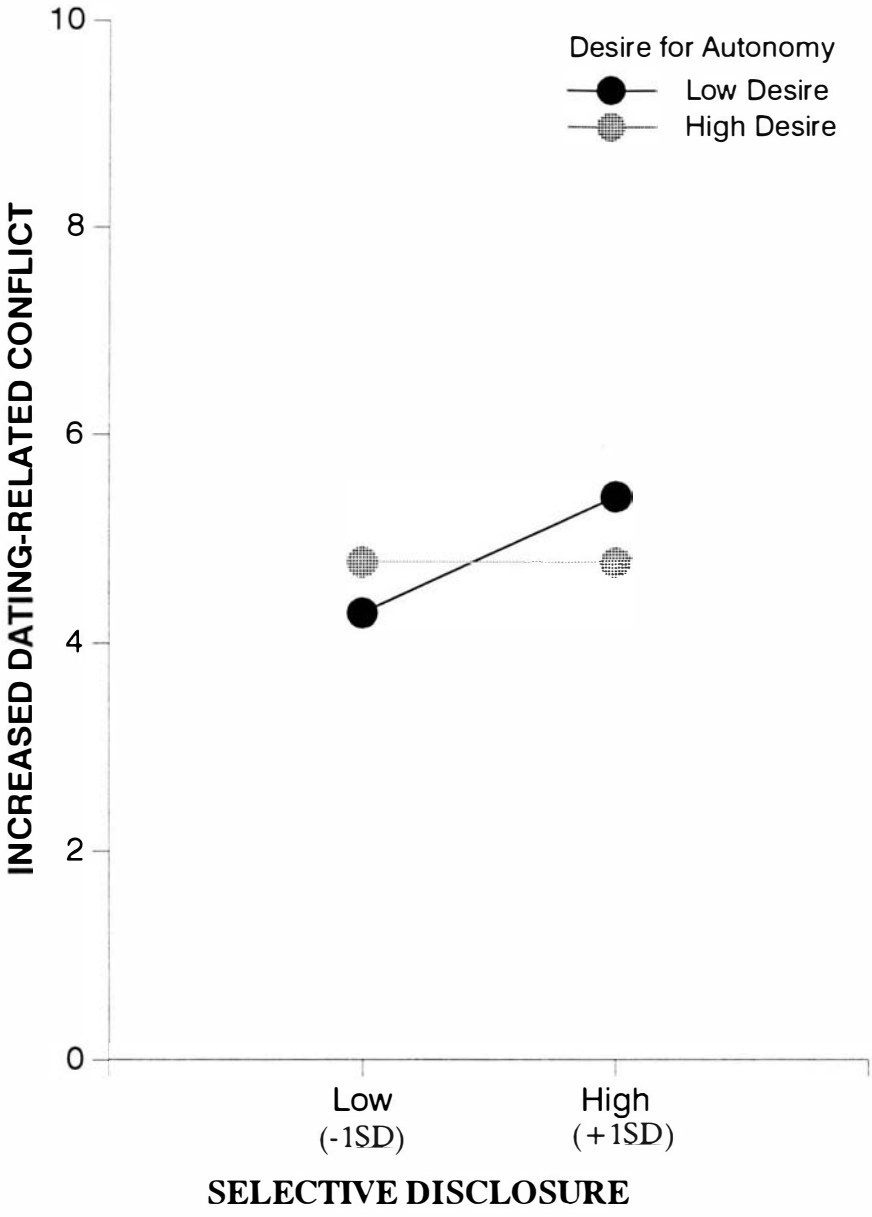

Figure 10. Desire for autonomy as a moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and increased dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

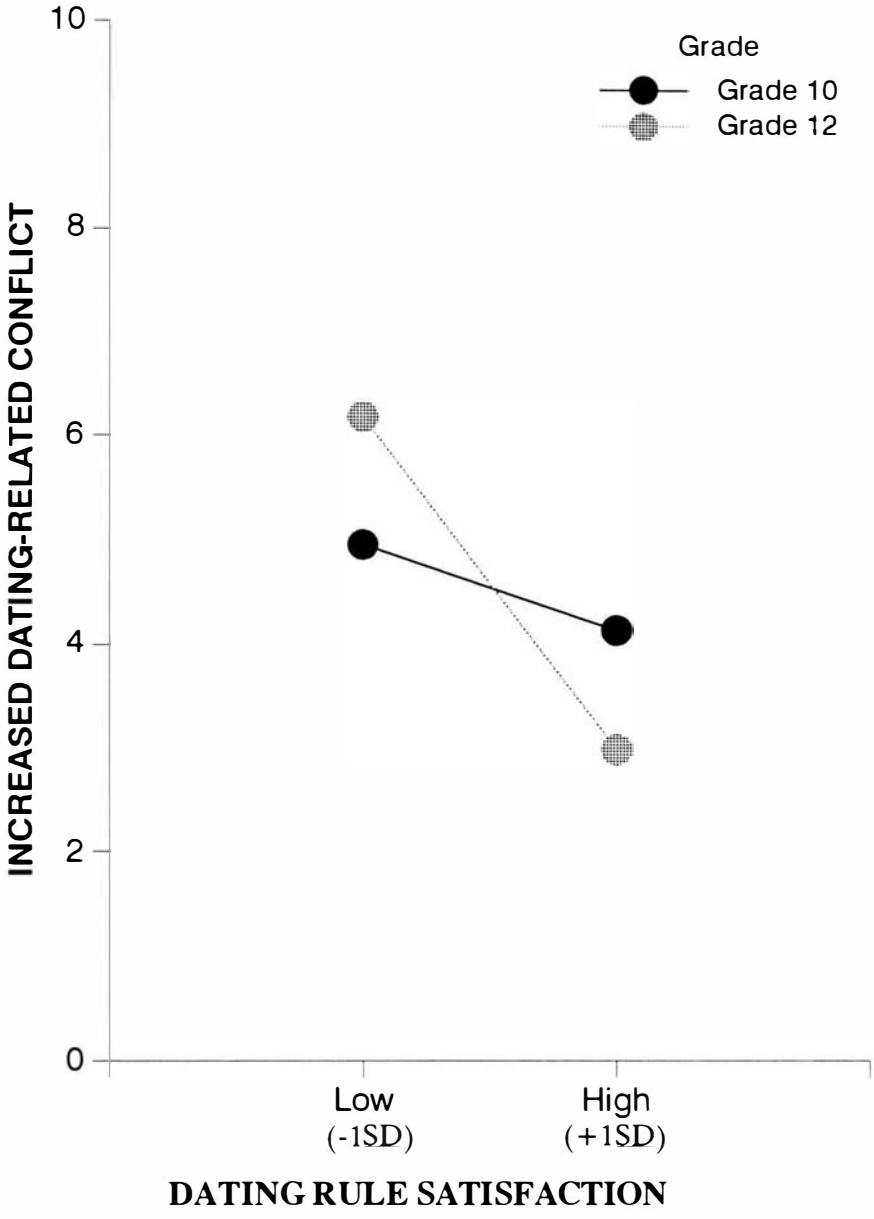

Figure 11. Grade as a moderator of the relationships between dating rule satisfaction and increased dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

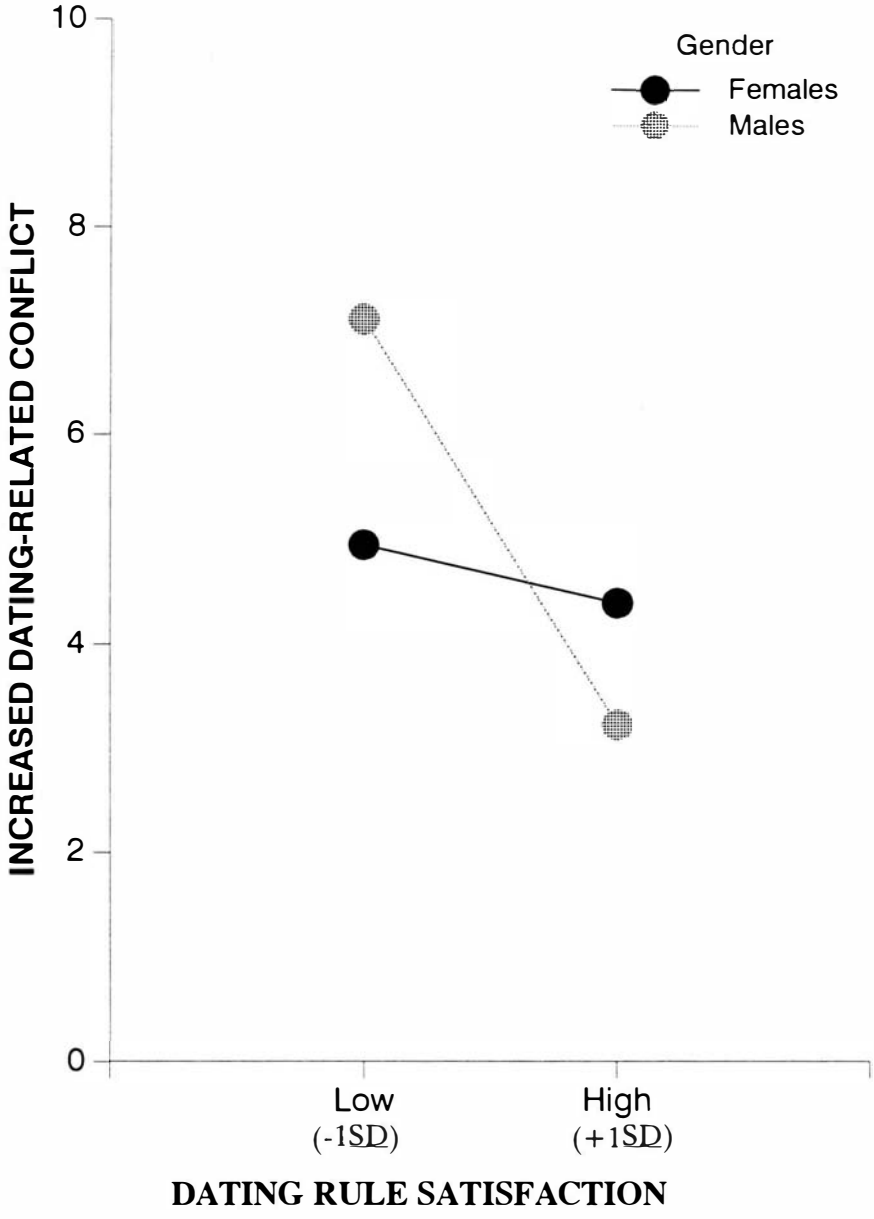

Figure 12. Gender as a moderator of the relationships between dating rule satisfaction and increased dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

By contrast, desire for autonomy was positively related to increased dating-related conflict for females, but, as indicated by the nearly flat regression line, appears unrelated for males (see Figure 13). These two gender differences suggest that moderators of increased dating-related conflict operate differently for males and females.

For Regression 6, perceived increased dating-related conflict was regressed on the negative selectivity variables (lying and covering) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 33% of the total variance (see Table 11).

The relationships between lying and covering as moderators of dating-related conflict were not uniform as expected. Consistent with predictions, greater lying predicted more conflict, but contrary to predictions, greater covering predicted less conflict. Significant interactions of grade with both lying and covering, however, qualify these main effects. As seen in Figure 14, the relationship between lying and increased dating-related conflict was positive for both grades, but was significantly stronger for 10th graders than 12th graders.

As seen in Figure 15, the negative relationship between covering behavior and dating-related conflict appeared to be significant for 12th graders, but not for 10th graders.

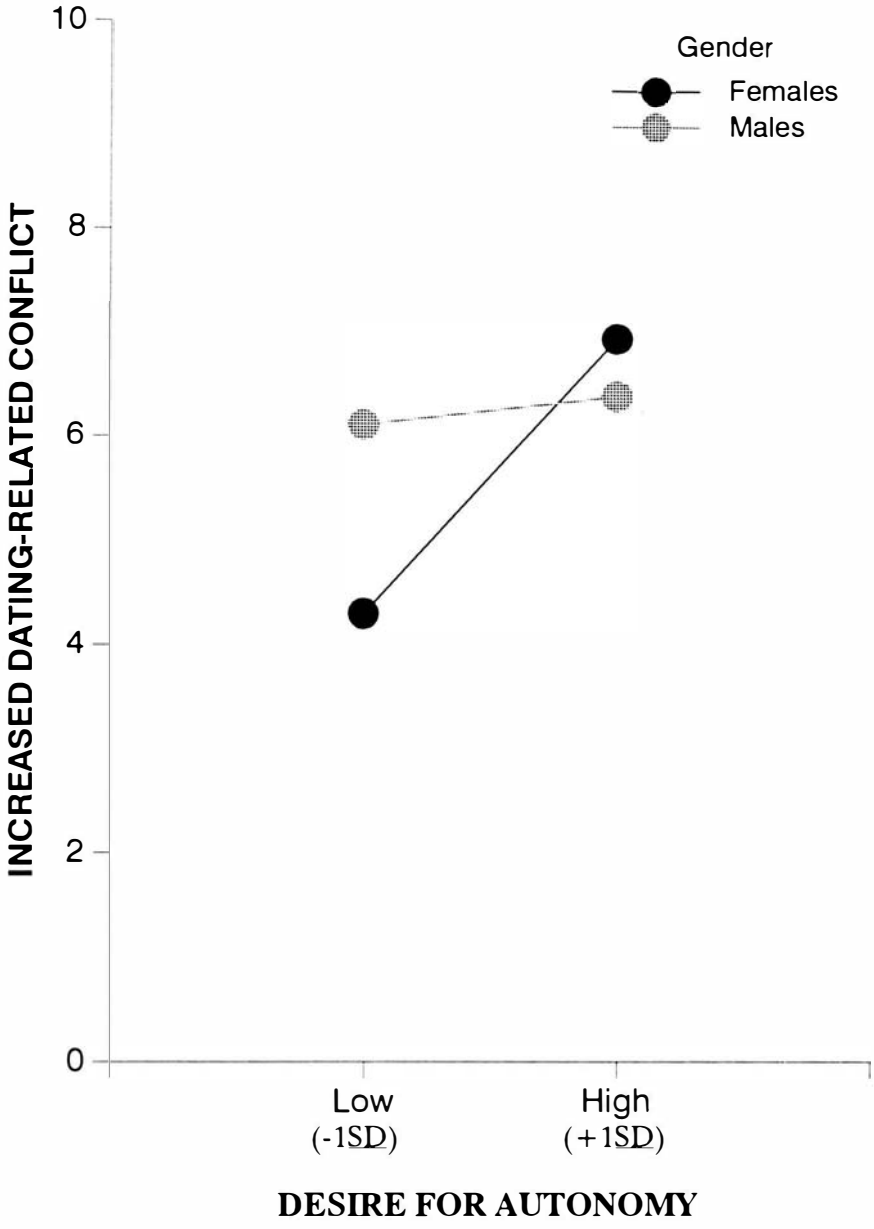

Figure 13. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between desire for autonomy and increased dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

Table 11

Regression of Frequency of Dating-Related Conflict on Negative Selectivity and Moderators

	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Variables				
Step 1	---	.01	1.09	
Gender				.03
Grade				-.01
Step 2	.12	.12	19.91[c]	
Lying				.50[c]
Covering				-.49[c]
Step 3	.13	.01	.89	
Importance				-.03
Desire for Autonomy				.09
Step 4	.21	.08	15.03[c]	
Cohesion				-.17[+]
Date Rules				-.02
Step 5	.21	.01	2.08	
Relationship Length				-.04
Step 6	.23	.01	.45	
Lying X Importance				.07
Lying X Rules				.04
Lying X Length				.03
Lying X DFA				-.10
Lying X Cohesion				.07
Covering X Importance				-.15[a]
Covering X Rules				.10
Covering X Length				-.05
Covering X DFA				.14[+]
Covering X Cohesion				-.09

(table continues)

Table 11 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.28	.05	2.70[a]	
Lying X Grade				-.24[a]
Covering X Grade				.36[b]
Importance X Grade				.04
Rules X Grade				-.19[a]
Length X Grade				.15[+]
DFA X Grade				.13
Cohesion X Grade				.05
Step 8	.33	.05	2.81[b]	
Lying X Gender				.02
Covering X Gender				.07
Importance X Gender				.02
Rules X Gender				-.18[b]
Length X Gender				-.04
DFA X Gender				-.20[b]
Cohesion X Gender				.07

(R^2 = .33, F (33,271) = 3.95, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

[+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

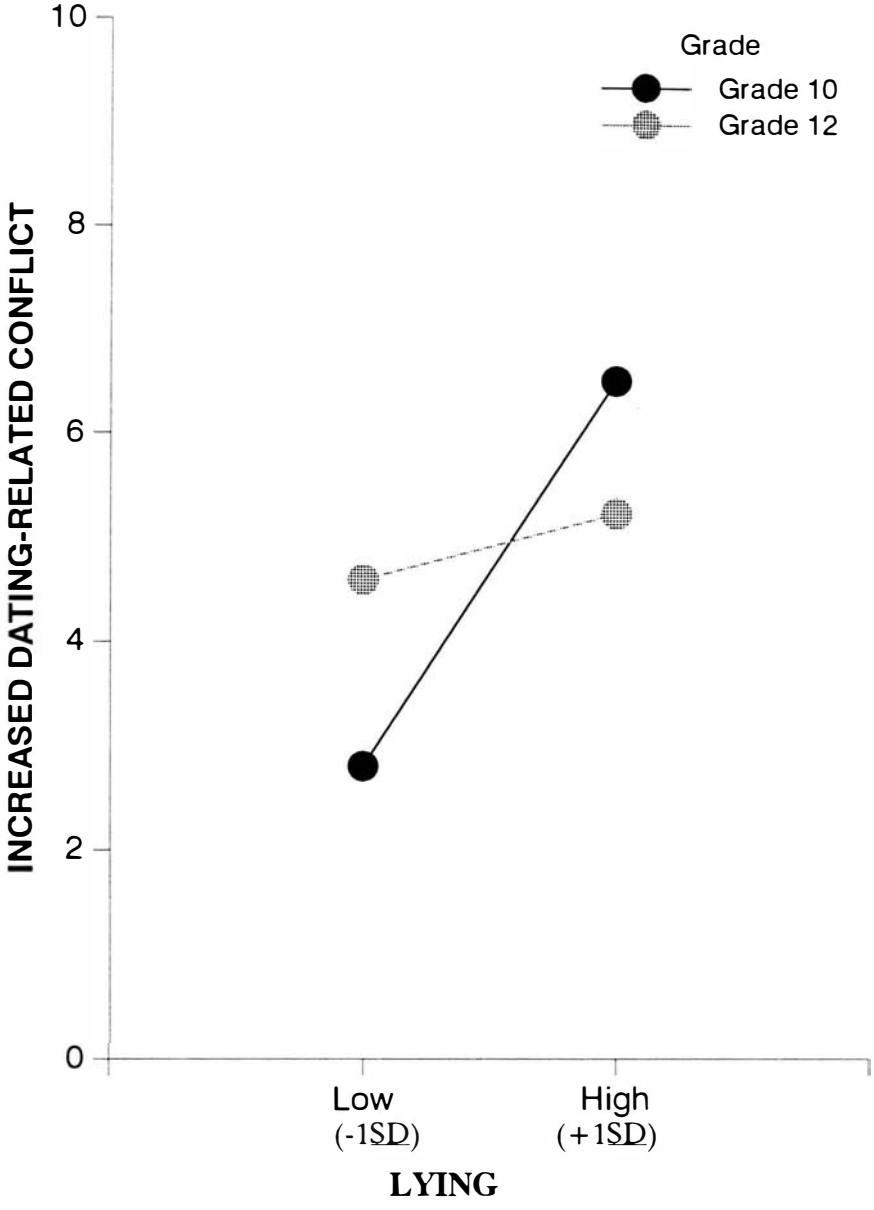

Figure 14. Grade as a moderator of the relationship between lying and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

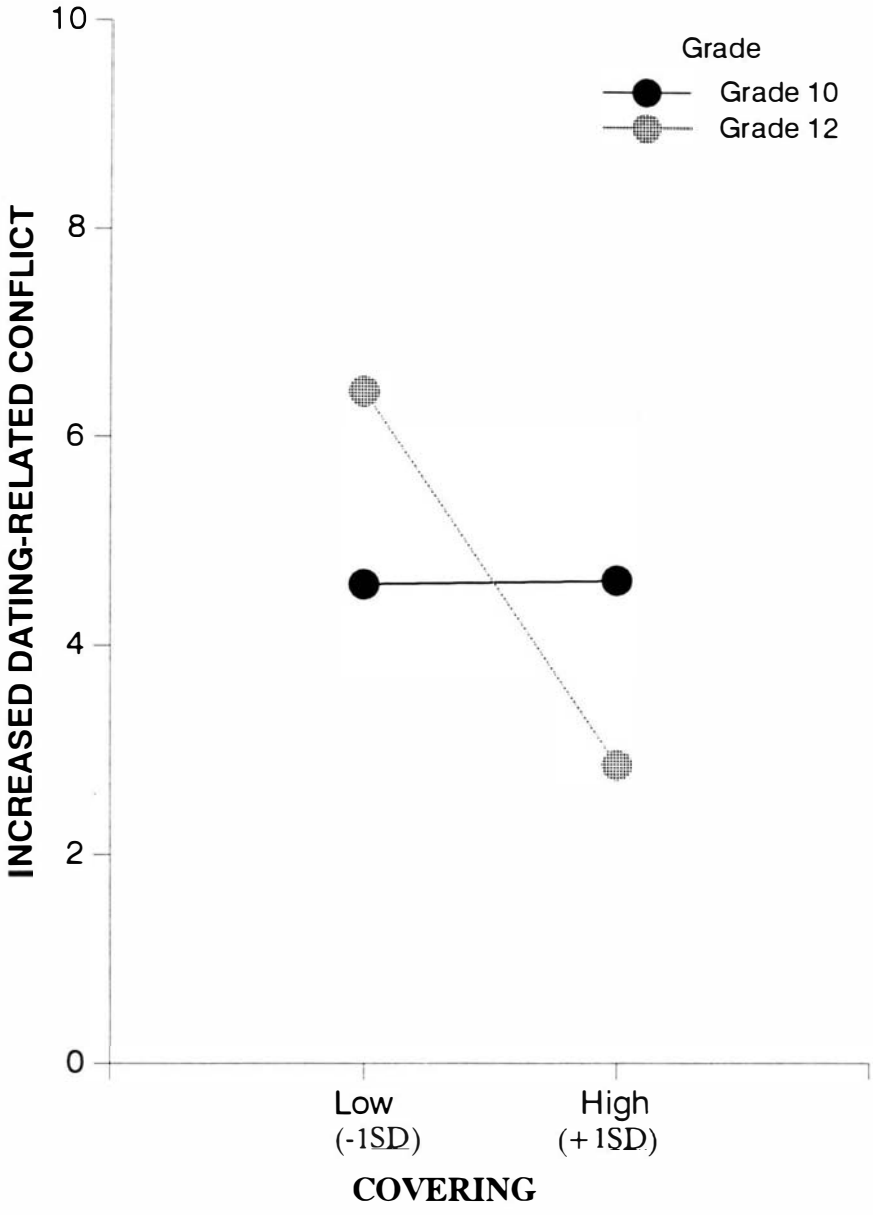

Figure 15. Grade as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

Given the developmental basis of this model, implications of these differences by grade are of great interest.

Contrary to predictions, the effects of lying on conflict were not moderated by either general (desire for autonomy and cohesion) or domain-specific (importance of boy/girlfriend, dating rule satisfaction, relationship length) variables. However, as seen in Figure 16, the importance of boy/girlfriend was a significant moderator of the effects of covering behavior on dating-related conflict. Contrary to prediction, the level of covering behavior was inversely related to increased conflict for both those high and low on importance of boy/girlfriend. However, the negative relationship was stronger for those high on importance than for those low on importance.

Finally, dating rule satisfaction did not moderate effects of negative selectivity variables on increased dating-related conflict. However, both grade and gender moderated the effect of dating rule satisfaction on conflict. As seen in Figures 17 and 18, dating rule satisfaction was negatively related to dating-related conflict for males and 12th graders, but unrelated to conflict for females and 10th graders. This suggests that the conflict processes differ by gender and grade, as developmental theory would suggest.

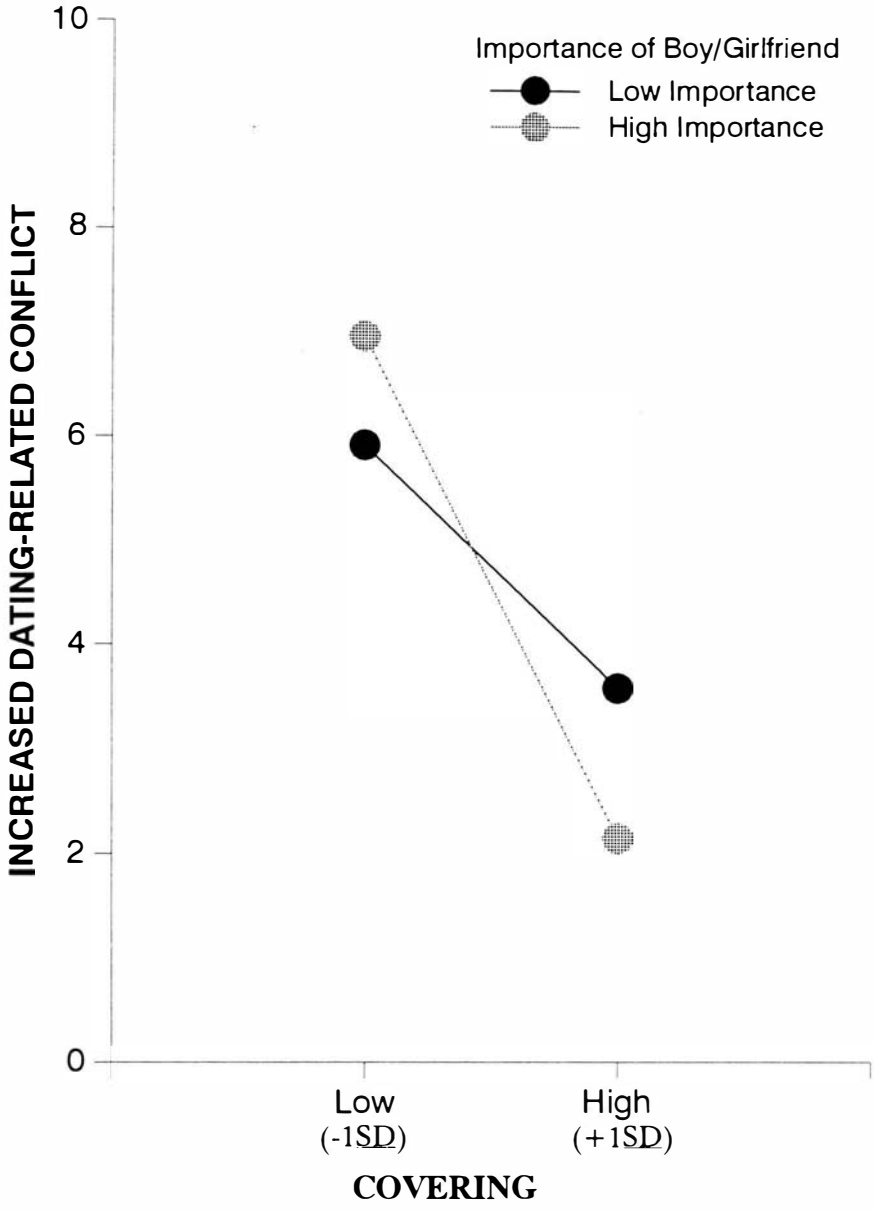

Figure 16. Importance of boy/girlfriend as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

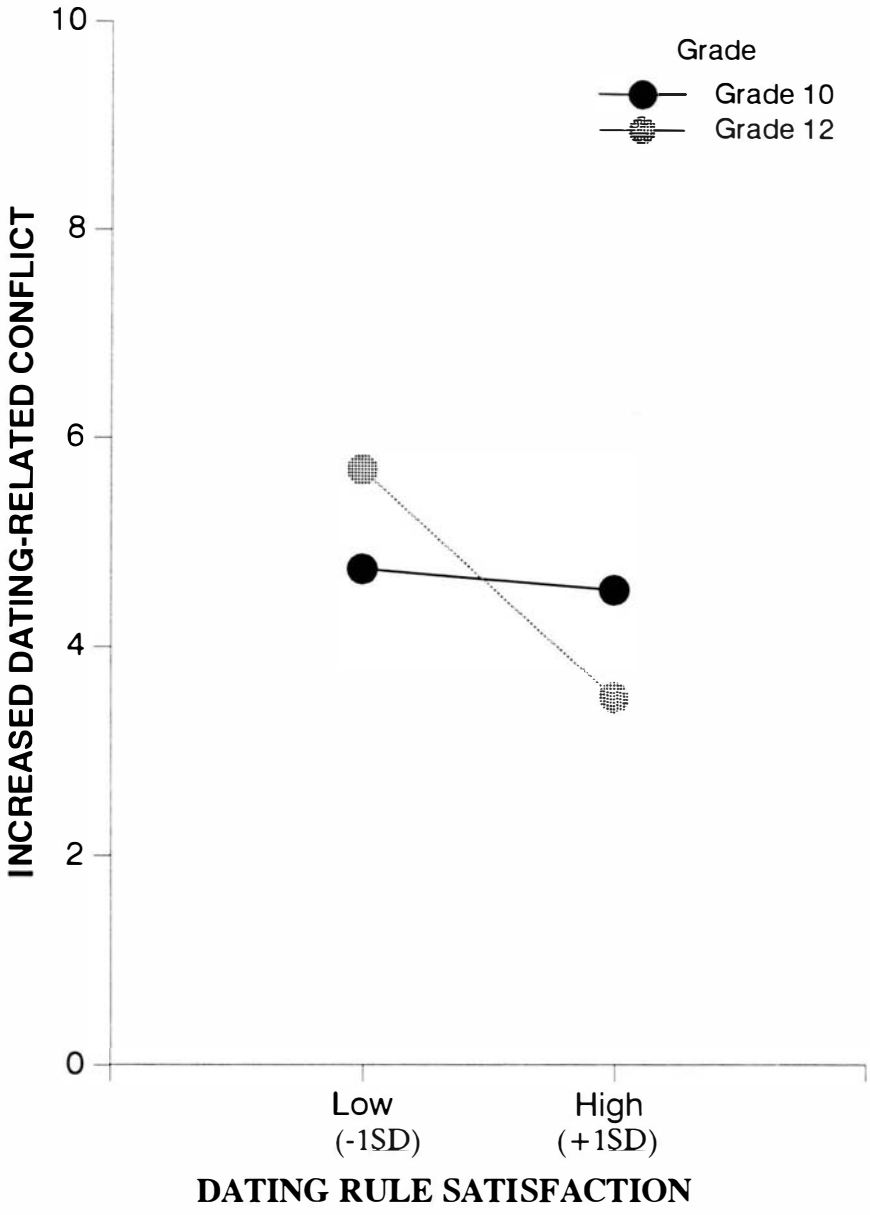

Figure 17. Grade as a moderator of the relationship between dating rule satisfaction and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

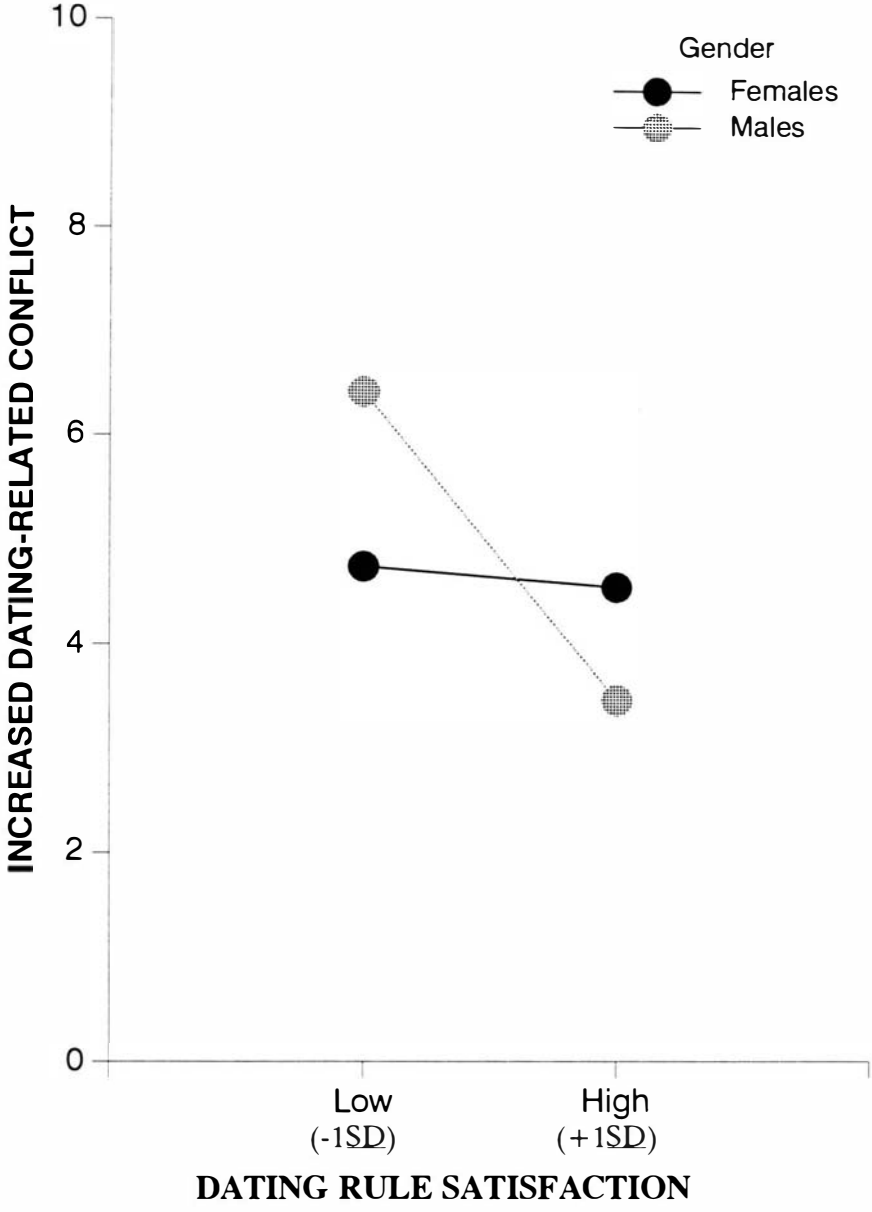

Figure 18. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between dating rule satisfaction and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

Desire for autonomy was not a significant moderator of the effects of negative selectivity on dating-related conflict; however, the relationship between desire for autonomy and conflict was different for males and females. For females, DFA was positively related to increased dating-related conflict, while for males it was negatively related to increased conflict (see Figure 19). Again, this suggests gender differences in the processes accounting for conflict.

Regressions 7 and 8 use the dependent variable perceived intensity of dating-related conflict. For Regression 7, intensity of conflict was regressed on the neutral selectivity variables (talking and selective disclosure) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 37% of the total variance (see Table 12).

Desire for autonomy and cohesion both significantly predicted intensity of dating-related conflict, but DFA was positively related while cohesion was negatively related to intensity. Both were also significant moderators of the relationship between selective disclosure and intensity of dating-related conflict. Selective disclosure and intensity were positively related for those high on DFA and negatively related for those low on DFA (see Figure 20). When cohesion was low, the relationship between selective disclosure and conflict was positive. The nearly flat regression line for

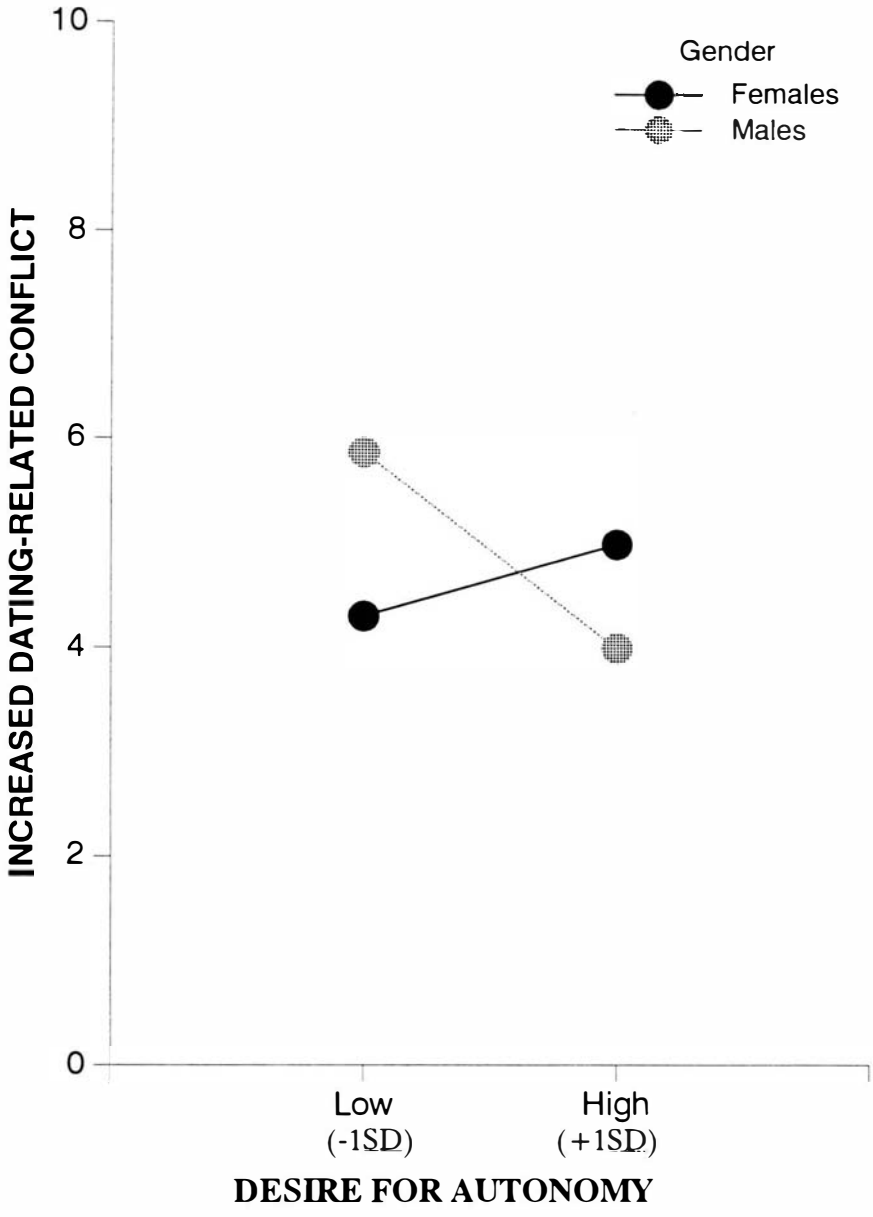

Figure 19. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between desire for autonomy and increased dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

Table 12

Regression of Intensity of Dating-Related Conflict on Neutral Selectivity and Moderators

	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Variables				
Step 1	---	.03	3.52[a]	
Gender				-.05
Grade				-.03
Step 2	.14	.12	18.90[c]	
Talking				-.03
Disclosure				.07
Step 3	.18	.03	5.28[b]	
Importance				.11
Desire for Autonomy				.25[a]
Step 4	.29	.11	21.32[c]	
Cohesion				-.25[a]
Date Rules				-.15
Step 5	.29	.00	.00	
Relationship Length				-.03
Step 6	.34	.05	1.94[a]	
Talking X Importance				.02
Talking X Rules				.05
Talking X Length				-.09
Talking X DFA				-.04
Talking X Cohesion				.03
Disclose X Importance				-.01
Disclose X Rules				.11[+]
Disclose X Length				.15[a]
Disclose X DFA				.14[a]
Disclose X Cohesion				-.13[a]

(table continues)

Table 12 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.35	.01	.68	
Talking X Grade				.05
Disclose X Grade				.09
Importance X Grade				-.07
Rules X Grade				-.00
Length X Grade				.08
DFA X Grade				-.06
Cohesion X Grade				.03
Step 8	.37	.02	.88	
Talking X Gender				-.03
Disclose X Gender				-.01
Importance X Gender				-.07
Rules X Gender				-.13^{+}
Length X Gender				-.05
DFA X Gender				-.02
Cohesion X Gender				.06

(R^2 = .37, $\underline{F}$ (33,243) = 4.28, $\underline{p}$<.000)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

$^{+}\underline{p} < .10$. $^{a}\underline{p} < .05$. $^{b}\underline{p} < .01$. $^{c}\underline{p} < .001$.

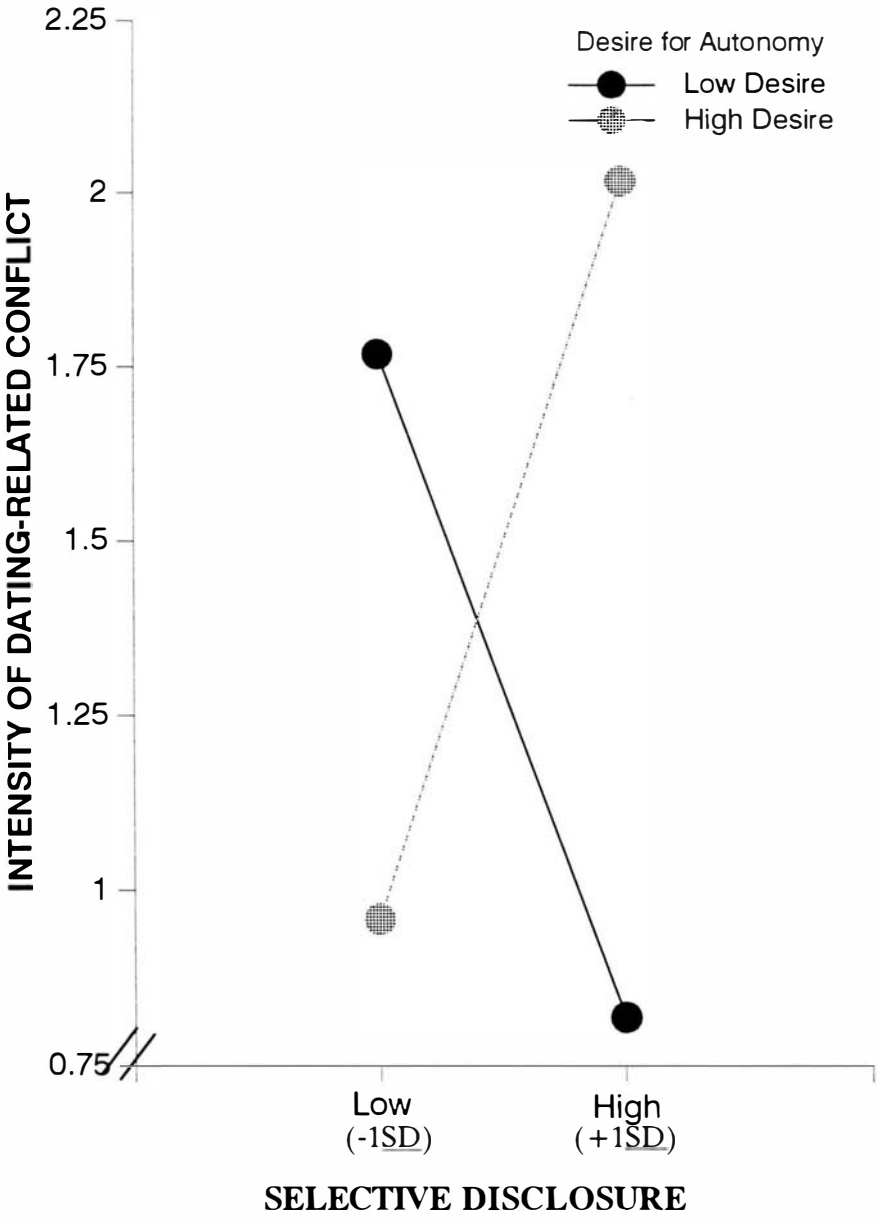

Figure 20. Desire for autonomy as a moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and intensity of dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

those high on cohesion suggests that there was no linear relationship between selective disclosure and the intensity of dating-related conflict (see Figure 21).

Finally, length of dating relationship was a significant moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and intensity of dating-related conflict. For those in longer dating relationships relative to others in the sample, high levels of selective disclosure predicted high levels of intensity. The relationship was negative for those in shorter relationships (see Figure 22). Interactions of proposed moderators with grade and gender were not significant in predicting intensity.

For Regression 8 (see Table 13), perceived intensity of dating-related conflict was regressed on negative selectivity variables (lying and covering) and the other independent variables and interaction terms. This set of predictors accounted for 40% of the total variance.

As in Regression 7, DFA was positively related and cohesion negatively related to intensity of dating-related conflict. However, the positive relationship between lying and intensity appeared to be stronger for males than females (see Figure 23). Additionally, DFA was a significant moderator of the relationship between lying and intensity. The relationship was positive for those high on DFA and appeared negative for those low on DFA (see Figure 24).

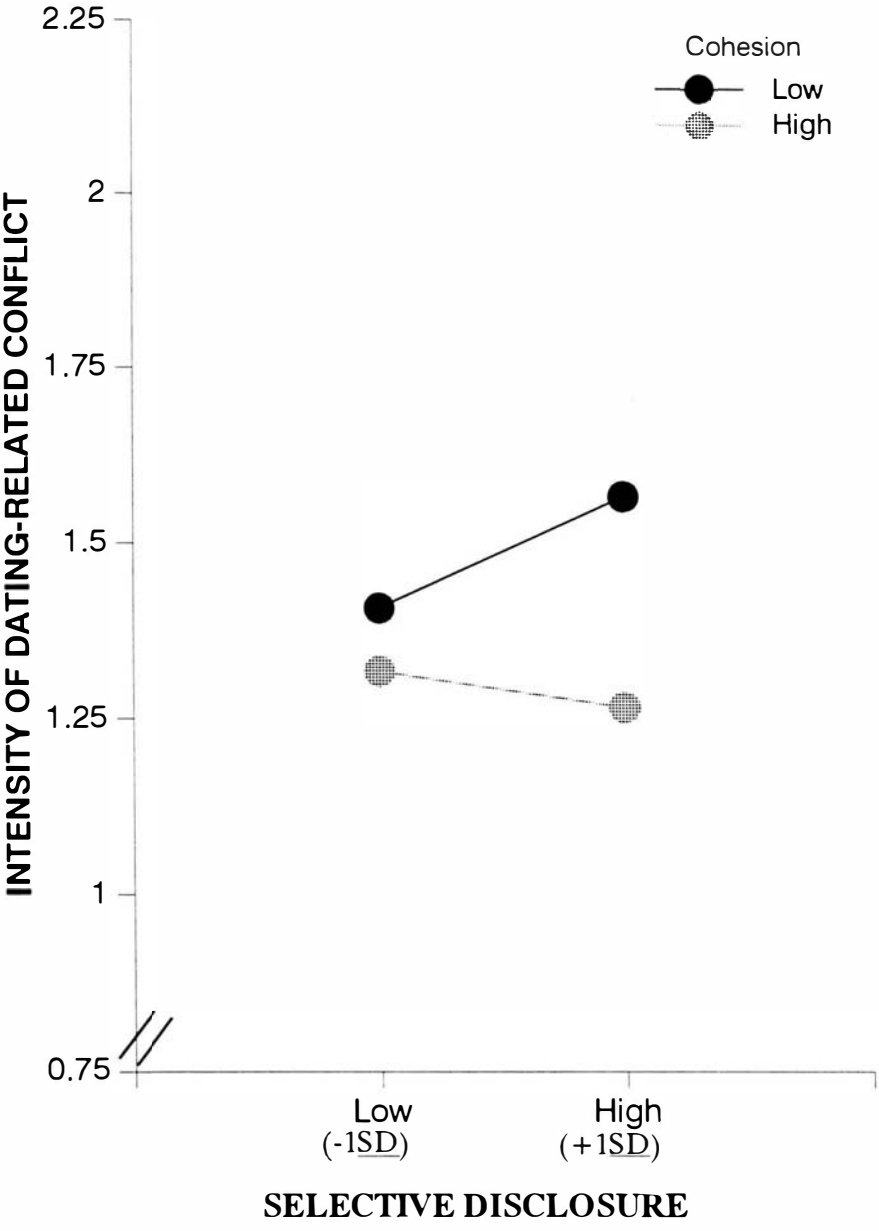

Figure 21. Cohesion as the moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and intensity of dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

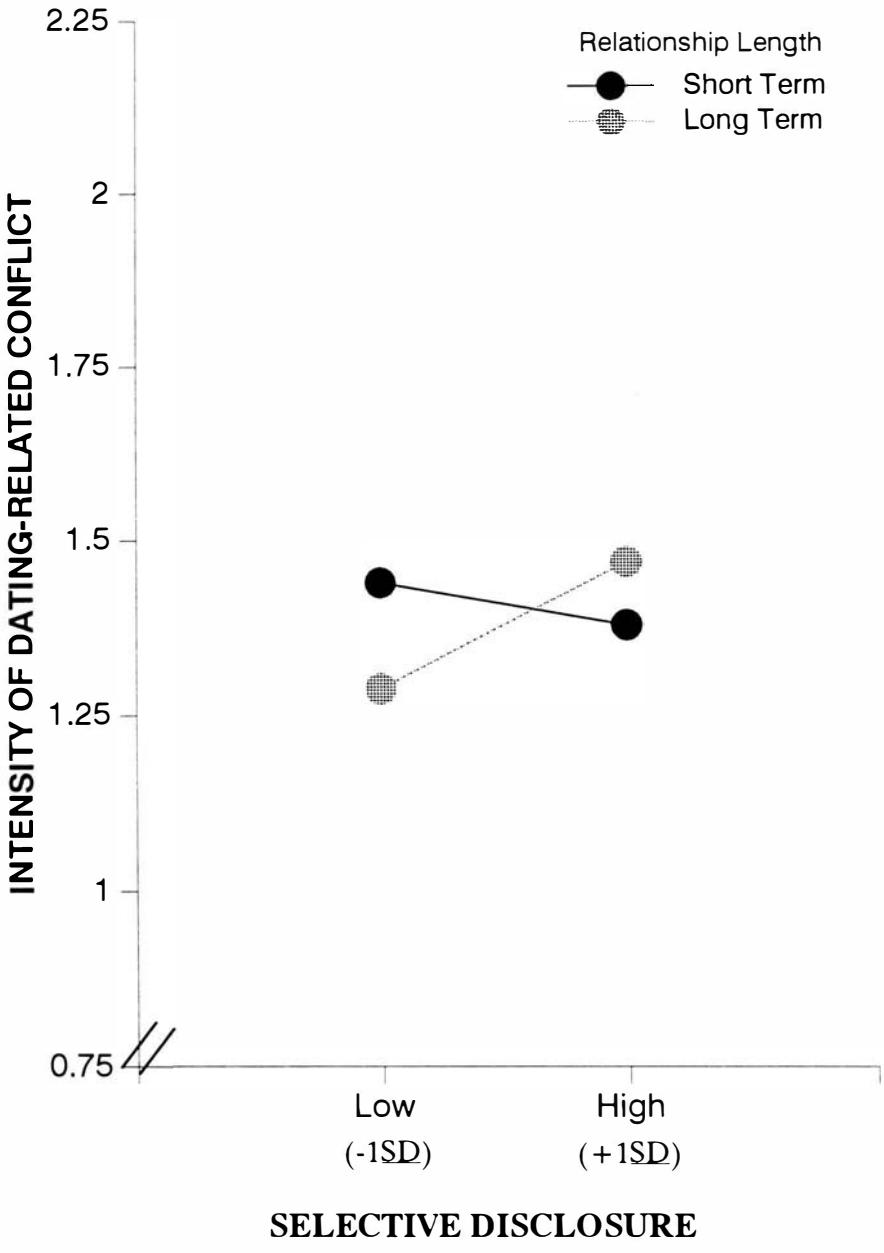

Figure 22. Length of the dating relationship as a moderator of the relationship between selective disclosure and intensity of dating-related conflict (neutral selectivity).

Table 13

Regression of Intensity of Dating-Related Conflict on Negative Selectivity and Moderators

	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Variables				
Step 1	---	.03	3.71[a]	
Gender				-.06
Grade				-.06
Step 2	.12	.09	14.23[c]	
Lying				.07
Covering				-.08
Step 3	.15	.03	5.36[b]	
Importance				.10
Desire for Autonomy				.28[a]
Step 4	.29	.14	26.10[c]	
Cohesion				-.32[c]
Date Rules				-.15[+]
Step 5	.29	.00	.08	
Relationship Length				-.02
Step 6	.35	.06	2.50[b]	
Lying X Importance				-.04
Lying X Rules				.01
Lying X Length				.00
Lying X DFA				.15[a]
Lying X Cohesion				.03
Covering X Importance				-.19[b]
Covering X Rules				-.04
Covering X Length				-.12
Covering X DFA				-.08
Covering X Cohesion				.01

(table continues)

Table 13 (continued)

Variables	R^2	R^2ch	Fch	Beta
Step 7	.37	.01	.69	
Lying X Grade				-.12
Covering X Grade				.16
Importance X Grade				-.06
Rules X Grade				-.07
Length X Grade				.07
DFA X Grade				-.10
Cohesion X Grade				-.01
Step 8	.40	.03	1.70	
Lying X Gender				.24[b]
Covering X Gender				-.14
Importance X Gender				-.11[+]
Rules X Gender				-.01
Length X Gender				-.06
DFA X Gender				-.04
Cohesion X Gender				.06

(R^2 = .40, F (33,242) = 4.82, p<.001)

Note. Variables were entered in sets in the predetermined order given here. R^2, R^2ch, and Fch represent values at the point of entry. Betas represent values when all variables have been entered in the equation.

[+]p < .10. [a]p < .05. [b]p < .01. [c]p < .001.

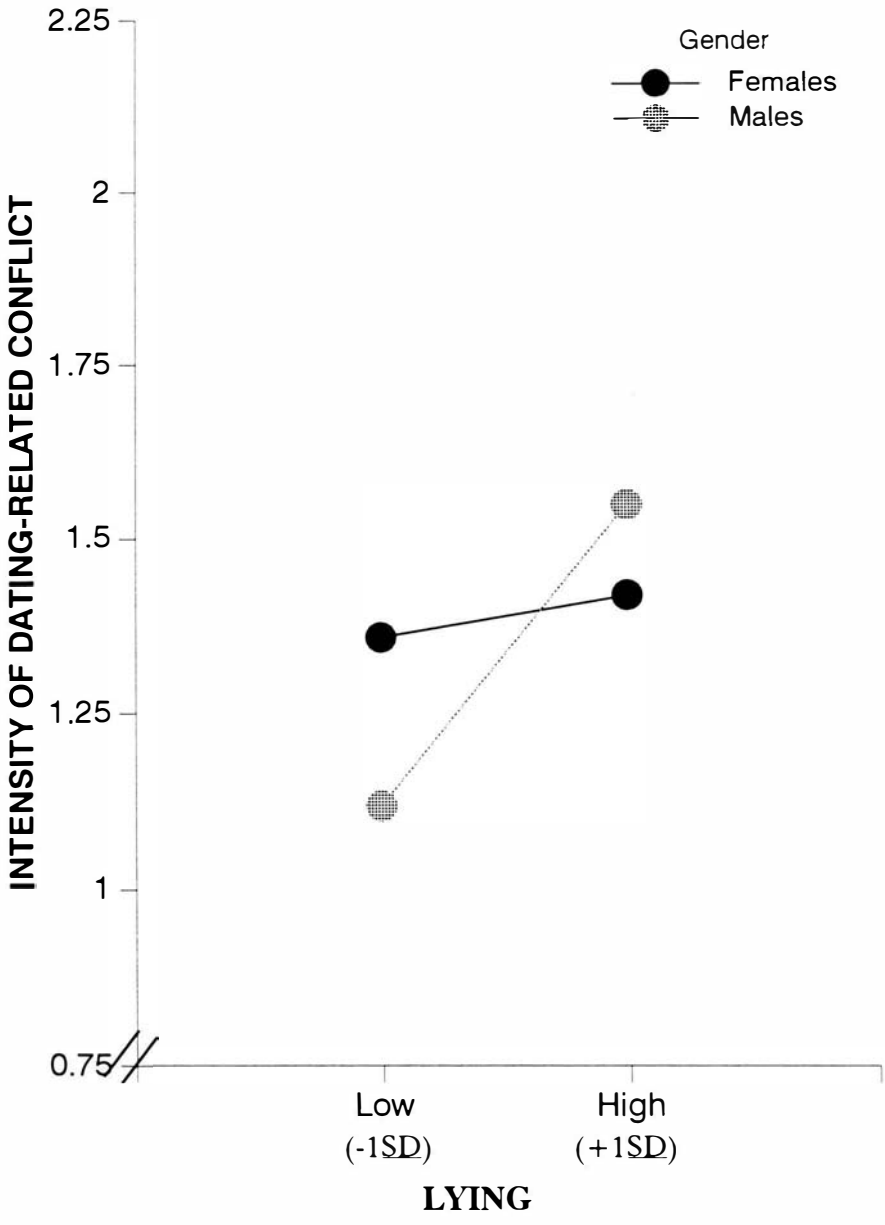

Figure 23. Gender as a moderator of the relationship between lying and intensity of dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

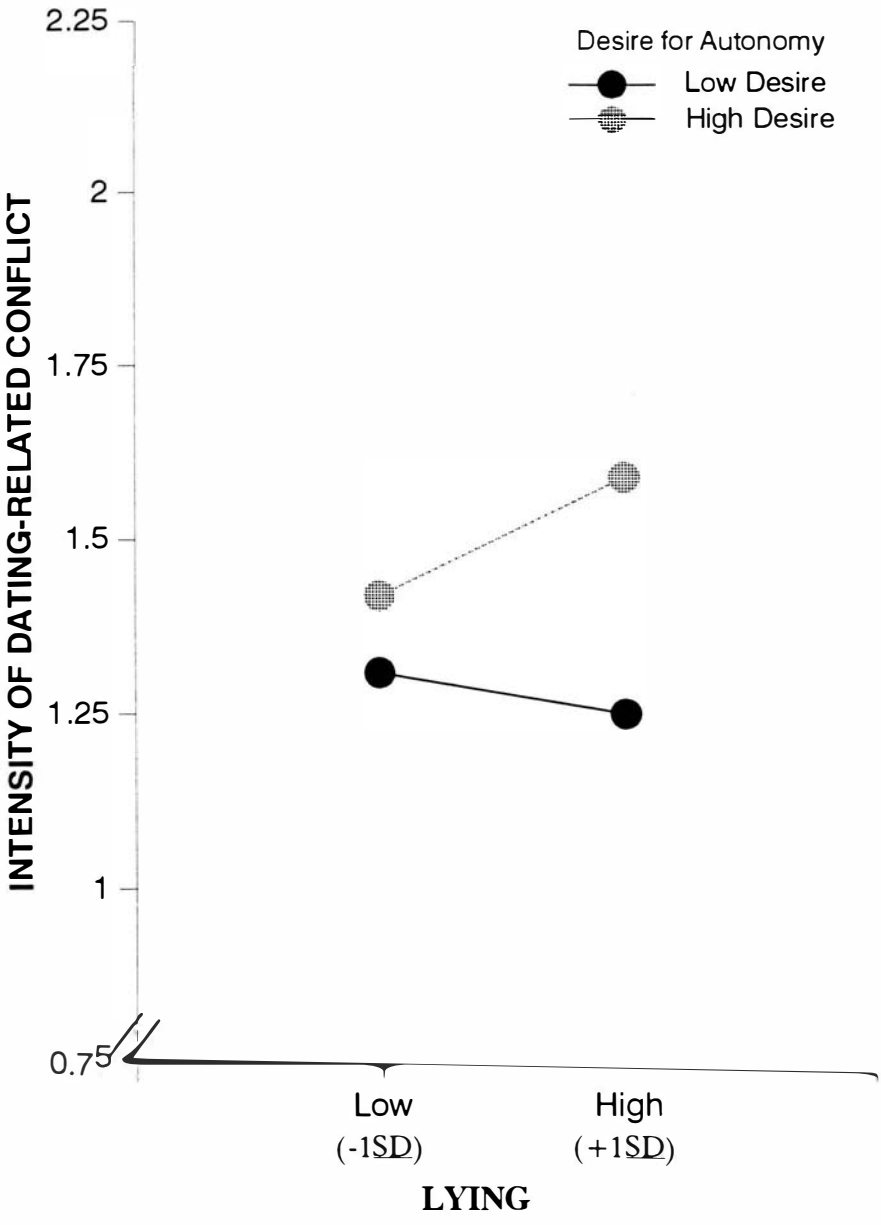

Figure 24. Desire for autonomy as a moderator of the relationship between lying and intensity of dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

Regarding covering behavior, the importance of boy/girlfriend was a significant moderator of the effects of covering on intensity of dating-related conflict. For those for whom importance was high relative to other subjects, high covering predicted low intensity of conflict. For those for whom importance was low, high covering predicted more intense dating-related conflict (see Figure 25).

Summary of Regression Results at the Last Step: What Was Not Significant. Although selectivity variables were significant at the point of entry (step 2) in seven of the eight equations, at the final step of the regression (Step 8), only selective disclosure in Regression 3 and lying and covering in Regression 6 were significant as main effects. Talking did not significantly predict conflict under any condition.

Looking at the moderators, none of the domain-specific (dating-related) moderators were significant as main effects at Step 8, while both global moderators (desire for autonomy and cohesion) were significant. The significance of desire for autonomy and cohesion is consistent with the conceptual model. Social cognitive theory argues that conflict is a signal of problems in matching parents' and adolescents' expectations for control of behavior (Smetana, 1988). Quality of family relations is considered essential in determining the meaning of conflict (Cooper, 1988).

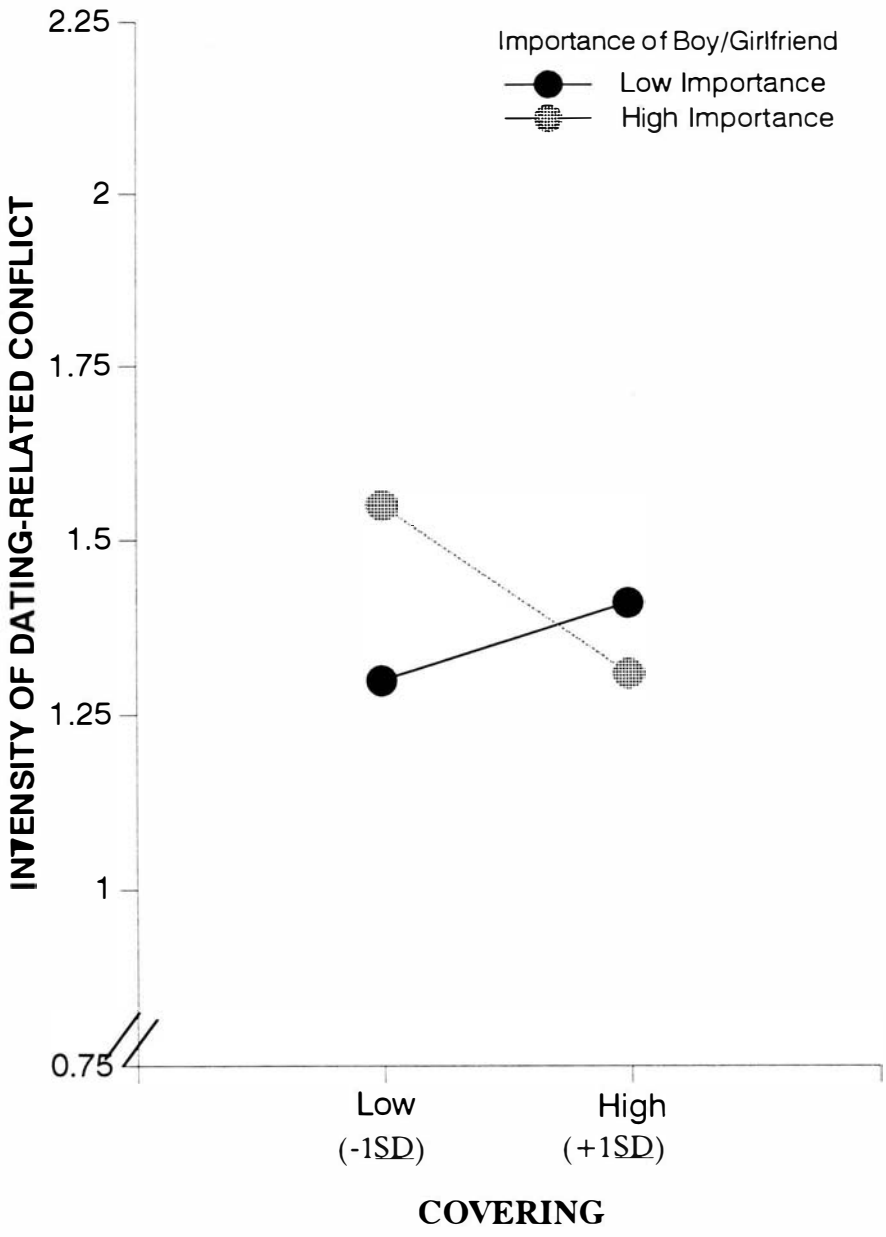

Figure 25. Importance of boy/girlfriend as a moderator of the relationship between covering behavior and intensity of dating-related conflict (negative selectivity).

Neither grade nor gender uniquely accounted for significant proportions of variance in any conflict measure at the final step of the equation.

Looking across the two dimensions of selectivity (neutral and negative), neither grade nor gender differences were found for neutral selectivity variables as predictors of either conflict frequency or intensity. Looking across the two domains of conflict (recent general and dating-related), no grade or gender differences were found in the relationships between the proposed moderators (global and domain-specific) and conflict intensity.

Caution should be taken in interpreting these analyses, given the number of terms in each equation and the number of analyses conducted.

Discussion

In this study, the adequacy of a proposed set of predictors of conflict for a conceptual model focusing on the active role adolescents play in parent-adolescent conflict was tested. Multiple dimensions of both predictors and outcomes were measured. Levels were chosen on the basis of a proposed model. This discussion of results addresses three questions: (a) Do adolescents play an active role in conflict management through filtering information parents receive about a potential area of conflict? (b) Do the proposed general and domain-specific factors moderate the effects of that filtering? (c) Do results from this study support the utility of the developmentally-grounded conceptual model proposed for addressing parent-adolescent conflict? The discussion is organized primarily around the last question.

Dating was chosen for the domain-specific area of conflict because it represents a developmentally salient transition that occurs during middle adolescence and involves goals and questions of jurisdiction about which parents' and adolescents' perceptions are likely to differ.

This mismatch should not only lead to conflict, but also promote utilization of strategies to achieve important dating-related goals. The strategies available to middle adolescents involve the filtering of information known or believed to be objectionable to parents. The effects of selectivity and its moderators were expected to be more clearly visible in a domain-specific approach to conflict than in the more global normative conflict assessment that currently typifies conflict research.

Overall, results from the hierarchical regressions support the importance of selectivity in predicting parent-adolescent conflict, and also suggest ways that intraindividual (boy/girlfriend importance, DFA) and dyadic (cohesion, dating rule satisfaction) variables moderate effects of selectivity on conflict. The numerous interactive effects of grade and gender with the moderators suggest developmental and socialization influences on processes affecting conflict frequency. The more consistent effects on intensity suggest something more stable is contributing to intensity as compared to frequency of conflict. Finally, comparisons of the total variance explained in conflict at two levels (general and domain-specific) support the utility of a more domain-specific analysis of conflict.

I will now discuss specific findings in light of the overall model described in this study. First, I will briefly review the dimensions of selectivity and conflict utilized in this model. Next, I will give a brief overview of the main effects of the general developmental factors (DFA and cohesion) which are consistent across the analyses, and relate these findings to what is reported in the developmental literature concerning conflict and autonomy. I will then address in detail findings regarding the frequency of recent general conflict and increased dating-related conflict, followed by a less detailed discussion of findings regarding intensity of conflict. I will conclude with sections addressing limitations of the study and future research needs.

Dimensions of the Model

To address the question of the utility of the model, one must ask whether patterns that were found are consistent with the developmental theory upon which the model is based, as well as with the hypotheses. Do the multiple dimensions of selectivity and conflict that were measured produce meaningful patterns in light of the theoretical grounding of the model?

Conflict is measured across two levels: recent general conflict and domain-specific, dating-related conflict, and across two dimensions: frequency and intensity.

Selectivity, the proposed significant contribution adolescents make to conflict management, is measured across two dimensions: neutral selectivity (talking and selective disclosure) and negative selectivity (lying and covering). Moderators of the effects of selectivity on conflict are measured in two domains: general developmentally important factors (desire for autonomy and family cohesion), and dating-specific factors that delineate dimensions of dating as a social role transition (importance of having a boy/girlfriend, dating rule satisfaction, and length of dating relationship). Gender and grade are used as markers of complex developmental and socialization effects. These effects are expected to interact with selectivity and its moderators to produce different patterns in predictors of conflict for males and females and for 10th and 12th graders.

When one looks across the analyses at the steps in which main effects were tested, desire for autonomy and cohesion stand out as important predictors of conflict. Whether regressed with neutral or negative selectivity variables, both DFA and cohesion predict intensity of both recent and dating-related conflict. DFA is positively related to conflict while cohesion is negatively associated with conflict. For conflict frequency, the patterns across the two sets of regressions are different: significant main

effects (directions noted above) when combined with neutral selectivity and only trends when combined with negative selectivity. Desire for autonomy predicts frequency of recent conflict, and cohesion predicts frequency of dating-related conflict. The strength of these predictors, as indicated by the p values, however, varies. When lying and covering are entered into the analyses, DFA and cohesion become only marginally significant predictors of conflict.

Consistent with the literature, desire for autonomy and cohesion, the two developmental factors, significantly predict conflict across six of the eight analyses. Desire for autonomy is conceptualized as an intraindividual factor, namely a need for autonomy that takes on special prominence during adolescence. Desire for autonomy is considered the motivation behind adolescents' struggle with their parents for control (Holmbeck & O'Donnell, 1991). Cohesion is conceptualized as a dyadic factor, namely, family connection, which provides a supportive context in which to explore new aspects of oneself. Cohesive families provide a safe context in which healthy development can occur (Cooper & Grotevant, 1983; Hill, 1987). The combined importance of these two developmental factors demonstrates the now well-documented connection between attachment and autonomy (Hill & Holmbeck, 1986).

The gender-differentiated patterns in frequency of parent-adolescent conflict that both Smetana (1988) and Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) reported are suggested by this data as well. The relationship between desire for autonomy and frequency of conflict is positive for females in all four regressions in which gender moderates the effects of DFA and is negative for males in two of the four regressions. Cohesion predicts high conflict for females and low conflict for males.

These gender differences, however, do not emerge for intensity of conflict. Smetana (1991) found that the intensity of conflict between males and their parents peaked in 9th and 10th grades, but dropped by 11th and 12th grades. Intensity of conflict among females was related to factors other than age. Since regressions in Smetana's study were run separately, comparisons could not be done across gender groups. This study suggests that 10th grade males and females who are dating do not differ on intensity of conflict with parents.

Different patterns emerge when different dimensions of selectivity are examined across gender groups. For females, desire for autonomy is positively related to conflict frequency across both types of conflict and both types of selectivity. The strongest relationship is seen when predicting frequency of recent conflict using neutral

selectivity. The weakest relationship is seen when predicting dating-related conflict using the negative selectivity variables.

For males, the relationship between desire for autonomy and frequency of both types of conflict is only weakly positive in regressions which include neutral selectivity. When negative selectivity is included, the relationship is distinctly negative across both types of conflict.

These gender differences in the magnitude and direction of effects across different types of conflict when predicting conflict frequency underline the importance of measuring conflict at both general and domain-specific levels and using moderator analyses. For females there is consistency in the direction of effects of desire for autonomy across different dimensions of conflict (frequency and intensity), but differences in the strength of the relationships. For males, the obverse is true: there are differences in the direction of effect of desire for autonomy, but consistency in strength of the relationship.

To date, the developmental literature has tended to be simplistic when examining the relationship between desire for autonomy, cohesion, and conflict. The findings in this study support the utility of measuring both general and domain-specific conflict as well as the frequency and intensity of conflict.

In the next section I will address the relationship of selectivity to conflict, which is the central focus of this study. Findings predicting frequency of conflict will be discussed first, followed by intensity.

Frequency of General and Dating-Related Conflict

Patterns significantly predicting frequency of conflict are complex and underline the importance of measuring different types of conflict (general and domain-specific) and testing moderator effects. First, I will summarize the effects of the selectivity predictors in terms of statistical relationships and relevance to my hypotheses. Interaction terms that contribute to explained variance will be identified. This overview will illustrate the contribution of moderator analyses to understanding predictors of conflict. Second, I will interpret the statistical results in light of my model.

Statistical Overview. Examination of the presence or absence of main effects of selectivity and the accompanying significant interaction terms reveal the following patterns when viewed across the two types of conflict (general and dating-related).

When looking at the effects of neutral selectivity, there are no main effects for selective disclosure on the frequency of either type of conflict. However, consistent with predictions, moderator analyses reveal that neutral

selectivity does predict conflict, but the direction of effect is dependent on the level of the moderators. The effect of selective disclosure on recent conflict depends on the level of dating rule satisfaction, while the effect of selective disclosure on dating-related conflict depends on the level of desire for autonomy. Since the effects in both cases are in opposite directions, there are no main effects of selectivity.

Relative to the model being tested, it is important to note that dating rule satisfaction moderates the effects of selective disclosure on frequency of recent conflict, while desire for autonomy is the significant moderator for dating-related conflict. This supports my assumptions that dating affects the frequency of conflict on normative issues as well as dating-specific issues and that dating is a catalyst for autonomy development.

There are also significant gender and grade differences in the effect the moderators have on frequency of conflict. Desire for autonomy is positively related to general and dating-related conflict for females, and rule satisfaction is negatively related to dating-related conflict for males. These findings support the assumption that the processes that explain parent-adolescent conflict are different for females and males.

When looking at effects of negative selectivity (lying and covering behavior) across types of conflict, different patterns emerge. For frequency of recent conflict, there are no significant main effects for lying and covering, but both lying and covering are significant predictors of increased dating-related conflict. This supports my assumption that adolescents use cognitive strategies to filter information in order to achieve dating-related goals.

The direction of effects of lying and covering depend on levels of DFA and cohesion. Since these selectivity variables are conceptualized as maladaptive forms of filtering information, this was unexpected. Additionally, the effects of DFA and cohesion on recent conflict frequency depend on gender, and the effect of dating rule satisfaction differs by grade.

In the regression equations which included lying, covering, desire for autonomy, and cohesion, neither DFA nor cohesion had main effects. The effects of lying and covering on frequency of recent conflict were moderated by DFA and cohesion, while the effects of lying and covering on dating-related conflict were moderated by dating-specific moderators. These differences in how general developmental and dating-specific moderators covary when measuring general versus domain-specific conflict underline the importance of measuring conflict in specific domains.

The importance of lying and covering as predictors of frequency of dating-related conflict is consistent with my prediction, and supports the basic assumption of this model: adolescents filter information to parents, and this filtering affects the level of conflict. This is best seen in domain-specific analyses. The finding that lying and covering produce opposite effects was not predicted. However, this supports the importance of looking at lying and covering as two dimensions of negative selectivity.

Interpretation of Statistical Results. Looking first at positive selectivity, the direction of effects of selective disclosure on both frequency of recent conflict and dating-related conflict depend on the level of the moderators. Patterns of relationships are difficult to interpret, and suggest possible problems in construct definitions.

Dating-specific factors moderate levels of recent general conflict, but not in the direction predicted. For those dissatisfied with dating rules in their families (low dating rule satisfaction), the relationship between selective disclosure and conflict is negative; i.e, high selective disclosure predicts low conflict. By contrast, for those satisfied with the dating rules (high dating rule satisfaction), selective disclosure is positively related to recent conflict.

Although the negative relationship between selective disclosure and frequency of recent conflict for those low on rule satisfaction is contrary to predictions based on my pilot data, it is consistent with the model being tested. The difference in the effects of selective disclosure on conflict across different levels of rule satisfaction reflects a potential difference in the utilization of neutral and negative selectivity. Unlike deceitful forms of filtering information (lying and covering), selective disclosure can represent an adaptive strategy for defining areas as private (healthy autonomy) or for achieving goals through filtering information.

In an environment where parents and adolescents have not successfully dealt with dating-related issues (low rule satisfaction) selective disclosure may be used as a strategy to avoid conflict and achieve dating-related goals. This represents a potentially maladaptive but apparently effective use of perspective taking abilities. The adolescent who is not satisfied with the rules about dating can successfully take over control by keeping information from the parent.

Correlations among rule satisfaction, cohesion, and disclosure support this interpretation. The moderate positive correlation between rule satisfaction and cohesion supports the conceptualization of rule satisfaction as a

measure of dyadic quality. The moderate positive correlation of disclosure and lying suggests that disclosure taps negative dimensions of selectivity as well as positive or neutral ones. The negative correlation between disclosure and cohesion suggests that adolescents may feel less of a need to be selective about revealing information when families are close. Unfortunately, three-way interactions (selective disclosure X cohesion X rule satisfaction) could not be tested due to power concerns.

Turning now to increased dating-related conflict, the intraindividual variable desire for autonomy rather than the dyadic variable rule satisfaction moderates the effects of selective disclosure on conflict frequency. Contrary to predictions, for those high on desire for autonomy, selective disclosure makes virtually no difference in predicting dating-related conflict scores. Conflict is high regardless of selective disclosure. For those low on DFA, high selective disclosure positively predicts conflict. This finding is neither consistent with the bulk of developmental literature that assumes conflict is driven by a desire for autonomy, nor is it consistent with my hypotheses.

In conclusion, while the effects of selective disclosure on recent conflict are moderated by dating rule satisfaction, the effects on dating-related conflict are

moderated by DFA. The importance of a dating-specific moderator (rule satisfaction) to predictions of recent general conflict and a general developmental moderator (DFA) to predictions of dating-related conflict confirm the utility of simultaneously measuring general and domain-specific predictors and outcomes.

Turning now to the effect of negative selectivity across both types of conflict, different patterns are seen. Lying is positively related to increased dating-related conflict, and the relationship is stronger for 10th graders. Covering is negatively related to dating-related conflict, and the relationship is stronger for 12th graders. This suggests that lying is a better predictor of higher dating-related conflict when looking at 10th graders and covering is a better predictor of reduced dating-related conflict when looking at 12th graders.

Since this is cross-sectional data, no inferences can be made about changes in choice or effectiveness of strategies across time. However, developmental theory suggests that this difference in strategies may reflect advances in value autonomy. Value autonomy is believed to emerge in late adolescence (Steinberg, 1993).

The importance of boy/girlfriend also moderates the relationship between covering and dating-related conflict, but in a direction opposite of prediction. Covering is

negatively related to the frequency of dating-related conflict, and this relationship is stronger for adolescents for whom having a boy/girlfriend is highly important. Covering appears to reduce dating-related conflict for both those high and low on importance. Causal direction, however, cannot be determined.

Analyses using the larger sample from which these daters were drawn indicated that the importance of having a boy/girlfriend was significantly greater for those adolescents not in current dating relationships than for current daters. When pilot testing this instrument (JARS), adolescents expressed confusion about how to respond to a question regarding the importance of dating. They observed that when you are dating, dating is not important, but when you are not dating, dating is important. A similar issue may arise when asking about the importance of having a boy/girlfriend. A better test of the effect of the importance of boy/girlfriend on parent-adolescent conflict may be one that compares dating and nondating adolescents.

Finally, rule satisfaction is negatively related to increased dating-related conflict for 12th graders and males and unrelated for 10th graders and females. Desire for autonomy is positively related to increased conflict for females, and negatively related for males. Developmental theory suggests that rule satisfaction may not be an issue

in 10th grade when dating is less normative. However, when acceptable rules on dating have not been established by 12th grade, low rule satisfaction will predict high conflict.

Desire for autonomy appears to be the most important predictor of increased dating-related conflict for females, while satisfaction with dating rules appears to be most predictive of conflict for males. The lack of predictive power of dating rule satisfaction for females is difficult to interpret and requires further research.

Regarding negative selectivity, the effects of both lying and covering on recent general conflict depend on the level of desire for autonomy, but are opposite in direction. When dating adolescents are not content with the control they have over their behavior (high DFA), high general conflict is found regardless of lying. For those reporting relative satisfaction with the control they have (low DFA), there is a strong positive relationship between lying and recent conflict. When lying is high, those low on DFA report equivalent levels of conflict to those high on DFA. This finding is contrary to developmental theory, and suggests that something other than desire for autonomy may motivate either conflict or lying. Family cohesion, a potential explanatory factor, does not moderate effects of negative selectivity on conflict. The correlation between cohesion and lying is significant but relatively small.

By contrast, regardless of level of desire for autonomy, general conflict frequency is similar when covering is low, but differs markedly when covering is high. Covering as a method to achieve dating-related goals, therefore, also involves something other than unmet autonomy-related needs. The effects of covering are further qualified by family cohesion. Moos operationalizes cohesion as shared time and emotional energy which produce an experience of togetherness or connectedness. Contrary to predictions, for daters in families perceived as low on cohesion, covering is not related to the frequency of recent parent-adolescent conflict. In families perceived as more cohesive, however, high covering is related to high conflict.

In light of the proposed model, this finding is interpreted as follows. In cohesive families, shifts in the priorities and behavior of adolescents who are dating are noticed and responded to by parents who are concerned for their children's future. As a result, conflict over mundane matters like homework and chores escalates. In families which share little time or energy, these shifts may be less apparent. Alternately, one could argue that high cohesiveness demands more devious methods for the adolescent to achieve individuation. Given the proposed conceptual

model linking healthy autonomy development to maintaining family connectedness, the former interpretation is espoused.

Overall, findings regarding conflict support the view that adolescents take an active role in filtering information to their parents. This filtering increases conflict frequency when lying is used and decreases conflict frequency when covering is used. When selective disclosure is used, effects are dependent on other factors. The contribution of the adolescent to conflict is most directly seen in negative selectivity, but is also seen in the interactions with global developmental and dating-specific variables. The conditions under which conflict is increased and decreased as a result of selectivity, however, need further study.

Results support the importance of dating rule satisfaction as a predictor of frequency of conflict. Since this is a domain-specific moderator comparable to the general developmental moderator, desire for autonomy, this is an important finding. Patterns of prediction based on the levels of these two factors need further study.

Intensity of General and Dating-Related Conflict

In regressions where intensity of recent conflict is the outcome of interest, main effects account for all the significant variance when using neutral selectivity in the analyses. Selective disclosure, a developmentally

appropriate and adaptive strategy, positively predicts recent conflict intensity. The general developmental moderators, desire for autonomy (DFA) and cohesion, also predict intensity. No significant interactions of selectivity or moderators with gender or grade emerge. Thirty-two percent of variance in recent conflict intensity is accounted for.

When using negative selectivity, desire for autonomy and cohesion remain strong predictors of recent conflict intensity. The effect of covering behavior depends on the level of rule satisfaction. Twenty-eight percent of the variance in recent conflict intensity is accounted for.

Desire for autonomy and cohesion have consistent main effects on recent conflict intensity with no significant interactions with grade, gender, or selectivity. This is true across both types of selectivity. Selective disclosure and desire for autonomy predict the intensity of recent conflict, while cohesion is negatively related to recent conflict intensity. Lying and covering, the more maladaptive forms of information management, do not predict intensity of recent conflict except in one interaction with importance of boy/girlfriend. For those high on importance, covering is negatively related to recent conflict intensity. However, the relationship is positive for those low on importance. Covering appears to effectively reduce conflict

intensity, although causal direction can not be determined. Again, there are no significant interactions of selectivity with either grade or gender.

Prediction of the intensity of dating-related conflict involves more complex patterns. In this domain-specific analyses, the active role the adolescent plays in conflict is clearly seen. Thirty-seven percent of the variance in the intensity of dating-related conflict is predicted when analyses include neutral selectivity variables. Forty percent of the variance in dating-related conflict is explained when using negative selectivity variables.

Although there are no main effects for either neutral or negative selectivity variables, moderator analyses reveal that the relationship between selectivity and conflict is conditional; the relationships depend on the level of the moderators. Important moderators include both general developmental moderators (DFA and cohesion) and dating-specific moderators (importance of boy/girlfriend and length of dating relationship). Differences in the levels of these moderators change the direction of the effects of selectivity variables on conflict.

When looking at neutral selectivity, the patterns of relationships predicted for frequency of conflict are seen with intensity as the outcome of interest. When the amount of control an adolescent has over behavior is satisfactory

(low DFA), selective disclosure is negatively related to the intensity of dating-related conflict. Selective disclosure appears to effectively reduce both frequency and intensity of dating-related conflict for those satisfied with dating rules (low DFA). For those dissatisfied (High DFA), selective disclosure is positively related to conflict intensity. The dual potential of selective disclosure is evident in this finding.

For those in less cohesive families, selective disclosure is positively related to intensity of dating-related conflict, as predicted for frequency measures. When cohesion is high, however, selective disclosure has little effect on intensity. This is consistent with developmental theory which argues that warm and supportive families are safe places to explore autonomy issues and stable places to experience transitions. The difference in intensity scores as a function of cohesion, however, is small.

Finally, for those in longer dating relationships, selective disclosure is related to more intense dating-related conflict. This appears contrary to findings of Connolly and Johnson (1993) who used subjects listing mother as a significant person in their lives. These adolescents described their mothers as sources of support and self-enhancement. As Collins and Laursen (1992) point out, more intimate relationships offer a safe place for

conflict to occur and are characterized by more intense conflict. Conflict is not negative by definition.

A developmental model in which dating is conceptualized as a social role transition and which defines areas of jurisdiction as the source of conflict suggests the following interpretation of this finding. Adolescents in long-term relationships have completed the role transition and perceive dating as serious and as within their area of personal jurisdiction. The strength of this perception is reflected in the intensity of conflict. Differences in intensity scores as a function of relationship length are again small. The relevance of relationship length to conflict and selectivity requires further study.

When looking at negative selectivity, both dating-specific and general developmental factors moderate the effects of selectivity on conflict. For those for whom having a boy/girlfriend is very important, covering and conflict intensity are positively related. When importance is low, covering and conflict intensity are negatively related.

Intensity of normative conflicts (recent general conflict) appears to be adequately explained by the general developmental factors, desire for autonomy and cohesion. Serious conflicts, such as those around dating, however, reveal both the active role that adolescents play in

conflict management and the complexity of factors affecting the intensity of conflicts in which adolescents are invested. The total variance explained in this model (40%) affirms the utility of domain-specific analyses.

To understand processes that affect conflict intensity, domain-specific measures of conflict which allow for subgroup differences in domain-specific and general developmental factors (moderators) offer more sophisticated insights and reveal conditional relationships that are missed by more global assessments of conflict.

Comparisons Across Frequency and Intensity Measures

Regarding dimensions of conflict (frequency and intensity), the proposed set of predictors are more consistent and powerful when predicting intensity than frequency of conflict across both general and dating-specific conflict. The amount of variance explained is greater and the number of significant predictors is fewer for intensity of conflict as compared to frequency of conflict. Predictors are more consistent; differences by grade and gender are not significant.

Regarding general (recent) versus domain-specific (dating-related) measurement of conflict, the amount of variance explained suggests that the set of proposed predictors is more effective in predicting dating-related conflict than general conflict. Total variance explained is

greater in each of the dating-specific regressions than in the comparable recent conflict regressions. This is true for both frequency and intensity of conflict.

Regarding gender and grade differences, while multiple gender and grade interactions were found when predicting the effects of selectivity on frequency of both types of conflict, only one gender difference was found when predicting intensity. While the effects of DFA, cohesion, and dating rule satisfaction differed by grade on both general and dating-related conflict frequency, no grade differences were found on conflict intensity.

These findings suggest that intensity is related to something shared by males and females. I argue that what is shared is the developmental transition into a network the center of which will become, for the majority of adolescents, an opposite gender partner. Boy\girlfriend relationships involve something worth fighting for. The effects of dating are apparent in both the frequency and intensity of conflict, but are especially evident in the intensity of conflict.

Current research on conflict suggests that intensity is the dimension of conflict that differentiates serious from playful conflict (Koplas & Laursen, 1994). Findings from this study, when interpreted within the framework of the developmentally grounded model that guided the design, offer

an alternative definition. Serious is more adequately defined by the contrast between vested interest and casual interest.

Limitations of the Model

Analyses of results suggest that the definition and operationalization of constructs proposed for use in this model require further study. Selectivity was defined at two levels: neutral (talking and selective disclosure) and negative (lying and covering). Indicators of negative selectivity (lying and covering) performed well as predictors of variance. Indicators of neutral selectivity performed less well.

Talking (the degree to which adolescents talk to their parents about their dating relationships) did not contribute to the prediction of conflict under any conditions. There are at least two possible explanations. Theoretically, one can argue that amount of talking is related more closely to issues of connection [attachment] than control [autonomy] (S. Paulson, personal communication, 1994). The moderate correlation of cohesion and talking supports this explanation. One can also argue, however, that the amount of talking is a frequency measure and does not assess the quality of communication as do selective disclosure, lying, and covering. Both explanations are consistent with the assumptions of the model.

Selective disclosure predicted variance in a meaningful way within the framework of the model. However, further work on the operationalization and testing of the dual nature it is assumed to represent is required. Selective disclosure is conceptualized as a product of developmental growth (cognitive perspective-taking skills) that can be utilized in either healthy or maladaptive ways. Patterns of zero-order correlations suggest that selective disclosure is similar to lying; results of moderator analyses indicate that its effects on the intensity of conflict are more similar to those of lying than those of covering.

Effects on frequency of conflict suggest that selective disclosure can effectively decrease conflict frequency. The effects of selective disclosure are moderated by family cohesion, and those of lying are not. Looking at how selective disclosure predicts conflict under different levels of cohesiveness may help untangle the dual nature of selective disclosure and its effect on conflict.

The combined effects of attachment and autonomy are not adequately addressed in this model. Hill and Holmbeck (1986) argue that to understand autonomy development one must consider attachment as well. Cooper (1988) argues that the effects of conflict on developmental outcomes depend on the quality of the family relationship. Family cohesion is more important than desire for autonomy in predicting

frequency of dating-related conflict versus recent general conflict. It is almost of equal importance in predicting intensity of conflict. Family cohesion is a likely variable with which to begin further study of dating as a catalyst for autonomy development.

Dating was measured in three ways: importance of boy/girlfriend, length of dating relationship, and satisfaction with dating rules. As predictors of variance, rule satisfaction performed well, and length of relationship poorly, with importance falling in between. However, analyses of the meaningfulness of patterns revealed possible problems in the measures or the model.

Satisfaction with dating rules predicted variance, but produced results that were sometimes difficult to interpret, such as the gender differences. This suggests problems in assumptions upon which questions are based. High satisfaction with dating rules can be reached in two ways: through the lack of rules, or through the achievement of agreed upon rules. If one posits the active role of the adolescent and acknowledges differences in socialization, one must consider both possibilities. (A similar concern can be expressed with the Desire For Autonomy Scale.) Unfortunately, both paths to rule satisfaction were not considered when the question was worded.

Length of dating relationship contributes to only one interaction, and that was predicting intensity of conflict. In analyses of the pilot data, months dating was used to create categories of short-term relationships (less than 4 months) and long-term relationships (4-24 months). This treatment of the data resulted in significant differences in prediction of conflict frequency, with short-term daters having higher conflict scores than long-term daters. It is quite possible that there is not a strict linear relationship here. During initial phases of relationships, conflict may be higher, but once the transition into a new relationship has been made, length is no longer important. The importance of length of the dating relationship invites further thought and research.

The effects of importance of boy/girlfriend were not as strong as expected. However, as stated above, the appropriate test of this moderator would be in a comparison of daters and non-daters. Among current daters, the seriousness of the dating relationship may be a more important dimension to investigate.

Limitations of the Current Study

Caution is necessary in interpreting the results of this study. The results offer a basis for creating hypotheses to be investigated in the longitudinal component of the overall study. Conclusions concerning developmental

change across time and direction of effect require longitudinal research. Does selectivity lead to conflict, or is selectivity a response to conflict? Do the strategies that adolescents employ as managers change between 10th and 12th grade? Do differences in the strategies used by middle adolescents predict differences in autonomy or parent-adolescent relationships in late adolescence? These questions cannot be answered with cross-sectional data.

An equally important deficit that limits interpretation is the lack of data from parents. This is important on a number of levels. First, conflict involves a dyadic process. To understand that process, information from both participants is necessary.

Second, development is embedded in context. Neither an objective measure of the family context, nor the perspective of the parent was included in this study. This deficit is of particular importance in this study. A working assumption for this model is that increased conflict when dating is the product of mismatched goals of parents and adolescents. It is a product of both the increased attempts of parents to protect the vested interests they have in their children's future and the strategies utilized by maturing adolescents to achieve their dating-related goals.

Finally, both parents and adolescents change across time. To address the issue of change in parent-adolescent

relationships across time, changes in the parent must be taken into account.

Caution is also required in generalizing results. Multiple gender differences were found. Although the sample was large and diverse, over 70% of participants were females. Males were not well represented. Gender differences found in this study, therefore, may not be replicated when a larger sample of males is utilized.

Contributions and Implications for Future Research

Agreed upon theories and constructs for the study of both dating and conflict are lacking. The major strength of this study is that it is embedded within a model that is firmly grounded in developmental theory and empirical research.

Developmental theory situates the adolescent in developmental as well as historical time, and acknowledges the multiple influences that contribute to behavior. Developmental theory acknowledges multiple changes occurring simultaneously in the adolescent and significant others, and stresses bi-directional effects. It defines context as relational as well as physical. Developmental theory can guide the construction of models that can more adequately address the complex processes accounting for differences in behavior across time and within developmental periods. It can also guide interpretation of results and further model

development. The complex model that such theory produces brings into focus the limitations of simplistic explanations of behavior.

Current approaches to studying the links between conflict, autonomy development, and changes in the parent-adolescent relationship have focused on the parent and ignored the adolescent. As a result, the active role the maturing adolescent plays in conflict management has been neglected. As a consequence, the importance of recognizing the effects that developmentally salient changes have in affecting what is worth fighting for has also been overlooked.

Although connections with parents are maintained, for the majority of adolescents, opposite gender relationships take on new meaning and salience during adolescence. This change in importance and focus may affect not only what is worth fighting for, but also what strategies are utilized to achieve goals. The overwhelming majority of parents are invested in their children's future good, but only the minority are utilizing the "ideal" parenting style. To achieve their goals, adolescents may resort to, and even see as justified, strategies that appear maladaptive (see Gardner & Herman, 1990 for a similar perspective on risk taking). From the perspective of the adolescent, such strategies may be deemed necessary to break out of the

imbalance of power characterizing the parent-child relationship. This rational strategy, however, can produce increases as well as decreases in conflict.

How parents and adolescents handle the social role transition of dating and opposite gender relationships offers a rich field in which to study the contribution of conflict to autonomy development. A strong focus on actual behaviors, as well as psychological constructs like autonomy, is needed. Conflicting results characterize research on conflict and autonomy development. This study suggests that the inconsistency is due to inadequate assumptions about the contributions parents and adolescents make to these processes. The proposed model offers an alternative guide for researching these questions.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Because this is a research project, parents and students need to sign this standard consent in order to participate

CONSENT FORM

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a study looking at relationships of important people in adolescents lives I have read the description of the study and procedures involved. My participation ins strictly voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw from participating at any time. I can ask questions about any concerns I may have.

I understand that my answers on the survey will be kept confidential and will only be identified by an assigned number code. My name will not be associated with any information I provide. Data from this study will be used for research purposes. Group results, not individual results, will be analyzed. Normally, no risks are expected. Should I experience any distress during my participation, I understand that the researchers encourage me to contact them or my school counselor.

Virginia Commonwealth University requires that we include the following statement on all research consent forms. I understand that in the event of physical and/or mental injury resulting from your participation in this research project Virginia Commonwealth University will not provide compensation.

By signing this I agree to participate in this study.

Student Signature_____Date_____

Parent Signature_____

****

PLEASE PRINT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

****

ALL STUDENTS:

Name_____Phone number_____

School_____Grade_____

English Period_____Teacher_____Room number_____

SOPHOMORES ONLY: WE ARE ASKING SOPHOMORES TO PARTICIPATE IN TWO 2 YEAR FOLLOW-UPS, ONE IN THEIR SENIOR YEAR AND ONE AFTER THEY GRADUATE. COMPENSATION WILL BE GIVEN. TO PARTICIPATE, PRINT THE FOLLOWING:

Home address_____
(street) (city) (zip code)

Phone number_____

Names of 2 adults other than your parents who will know how to contact you in case you move:

Name_____ Name_____

(street)_____ (street)_____

(city, state, zip)_____ (city, state, zip)_____

Relation to you_____ Relation to you_____

☐ Check here if you are not participating in the follow-ups.

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

SECTION B: Juggling Important Relationships

This section asks questions about particular kinds of relationships in adolescents' lives: parents, best friends, opposite sex friends, and boy/girlfriends. There are three parts. COMPLETE THE BOX FIRST.

Q1) Write the initials of your SAME SEX BEST FRIEND in the blank below. IF you have more than one same sex best friend, pick the one you would most hate to see move to another state. -----> _____

Q2) Pick your BEST OPPOSITE SEX FRIEND who is NOT your boyfriend or girlfriend. Write his/her initials in this blank. -----> _____

Q3) Write the initials of the parent(s)/guardian(s) you live with most of the time during the school year.

STEPPARENT FAMILY: _____ _____ SINGLE PARENT: _____
TWO PARENT FAMILY: _____ _____ OTHER: _____ _____

FOR ALL QUESTIONS IN THIS SURVEY ABOUT BEST FRIEND, OPPOSITE SEX FRIEND, AND PARENTS, USE THE PEOPLE WHOSE INITIALS YOU PUT IN THESE BLANKS.

PART I

Q4: Important People in Your Life

1) How many SAME SEX BEST FRIENDS do you have? (number) _____

2) Since what grade have you known the SAME SEX BEST FRIEND whose INITIALS are in the box on the top of this page? (grade) _____

3) Since what grade have you been BEST friends? (grade) _____

4) Do you discuss personal feelings and problems with this person? (circle) YES NO

5) How many OPPOSITE SEX FRIENDS do you have who are close friends, but not boy/girlfriends? (number) _____

IF you wrote 0, go to page 2.

6) Since what grade have you known your BEST OPPOSITE SEX FRIEND whose INITIALS are in the box on the top of this page? (grade) _____

7) Do you discuss personal feelings and problems with this person? (circle) YES NO

How SATISFIED are you with the way things are between you and each of these people?

(E = DOES NOT APPLY = do not have this type of relationship)

	circle answer				
	VERY DIS-SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	DOES NOT APPLY
8) Mother	A	B	C	D	E
9) Stepmother	A	B	C	D	E
10) Father	A	B	C	D	E
11) Stepfather	A	B	C	D	E
12) Boy/Girlfriend	A	B	C	D	E
13) Best Friend (same sex)	A	B	C	D	E
14) Best Friend (opposite sex)	A	B	C	D	E
15) Favorite teacher	A	B	C	D	E
16) Employer	A	B	C	D	E

Q 5: How much do your parents REALLY know about...

	circle answer		
	THEY DON'T KNOW	THEY KNOW A LITTLE	THEY KNOW A LOT
1) who your friends are?	A	B	C
2) where you go at night?	A	B	C
3) how you spend your money?	A	B	C
4) what you do with your free time?	A	B	C
5) where you are most afternoons after school?	A	B	C
6) what in your life makes you angry	A	B	C
7) what in your life makes you happy	A	B	C
8) what in your life you worry about	A	B	C
9) what hurts you (emotionally)	A	B	C
10) what is really important to you	A	B	C
11) who is really important to you	A	B	C

Q 6: WHAT TOPICS DID YOU AND YOUR PARENTS DISCUSS IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS?

DIRECTIONS

COLUMN A: circle how often you and a parent talked toagether about each topic during THE LAST TWO WEEKS.

COLUMN B: indicate whether these discussions were usually CALM, A LITTLE ANGRY, or VERY ANGRY.
Skip Column B for items you mark "never."

DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS, A PARENT AND I DISCUSSED THIS TOPIC:

	A circle answer				B circle answer		
	never	once	few times	many times	calm	little angry	very angry
1) whether I do chores at home	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
2) when I do my homework	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
3) how much time I spend on homework	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
4) what time to be home on weekend nights	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
5) having to be home for dinner	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
6) how I spend my money	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
7) what clothes I wear to school	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
8) which friends I spend time with	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
9) time to be asleep on school nights	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
10) how I spend my time after school	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
11) whether I must let my parents know where I am when I am out	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
12) whether I can smoke cigarettes if I want to	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
13) whether I can have friends over when my parents aren't home	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
14) how late I can stay out on school nights	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
15) whether I can have a job	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
16) whether I have to go on family visits or trips	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
17) what I can watch on TV/movies	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
18) what I have the right to decide	A	B	C	D	A	B	C

Q7: Talking with Parents: How much do you agree with each statement?

STRONGLY DISAGREE = Almost never true (A)
DISAGREE = Usually not true (B)
AGREE = Pretty often true (C)
STRONGLY AGREE = Almost always true (D)

	circle answer			
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1) When I talk with my parents about my worries or problems, it helps.	A	B	C	D
2) When I talk with my parents about my worries or problems, they understand. . . .	A	B	C	D
3) When I talk with my parents about my worries or problems, they do <u>not</u> listen to what I am trying to say. . . .	A	B	C	D
4) My friends are better sources of information about dealing with the opposite sex than my parents are. .	A	B	C	D
5) My parents are better sources of information about sex than my friends are.	A	B	C	D
6) If I had a serious problem, my parent (guardian) would be a better source of help than my friends. . .	A	B	C	D
7) My parents trust me to make good decisions.	A	B	C	D
8) My parents use "guilt trips" to get me to do what they want.	A	B	C	D
9) My parents respect my ideas and feelings even when they disagree with me.	A	B	C	D
10) It is OK with my parents for me to disagree with them if I do it respectfully.	A	B	C	D
11) I avoid discussing certain topics with my parents because I know we won't agree.	A	B	C	D
12) I use my friends, brother, or sister to cover for me with my parents so I can do what I want. . . .	A	B	C	D

13) Usually, disagreements with my parents <u>about what I can or can't do</u> end like this: [CHECK ONE]

- ☐ We talk until an agreement is reached that we both like; I do what we agreed.
- ☐ We don't agree; the topic is dropped; I do what my parents want.
- ☐ We don't agree; the topic is dropped; I do what I want.
- ☐ Other (describe) _____

Q 8: DECISION-MAKING IN YOUR FAMILY: WHO MAKES MOST OF THE DECISIONS ON EACH TOPIC BELOW?

Choose from these responses for # 1-17 below. CIRCLE ANSWERS.

A. I decide without discussing it with my parents (I WITHOUT)
B. I decide after discussing it with my parents (I AFTER)
C. We discuss it and make decision together (WE TOGETHER)
D. My parents decide after we discuss it (PARENTS AFTER)
E. My parents decide without discussing it with me (PARENTS WITHOUT)

	circle answer				
	I WITHOUT	I AFTER	WE TOGETHER	PARENTS AFTER	PARENTS WITHOUT
1) what classes I take in school	A	B	C	D	E
2) choosing my clothes	A	B	C	D	E
3) how late at night I can stay out	A	B	C	D	E
4) which friends I spend time with	A	B	C	D	E
5) whether I have a part-time job	A	B	C	D	E
6) at what age I can leave school	A	B	C	D	E
7) how I spend my money	A	B	C	D	E
8) whether I can drink alcohol	A	B	C	D	E
9) how much time I spend with friends	A	B	C	D	E
10) when I can/could start dating	A	B	C	D	E
11) who I can or should date	A	B	C	D	E
12) whether I should go out for a school sport	A	B	C	D	E
13) whether I should be in other school activities	A	B	C	D	E
14) how I style my hair	A	B	C	D	E
15) how much time I should spend on homework	A	B	C	D	E
16) who I can drive with	A	B	C	D	E
17) when I can have my own car	A	B	C	D	E

18) Which topics (#1-17) do you avoid discussing because you know you and your parents will not agree? Write the numbers (#1-17) in the blanks. Use only the blanks you need. If you avoid none of these topics, check NONE.

_____ # _____ # _____ NONE _____

Q 9: DECISIONS YOU MAKE: How SATISFIED are you with the amount of control you now have in making decisions in your family?

Read carefully choices for questions # 1-17:

A) I should have a lot more control (LOT MORE)
B) I should have a little more control (LITTLE MORE)
C) I have the right amount of control for now (RIGHT AMOUNT)
D) I should have a little less control (LITTLE LESS)
E) I should have a lot less control (LOT LESS)

I should have _____ control over....

	circle answer				
	LOT MORE	LITTLE MORE	RIGHT AMOUNT	LITTLE LESS	LOT LESS
1) what classes I take in school	A	B	C	D	E
2) choosing my clothes	A	B	C	D	E
3) how late at night I can stay out	A	B	C	D	E
4) which friends I spend time with	A	B	C	D	E
5) whether I have a part-time job	A	B	C	D	E
6) at what age I can leave school	A	B	C	D	E
7) how I spend my money	A	B	C	D	E
8) whether I can drink alcohol	A	B	C	D	E
9) how much time I spend with friends	A	B	C	D	E
10) when I can/could start dating	A	B	C	D	E
11) who I can date	A	B	C	D	E
12) whether I should go out for a school sport	A	B	C	D	E
13) whether I should be in other school activities	A	B	C	D	E
14) how I style my hair	A	B	C	D	E
15) how much time I should spend on homework	A	B	C	D	E
16) who I can drive with	A	B	C	D	E
17) when I can/could have my own car	A	B	C	D	E

PART II

Q 10: DATING HISTORY SINCE 8th GRADE. Read choices A-G in this box. Then for #1-6, pick the choice that comes closest to describing the dating you did in each time period listed, and circle that letter.

A) did not date
B) dated one or two people just once or a few times each
C) dated frequently but not usually the same person
D) had one girl/boyfriend
E) had a few different girl/boyfriends
F) was engaged or married
G) Don't remember

NA (Not Apply): NOT IN THAT GRADE YET.

	circle answer							
1) in 8th grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
2) in 9th grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
3) in 10th grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	NA
4) in 11th grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	NA
5) in 12th grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	NA
6) Which choice best describes your BEST FRIEND'S DATING during this school year?	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	NA

Q 11: THIS SCHOOL YEAR, HAVING A BOY/GIRLFRIEND IS [less/ just as/ more] IMPORTANT TO ME ....

	circle		
	LESS	**JUST AS**	**MORE**
1) than doing well in school	A	B	C
2) than having time with my friends	A	B	C
3) than getting along with my best friend	A	B	C
4) than having a good relationship with my mother	A	B	C
5) than having a good relationship with my father	A	B	C
6) than doing well at other activities I value (sports, music, art, etc.)	A	B	C
7) than having money to spend on other things	A	B	C

Q11: DATING continued

	circle answer					
	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	SOME-WHAT	QUITE	VERY	DOES NOT APPLY
8) Overall, HOW IMPORTANT to you is DATING this school year?	A	B	C	D	E	
9) Overall, HOW IMPORTANT to you is having a BOY/GIRLFRIEND this year?	A	B	C	D	E	
10) HOW SATISFIED are you with your mother's attitude toward your dating?	A	B	C	D	E	NA
11) HOW SATISFIED are you with your father's attitude toward your dating?	A	B	C	D	E	NA
12) HOW SATISFIED are you with the dating rules your parents have set?	A	B	C	D	E	NA

Q 12: BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS

1) What GRADE were you in when you had your first real boy/girlfriend? (REAL = SOMEONE YOU SPENT TIME WITH REGULARLY).

(grade) _____
HAVE NOT HAD YET (X) _____

If you checked NOT YET HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND, skip to # 6 below. Otherwise, continue.

2) Since your first boy/girlfriend, about how many boy/girlfriends have you had? . . . . . (number) _____

3) How LONG did the LONGEST relationship last?

[circle one]

A) 2 weeks or less
B) 3-4 weeks
C) 1-2 months
D) 3-4 months
E) 5-6 months
F) 7-12 months
G) 1-2 years
H) more than 2 years

4) How many past boy/girlfriends are STILL among the group of friends you hang out with regularly? . . . . . (number) _____

5) How many boy/girlfriends have you had IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS? . . . . . (number) _____

6) How many boy/girlfriends has your BEST FRIEND had IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS? . . . . . (number) _____

7) Have MOST of the girls/boys in your GROUP of friends had a boy/girlfriend during the last twelve months? . . (circle) YES NO

IF you have had NO boy/girlfriend THIS SCHOOL YEAR OR LAST SCHOOL YEAR, GO TO SECTION C, page 16. Otherwise, continue on next page.

PART III

Q 13: GIRL/BOYFRIENDS THIS SCHOOL YEAR OR LAST SCHOOL YEAR
First, read and answer EITHER #1 or #2.

1) If you do not have a girl/boyfriend NOW, write in the initials of the **LAST** girl/boyfriend you had this school year or last school year. ----------> _____

[If you did not have a girl/boyfriend this school year or last school year, you should be in Section C, Page 16.]

2) If you have a girl/boyfriend now, write in the initials of your **CURRENT** girl/boyfriend. ---> _____

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS THAT REFER TO GIRLFRIEND OR BOYFRIEND USING THE PERSON WHOSE INITIALS YOU WROTE DOWN.

ALL QUESTIONS REFER TO WHEN YOU WERE DATING THIS PERSON.

THIS SECTION IS SET UP IN COLUMNS. DO THE COLUMN ON THE LEFT FIRST, AND THEN GO TO THE TOP OF THE PAGE AND DO THE COLUMN ON THE RIGHT.

3) When did you START dating this person?
(month) _____ (year)_____

4) If you are NOT still dating this person, give month and year you STOPPED. If you ARE still dating this person, check STILL DATING.

(month) _____ (year)_____
☐ We are still dating

5) What GRADE and AGE is (was) your boy/girlfriend?

(grade) _____ AND (age) _____

6) How do you describe this relationship?

☐ casual -- like a good friend
☐ close -- good friend + something special
☐ committed -- friend + special + dating no one else
☐ serious -- friend + special + dating no one else + possible future plans
☐ other (describe)_____

_____

[GO BACK TO THE TOP OF NEXT COLUMN]

7) Does (did) he/she attend the same school you do?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8) Does (did) he/she live too far away to see each other every week?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9) How often do (did) the two of you talk on the phone?

☐ almost never/ never
☐ several times a year
☐ couple times a month
☐ once a week
☐ several times a week
☐ almost every day

10) About how long do (did) the two of you usually talk?

☐ 5 - 15 minutes
☐ 16 to 30 minutes
☐ 31 - 60 minutes
☐ 1 - 2 hours
☐ more than 2 hours
☐ We don't call each other.

[CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE]

11) How many days a week do (did) you spend 30 minutes a day or more with this person (NOT COUNTNG time in class or on the phone)?

_____ days a week

12) How many hours do (did) you spend together on an AVERAGE WEEKEND?

- ☐ 0 hours
- ☐ 1 - 3 hours
- ☐ 4 - 6 hours
- ☐ 7 - 10 hours
- ☐ 11 - 15 hours
- ☐ more than 15

13) How often do (did) the two of you have disagreements that result in hurt or angry feelings (either partner's)?

- ☐ almost never/ never
- ☐ less than once a month
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ several times a week or more

14) When I am dating, I talk with my parent(s) about my relationship...

- ☐ almost never/ never
- ☐ less than once a month
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ several times a week or more

15) I feel I must lie to my parent(s) to get to do what I want with my boy/girlfriend...

- ☐ almost never/ never
- ☐ less than once a month
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ several times a week or more

16) I get my friends, brother or sister to cover for me with my parents so I can do what I want with my girl/boyfriend

- ☐ almost never/ never
- ☐ less than once a month
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ several times a week or more

[GO BACK TO THE TOP OF NEXT COLUMN]

17) I am selective in what I tell my parent(s) about my girl/boyfriend relationship [I pick what I let my parents know].

- ☐ almost never/never
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ fairly often
- ☐ very often
- ☐ almost always

18) I am selective because my parent(s) would ...
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ limit what I am doing
- ☐ not understand
- ☐ worry for no good reason
- ☐ forbid me to see the person
- ☐ make fun of what I say/feel
- ☐ not be interested
- ☐ These are my private affairs.
- ☐ I am never selective.

19) If I had a problem with my boy/girlfriend that really bothered me, I would first

- ☐ discuss it with him/her
- ☐ get another person's opinion
- ☐ try to ignore the problem

20) If I wanted someone else's advice on this problem I would turn for help first to ....

- ☐ mother
- ☐ father
- ☐ adult relative
- ☐ brother
- ☐ sister
- ☐ friend
- ☐ adult at school
- ☐ adult at church
- ☐ adult at work
- ☐ other_____

21) If that person wasn't available or I wanted another viewpoint, I would turn to this person next....

- ☐ mother
- ☐ father
- ☐ adult relative
- ☐ brother
- ☐ sister
- ☐ friend/another friend
- ☐ adult at school
- ☐ adult at church
- ☐ adult at work
- ☐ other_____

[TURN PAGE]

Q 14: DO THINGS CHANGE WHEN YOU HAVE A GIRL/BOYFRIEND?

DIRECTIONS

COLUMN A: check if you and your parent(s) DISCUSS each topic MORE, LESS, or ABOUT THE SAME <u>when you HAVE a girl/boyfriend</u> AS COMPARED TO when you DON'T.

COLUMN B: indicate whether these discussions are usually CALM, A LITTLE ANGRY, or VERY ANGRY.

<u>Skip</u> Column B for items you mark "never discuss."

WHEN I HAVE A GIRL/BOYFRIEND, MY PARENTS AND I DISCUSS THIS TOPIC:	**A** circle answer				**DISCUSSIONS ARE: B** circle answer		
	less	about same	more	never discuss	calm	little angry	very angry
1) how late I stay out	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
2) places I can/can't go	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
3) how I dress	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
4) how I handle money	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
5) time spent on the phone	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
6) time spent away from home	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
7) missing meals and family events	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
8) helping out around the house	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
9) time spent on school work	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
10) time spent on my other important activities (sports, music, art)	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
11) grades I get in school	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
12) use of the car	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
13) the friends I hang out with	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
14) telling them where I am going	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
15) telling them who I am with	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
16) drinking alcohol	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
17) sexual behavior	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
18) what I have the right to decide	A	B	C	D	A	B	C

DIRECTIONS: Use topics #1-18 on page 11 to answer the next three questions. Write the number (#1-18) of the topics in the blanks below. Only use blanks you need. IF NONE OF THESE TOPICS PRODUCE DISAGREEMENTS, check NONE.

WHEN YOU HAVE A GIRL/BOYFRIEND, WHICH TOPICS (#1-18). . .

19) WHICH TOPICS (#1-18) do you and your parents disagree about most frequently?

_____ # _____ # _____ NONE OF THESE _____

OTHER (write in): _____

20) WHICH TOPICS (#1-18) do you and your parents disagree about most strongly?

_____ # _____ # _____ NONE OF THESE _____

OTHER (write in): _____

21) WHICH TOPICS (#1-18) do YOU avoid discussing with your parents because you know they will not agree with your views?

_____ # _____ # _____ NONE OF THESE _____

OTHER (write in): _____

Q 15: YOUR BEST SAME SEX FRIEND. Use the best friend whose initials you wrote down on page 1.

How much does your SAME SEX BEST FRIEND really know about...

	circle answer		
	DOESN'T KNOW	KNOWS A LITTLE	KNOWS A LOT
1) what in your life makes you angry	A	B	C
2) what in your life makes you happy	A	B	C
3) what in your life you worry about	A	B	C
4) what hurts you (emotionally)	A	B	C
5) what is really important to you	A	B	C
6) who is really important to you	A	B	C

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW OFTEN HAS YOUR SAME SEX BEST FRIEND. . .

	circle			
	NEVER	ONCE	A FEW TIMES	MANY TIMES
7) helped you solve a problem you had with your girl/boyfriend	A	B	C	D
8) listened to you when you were upset or angry with your girl/boyfriend	A	B	C	D
9) helped you understand your girl/boyfriend's actions or thinking	A	B	C	D
10) given advice on how to deal with your parents about dating	A	B	C	D
11) said or did things that caused problems between you and your boy/girlfriend	A	B	C	D
12) teased you about being under your boy/girlfriend's control	A	B	C	D
13) revealed something about your dating relationship you considered private	A	B	C	D
14) said you didn't have much time anymore for him/her because of dating	A	B	C	D
15) started dating your girl/boyfriend after you broke up	A	B	C	D
16) helped you meet a girl/boyfriend	A	B	C	D

17) How often do you and your SAME SEX BEST FRIEND have disagreements that result in hurt or angry feelings for either of you?

- ☐ almost never/ never
- ☐ less than once a month
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ several times a week or more

The next section is about breakups. IF you have NOT experienced a breakup with a girl/boyfriend, GO to SECTION C, page 17. Otherwise, continue.

Q 16: BREAKUPS: IF YOU HAVE HAD MORE THAN ONE GIRL/BOYFRIEND, PICK THE RELATIONSHIP WHERE BREAKING UP WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT. Write month & year this breakup happened in the blanks below.

1) Write the month & year this breakup happened here---> _____/____
month year

2) What GRADE were you in when the breakup occurred? ———> (grade) _____
IF DURING THE SUMMER, BETWEEN WHAT GRADES? -> (between grades) ____ & _____

3) How many MONTHS had you been going together? (number) _____

4) Did YOU want to break up?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5) How upset or hurt were you?

☐ Not at all
☐ A little
☐ Quite a bit
☐ A lot

6) How angry were you?

☐ Not at all
☐ A little
☐ Quite a bit
☐ A lot

7) How many DAYS OR MONTHS did it take you to
STOP MISSING this person? ——————————> (days)_____ OR (months)_____
IF STILL MISS, check here ———> STILL MISS (X) _____

BREAKUPS: WHO WAS HELPFUL?

8) When the two of you broke up, who responded to you in a way that helped THE MOST? [Example: mother, stepfather, best friend...]

(write in): _____

	circle answer			
	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	QUITE A BIT	A LOT
9) How much did you talk with your SAME SEX BEST FRIEND about breaking up?	A	B	C	D

IF you circled A, SKIP to #12 below.

10) How HELPFUL was talking with him/her?	A	B	C	D
11) Did he/she understand what you were feeling?	A	B	C	D
12) How much did you talk with your MOTHER about breaking up?	A	B	C	D

IF you circled A, SKIP to #15 below.

13) How HELPFUL was talking with her?	A	B	C	D
14) Did she understand what you were feeling?	A	B	C	D
15) How much did you talk with your FATHER about breaking up?	A	B	C	D

IF you circled A, SKIP to #18 below.

16) How HELPFUL was talking with him?	A	B	C	D
17) Did he understand what you were feeling?	A	B	C	D
18) How much did you talk with your BEST OPPOSITE SEX FRIEND (initials on page 1) about breaking up?	A	B	C	D

IF you circled A, SKIP to #21 below.

19) How HELPFUL was talking with him/her?	A	B	C	D
20) Did he/she understand what you were feeling?	A	B	C	D
21) How much did the breakup affect how you did in school?	A	B	C	D

Vita