

Stepfather-Adolescent Relationship Quality during the First Year of Transitioning
to a Stepfamily

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Abstract

This study contributes to the growing literature on factors associated with the formation of close relationships between stepfathers and stepchildren. We extend prior research by using nationally representative data from Add Health (N = 179) to examine how factors existing prior to stepfamily formation are associated with the quality of stepfather-adolescent ties within the first year after married stepfathers join the household. Results from structural equation models revealed that both the quality of the mother-adolescent relationship and adolescent adjustment prior to stepfamily formation were significantly associated with the perceived quality of adolescents' relationships with their stepfathers.

The general instability of childbearing unions in the United States, combined with the tendency for parents to form new partnerships following relationship disruption, means that stepfamilies have become a central feature of the American family system. Kreider and Ellis (2011) reported that almost 8% of all U.S. children lived with a stepparent in 2009, and about 30% of U.S. children will live with a stepparent at some time before reaching adulthood (Bumpass, Raley, & Sweet, 1995). The majority of stepfamilies involve residential stepfathers (Stewart, 2007)—the focus of the current study.

The current study builds on recent research on factors that promote (or inhibit) the formation of close relationships between stepfathers and stepchildren (e.g., Ganong, Coleman, & Jamison, 2011; Jensen & Shafer, 2013; King, 2009; King, Thorsen, & Amato, 2014). In contrast to earlier studies that focused on differences between stepfamilies and two-parent biological families, more recent studies have focused on variation within stepfamilies. Stepfamily-focused research, like the current study, investigates processes unique to stepfamilies (such as the presence of stepsiblings and the number of years in a stepfamily) that may produce positive or negative stepfamily outcomes. The current study draws on Waves I and II of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), and examines adolescents who transitioned from single-mother households to married mother-stepfather households between waves. Our goal is to use variables measured prior to the entry of stepfathers to predict the quality of stepchild-stepfather relationships during the first year after stepfamily formation.

Background and Conceptual Perspective

Understanding adolescents' relationships with stepfathers in newly formed stepfamilies is a topic of particular importance, and the current study captures families when they are particularly vulnerable. Many families exhibit declines in parental attention and increases in parent-child

conflict as children enter adolescence (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2000), placing children at greater risk for poor outcomes (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). This developmental period can be a particularly difficult time for stepfamily formation and integrating stepfathers into the family, given that adolescents (and preadolescents) are more likely than young children to reject mothers' new partners (Bray & Easling, 2005; Hetherington & Jodl, 1994). The early phase of stepfamily formation is a critical time involving major changes to the family system as new roles and relationships have to be negotiated (Pryor, 2014). Early tension between adolescents and stepfathers can spill over and disrupt stepfamily functioning more generally (Bray, 1999). Yet we know relatively little about the factors that affect whether adolescents accept or reject stepfathers during the first critical year of stepfamily life.

When mothers form new unions, children often benefit from the economic resources provided by stepfathers (Sweeney, 2010). Although remarriage improves the standard of living of most single mothers and their children, children with stepfathers have the same risk of behavioral and emotional problems as children with single mothers (Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000). The absence of positive stepfather effects has led researchers to focus less on the presence of stepfathers and more on the quality of relationships between stepfathers and stepchildren. Children's relations with stepfathers are not always close, and there is little reason to assume that children benefit when relationships with stepfathers are distant or hostile (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). For this reason, recent studies have attempted to document the conditions under which children and stepfathers form close relationships—relationships that may benefit children and help to compensate for any disadvantages associated with single parent households.

Ecological-contextual theory (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erikson, 1998) holds that fatherhood (unlike motherhood) is largely social constructed. Consequently, the father-child relationship is

more variable in quality than the mother-child relationship and more sensitive to a variety of contextual influences. Given the normative ambiguity that surrounds the stepfather role, relationships with stepfathers are even more sensitive to family and interpersonal factors than are relationships with biological fathers (Sweeney, 2010). Consistent with King, Thorsen, and Amato (2014), we assume that other family relationships are particularly important in understanding children's relationships with stepfathers. This assumption follows from family systems theory (Minuchin, 1974), which holds that all parts of a family system are interconnected, with one subsystem (such as the mother-child dyad) affecting all other subsystems (such as the stepfather-child dyad). Following King et al., we view adolescents' relationships with mothers and nonresident biological fathers prior to stepfamily formation as potential predictors of subsequent relationships with stepfathers.

We assume that child characteristics that predate the entry of the stepfather into the household also affect the quality of subsequent adolescent-stepfather relationships. We focus on two aspects of adolescent adjustment: delinquency and depression. Adolescents who engage in delinquent and antisocial activities (such as shoplifting, damaging property, and getting into physical fights) may reject the authority of new stepfathers. Similarly, depressed adolescents (who are focused on their own distress) may find it difficult to form positive emotional attachments to new household members. Moreover, adolescents with behavioral or emotional problems are unlikely to behave in ways that endear themselves to new stepfathers. Previous research has shown that adolescent delinquency and depression interfere with relationships with mothers and biological fathers (Hawkins, Amato, & King, 2007), and the same processes are likely to occur with stepfathers.

The conceptual model that guides the current study is shown in Figure 1. In this model, the mother-child relationship, the nonresident father-child relationship, and child adjustment are proximal influences on the adolescent-stepfather relationship. The model treats other background factors (such as adolescent gender, adolescent age, and the number of previous father figures) as distal variables. Distal variables can affect the adolescent-stepfather relationship both directly and indirectly. Adolescent age, for example, may have a direct effect on the adolescent-stepfather relationship. But if age also affects the adolescent-mother relationship, and if the adolescent-mother relationship affects the adolescent-stepfather relationship, then age also will have an indirect effect. Distinguishing between proximal and distal factors makes it possible to estimate direct and indirect influences in stepfamilies—an approach that reflects the complexity of stepfamily processes.

----- *Figure 1 about here* -----

Previous research has supported the importance of some of the variables in the conceptual model. The quality of the child-mother relationship, for example, is positively correlated with the quality of the child-stepfather relationship (Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor, & Bridges, 2004; King, 2009; King et al., 2014). Research is less clear about whether children's relationships with nonresident biological fathers have implications for stepfathers, although the number of studies that have examined this topic is small (King, 2006). Some studies have shown associations between children's relationships with stepfathers and children's emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., Yuan & Hamilton, 2006). Because these studies tend to be cross-sectional, however, it is not clear whether problems in children's adjustment precede or follow the introduction of stepfathers into children's households.

With respect to other variables in the model, several studies have shown that boys tend to have better relationships with stepfathers than do girls (Jensen & Shafer, 2013; King et al., 2014; Pasley & Moorefield, 2004). One study found that older adolescents have weaker ties with stepfathers than do younger adolescents (King et al., 2014). Another study found that stepfather education is positively associated with stepfather involvement (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996). Relatively little is known about the importance of other variables in the model, such as the number of siblings, whether children were born within marriage, and the number of prior father figures in children's lives. Moreover, studies that have compared the stepfamily relationships of children with different racial backgrounds have yielded mixed results (e.g., Hofferth & Anderson, 2003). Overall, more research is necessary to clarify the factors associated with positive relationships between stepchildren and stepfathers.

In summary, the present study focuses on adolescents' descriptions of their relationships with stepfathers (closeness, caring, warmth, positive communication, and general relationship quality). We focus on adolescents who lived with single mothers in Wave I of Add Health and transitioned to residential, married stepfather families by Wave II. Our goal is to understand factors (measured prior to stepfamily formation) that predict close (or weak) ties between adolescents and stepfathers during their first year of living together. Our study builds directly on a previous study by King (2009), which also used the first two waves of Add Health. The current study goes beyond King by (a) including measures of adolescent adjustment as predictors of closeness to stepfathers, (b) relying on structural equation modeling to represent relationships as latent variables measured without error, and (c) using a larger sample of stepfamilies. The fact that our study is longitudinal, with the independent variables measured prior to stepfamily formation, increases our confidence that we have the correct causal ordering of variables.

METHOD

This study used data from the first two waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The Wave I in-home interview includes 20,745 adolescents in grades 7-12 during the 1994-95 school year, and is nationally representative when appropriate sample weights are used. Parent data ($n = 17,670$) were collected from one parent, usually the biological mother (see Harris et al., 2009, for a detailed description of the data). In 1996, 14,738 of the adolescents were re-interviewed. (The Wave II sample design purposefully excluded adolescents who were in 12th grade at Wave I.) The analytic sample for this study was restricted to adolescents with valid sample weights who reported they were living with a single biological mother (no partner in the household) in Wave I, and who transitioned to a married stepfather family by Wave II ($n = 179$).

We relied on structural equation modeling techniques, a particularly appropriate approach for this study given the multiple pathways proposed and the underlying latent constructs outlined in the conceptual model. Analyses were conducted in Mplus version 6 (Muthen & Muthen, 2010). Mplus uses full information maximum likelihood (FIML) to deal with missing data. Results are based on weighted data, with standard errors adjusted for clustering and stratification in the Add Health sample design. We report descriptive statistics based on non-missing, weighted data.

Measures

The dependent variable, *stepfather-child relationship quality*, was treated as a latent construct with five observed indicators taken from the Wave II adolescent interview: how close adolescents feel to their stepfather, how much they feel he cares about them, how much they feel he is warm and loving, how satisfied they are with their communication, and how satisfied they

are with their overall relationship (1 = *not at all/strongly disagree*, 2 = *very little/disagree*, 3 = *somewhat/neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *quite a bit/agree*, 5 = *very much/strongly agree*). A scale based on these observed indicators produced an alpha reliability coefficient of .90 ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, $SE = .08$) Although a majority of adolescents perceived having good relationships with stepfathers (as indicated by responses in the top two agreement categories), a substantial minority gave low-to-moderate ratings on closeness (43%), feeling the stepfather cares (23%), stepfather warmth (31%), satisfaction with communication (30%), and the relationship in general (28%).

The indicators for the *mother-child relationship quality* latent construct were identical to those for stepfather-child relationship quality but were measured at Wave 1 ($\alpha = .87$, $\bar{x} = 4.46$, $SE = .06$). The latent construct *nonresident father-child relationship quality* was measured with three observed indicators from the Wave 1 adolescent interview ($\alpha = .89$): how often they talked with their father or received a letter from him ($\bar{x} = 1.94$, $SE = .21$), how often they stayed overnight with their father (0 = *not at all* to 5 = *more than once a week*; $\bar{x} = 1.1$, $SE = .16$), and how close they felt to their father (1 = *not at all close* to 5 = *extremely close*; $\bar{x} = 2.69$, $SE = .16$).

The latent construct *child delinquency* was measured with 13 observed indicators from the Wave 1 adolescent interview. These items tapped the frequency of behaviors such as stealing, lying to parents, damaging property, and fighting during the past 12 months (see Table 1). Response categories originally ranged from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*five or more times*), but were dichotomized (0 = *never*, 1 = *once or more*) to reduce extreme skewness and then summed ($\alpha = .81$, $\bar{x} = 2.67$, $SE = .28$).

The latent construct *child depression* was measured with five observed indicators from the Wave 1 adolescent interview. Adolescents were asked how many times within the past week (0 = *never*, 3 = *five or more times*) they couldn't shake the blues, felt depressed, felt lonely, felt sad, and felt that life was not worth living ($\alpha = .85$, $\bar{x} = .43$, $SE = .05$). Although the interview included a larger number of depressive symptoms, preliminary analysis revealed that the items did not represent a single underlying dimension. For this reason, we relied on five items with high loadings on the first general factor to emerge from an exploratory factor analysis.

The adolescent's *age* was measured in years ($\bar{x} = 15.01$, $SE = .22$). *Gender* was coded as a binary variable where 0 = *male* and 1 = *female* (45%). *Race* was a binary variable with Black (24%) coded 1 and all others (mostly White) coded 0. The *stepfather's level of education* was measured as a continuous variable ranging from 1 (*less than a high school education*) to 4 (*college degree or beyond*; $\bar{x} = 2.22$, $SE = .09$). The *number of siblings* the adolescent reported to be living in the household was measured as a continuous variable ($\bar{x} = 1.57$, $SE = .14$). The above background variables were created using Wave I adolescent reports, with the exception of stepfather's education, which came from the Wave II adolescent interview because it was not available in Wave 1. As it is unlikely that the stepfather's level of education changed during the year, we treat this measure as a Wave 1 background characteristic along with the other Wave 1 background measures. The number of prior father figures experienced by adolescents ($\bar{x} = 1.58$, $SE = .10$) drew on a series of questions from the Wave I mother interview regarding her relationship history and was calculated as the number of coresidential relationships (marriages and cohabitations) the child had been exposed to since birth. A binary variable was also created to indicate that the adolescent was born in marriage (72%).

RESULTS

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to assess how well the latent variable model fit the data, and RMSEA and CFI were used to indicate the overall goodness of fit. The measurement model is presented in Table 1. This model included correlations between all latent variables, along with several correlations between the residuals of observed indicators (not shown) to improve model fit. The overall fit of the measurement model was good ($\chi^2(347) = 359.01, p > .05$; RMSEA = .01; CFI = .98).

----- *Table 1 about here* -----

The standardized factor loadings on all five latent variables were acceptable with factor loadings ranging from .37 to .97. Correlations between the latent variables revealed that stepfather-stepchild relationship quality was positively and significantly associated with mother-child relationship quality ($p < .001$) and approached significance ($p < .10$) with nonresident father-child relationship quality. These findings suggest that adolescents' relationships with stepfathers are more positive when relationships with both biological parents were positive before the stepfather entered the household. The correlation between stepfather-child relationship quality and child delinquency was negative and significant ($p < .001$), which suggests that adolescents' relationships with their stepfather are less positive when the child exhibited more delinquent behaviors before the stepfather entered the household. The correlation between stepfather-child relationship quality and child depression was not significant, although mother-child and nonresident father-child relationship quality were negatively associated with child depression ($p < .001$ and $p < .05$, respectively). Child delinquency and depression were positively correlated ($p < .05$), which is consistent with previous research showing that externalizing and internalizing problems tend to co-occur in children and adolescents (e.g., Marmorstein and Iacono, 2004).

Structural Model

Following the conceptual model (see Figure 1), the structural model assumes that the mother-child relationship, the nonresident father-child relationship, child delinquency, and child depression directly influence the extent to which adolescents develop positive relationships with stepfathers within approximately the first year of his entry into the household. The model also assumes that background variables have direct effects on the quality of the stepfather-child relationship, as well as indirect effects through other family relationships, child delinquency, and child depression.

As shown in Table 2, standardized regression coefficients for the structural model indicated that both the quality of the mother-child relationship ($b = .34$) and the level of child delinquency ($b = -.58$) prior to stepfather entry were significantly associated (both $p < .01$) with adolescent reports of positive stepfather-child relationships at Wave II, controlling for child and family characteristics. These findings are consistent with our assumption that the quality of the mother-child relationship and the child's level of delinquency prior to stepfather entry are good predictors of the quality of children's relationships with stepfathers after he enters the household. The regression coefficient for the quality of the nonresident father-child relationship ($b = .24$), however, was smaller in magnitude and not statistically significant. The level of child depression ($b = .36$) prior to stepfather entry was significantly ($p < .01$) and positively associated with adolescent reports of positive stepfather-child relationships at Wave II, controlling for child and family characteristics. Contrary to expectations, this finding suggests that adolescents who experienced depressive symptoms were more, not less, likely to form positive relationships with stepfathers, a finding we return to in the discussion.

----- *Table 2 about here* -----

With respect to other covariates, two background variables had direct effects on stepfather-child relationship quality. Girls reported lower quality relationships with their stepfathers than boys ($b = -.33, p < .05$), and Black adolescents reported lower quality relationships with their stepfathers than other adolescents ($b = -.35, p < .05$).

Sobel tests (not shown) revealed that several child and family characteristics had statistically significant indirect effects on the quality of the adolescent-stepfather relationship. As shown in Table 2, daughters reported less positive relationships with stepfathers than did sons. Daughters also reported less delinquency than did sons, however, and delinquency, in turn, was negatively associated with the quality of the stepfather relationship. Daughters also reported less depression than did sons, and depression, in turn, was positively associated with the quality of the stepfather relationship. Both of these pathways involved significant positive indirect effects of female gender (both $p < .05$). In other words, daughters were more likely than sons to have close ties with stepfathers because they had a lower level of delinquency and a higher level of depression. Controlling for these differences in adjustment, however, revealed a tendency for daughters to be less close to stepfathers. These results underscore the complexity of how adolescent gender affects stepfamily dynamics.

The direct association between adolescent age and the quality of the stepfather relationship in Table 2 was close to zero and not statistically significant. Nevertheless, age was positively associated with delinquency, and delinquency, in turn, was negatively associated with the stepfather relationship. At the same time, age was positively associated with depression, and depression, in turn, was positively associated with the stepfather relationship. Both of these indirect effects were statistically significant ($p < .05$). In other words, older adolescents were no

more or less close to stepfathers than were younger adolescents because the negative effect of being more delinquent offset the positive effect of being more depressed.

Two other statistically significant ($p < .05$) indirect effects emerged. First, black adolescents tended to be less close to stepfathers than were adolescents of other races, as reflected in the direct effect in Table 2. Black adolescents also reported less delinquency than did other adolescents, however, which produced a positive indirect effect on the stepfather relationship. Finally, stepfather education did not have a significant direct effect in Table 2. Stepfather education was negatively related to delinquency, however, which resulted in a positive indirect effect on the adolescent-stepfather relationship.

DISCUSSION

By focusing on children who gain a stepfather during adolescence and examining factors that promote the formation of positive relationships between stepfathers and stepchildren within the first year, this study captures families when they are particularly vulnerable. During the early phase of stepfamily formation, family members must (re)negotiate roles and relationship, reorganize many aspects of their lives, and adapt to major changes in the household (Pryor, 2014). For these reasons, the first year is when stepfathers experience the most difficulty integrating themselves into the family (Bray & Easling, 2005) and children are at the greatest risk for developing problems (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Despite these challenges, many stepfamilies adapt successfully and, as this study confirms, a majority of married stepfathers establish close and satisfying relationships with their adolescent stepchildren.

Results from the present study point to a number of factors that are associated with positive relationships between stepfathers and adolescent stepchildren during the first year of stepfather entry to the household. Consistent with our conceptual model and a growing body of

research (King et al., 2014), the quality of the mother-child relationship was a strong predictor of the quality of adolescent's relationships with stepfathers after he enters the household. Other scholars have noted the pivotal role mothers play in enhancing, or detracting from, family functioning and child well-being in stepfamilies (Pryor, 2014; Smith, 2008), and it appears that a positive mother-child relationship can also help facilitate the development of positive ties between adolescents and their new stepfathers (see also Weaver & Coleman, 2010).

After controlling for child and family characteristics, the quality of the nonresident father-child relationship was not significantly associated with adolescent ties to stepfathers. This finding is consistent with a few other studies suggesting that the quality of adolescents' relationships with stepfathers and nonresident fathers are largely independent, and that having close ties to a nonresident father does not preclude developing close ties to a stepfather (King, 2006).

A unique aspect of the current study was the consideration of adolescent adjustment prior to stepfather entry as a predictor of later stepfather-child relationship quality. Adolescent delinquency was a strong predictor (indeed, the strongest predictor in our model) of later stepfather-child ties. Some mothers may (re)marry hoping that the presence of a father figure in the household will reduce the delinquent activities of children who are getting into trouble. These mothers may find that their children and new husband have difficulty getting along with one another, which could exacerbate (rather than improve) tension in the family system.

Contrary to expectations, adolescents who reported high levels of depressive symptoms prior to stepfather entry were significantly more likely than other adolescents to report having positive relationships with their stepfathers. This finding is noteworthy, given that depression was negatively associated with the quality of adolescents' relationships with mothers and

biological fathers—a finding consistent with prior research (Hawkins, Amato, & King, 2007; Marmorstein & Iacono, 2004). Perhaps depressed adolescents living with single mothers are especially responsive to the benefits that often accompany the entrance of stepfathers (e.g., increased economic resources, the availability of a father-figure in the household, and greater emotional support for mothers). These improvements in quality of life may lead depressed adolescents to appreciate their stepfathers and develop close relationships with them (Ganong et al., 2011). Similarly, depressed adolescents may be emotionally needy and attracted to a new source of social support in the household. Correspondingly, some stepfathers may make special efforts to reach out to depressed adolescents. Certainly further research is needed to shed light on the ways in which adolescent adjustment influences the development of stepfather-stepchild ties, but these results suggest the fruitfulness of pursuing additional work on this topic.

We expected girls to report less positive relationships with stepfathers than boys. This expectation was supported in the analysis, at least when all other variables were included in the statistical model. Our analysis also revealed, however, that daughters reported less delinquency and more depressive symptoms than did sons—trends that indirectly increased their closeness to stepfathers. Were it not for the tendency for daughters to report more internalizing than externalizing problems, they would have reported substantially weaker ties with stepfathers.

Contrary to some previous research (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994), we did not find that younger adolescents reported especially weak ties with stepfathers. The analysis of indirect effects provided an explanation for the absence of an age effect. Older adolescents reported more delinquency (which weakened ties with stepfathers) as well as more depressive symptoms (which strengthened ties with stepfathers). These two trends offset one another, resulting in no net effect of age on stepfather relationships.

Our finding that Black adolescents report less positive relationships with stepfathers deserves future attention. Prior studies report mixed finding regarding how stepfamily relationships vary by race and ethnicity. A recent study examining adolescents' relationships with married stepfathers in Wave 1 of Add Health found no racial differences (King et al., 2014), although this cross-sectional study included stepfamilies of all durations. It may be that establishing positive relationships with stepfathers is more difficult for Black youth only when this occurs during adolescence, or only during the initial transition, or to some other constellation of factors.

Although this study identified a number of important factors associated with positive stepfather-stepchild ties, data limitations precluded an examination of other potentially important factors that should be examined in future research. For example, data were not available on the stepfather-mother relationship or stepfather-child relationship prior to his entry into the household. The current study focuses on only one time point after stepfather entry and does not capture how the stepfather-child relationship unfolds over time. Our findings are also limited to married stepfather families; although a common stepfamily form, our study does not address the growing diversity of stepfamilies, including cohabiting stepfamilies, stepmother families, and gay and lesbian stepfamilies. Finally, all of our observations came from adolescents' reports—a limitation of the Add Health data. Having information on the perspectives of stepfathers as well as adolescents would have broadened the scope of the study.

The transition to a stepfamily is a critical life course event for adolescents and other family members, although few studies have captured stepfamilies during this juncture. The current study contributes to the growing literature on factors associated with the formation of close relationships between stepfathers and stepchildren. We extend prior research in this area by

using nationally representative data to look at stepfather-adolescent relationships prospectively, providing a better understanding of how factors existing *prior* to stepfamily formation are associated with the quality of stepfather-adolescent ties within the first year after married stepfathers join the household. Our findings suggest that both the quality of the mother-adolescent relationship and the adolescent's adjustment prior to stepfamily formation have significant implications for the development of adolescent-stepfather ties.

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Table 1. *Measurement model with standardized factor loadings and correlations*

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Stepfather-Child Relationship		
Closeness	.878***	.071
Caring	.688***	.107
Warmth	.833***	.070
Communication	.632***	.097
Overall relationship	.536***	.104
Mother-Child Relationship		
Closeness	.787***	.059
Caring	.370***	.060
Warmth	.702***	.064
Communication	.825***	.046
Overall relationship	.860***	.043
NRF-Child Relationship		
Closeness	.899***	.080
Number of nights	.851***	.097
Amount of contact	.736***	.061
Child Delinquency		
Damaged property	.844***	.081
Stole more than \$50	.965***	.062
Sold drugs	.622***	.107
Stole less than \$50	.607***	.103
Seriously hurt someone	.696***	.100
Used/threatened with weapon	.808***	.127
Was in a group fight	.820***	.102
Lied to parents about location	.554***	.101
Shoptlifted	.701***	.072
Took car without permission	.611***	.148
Got into serious fight	.765***	.080
Child Depression		
Couldn't shake blues in last week	.764***	.059
Felt depressed in last week	.717***	.046
Felt lonely in last week	.766***	.070
Felt sad in last week	.558***	.072
Felt life not worth living in last week	.511***	.062
Correlations		
SF-Child with Mother-Child	.392***	.082
SF-Child with NRF-Child	.194^	.108
SF-Child with Delinquency	-.352***	.097
SF-Child with Depression	-.109	.114
Mother-Child with NRF-Child	.140	.095
Mother-Child with Delinquency	-.153^	.090
Mother-Child with Depression	-.396***	.067

NRF-Child with Delinquency	.118	.129
NRF-Child with Depression	-.272*	.116
Delinquency with Depression	.293*	.125

Chi-square = 359.01

RMSEA = .01

DF = 347

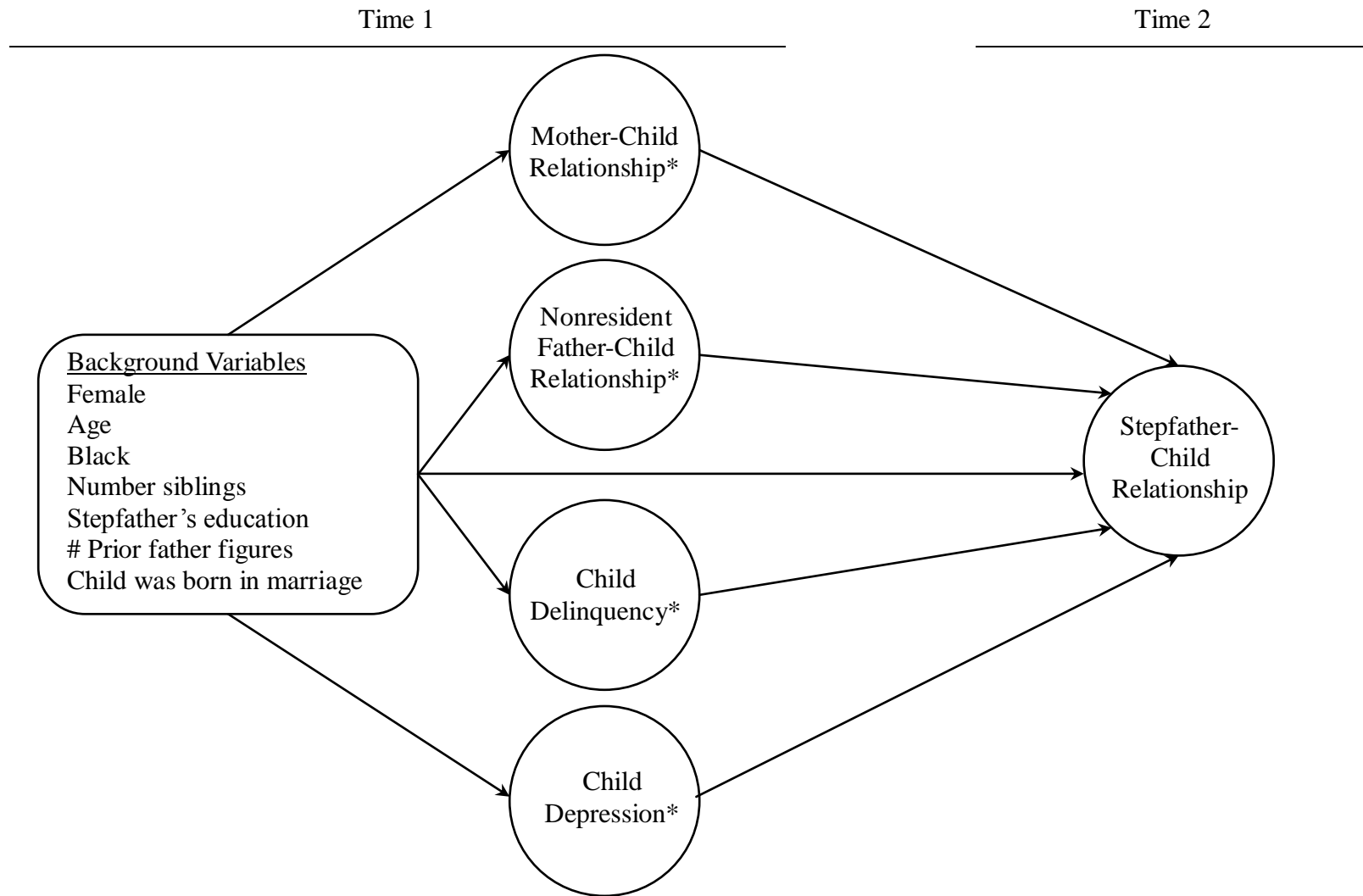
CFI = .98

Note: $\wedge p < .10$, $* p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$, (two-tailed); Correlations between residuals of observed indicators included to improve model fit not shown in table.

Table 2. *Standardized Coefficients for Structural Model Predicting Stepfather-Child Closeness at Wave 2 (N=179)*

	Stepfather-Child Relationship (W2)	Mother-Child Relationship (W1)	Non-resident Father-Child Relationship (W1)	Child Delinquency (W1)	Child Depression (W1)
<i>Family Relationships</i>					
Mother-Child relationship (W1)	.34**	-	-	-	-
NRF-Child Relationship (W1)	.24	-	-	-	-
Child Delinquency (W1)	-.58**	-	-	-	-
Child Depression (W1)	.36**	-	-	-	-
<i>Child Characteristics</i>					
Female	-.33*	-.05	-.25**	-.35***	.28***
Age	-.06	-.18*	-.10	.38***	.39***
Black	-.35*	-.05	.17	-.40**	-.10
Number siblings	-.12	-.23*	-.23*	-.22^	.12
<i>Family Characteristics</i>					
Stepfather's education	.02	.02	-.002	-.26**	.003
# Prior father figures	.01	.06	.28^	-.09	-.04
Child was born in marriage	-.15	.13	.33**	-.26^	-.13
Chi-square = 544.22	RMSEA = .02				
DF = 515	CFI = .94				

Note: ^ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, (two-tailed); Correlations between residuals of observed indicators included to improve model fit not shown in table.

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*

*Correlations between the residuals of all latent variables at Wave 1 are included in the statistical model but are not shown in the figure to improve clarity.