

Relationship Between Quality Of Sibling Relationship And Personality Traits Among Single Parent Families

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Abstract

Objectives: *This study's main focus was to explore how the quality of sibling relationships relates to the personality traits of individuals in single-parent families.*

Sample description: *The sample comprises 200 adults (100 from single-family structures, 100 from intact family structures), ages 20-30, from district Swabi.*

Measures: *The demographic sheet, Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale (Riggio, 2000), and Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John & Srivastava, 1999) were utilized for data collection.*

Results: *In single-parent families, the quality of sibling relationship is low, positively correlated with Extraversion ($R = .21$) and positively correlated with Agreeableness ($R = .37$), Conscientiousness ($R = .79$), and Openness ($R = .64$) while negatively correlated with Neuroticism ($R = -.46$). In intact parent families sibling relationship is significantly negative correlated with Extraversion ($R = -.65$) and Agreeableness ($R = -.47$) while positively correlated with Neuroticism ($R = .43$) and Openness ($R = .59$) and low negatively correlated with Conscientiousness ($R = -.22$). Furthermore, results also revealed that significant difference had been found between quality of sibling relationship ($T = 4.79$) and personality traits i.e., Extraversion ($T = 2.94$), Agreeableness ($T = 3.03$), conscientiousness ($T = 3.29$) and Neuroticism ($T = 4.12$), while non-significant differences has been found on the variable of Agreeableness ($T = 1.32$).*

Conclusion: *The research findings indicated that being raised by a single parent can positively impact the quality of relationships between siblings and individual personality traits compared to adults from intact families.*

Keywords: *Single parenting, Intact parenting, Quality of Sibling relationship, Big Five Inventory.*

Introduction/Background

The family unit is one of the most crucial agents of socialization, playing a significant role in shaping an individual's values, beliefs, and behaviors. In Pakistan, social life predominantly revolves around familial connections and relationships with relatives. The Pakistani culture encompasses various family structures, including intact families, extended families, single-parent families, and stepparent families (Bilal et al., 2013). For

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this discussion, the focus will be on the dynamics of single-parent and intact families. Single-parent families are formed due to various reasons, including separation, divorce, or the death of a parent. The challenges single parents face are similar to those encountered by two-parent families, but managing these difficulties as a single parent poses additional complexities (Richards & Schmiede, 1993). Single parents often grapple with feelings of loneliness, financial strain, and the stress of raising children without the support of a partner (Adeyemi, 2020). The absence of a co-parent can lead to an over-involvement with the children, which may result in emotional distress and difficulties in maintaining performance in other areas such as work, school, and interpersonal relationships (Richards & Schmiede, 1993). Despite the challenges, single parenting also has its positive aspects. Children raised in single-parent households often exhibit maturity and a sense of responsibility beyond their years. Additionally, the self-sufficiency and confidence demonstrated by the single parent can contribute to a robust and close-knit relationship between parent and child. Facing their children's behavioral challenges, single parents are more inclined to rely on positive problem-solving strategies rather than resorting to punitive measures (Richards & Schmiede, 1993). A study on single-parent families revealed that sibling relationships in such households were often more favorable than intact-parent families, even when family structure was the sole consideration (Ahn, 2019).

Moreover, conflict between siblings was found to be lower in single-parent families as opposed to intact-parent families (Ahn, 2019). The findings regarding sibling relationships in single-parent families underscore the resilience and adaptability of such family structures. Despite the absence of one parent, these households can foster nurturing and supportive sibling dynamics, contributing to the overall well-being and development of the children. This serves as a testament to single-parent families' unique strengths and advantages, challenging prevailing societal stereotypes and misconceptions. By recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of single parenting, we can better understand the diverse family structures and dynamics within our society. Ultimately, this understanding can pave the way for more significant support and inclusivity for all types of families, irrespective of their structure or composition.

The dynamics of sibling relationships shape and influence our lives in profound ways. From the earliest stages of childhood to adulthood, the interactions between siblings play a pivotal role in developing social, cognitive, emotional, and socio-cognitive skills. As Wałęcka-Matyja (2018) highlighted, sibling relationships are formed through the interaction and communication between individuals with the same natural parent. This bond often fosters the acquisition of fundamental skills, such as caring, nurturance, and the ability to fulfill one's own needs as well as the needs of others, as noted by Howe et al. (2022). One of the remarkable aspects of siblinghood is its longevity. Siblings often share a lifetime connection, making the sibling relationship one of the most enduring connections in human life. O'Laughlin (2006) underscores the significance of sibling relationships in shaping our fundamental abilities and behaviors. The influence of sibling relationships extends beyond the family unit and significantly impacts various aspects of our lives.

Interestingly, the quality of sibling relationships has been found to correlate with experiences such as parental divorce and other close relationships within the family. Lewandowska-Walter and Błazek (2022) revealed that a more positive sibling relationship is associated with parental divorce, while it can negatively impact relationships with fathers, mothers, and peers. This sheds light on the intricate dynamics of family relationships and how sibling relationships can serve as a buffer or amplifier in response to significant life events such as divorce. Moreover, Deater-Deckard and Dunn's (2002) study comparing sibling relationship quality across intact families, single-mother families, and complex stepfamilies highlighted the differences in sibling negativity across these family structures. The findings pointed out higher levels of sibling negativity in single-mother families than in intact, two-parent families. This underscores the influence of family structure on sibling dynamics and the potential impact on individual well-being. In times

of adversity, such as accidents, death, separation, or disasters, the support and bond within sibling relationships can be a source of strength. Gass et al. (2007) emphasized that children displaying a strong affect toward their siblings are less likely to exhibit internalizing and externalizing behavior problems during stressful life experiences. Positive sibling relationships' protective and supportive nature serves as a crucial mediator in helping children navigate challenging circumstances, promoting resilience and emotional well-being during times of distress.

Sibling relationships are a cornerstone of our development, influencing various facets of our lives. From shaping our foundational skills to providing support during adversity, sibling relationships profoundly impact our well-being and development. Understanding the intricate dynamics of sibling relationships can shed light on their significance in shaping our experiences and relationships within and beyond the family unit.

Bandura (1977) emphasized that children exposed to continuous conflicts may develop aggressive and argumentative behavior, as they may perceive such actions as rewarding. This idea highlights the significance of social learning, particularly within sibling relationships. The social learning theory is a fundamental mechanism underlying these relationships, as it explains how individuals observe, model, and imitate behaviors. Consequently, siblings with positive relationships are more likely to spend time together, leading to increased opportunities for behavioral modeling. Moreover, sibling relationships are pivotal in developing social and emotional skills. Interactions with siblings provide children with essential lessons in conflict resolution, negotiation, and cooperation, which are valuable skills that can be applied throughout their lives. Positive sibling relationships also contribute to developing empathy and altruism, offering crucial support and companionship. In addition, the influence of sibling relationships extends into adolescence and adulthood. Siblings continue to serve as sources of emotional support, impacting various aspects of mental health, academic achievement, and even romantic relationships. Understanding the dynamics of sibling relationships is imperative for comprehending the broader context of human development and the factors that shape individuals' social and emotional competencies. Meunier et al. (2011) further support this perspective, noting that children often draw upon their experiences and interactions with their parents to navigate their relationships with siblings.

According to the compensatory model, siblings may also turn toward one another in parental conflict. When distress occurs in another subsystem, individuals look for support in the family subsystem. So, when a parental crisis occurs, children turn toward their siblings for support and affection in return for the distress (Margolin et al., 1996). Parents highly influence a child's and an adolescent's personality development. According to Carl Roger, personality disorders in adolescents are mainly caused by the absence of unconditional positive regard in parents, especially in single-parent families. Learned helplessness theory states that children of single parents feel that some things in their lives are out of their control, so as a result, they give up on any external event that occurs in their lives, which leads to neuroticism (Mortazavi et al., 2018).

Numerous personality models have significantly influenced contemporary research. The Five Factor model (Big Five), introduced by McCrae and Costa in 1986, stands out as the most widely recognized and utilized personality model. This model is based on 35 sets of opposing terms that represent personality traits initially developed by Cattell in 1943. Additionally, it incorporates the fifth essential personality trait, neuroticism or emotional stability, which originated from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Rossberger, 2014). Five primary factors contribute to differences in personality among individuals. These five factors are Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. Extraversion is defined as when people enjoy being with people around them more than being alone. It is marked by sociability,

talkativeness, and assertiveness. Agreeableness is marked by warmth, compassion, trust, and generosity. A high level of this factor is associated with helping behavior, while a low level of this factor is associated with being hostile and incompatible behavior. Conscientiousness is defined as being dependable, responsible, attentive, and productive. Those individuals whose score is higher on neuroticism are moody, anxious, depressed, aggressive, frustrated, worried, and lonely. Openness to experience indicates how open-minded an individual is. A high score on this factor indicates the individual's imaginative ability, curiosity, and open-mindedness (Matthews et al., 2003).

Prady et al. (2014) found significant differences in the variables of depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems among adolescents in both parent and single-parent groups. The likelihood of getting involved in problematic behavior increases when there is less parental involvement and a lack of time in the child's life (Pomerantz et al., 2007).

A study conducted by Furman in 1996 provided intriguing insights into this dynamic. The findings revealed that school-aged older siblings who exhibited higher openness to new experiences tend to encounter more challenges and experience fewer warm feelings toward their younger siblings, which sheds light on the complex nature of sibling dynamics, highlighting how individual personality traits can impact these relationships. Furthermore, the study indicated that older adult siblings had more opposition toward their younger siblings but experienced fewer behavioral conflicts. On the other hand, for adult younger siblings, no significant association between personality and sibling relationships was observed (Gözü & Newman, 2019). These findings hint at the multifaceted nature of sibling relationships, where the age and personality of each sibling can significantly influence the dynamics at play. The role of openness in interpersonal relationships appears particularly enigmatic in light of this research. It provokes questions about how specific personality traits shape sibling interactions and the potential implications for family dynamics. Understanding these dynamics can have far-reaching implications, offering insights into how to nurture healthier and more harmonious relationships among siblings.

Further research is crucial to deepen our comprehension of the relationship between personality and sibling dynamics. By conducting additional studies, we can better understand the nuanced factors that shape sibling relationships. This has the potential to inform interventions and strategies aimed at promoting positive sibling interactions, ultimately contributing to the well-being of families. The intricate interplay between personality traits and sibling relationships offers a captivating avenue for exploration. Delving deeper into this subject has the potential to unveil valuable insights that could enrich our understanding of family dynamics and interpersonal relationships as a whole.

Objectives

To investigate the correlation between sibling relationship quality and personality traits in single and intact-parent families.

To compare the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits in single-parent families with those in two-parent family structures.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the present research are as follows

H1: There is a positive relationship between the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits among single-parent families.

H2: There is a negative relationship between the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits among intact parent families.

H3: There are significant differences in the scores obtained on the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits in single-parent and intact-parent families.

Method

Research Design

The research is both correlational and cross-sectional. Its main objective is to examine the connection between the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits in adults from single-parent households. Additionally, the study aims to compare the quality of sibling relationships and personality traits between single-parent families and those with a two-parent family setup.

Sample

The sample for this research consisted of 200 individuals from Swabi's single-parent and intact family, i.e., 100 from a single-parent family and 100 from an intact family structure (n=100 male, n=100 female). The age range of the sample will be 20-30 years. For inclusion criteria, individuals with at least one sibling will be added.

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of demographic variables of study (N=200)

Variables	Category	F	%
Gender	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
	Total	200	100
No. Of siblings	1-3	78	39
	4+	122	61
	Total	200	100
Family system	Single	100	50
	Intact	100	50
	Total	200	100

Note f= Frequency, %= Percentage

Operational Definition

Quality of sibling relationship. The sibling relationship encompasses verbal and nonverbal interactions between individuals with the same biological parents (Cicirelli, 1991). We can measure the sibling relationship quality using the Lifespan Sibling Relationship Scale, where higher scores indicate a positive relationship and lower scores indicate a less positive one (Riggio, 2000).

Personality Traits. A personality trait is the characteristic patterns of individuals' judgments, feelings, and behavior (Lucas & Diener, 2009). These traits can be measured using the five dimensions of the Big Five Inventory. Higher scores on these dimensions correspond to higher levels of "cooperativeness" for Agreeableness, "responsibility" for Conscientiousness, "sociability" for Extraversion, "vulnerability to stress" for Neuroticism, and "curiosity for new experiences" for Openness (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Instruments

The instruments that will be used in the study are the following:

Demographic form. A personalized survey which aims gather personal details such as the participant's name, age, gender, number of siblings, and family structure.

Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale. The Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale, created by Riggio (2000), assesses individuals' attitudes toward sibling relationships during childhood and adulthood. It consists of 48 items, including 40 positive and 8 negative statements. Each item is rated on a Likert-type scale, with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). When calculating the scores, the negative items are reversed—possible scores on the scale range from 48 to 240. Higher scores indicate stronger sibling relationships, while lower scores suggest weaker relationships. The scale demonstrates a high level of internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .95. Moreover, the acquired Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .83.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI). The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was introduced by John and Srivastava in 1999 as a tool to assess an individual's personality traits. It comprises 44 self-report items organized into five dimensions: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness. Participants are required to rate each BFI item using a 5-point scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. Higher scores on the dimensions are indicative of "cooperativeness and altruism" for Agreeableness, "responsibility and thoughtfulness" for Conscientiousness, "sociability and emotional expressiveness" for Extraversion, "vulnerability to stress and emotional reaction" for Neuroticism, and "curiosity to novelties" for Openness. The scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .80, signifying good reliability.

Procedure

Prior to gathering data, the appropriate authorities and participants provided informed consent. These individuals were made aware that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at their discretion. Any information they provided was treated as confidential and solely utilized for research purposes. Additionally, they received detailed information about the utilization of the scale.

Results

Table 2 Correlation coefficient matrix for Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness among single family adults (N=100)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. LSSRS	38.57	3.29	1					
2. Extraversion	80.09	3.88	.21	1				
3. Agreeableness	68.12	2.68	.37*	.82*	1			
4. Conscientiousness	74.34	2.11	.79**	.21	.40*	1		
5. Neuroticism	68.25	2.63	-.46*	.12	-.32*	-.46*	1	

6.Openness 79.94 3.09 .64** .61** .71** .80*** -.30 1

Note. **p<0.01, *p<0.05, ***p<0.001, LSSRS= Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale.

Table 3 shows that Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale is low positively correlated with Extraversion and significantly positively correlated with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness while significantly negative correlated with Neuroticism.

Table 3 Correlation coefficient matrix for Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness among intact family adults (N=200)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. LSSRS	29.01	3.42	1					
2. Extraversion	35.05	2.85	-.65*	1				
3. Agreeableness	34.28	2.34	-.47*	.19	1			
4. Conscientiousness	45.43	2.01	-.22	-.39*	.11	1		
5. Neuroticism	56.32	3.21	.43*	.38*	-.44*	-.40*	1	
6. Openness	44.10	2.57	.59**	.21	-.43*	-.32	-.41*	1

Note. **p<0.01, *p<0.05, ***p<0.001, LSSRS= Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale.

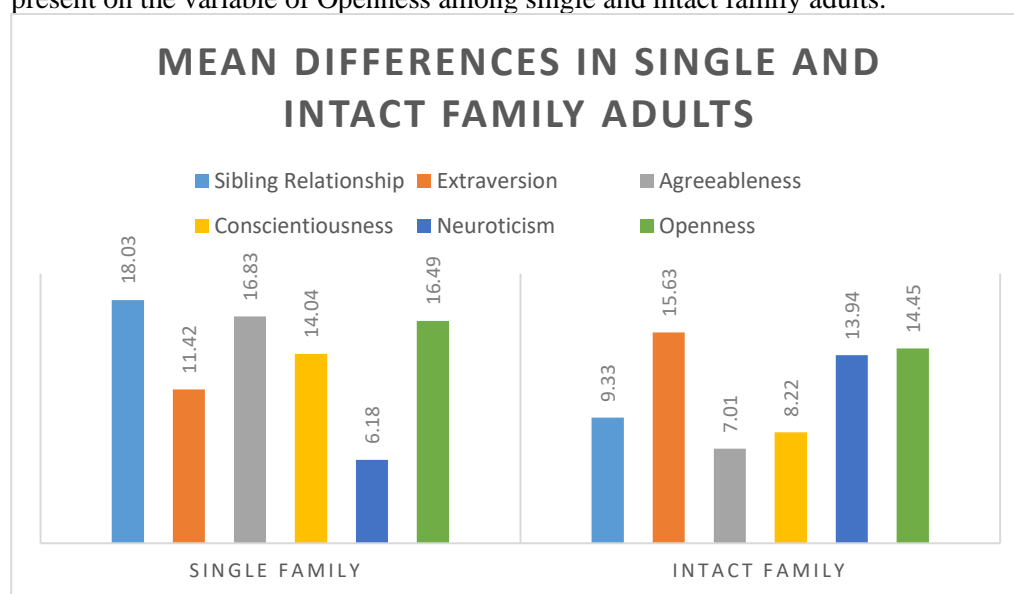
Table 4 shows that Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale is significantly negative correlated with Extraversion and Agreeableness while significantly positive correlated with Neuroticism and Openness and low negatively correlated with Conscientiousness.

Table 4 Difference between single and intact family adults in relation to Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale and Big Five Inventory (N=200)

Variables 95% CI	Single family (n=100)		Intact family (n= 100)		T	P	LL	UL
	M	SD	M	SD				
Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale	18.03	4.03	9.33	4.15	4.79	.00	.72	.98
Extraversion	11.42	3.17	15.63	3.37	2.94	.02	.93	1.72
Agreeableness	16.83	2.95	7.01	3.05	3.03	.00	1.45	4.74
Conscientiousness	14.04	3.25	8.22	2.56	3.29	.00	1.34	2.84

Neuroticism	6.18	4.54	13.94	3.54	4.12	.00	3.65	4.90
Openness	16.49	2.77	14.45	3.44	1.32	.06	-.56	1.67

Table 5 indicates that there is a significant difference between single and intact family adults on the variables of the Life Span Sibling Relationship Scale and Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism, while a non-significant difference is present on the variable of Openness among single and intact family adults.



Discussion

There are several factors that affect individual personality, but the current study focused on how sibling relationships affect individual personality via single and intact parenting. Current research focuses on the relationship between sibling relationships and personality traits in single and intact-parent families. In single-parent families, the sibling relationship is low positively correlated with Extraversion and significantly positively correlated with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness while significantly negatively correlated with Neuroticism (Table 2). In intact parent families' sibling relationship is significantly negatively correlated with Extraversion and Agreeableness while significantly positively correlated with Neuroticism and Openness and low negatively correlated with Conscientiousness (Table 3).

In the light of analysis, it is also significantly confirmed that the quality of sibling relationships is good in single-parent families as compared to intact-parent families. Significant differences have been found in personality traits that were measured during the study in single- and intact-parent families, i.e., Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. In contrast, non-significant differences have been found in the variable of Agreeableness.

Research shows a positive relationship between single parenting and sibling relationship quality (Brody & Murry, 2001). A study showed that the quality of sibling relationships was more positive in single-parent families than in two-parent families. Additionally, the conflicts between sibling relations were lower in single-parent families (Ahn, 2019). A helpful and caring sibling relationship protects the child from negative life experiences like bullying or negative parenting (Bank et al., 2004). Regardless of the

parent's marital status, siblings often interacted with prosocial and dominant behaviors. However, a study by Summers et al. (1994) found that although single-parent siblings did not engage in more conflicting behavior than intact-parent siblings, they did exhibit lower levels of prosocial behavior. Another study by Branje et al. (2004) discovered that developing psychosocial competence skills in children has been associated with supporting sibling relationships. In addition, research has shown a significant positive relationship between single parenting and personality factors and interpersonal relationships. Findings from a study by Oke (2015) suggest that single parenting influenced the personality factors of female undergraduates regarding their interpersonal relationships.

It has been found that sibling relationships have an impact on personality development. Research by Gautam (2018) suggests that siblings can serve as role models for each other and influence the development of personality traits such as extraversion and introversion. The learning process of the older sibling puts them ahead of the younger one, leading to increased confidence when comparing abilities and strengths. Additionally, the first child tends to receive more attention and care, potentially leading the younger sibling to feel insecure, competitive, and seeking attention. Another study by Gözü and Newman (2019) found a significant relationship between personality traits and sibling relationships among young adults. The research revealed that agreeableness was the strongest predictor of the quality of sibling relationships, while neuroticism was a negative predictor of the relationship quality.

In a recent study, Lan & Mastrotheodoros (2022) discovered that Chinese adolescents from single-parent households experience more internalizing issues than those from intact families. Surprisingly, the researchers also found that greater autonomy support from teachers was linked to lower adolescent internalizing problems. Similarly, Shifren et al. (2015) conducted a study involving adult women from both single-parent and intact families. They found that women who had experienced parental divorce and demonstrated strong commitment, control, and resilience reported higher levels of well-being and fewer symptoms of depression.

Limitations and Suggestions

The study only focuses on the comparison between single parenting and intact parenting. However, other family structures, such as blended families or co-parenting arrangements, could impact sibling relationships and personality traits. This limited focus reduces the generalizability of the findings. Including a broader range of family structures in the study would be beneficial to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between family structure, sibling relationships, and personality traits. This could include blended families, co-parenting arrangements, or other non-traditional family structures. The study may rely on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to establish causality and understand the developmental trajectory of sibling relationships and personality traits over time. Longitudinal data would provide more insights into the temporal dynamics of these relationships. Since the study relies on self-reported measures of sibling relationships and personality traits, there may be a potential for bias or respondents reporting what they perceive as socially desirable responses. Using multiple data collection methods, such as observations or interviews, could enhance the validity of the findings. Explore and control for other variables that may influence sibling relationships and personality traits, such as parental conflict, parental involvement, socioeconomic status, or birth order. This would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between family structure, sibling relationships, and personality traits.

Implications

The findings can inform the development of parenting interventions and programs explicitly targeting single-parent households. Understanding the impact of family structure on sibling relationships and personality traits can help guide interventions that aim to

improve these areas in single-parent households. The research provides insights into the importance of sibling relationships and their impact on personality traits in adulthood. This understanding can help individuals, families, and therapists recognize and address issues within sibling relationships, fostering healthier and more positive sibling interactions. The research opens up avenues for further exploration and investigation. Future studies can delve deeper into the specific mechanisms and factors that mediate the relationship between family structure, sibling relationships, and personality traits, providing a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. Additionally, research can explore how these relationships may differ across cultural contexts or among different age groups.

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