

## IMPACT OF PARENTAL NEGLECT AND QUALITY OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIP ON SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG FIRST BORN AND LAST BORN

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Objectives:** To inspect the impact of parental neglect and quality of sibling relationships on subjective well-being among first-born and last-born.

**Design of the Study:** cross-sectional survey research design

**Place and Duration of Study:** Sargodha from Dec 2022 to April 2023

**Sample and method:** A purposive sample of 300 adolescents and young adults from the Sargodha division, composed of first-borns ( $n=150$ ) and last born ( $n=150$ ), was included in the cross-sectional survey research design. The Multidimensional Neglect Behavior Scale, Form: Adolescent and Adult Recall (Straus et al., 2011), Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (Stocker & McHale, 1992), Adolescence subjective well-being scale (Eryilmaz, 2012) measured parental neglect, quality of sibling relationship, and subjective well-being respectively.

**Results and Conclusion:** Results of the analysis reveals that parental neglect was a significant negative predictor of subjective well-being, and sibling relationship was a significant positive predictor of subjective well-being; however, for birth order, the mean difference was non-significant. Parental neglect harmed the subjective well-being of a youngster, and the quality of sibling relationships positively impacted a youngster's subjective well-being.

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**Keywords:** Parental Neglect; Quality Sibling Relationship; Subjective Well-being.

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## INTRODUCTION

Family and family bonding are vital aspects of human and animal development and essential for understanding human beings. However, an in-depth understanding of this aspect tends to be overshadowed and less researched over time. The parent's involvement is crucial in every phase of life, whether childhood, adolescence, or adulthood; parents play an essential role by providing guidelines in all spheres of life. As long as the parent's involvement plays a role in developing individuals, parents' neglect also affects the individual physically and psychologically.

Parental neglect includes leaving a child alone when they need protection, failure to provide food, clothing, and medical attention, or placing the child in dangerous or harmful circumstances, including exposing the child to a violent, abusive, or sexually predatory person (Shin et al., 2009). According to Bowlby (1973), parental attachment helps the child to build an internal representation of the self. On the other hand, the parents' rejection makes the child aggressive, hesitant, and hostile towards others. Physical, emotional, and supervisory maltreatment are all examples of child neglect. Physical neglect of a child refers to a failure to give enough food, clothing, and shelter. Physical neglect is distinct from supervisory neglect, which refers to insufficient attention to protecting children from harm. Emotional neglect encompasses rejecting affection and empathy (James & James, 2012; Morrongiello & Cox, 2019).

Some researchers suggested that various types of neglect frequently co-occur and that their combined impact on children's well-being is significant (Ju & Lee, 2010; Mbagaya et al., 2013). Parental neglect comprises of physical and emotional neglect so the neglect result in the delay of developmental stages and also leads to delay in social communication. The most severe effect of parental neglect is the emotional abuse which blown away the child's life (Carvalho et al., 2016; Stoltenberg et al., 2013; James & James, 2012; Young et al., 2011).

Quality of sibling relations mean a unique bonding of warmth and love as well as hostility and rivalry. It influences youngsters' well-being despite the secondary status in family bonding (Davies et al., 2019). The studies have highlighted the importance of sibling relationships on the results of sibling relationship's quality. A good quality of relationship with the sibling helps them to build good social relationships and also improves the well-being (Downey & Condron, 2004; Kramer & Kowal, 2005). As the siblings grow together, they develop a sense of cohesiveness and this leads to successful aging (Milevsky &

Heerwagen, 2013). Parental behavior plays an important role in the development of good relationship among the siblings (Jensen et al., 2013; Pillemer et al., 2010).

Subjective well-being describes as people's evaluations about their lives, including both affective (feeling) and cognitive (thinking) dimensions (Diener et al., 2002). The affective dimension relates to experiences of positive affect - joy, happiness, and pride- whereas the adverse effect includes sadness, stress, and guilt. The cognitive dimension refers to satisfaction in life. For living the life to the full extent, a person should have at least some amount of subjective well-being (McLeod & Wright, 2016), because this help to assess the different aspect of life of individuals (González et al., 2015; Navarro et al., 2017). Subjective well-being protects the individual from the negative outcome and promotes the positive aspects of human being (Park, 2004; Viner et al., 2012).

Parents who are emotionally warm and available and have high demands create an emotional climate where adolescents feel more secure, healthier, and safer than their peers raised in other settings (Michael et al., 2014). Parental support enhances the well-being and positive health outcome in child (Walter & Golan, 2017). Walton and Flouri, (2010) reveal that there is a high level of association of parental relationship and subjective well-being of adolescence.

The parental relationship influences the subjective well-being of youngsters by contributing to shared values and family norms (Walter & Shenaar-Golan, 2017). Quality of sibling relationships significantly impact subjective well-being (Marotta & Kronen, 2015). Parental neglect significantly affects the quality of the sibling relationship between emerging adults (Portner & Riggs, 2016).

In one investigation of sibling connections and prosperity in developing adulthood, Stocker et al. (2020) found that sibling struggle has adversely corresponded with mental well-being. Furthermore, younger siblings were found to bring greater happiness and fewer conflicts with younger siblings than older ones (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). Even though the literature on sibling's connections in youth has examined the birth order, Minnett et al. (1983) called attention to a need to comprehend the connection between birth order and the nature of sibling's cooperation and connections.

One cannot neglect family and family relationships at any cost as they play a vital role in any individual's life. The role of parents in their children's

lives is so vital that it can make them successful or worse, however, parenting styles may differ, but the roles and responsibilities are the same everywhere. The most important responsibilities are to feed them, provide security, and provide them with education. On the other side, parental neglect is the failure of parents to provide them with these significant needs. Like Wise, the relationship with a sibling is also vital.

The current study aims to explain the relationship between Parental Neglect, Quality of Sibling Relationships, and Subjective Well-being. Many studies have been conducted to explain the relationship between parental neglect and subjective well-being, but these studies mainly performed on childhood (Amoah, 2020). The primary purpose of this research is to verify the impact of childhood neglect and quality of siblings relationship on adolescents' and adults' subjective well-being.

The quality of sibling relationships is the other main focus of the study. The sibling's bond is essential in determining one's well-being in life. The researches that have been conducted on these constructs were mainly from Western culture, where usually only two siblings share this bond (McHale et., 2012). Pakistani culture is a collectivist culture where a minimum of five to six siblings share this bond, which is differ significantly from Western culture. We use the sample of first and last-born children because these two siblings have the most different relationships with other family siblings.

Previous research shows mixed results on the relationship between Parental Neglect, Quality of Sibling Relationships, and Subjective Well-being (Kong & Martire, 2019). This study aims to determine the relationship between these variables so that it may be apparent. Parental neglect and sibling relationships can greatly influence adolescent and adult development and well-being. It is well documented that early family-related experiences shape an individual's emotional, cognitive, and social development, self-esteem, and mental health (Sharratt et al., 2023). Previous study shows the relationship between parental maltreatment and sibling relationship in childhood (Witte et al., 2020). Still, exploring it, in adolescents and adults is necessary, and it strongly impacts a person's subjective well-being. Portner and Riggs (2016) studied the relationship between these variables in a sample of adolescents and adults in the Southwest of the United States. The current study aims to identify the impact of these variables on subjective well-being among the Pakistani population, as this domain has not been explored in Pakistan yet. An extensive literature review on parental neglect, sibling relationships, and subjective well-being provides

evidence of their relationships. The literature review showed a negative correlation between parental neglect and quality of sibling relationship and the relationship between parental neglect and subjective well-being. Moreover, according to previous research, the relationship between quality of sibling relationships and subjective well-being was positive.

The presentation of the conceptual framework is as follows:

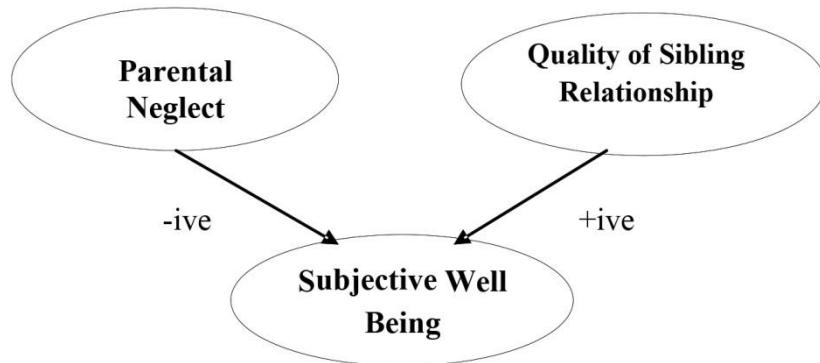


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

#### Operational Definitions

**Parental Neglect:** The study used the Multidimensional Neglect Behavior Scale, Form: Adolescent and Adult Recall (Straus et al., 2011) to measure Parental Neglect in first-born and last-born children. Higher scores indicate a high level of neglect and vice versa.

**Quality of Sibling Relationship:** In the present study, the Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (Stocker & McHale, 1992) was used to measure the quality of sibling relationships in first-born and last-born children. A higher Quality of Sibling Relationship Questionnaire score indicates a high-quality sibling relationship and vice versa.

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**Subjective Well-being:** The present study used the Adolescence Subjective Well-being Scale (Eryilmaz, 2012) to measure subjective well-being in first-born and last-born children. Higher scores indicate a high level of Subjective Well-being and vice versa.

**Adolescence:** According to Erickson, adolescence lasts from 12 to 18 years. This period is critical in developing a sense of personal identity, impacting behaviour and development for the rest of a person's life.

**Young adult (18-40 years):** It was essential for humans to form intimate, committed connections with others. Those who succeed at this stage will develop long-lasting, stable partnerships (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

We formulated the following objectives and hypotheses for the current study according to the above-mentioned conceptual framework. The study has the following objectives:

1. To inspect the relationship among the variables of Quality of Sibling relationship, Parental Neglect and subjective well-being among the first-born and last-born
2. To examine the impact of parental neglect on subjective well-being.
3. To investigate the influence of quality of sibling relationships on subjective well-being.

To attain the mentioned objectives, following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Parental neglect will negatively predict subjective well-being among first-borns and last-borns.
2. Quality of sibling relationships will be a significant positive predictor of subjective well-being among the first-born and last-born.

## **METHOD**

The proposed study used the cross-sectional survey research design to study the effect of parental neglect and quality of sibling relationship on subjective well-being among first-born and last-born. The cross-sectional research design is a design in which variables of interest in a sample of subjects are studied once, then the relationship among variable is determine (Hopkin, 2008).

### ***Participants***

A sample of ( $N=300$ ) adolescents and young adults were selected through purposive sampling. At the same time, the sample age limit ranges from 14-35 years ( $M= SD$ ). Moreover, data was collected from educated adolescents and young adults and their educational level was from matriculation to postgraduate. The data was only collected from first- and last-born adolescents and younger adults (1<sup>st</sup> born=150, last born=150). from the Sargodha's schools, colleges, and universities.

#### **Inclusion criteria**

The inclusion criteria of the current study have been described below:

- Participant's qualification should above matriculation/10th grade
- The age of the sample was restricted from 14 to 35 years.
- Participants should be first-born or last-born.
- Participants should have an age difference between their first and last born of a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 8 years.
- Participants should have two or more two siblings.

#### **Exclusion criteria**

The exclusion criteria of the current study have been described below:

- The only child of the family is excluded.
- Participants above or below the age limits (14-35) were excluded.

### ***Measures***

#### **Demographics Information Sheet:**

A demographic sheet was provided to the participants. Participants were asked about their age, gender, education, educational system, present semester, residential background, source of income, monthly income, family system, birth order (first-born or last-born), and number of siblings

#### **Parental Neglect Scale (Straus et al., 2011):**

Multidimensional Neglect Behavior Scale, Form: Adolescent and Adult Recall. This scale is used to measure the neglectful behaviours of parents. The

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scale includes four subscales: (1) neglect of physical needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; items included in this subscales were 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (2) emotional needs such as affection, companionship, support; items included were 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (3)supervisory needs such as setting limits, attending to misbehavior, knowing child's whereabouts about understand friends; items included were 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and (4) cognitive needs such as reading to the child and explaining things; items were 22, 23, 24, 25. The parental neglect scales were rated on 4 points Likert-type scale ranging from (1=never, 2=almost never, 3=sometimes, 4=a lot). All items were reversed due to their social desirability factor because this scale measures negative phenomena about parents. The preliminary psychometric data indicate the MNBS has high internal consistency reliability. The alpha coefficients for the overall 20 items of MNBS were found to be .93. The alpha coefficients range from .80 to .89 for each of the four subscales. There is also evidence indicating construct validity.

### Quality of Sibling Relationship Scale (Stocker & McHale, 1992):

This scale measures the quality of sibling relationships between first and second-born children. The scales measure two dimensions: Hostility, items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and affection, items 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. The responses for this scale were rated on 5 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1= hardly ever to 5= always). Overall, the administration requires between fifteen and twenty minutes. It is also worth noting that the format of the items encourages participants to feel free to give natural rather than socially desirable answers. Every question is preceded by an opening statement, which generalizes the behaviour to which the question refers. This approach underlines the dimension of sharing both the positive and the negative aspects of the relationship so that all the answers are equally acceptable. There is strong evidence indicating construct validity. The internal reliability of the scales is proved to be good. Overall, the internal consistency for the scale was 0.68, which is satisfactory.

### Subjective Well-being scale (Eryilmaz, 2012):

The Adolescence Subjective Well-being scale was initially developed by Eryilmaz (2012). The scale includes four subscales: (1) autonomy, items are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (2) competence, items are 6, 7, 8 (3) relatedness, items are 9, 10, 11, 12 (4) life satisfaction items are 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. The response format for rating subjective well-being was 5 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). The Cronbach alpha value of the scale is 0.87.

***Procedure***

In the first step the authority letter was collected from the department and then data was collected from different colleges, school and universities. The questionnaires were distributed among the first born and last born. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the study. And after getting the consents from the participant the data was collected. It takes approximately 20 minutes to fill the form. After completion the participant were warmly thanks for their participant. And they were assured that their information will be used only for the study purposes.

After that, data was entered into SPSS-22, and an analysis was run for results. The primary analysis was run on SPSS. Pearson correlation, regression analysis and univariate analysis of variance have been used to test the hypotheses.

## RESULTS

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive statistics, alpha reliability and Pearson correlation of the variables (N=300)*

Variables		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>a</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. QSR		44.61	8.45	.74	—	.85***	.77***	—	.29***	.38***	.25***	.24***	.05	.28***	.19***	.25***	
2. Affection		29.94	5.72	.68	—	.32***	.37***		.34***	.45***	.23***	.32***	.34***	.18**	.29***	.30***	.28***
3. Hostility		14.66	4.65	.72	—	.15*	.10	.12*	.18*	.04	.03	.03	.13*	.15*	.02	.11	
4. PN		81.15	10.71	.86	—	.88**	.75***		.88**	.75***	.733***	.72***	.51***	.28***	.35***	.47***	.45***
5. EN		24.66	3.44	.74	—	.55***	.52***		.55***	.52***	.62***	.54***	.36***	.29***	.41***	.52***	
6. PHN		22.76	4.13	.77	—	.38***	.42***		.38***	.42***	.38***	.21***	.33***	.40***	.40***	.27***	
7. Supervision		21.57	3.55	.57	—	.33***	.27***		.33***	.27***	.33***	.07	.24***	.24***	.24***	.29***	
8. ES		12.16	2.57	.62	—	.36***	.23***		.36***	.23***	.22***	.22***	.37***	.30***	.30***	.30***	
9. SW		56.68	8.89	.84	—	.78***	.67***		.78***	.67***	.73***	.73***	.83***	.83***	.83***	.83***	
10. Autonomy		13.47	3.29	.67	—	.31***	.46***		.31***	.46***	.49***	.49***	.51***	.51***	.51***	.51***	
11. Competence		12.15	2.02	.57	—	.39***	.46***		.39***	.46***	.49***	.49***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	
12. Relatedness		15.71	2.72	.58	—	.40***	.40***		.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	
13. LS		15.35	3.63	.83	—	.40***	.40***		.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	.40***	

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

Note. QSR quality sibling relationship, PN= parental neglect, EN= emotional neglect, PHN= physical neglect, ES= Educational support, SW= subjective well-being, LS= life satisfaction.

Table 1 shows the Descriptive statistics, alpha reliability and Pearson correlation of the variables. The reliability analysis indicates that the reliability coefficient of the quality sibling relationship, parental neglect, and subjective well-being scale is 0.74, 0.86, and 0.84, respectively, indicating that the scales are reliable. The reliability coefficients for subscales of quality sibling relationships are .68 (Affection), and .72(Hostility). The reliability coefficients for subscales of parental neglect are .74 (physical need), .77 (emotional need), .57 (supervision), .62 (educational need). The reliability coefficients for subscales of subjective well-being are .67 (autonomy), .57 (competence), .58(relatedness), and .83(life satisfaction), which indicates satisfactory internal consistency.

Results of the Pearson correlation revealed that quality of sibling relationship has a significant positive correlation with their subscales, affection ( $r = .85, p < .001$ ) and hostility ( $r = .77, p < .001$ ), which validate the internal validity of the scales. Quality sibling relationship has a significant positive relationship with subjective well-being ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and a significant negative correlation with parental neglect ( $r = -.37, p < .001$ ). Parental neglect has a significant negative correlation with their subscale, emotional need ( $r = -.88, p < .001$ ), physical need ( $r = -.75, p < .001$ ), supervision ( $r = -.73, p < .001$ ), educational support ( $r = -.72, p < .001$ ), which shows the internal validity of the scale. Parental neglect has a significant negative correlation with subjective well-being ( $r = -.51, p < .001$ ). Subject well-being has a significant positive relation with their subscales, autonomy ( $r = .78, p < .001$ ), competence ( $r = .67, p < .001$ ), relatedness ( $r = .73, p < .001$ ) and life satisfaction ( $r = .83, p < .001$ ) which shows the internal validity of the scale.

**Table 2**

*Regression Analysis for Hostility and Affection Predicting Subjective Well-being among all participants of the study (N = 300)*

Predictor Variable	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F (Model)</i>
Affection	.37***	.12	20.70***
Hostility	-.09		

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 2 describes the contributions of affection and hostility to subjective well-being; multiple regression analysis was carried out. Results revealed that predictor variables can explain 12% of the variance in subjective well-being  $\{F(2, 297) = 20.70, p < .001\}$  and among the predictor's affection ( $\beta = .57, t = 6.42, p < .001$ ) were a significant positive predictor of subjective well-being and hostility ( $\beta = -.18, t = 6.42, p < .05$ ) were a non-significant predictor of Subjective Well-being.

**Table 3**

*Regression Analysis for Physical Need, Emotional Need, Supervision and Educational Support predicting subjective well-being*

Predictor Variable	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F$ (Model)
Emotional need	.01***		
Physical need	.32*		
		.30	31.75***
Supervision	-.07		
Educational support	.08		

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

Table 3 describes the contributions of physical needs, emotional needs, supervision, and educational support to subjective well-being. *Results of* multiple regression analysis revealed that 30% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by predicting variables  $\{F(4, 295) = 31.75, p < .001\}$  and among predictors emotional need ( $\beta = .47, t = 6.44, p < .001$ ) and physical need ( $\beta = .12, t = 2.10, p < .05$ ) significantly predict subjective well-being.

**Table 4**

*Effect of Parental Neglect and Quality of Sibling Relationship on Subjective Well-being (N = 300)*

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Corrected Model	22307.47 <sup>a</sup>	219	101.86	6.19	.000
Intercept	364675.80	1	364675.80	22165.93	.000
QSR	3594.36	38	94.58	5.74	.000
Parental neglect	6284.94	45	139.66	8.48	.000
QSR x parental neglect	7771.32	136	57.14	3.47	.000
Error	1316.16	80	16.45		
Total	987297.00	300			
Corrected Total	23623.63	299			

*Note.* QSR = quality sibling relationship

Table 4 shows the effect of parental neglect and quality of sibling relationships on subjective well-being. The findings indicate that quality sibling relationship with  $F(38, 299) = 5.74, p < .001$  and family system with  $F(45, 299) = 8.48, p < .001$  has a significant effect on subjective well-being. The findings are significant on quality of sibling relationship x parental neglect with  $F(136, 299) = 3.47, p > .05$ .

## DISCUSSION

In our lives, parents and siblings have a significant role in our well-being. In our culture, we have a minimum of 4-6 siblings, and they have a substantial impact on subjective well-being. Due to a large family, the parents sometimes show neglectful behaviour toward the child or fail to satisfy the child's needs, leading to a person's poor subjective well-being. This study aims to identify the effects of parental neglect and quality of sibling relationships between first-born and last-born. First, the researcher has examined the psychometric soundness of all the instruments. Table 1 shows the alpha reliability, means, and standard deviation of the variables, i.e. Parental Neglect, Sibling Relationship Quality, and Subjective Well-being. The reliability analysis indicates that the reliability coefficient of a quality of sibling relationship, parental neglect, and subjective well-being scale indicates satisfactory internal

consistency. The result of the Pearson correlation reveals that parental neglect has a significant negative relation with subjective well-being and Quality of sibling relationship has a significant positive correlation with subjective well-being.

The hypothesis states that parental neglect will negatively predict subjective well-being among first-borns and last-borns. Regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis showed that emotional and physical need significantly predict subjective well-being (see Table 3). The results of the findings support the hypothesis. Previous literature was in line with the results. The Bowlby attachment theory also proposed that rejection from the parents decreases subjective well-being. The study by Laursen and Collins (2009) explains that parents' behaviour significantly impacts subjective well-being of their children. This study is in line with the study of Ponti and Smorti (2018), which shows the strong impact of family relationships and indicated that the Neglectful behaviour of the parents leads to poor perceived subjective well-being by their children as the parents are involved in their own life and do not give full attention to their children.

The subjective well-being of first-borns and last-borns is likely to suffer due to parental neglect. According to the research, parental neglect is favourably associated with social network addiction and adversely associated with emotional well-being (Chidambaram et al., 2023). Furthermore, childhood neglect has long-term repercussions on adult mental health trajectories, including emotional disorders (Rozanski et al., 2021). Parental neglect was shown to be connected with worse subjective well-being among independent child migrants (ICM) in Ghana (Amoah, 2020). Furthermore, reports of maternal childhood abuse and neglect predicted lower levels of felt closeness with ageing moms, which impacted adult children's psychological well-being (Kong & Martire, 2019).

Not only in the childhood, have parents played an important role in the adolescence life too. Adolescence also needs parents in the achievement of the milestones off adolescence whether it is building social relation, or improving his or her identity (Hill & Wang, 2015). Moreover, the parental relationship in the developmental stages shapes the emotional development of the individual. Positive and warm parenting adds positive emotion and on the other hand negative parenting induce negative emotion in the child (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

According to a study by Shakil (2019) in Pakistan, an increase in the number of suicides among youngsters is linked to parental neglect. Parental

neglect exists in Pakistani society, driven by financial problems, conventional gender roles, large family sizes, a lack of education and awareness, and cultural conventions that affect children's well-being and lead them to suicide and other psychological problems.

The following hypothesis states that quality of sibling relationships will significantly predict first- and last-born subjective well-being. Regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis. Quality of sibling relationship has a significant positive correlation with subjective well-being. The result of the study is in line with the work of Dush et al. (2005), and Shepherd et al. (2021). According to Wu (2014), the quality of sibling relationships enhances the child's subjective well-being by developing a sense of security that their siblings are with them. They look at their sibling as a guide in social and moral affairs of life

Attachment to siblings in childhood has been proven in studies to impact psychological and subjective well-being in life directly (Stocker et al., 2020). Furthermore, person's physical, social and mental health is dependent on the quality of relationship between siblings (Yin et al., 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that the quality of sibling relationships is connected with fewer depression symptoms among foster adolescents (Shepherd et al., 2021). These findings imply that having a pleasant and supportive connection with siblings might improve one's subjective well-being and mental health. However, the particular impacts of sibling relationship quality on subjective well-being may differ based on characteristics such as birth order and gender composition (Jensen et al., 2023).

The quality of sibling relationships might suffer as a result of parental neglect. According to research, mistreatment and poor experiences within the family can result in a variety of sibling relationship patterns, including antagonistic, distant, emotional-intense, and harmonious patterns (Milojevich et al., 2021). The quantity and types of maltreatment endured by children can predict the sibling relationship pattern, with a more significant number of maltreatment categories related to a hostile sibling relationship pattern (Rodrigues et al., 2022). Emotional abuse and neglect, in particular, have been proven to predict a hostile or emotionally intense sibling relationship pattern (Susanne et al., 2020).

Parental neglect is likely to harm sibling relationships between first and last borns. Child neglect, especially emotional neglect, has been linked to bad outcomes for children and can influence their relationships with their parents and siblings (Kong & Martire, 2019; Schweer-Collins et al., 2020; Witte et al., 2020).

High-severity neglectful moms, in particular, have been found to exhibit less warm and affiliative parenting, as well as more harsh and controlling parenting, which might impact the sibling relationship (Yu et al., 2023). Furthermore, it has been discovered that the quality of the sibling relationship moderates the association between parental psychological distress and child maladjustment, implying that positive interactions with siblings can buffer the adverse effects of parental distress on children's social-emotional well-being (Jensen et al., 2023).

The study focuses on first-born and last-born children because of the importance of birth order dynamics in family contexts. First-born children frequently have expectations and duties, which may make them more vulnerable to feelings of neglect if they notice parental attention is moving to younger siblings. Last-born children, on the other hand, may perceive unequal treatment or less stringent parenting, which might affect their feelings of neglect. Furthermore, first-borns may take protective duties, impacting their link with younger siblings, while last-borns may negotiate different relationships with their elder siblings. Parental time, attention, and love are critical, and different parenting techniques and behaviours may influence how children perceive their connection with their parents and siblings. Understanding these dynamics within demographic variables like age, gender, and family size is critical for understanding the intricate interaction of familial determinants on subjective well-being and directing efforts to improve children's emotional well-being in varied family structures.

### *Conclusion*

The study was designed to investigate the impact of parental neglect and quality of sibling relationships on subjective well-being among first-born and last-born. The study finds that parental neglect negatively predicts subjective well-being. The study also reveals that sibling relationship quality positively predicts subjective well-being. The result of the present study contributes to the theoretical knowledge in the area of research. The results were helpful for the counsellors as they gave them the advantage of dealing with their clients to create a better family environment with less problematic parent and sibling relationships. The study is also helpful in psychopathology, psychiatry, and clinical psychology. This research provides important insights that can lead to beneficial changes in family relations, mental health assistance, and community initiatives. It can also help to improve awareness of cultural impacts on family life and well-being in Pakistan.

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Pakistan is a developing country lacking necessities, putting enormous pressure on people, particularly parents. With inflation and violations of fundamental rights on the rise, this study has significant benefits for policymakers and government agencies, considering the need for developing programs and promoting positive parenting practices and healthy sibling relationships. Hence, culturally appropriate programs must be designed for easy access to families from all around Pakistan.

### *Limitations and Recommendations*

Some limitations and suggestions to this study should be considered when considering the results. As the sample of the study was not very diverse, and it is only from the Sargodha Division, the generalization ability of the findings must be applied cautiously as the population of Sargodha is not representative of the whole population of Pakistan. For this purpose, future researchers should consider that for the results to generalize the whole population, the data should be collected from different populations and with many samples.

The sampling techniques applied in the study were purposive, and the data was gathered from a population consisting of first-born and last-born adolescents and early adults from school, college, and university. Different sampling techniques, such as random sampling, should be used for the data collection to understand the results better.

The nature of the study is primarily a cross-sectional survey research design. Different research methods, such as longitudinal or experimental design, are suggested to enhance the quality of research work.

The data was collected from the first and last-born child only. For more accurate results, it is suggested that data can be collected from all the siblings, not only from the first and last born.

In the current study, the data were collected using self-report inventories, so participants may have given biased responses that caused social desirability. For in depth understanding, interviews and qualitative designs are recommended.

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