

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## SIBLING RELATIONSHIP AND EXPRESSION OF ANGER AMONG THE CHILDREN OF WORKING WOMEN

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**Background:** Maternal presence or absence influences the quality of relationship between the siblings. The quality of sibling relationship is affected by the quantity of time parents, especially mother, spend with children. This study was aimed to investigate the sibling relationship and expression of anger in children of working women, and to explore an association between the quality of sibling relationship and the time given by a working mother. **Method:** By using cross-sectional study design a sample of 150 participants, who were the children of working women, was drawn through purposive sampling technique with age range 11 to 14 years having one or more than one sibling. The study was conducted in Lahore and completed in one year. Demographic Information Sheet, Sibling Relationship Inventory, and Child Anger Expression Scale were used to collect data. **Results:** Number of working hours of the mothers emerged as the strongest predictors of the conflicted sibling relationship and accounted for 51% of variance in conflicted sibling relationship. The results also indicated that children living in nuclear family had more external anger, violence, and hostility as compare to the children living in joint family system. **Conclusion:** Sibling relationships are badly affected by the absence of the mother. A mother who spends maximum time at work, is unable to settle down the conflicts arose between the siblings, and due to conflicted relationship they may develop anger and violence.

**Keywords:** Sibling relationship, Hostility, Anger expression

Pak J Physiol 2021;17(2):38–41

## INTRODUCTION

Almost every child around the world has at least one sibling. The sibling relationship is likely to last longer than any other relationship in one's lifetime and plays an integral part in the lives of families.<sup>1</sup> Researches on sibling relationship, concluded that siblings are dominant and central in the lives of individuals across the life span. Siblings serve as companions, role models, and confidants for children and adolescents.<sup>2</sup>

During childhood years, conflicts can be seen among siblings and it is an unavoidable part during these ages. During this conflicted situation siblings learn to argue their position, learn to take the perspective of the other and provide accommodation to settle differences. These situations play very important role in the lives of siblings.<sup>3</sup> Whether the parents set limits to control conflicts or siblings settle these conflicts on their own, this resolution of the conflicts, prepare the children for dealings with friends, peers and others throughout the life. However, when these conflicts are not resolved and intensified into violent interactions or the mental or physical abuse by a stronger sibling on a weaker sibling, the relationship among siblings becomes maladaptive and can be extremely dangerous.<sup>3</sup>

The children's skills to resolve conflicts in cognitively and culturally sophisticated ways are greatly influenced by maternal intervention and their presence or absence. Though a mother may not pursue active and positive intervention, her presence is an influencing factor in the relationships of her children. The presence of a mother creates a different dynamic between siblings

than when they are alone, which shows that the quality of sibling relationship is affected by the quantity and quality of time the mother spends with her children.<sup>4</sup>

For many parents' management of conflict and violent behaviour between siblings is challenging. A study suggested that parental absence was positively associated with the dysfunctional sibling relationship. Parental non-involvement can play a role in the development of conflicted sibling relationships.<sup>5</sup>

There are many factors in the family system that lead to conflict and anger between siblings. We see in daily life that jealousy is a common factor between siblings. One of these factors is the amount of time that a mother spends with her children. Role of mother is very important to resolves or decrease these conflicts. A working mother mostly cannot spend or give enough quality of time to her children.<sup>4</sup> Maternal absence is linked with more common negative interactions between siblings and there exists correlation between quantity of time spent with children and sibling rivalry. The present study has aimed to find association between the quality of sibling relations and expression of anger among the children of working mothers. The objectives of study were:

- To find the sibling relationship and anger expression in children of working women
- To explore relationship between sibling relationship and anger expression with the working hours of the mothers
- To determine the relation between quantity of time with quality of relationship among the siblings

## METHODOLOGY

This was a cross-sectional, correlational study. From the population of private school students of Lahore, a sample of 150 children of working women was drawn through purposive sampling with age range 11–14 years having one or more than one sibling. Demographic Information Sheet, Sibling Relationship Inventory<sup>6</sup> and Child Anger Expression Scale<sup>7</sup> were used to collect information about the respondents, quality of sibling relationship and expression of anger. Sibling relationship inventory consists of 13 items and two subscales, Affection and Hostility. Subscale Affection has 8 items and the Hostility has 5 items. Urdu version of this scale was used.

After collecting the required data from the students, scoring was done as suggests in test manual. Raw score was analysed with SPSS-20. Different statistical methods for example correlation and *t*-test were used to make some inferences for the population.

## RESULTS

A total of 150 students participated in the study. Majority (80%) of the participants were female. Twenty-eight percent (28%) participants were 11 years old, 19% were 12 years old, 26% were 13 years old, and 27% participants were 14 years old. Forty-seven percent (47%) participants had joint family and 53% had nuclear family. Working time of 5.3% mothers was 6 hours, 56% worked 8 hours, and 38.7% mothers worked 12 hours a day. Thirty percent (30%) participants had two siblings, 35% had three, 20% had four, and 15% had five siblings.

According to the results 17% of the sample had very severe anger expression, 13% of the sample had moderately severe anger expression, and 57% of the sample had moderately anger expression. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the sample had moderate level of externalized anger whereas 67% of the sample had moderate level of internalized anger. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the sample had moderately severe externalize anger whereas 27% of the sample had moderately severe internalize anger. Three percent of the sample had very severe externalize anger whereas 4% of the sample had very severe internalize anger. Sixteen percent (16%) of the sample had very severe feeling of rejection, 23% of the sample had moderately severe feeling of rejection and 61% of the sample had moderate feeling of rejection. Thirty percent (30%) of the

participants were with very severe hostility and violence, 10% were with moderately severe hostility and 53% were with moderate hostility and violence. (Table-1).

Table-2 indicates that differences between the mean score of external anger, hostility and violence and hostility of the siblings living in two family systems. The result revealed the significant difference on the mean scores of the anger expression (external anger) between the siblings living with joint and nuclear family system  $t(148) = -2.07, p < 0.05$ . The result indicated that the siblings living in nuclear family had more external anger (Mean±SD 57.90±5.8) as compare to siblings living in joint family system (Mean±SD 46.44±5.2). In the case of Hostility and Violence, significant mean difference was found between the score of siblings living with joint and nuclear family systems  $t(148) = -2.10, p < 0.05$ . The result indicated that the siblings living in nuclear family had more (Mean±SD 19.98±5.9) hostility and violence as compare to siblings living in joint family system (Mean±SD 9.01±4.5). The results also revealed that siblings living with joint family (Mean±SD 10.02±3.30) had significantly less hostility than the siblings living with nuclear family (Mean±SD 17.88±4.37). On the whole, results shown that external anger, hostility and violence and hostility were more in siblings living in nuclear family system than the siblings living in joint family system.

Table-3 shows the inter correlation between the sibling relationship (conflict, affection) and number of working hours of the mothers. Significant positive relationship was found between conflicted sibling relationship and number of working hours of the mothers  $r = 0.735, p < 0.0001$ . Conflicted relationship among the sibling increased, as the number of working hours of mothers increased. There was non-significant relationship was found between affection and number of working hours of the mothers.

Multiple regression analysis was performed for predicting conflicted sibling relationship while using gender, numbers of siblings, mother education and number of working hours of mothers as the Predictors. Number of working hours was emerged as the strongest predictor of conflicted sibling relationship that accounted 51% variance for conflicted sibling relationship between the siblings who had working mother,  $\beta = 0.735, t = 13.08, p < 0.0001$ . (Table-4).

**Table-1: Number of children experiencing different levels of anger for the subscales of Child Anger Expression Scale (CAES) [n (%)]**

Anger Expression	Expression of Anger	Externalize Anger	Internalize Anger	Feeling of Rejection	Hostility and violence
Mild	20 (13)	14 (9)	3 (2)	10 (7)	10 (7)
Moderate	86 (57)	92 (62)	100 (67)	85 (61)	80 (53)
Moderately Severe	19 (13)	39 (26)	40 (27)	32 (23)	14 (10)
Very Severe	25 (17)	5 (3)	7 (4)	23 (16)	46 (30)

**Table-2: Independent Sample *t*-test on mean scores of subscales of anger expression scale between siblings living with nuclear and joint family system (n=150)**

Variables	Mean±SD		<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	Joint (n=70)	Nuclear (n=80)		
Externalize anger	46.44±5.2	57.90±5.8	-2.07*	2.08
Hostility & Violence	9.01±4.5	19.98±5.9	-2.10*	2.07
Hostility	10.02±3.30	17.88±4.37	-2.01*	2.02

\**p*<0.05

**Table-3: Inter-correlation between sibling relationships (conflict, affection) and number of working hours of mothers (n=150)**

Variables	1	2	3
1. Number of working hours	-	0.036	0.735*
2. Affection	-	-	-0.048
3. Conflict	-	-	-

\**p*<0.0001

**Tale-4: Predictors of conflicted sibling relationship (n=150)**

Variables	Conflicted Sibling Relationship		95% CI
	Model-1 B	Model-2 B	
Constant	14.087	-8.51	[-13.03, 0.98]
Mother education	-0.476	-0.117	[-0.52, -0.29]
Number of siblings	0.029	0.283	[0.038, 0.528]
Gender	-0.393	-0.029	[-1.11, 1.055]
Family system	1.661	0.639	[-0.32, 1.59]
Working hours of mother		2.391	[2.03, 2.75]
R <sup>2</sup>	0.060	0.570	
F	2.306	38.23	
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.511	
ΔF		171.12	

B=Non-standardized coefficient (beta); CI=Confidence Interval

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate expression of anger and quality of sibling relationship among the children of mothers who were working in offices. The results indicated that most of the siblings had externalized expression of anger, violence and hostility. Conflicts or expression of anger arose between siblings when they had lack of time from their parents especially from their mother. Mother's time play a significance role in children development. The working mothers when cannot give proper time to their children, the children experience irritating and aggressive mood as compare to other children of non-working mothers. A study by Bouchard *et al*<sup>5</sup> suggested that parental absence was positively associated with the dysfunctional sibling relationship.

Main part of the research suggested that quantity of time that mother give or spent with her children show the quality of sibling relationship and anger expressions among them. Nuclear and joint family system also have main impact on sibling relationship (affection and hostility) and anger expression (externalize anger, violence, feeling of rejection, and externalize anger) in children. Children living with nuclear family system have more anger expression as compared to children living with joint family system.

Parental non-involvement can play a role in the development of conflicted sibling. In consistence with these results, Howe *et al*<sup>4</sup> concluded that the quality of sibling relationship is affected by the quantity of time the mother spends with her children. Parents are the model for children. Time of both for children is very important to shape their behaviour and relationship. Ross and Lazinski also suggested that the parent's mediation empowers sibling conflict resolution. Mostly mother's time for children play important role for their emotional expressions and relationships with their siblings. The children living in joint family have grandparents and other members who can help them to solve the conflicts but the children living with nuclear families are lack of members that provide guidance for children to settle their conflict that's why these children express more externalize anger and hostility in their relationships.<sup>8</sup>

Results of present study showed that there was significant positive relationship between conflicted sibling relationship and number of working hours of mother. The study result has shown that the working mother could not give enough time to their children which cause feeling of rejection, hostility, violence and the externalize anger that could make the conflicted sibling relationship. Conflicted relationship among the sibling increased, as the number of working hours of mothers increased. Mother's number of working hours emerged as the strongest predictor of conflicted sibling relationship and accounted for 51% variance in the conflicted sibling relationship. Consistent with present research, Bouchard and colleagues also suggested that parental absence was positively associated with the dysfunctional sibling relationship. These results emphasize that parental non-involvement can play a role in the development of conflicted sibling relationships.<sup>5</sup> Bendura (1977) theory explained the parent's role for children like model. If they spend limited time with children, they cannot become a good model for their children.<sup>9</sup> Also, children of these parents are aggressive and their relationship with their own sibling is not communicative. Importantly mother shape the behaviour of her children if mother spend limited quantity of time with them that would badly affect the quality of the relationship between the siblings.

## CONCLUSION

On the base of results, it is suggested that siblings may develop hostile sibling relationship due to prolonged

and unsettled conflicts between them. For the resolution of conflicts mother's presence play central role. Absence of mother may predict the conflicted sibling relationships. According to the present study conflicted sibling relationships and expression of anger was significantly correlated. It can be said that with conflicts in mind, siblings may exchange hot words and express anger as the results showed that 17% of the sample had very severe anger expression, 13% of the sample had moderately severe anger expression, 57% of the sample had moderate anger expression. Parental, especially maternal involvement and intervention can play important role in resolving and managing the conflicts between their children. Furthermore, grandparents and other members in the joint family can help children to resolve their conflicts, whereas the children of working women, living in nuclear families remain unable to settle their conflicts. For this reason, these children express more externalize anger and hostility in their relationships.

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Received: 23 Sep 2020

Reviewed: 29 Apr 2021

Accepted: 1 May 2021

### Contribution of Authors:

SK: Data analysis, Results and Discussion

ZM: Data collection and entry, Literature review

**Funding source:** None

**Conflict of interest:** None