

Research Paper

## Examining the Impact of Personality Traits on Coping Strategies and Stress Levels Among Single Parents: A Pilot Study

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### ABSTRACT

The influence of personality traits on coping mechanisms and stress among single parents is an important area of research that seeks to understand the interplay between individual characteristics and the management of stress in unique family dynamics. Single parents often face heightened levels of stress due to the challenges of balancing work, child-rearing, and emotional well-being. The present study focuses on single parents, by examining the relationship between their personality traits, coping mechanisms and stress levels. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights for interventions aimed at reducing stress and improving the well-being of single parents.

**Keywords:** *Single Parents, Stress, Personality Traits, Coping Mechanism*

In recent years, there is a phenomenon of single parenting (SP) found quite often within the society. Among personal, social, and economic factors observed, few reasons identified are split within the couples, widowhood, divorce, and single-parent adoption (Patricia noller,2000). However, the outcome of SP has adverse effects on children. The offsprings of single parents are more stressed than children living with their both parents and their families. Parents living under nuclear arrangements have to take care their housework, finances, and mental health singlehandedly (Bashir et al., 2022; Bashir et al. 2023). Although many studies have already been on parenting styles but there has been a handful number researches conducted on single parents and their parenting styles. An overwhelming volume of stress is likely to induce extreme anxiety, depression, and mental fatigue, which is why it is crucial to study how single parents cope with their stress and manage obstacles (Luthar & Ciciolla ,2016). Understanding the stress management process through personality types is principally assisted by the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality. This model contains five dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Lewis Goldberg (1981, 1993). Every individual response with a coping style when exposed to stressful situations. Therefore, with the present study the coping styles of single parents is analyzed in context of their personality type. Coping mechanisms like confrontive coping and escape avoidance were employed by single parents while handling the stressful situations (Balbuena 2022). Religious practices help single parents manage stress, highlighting faith-based behaviors like prayer and community involvement

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(Jenssa 2020). Children having disturbed family structure due to split between their parents showed have high level of academic stress (Hukom & Madrigal 2020). It recommends more research on students' real-life experiences and emphasizes the importance of personalized support programs. Social support and financial management are a key factor identified for better adjustment and mental health of both single parents and their children (Talib et al. 2020; Harun et al. 2020). Single parents who have authoritative parenting style leads to better problem-solving, while authoritarian parenting leads to avoidance among their children which impacts their mental health (Popescu 2020). The Mothers among single parents who have neuroticism often shows emotion-focused coping style (Jankowska et al. 2015). The anxiety and stress among single mothers in Cyprus show that financial instability and lack of support are key stressors Rousou et al. (2019).

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Objectives*

- The primary objective of this study is to explore the influence of personality traits on coping mechanisms and stress among single parents. To achieve this, the study will focus on the following specific objectives,
- To examine the relationship between the Personality Traits and stress levels among single parents.
- To identify the type of coping mechanisms used by single parents.

#### *Hypotheses*

- There will be no correlation between personality traits and stress level.
- There will be no correlation between coping mechanism among single parents.

#### *Selection of Sample*

In the present study 50 single parents were included through purposive and snowball sampling technique. The samples were selected between the age range of 25-40 years.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

- Status: single parents
- Age: 25 – 40 years
- Only urban population
- People belonging from Indian ethnicity, especially from India

#### *Research Design*

Co-relational Research Method

1. **Independent Variable** –a) Personality traits
2. **Dependent Variable**- a) Stress  
b) Coping mechanism

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Table 01: Shows correlation matrix between personality traits, coping mechanism and stress*

		Stress	BFI	cope
Stress	Pearson's r	—		
	df	—		
	p-value	—		
BFI	Pearson's r	0.089	—	
	df	50	—	
	p-value	0.530	—	
cope	Pearson's r	0.631***	-0.051	—
	df	50	50	—
	p-value	<.001	0.721	—

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

This table 01 shows the statistical analysis tested two null hypotheses concerning the relationships between personality traits, stress levels, and coping strategies among single parents. Personality Traits and Stress showed the correlation between personality traits (measured by the BFI) and stress was statistically non-significant ( $r = 0.089$ ,  $p = 0.530$ ). This result supports the null hypothesis, hence indicating that no relationship exists between personality characteristics and perceived stress levels among the single parents. Coping Strategies and Stress showed a strong positive correlation between coping strategies and stress ( $r = 0.631$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding contradicts the second null hypothesis, suggesting a significant relationship exists: those parents who are experiencing higher stress levels tend to report greater engagement in coping strategies. Therefore, personality traits and coping strategies showed the negative correlation ( $r = -0.051$ ,  $p = 0.721$ ). This reinforces the idea that personality factors do not play a substantial role in influencing how single parents cope with stress.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that personality traits do not share a positive relationship with both experiencing stress or applying their coping strategies. However, the strong relationship is found between coping strategies and stress levels, which suggests that coping plays a critical role in how stress is experienced and managed among single parents. These findings suggest that such interventions should be designed and developed which aims at stress reduction as well as must be more focused on enhancing effective coping mechanisms rather than targeting personality factors among single parents. Although such interventions have been developed in past that have been beneficial for single parents for handling stress and enhancing coping mechanisms. However, the interventions lacked long-term follow-up and scalability which can be also kept in cognizance (Dixon, 2020).

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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