

Sibling Relationship Quality in Early Adulthood: The Effects of Education, Employment, Marriage and Parenthood

Lindsey Aldrich (aldricl@bgsu.edu), Kei Nomaguchi (knomagu@bgsu.edu), & Marshal Fetto (mfetto@bgsu.edu)
 Department of Sociology
 Bowling Green State University

Background

- Sibling relationships are long-lasting relationships
- Sibling relationship quality is associated with mental health
- Early adulthood is a period when individuals break away from their family of origin and obtain social statuses – education, employment, relationship, and parenthood

Current Study

- Examines how social statuses, including education, employment, romantic relationships, and parental status, are related to relationship quality during early adulthood
 - Closeness, conflict/fights, direct and indirect contact, seeking advice

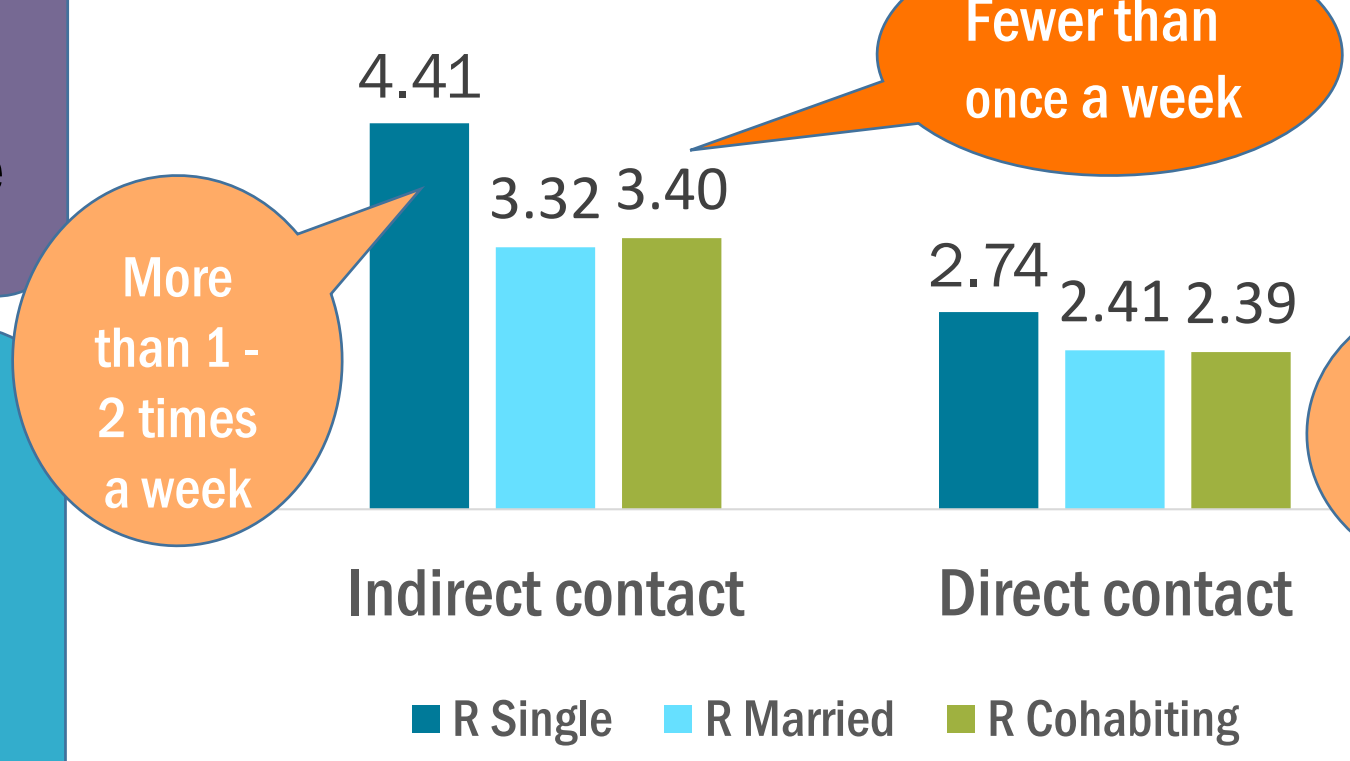
Time Demands Perspective
 Role strain theory: Social roles demand an individual's time and energy. During early adulthood, other social statuses may cause the role of brother or sister to lose precedence.

Role Expansion Perspective
 Role enhancement or role accumulation: Individuals can use their time and energy flexibly, finding ways to organize and balance multiple roles. Social roles provide opportunities to expand economic resources and social contacts.

Data and Sample

- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) Wave III
- Nationally representative sample of young adults 18-26
 - Genetic Oversample: twins, full biological siblings, half siblings, stepsiblings, and other unrelated siblings
 - Excluded twins, same age siblings, and those who did not have data for age or sibling type (N = 1,451)
 - Analyses are divided:
 - Younger Sample (n = 752)
 - Older Sample (n = 699)

Fig. 1. Predicted Means for Contact with the Focal Sibling by R's Partnership Status: The Younger Sibling Sample

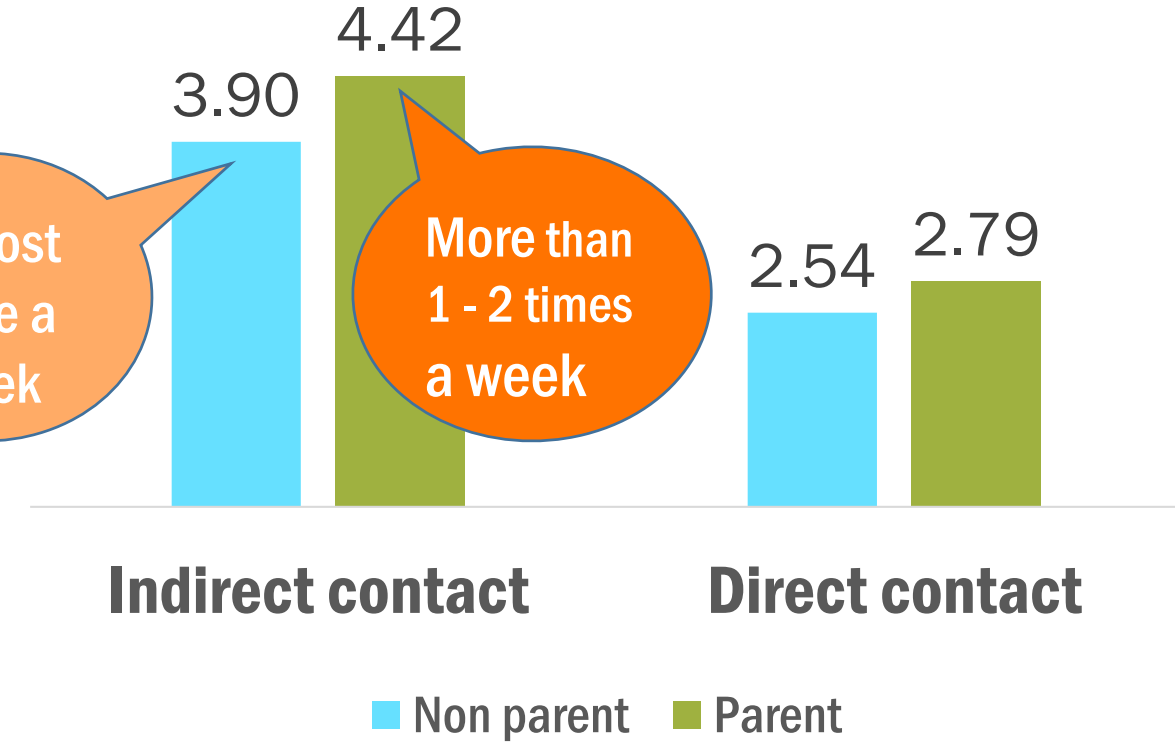


Summary of Results

	Education		Employment		Partnership		Parent	
	R	S	R	S	R	S	R	S
Younger Sibling Sample								
Closeness	-							+
Quarreling					-			
Direct Contact		-			-	-		+
Indirect Contact					-	-		+
Aid								
Older Sibling Sample								
Closeness								
Quarreling				+	-	-		
Direct Contact		-			-	-		
Indirect Contact	+	+			-	-		
Aid		+						

Notes. R stands for respondents; S stands for siblings; "+" refers to a positive association; "-" refers to a negative association. OLS models controlled for sibling relationship type, gender composition of the sibling dyad, age gap between siblings, geographic distance between siblings, relationship quality in adolescence, age, and race/ethnicity.

Fig. 2. Predicted Means for Contact with the Focal Sibling by S's Parental Status: The Younger Sibling Sample



Discussion

- Both the time demands perspective and the role expansion perspective garnered partial support
- Relationship status showed the most robust associations with aspects of sibling relationship quality
- Neither the respondents' nor their siblings' relationship status significantly influenced reports of closeness
- Wave IV did not have comparable sibling relationships measures to Waves II and III

Descriptive Statistics

	Younger Sample (N = 752)	Older Sample (N = 699)
Quality with Sibling	M (std.)	M (std.)
Closeness	2.86 (1.14)	2.95 (1.05)
Quarrel	1.11 (1.10)	1.11 (1.06)
Direct contact	2.64 (1.52)	2.90 (1.47)
Indirect contact	4.15 (3.27)	4.46 (3.30)
Seeking help	1.75 (1.31)	1.58 (1.31)
Education		
R < high school	0.15	0.11
R high school	0.35	0.37
R Some College	0.10	0.18
R In College	0.38	0.20
R BA/BS+	0.02	0.14
S < high school	0.12	0.13
S high school	0.33	0.35
S Some College	0.26	0.39
S In College	0.17	0.09
S BA/BS+	0.13	0.03
Employment		
R Work hours	24.35 (19.31)	28.95 (19.41)
S Work hours	29.78 (19.39)	23.79 (19.20)
Relationship Status		
R Single	0.71	0.60
R Cohab	0.16	0.18
R Married	0.13	0.22
S Single	0.57	0.75
S Cohab	0.18	0.15
S Married	0.25	0.10
Parental Status		
R Parents	0.37	0.41
S Parents	0.40	0.34

This research was supported in part by the Center for Family and Demographic Research, Bowling Green State University, which has core funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (P2CHD050959).
 This research was supported in part by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R03HD078653).