

## Sibling Rivalry and Psychological Well-Being in Early Adulthood

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**Abstract.** Many cases of sibling rivalry, including crimes, are committed by young adults who are usually considered independent, responsible and have good psychological well-being. These cases are caused by parental injustice. Parenting patterns that create sibling rivalry. This study aims to determine whether there is a significant relationship between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being in early adults in Jakarta. The research method used is quantitative with the criteria for male or female, aged 18-29, having at least one sibling and domiciled in Jakarta. Sibling rivalry was measured using the ASRQ Rivalry Subscale (Stocker, 1997), adapted via expert judgment, while psychological well-being used the SPWB (Ryff & Keyes) adapted by Fadhil (2021). The 114 respondents were obtained and analyzed using SPSS and Spearman's rho correlation test. The results showed no significant relationship between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being. This means that higher levels of sibling rivalry do not necessarily increase or decrease psychological well-being, and vice versa. However, in the correlation matrix, sibling rivalry correlated positively with the Positive Relations with Others dimension and negatively with the Personal Growth dimension.

**Keywords:** *Sibling Rivalry, Psychological Well-Being, Early Adulthood*

### Introduction

Sibling Rivalry represent one of the longest lasting interpersonal bonds throughout the human life cycle. However, these relationships are not always harmonious, sibling rivalry often persists and even intensifies during early adulthood. While some degree of competition is considered a normative part of development, if left unmanaged, this phenomenon can have significant adverse effects on an individual's psychological well-being. Preliminary evidence suggests that the impact of such rivalry is multifaceted. A pilot study conducted with four early-adult subjects in Jakarta revealed that sibling rivalry triggered profound feelings of worthlessness and even suicidal ideation in two of the participants. This indicates that unresolved rivalry can escalate into a serious mental health crisis, affecting how individuals perceive their self-worth and their role within the family. In extreme cases, these psychological pressures may manifest as severe interpersonal conflicts. Media reports have highlighted tragic instances of family disputes involving violence (Ningsih, 2022) and even fatal criminal acts between children and parents

driven by perceived favoritism (Anugrah, 2021). These cases serve as a critical reminder of the potential for extreme escalation when underlying rivalries are neglected. Therefore, this study aims to explore the dynamics of sibling rivalry in early adults and its influence on Psychological Well-Being.

From the news phenomenon and preliminary above, it is the attitude or action taken by early adults who should have full awareness regarding high psychological well-being. According to Nasution et al., (2024) Early adults are considered as individuals who have moved towards independence both economically and emotionally, can build good relationships with the environment, are able to manage careers, thus forming a mature identity. Psychological well-being itself is a psychological condition with optimal well-being which includes self-acceptance, independence, positive relationships with other individuals, mastery of the environment, the existence of life goals and personal growth (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).). According to Tirtania (2024) the factors that form good psychological well-being are the family environment, if parents are competitive and hostile (taking sides or being unfair) in relationships between siblings, it will have an impact on the emergence of negative experiences so that it gives a reaction of competition between siblings or sibling rivalry.

Sibling rivalry is competition between siblings caused by parental bias (Stocker et al., 1997). The impacts of sibling rivalry include aggressive behavior, selfishness, low self-confidence, feelings of inferiority, and poor relationships with friends (antisocial behavior). High levels of sibling rivalry can lead to negative emotions, anxiety, depression, and if continued, self-harm, suicide, low self-esteem, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, dating violence, and eating disorders (Laeque, 2022). One effect of good sibling relationships in early adulthood is the creation of flourishing, which in this case also includes psychological well-being (Deviarga et al., 2025).

In his research, Lupo (2021) stated that severe sibling rivalry in early adulthood is associated with decreased psychological well-being, thus negatively impacting self-esteem and self-concept. This study, similar to Kelechi's (2022) study, found that family rivalry tears apart households, and Laeque et al.'s (2022) study found that victims of sibling abuse are the cause of delinquent activity at school. However, these negative outcomes are not universal, as other

research findings differ. According to Waluyo and Purwandari (2010) sibling rivalry can yield both positive and negative impacts, positive impacts include increased learning motivation, the ability to overcome differences, and fostering compassion between siblings. Negative impacts include disputes and strained sibling relationships, leading to isolation and crying. This is in line with Fardiyanti's (2017) opinion, which states that sibling rivalry not only has negative impacts but also positive ones, such as the ability to understand the thoughts and actions of others, and fostering self-awareness and self-care in social relationships. While moderate competition may serve as a constructive catalyst for personal development (Waluyo & Purwandari, 2010), extreme or abusive rivalry leads to maladaptive behaviors (Laeque et al., 2022).

This study aims to address the gap between the aforementioned studies. Previous research on sibling rivalry has also focused largely on childhood and adolescence, with relatively limited focus on early adulthood. However, Alfaridzi and Hutama's (2024) study suggests that the impact of sibling rivalry can persist into adulthood. This is evidenced by several news reports of adult sibling disputes. Furthermore, the researchers chose Jakarta as a metropolitan city with unique demographic and social characteristics that better represents Indonesia's diversity than the Western cultural context that has been the focus of most previous research.

Based on the above elaboration, the researcher is interested in understanding the relationship between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being in early adulthood in Jakarta. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to scientific knowledge, particularly in the field of psychology. It can serve as a reference for future research, particularly regarding the relationship between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being in early adulthood. This research is also expected to benefit the wider community and be implemented within families.

## **Method**

The quantitative approach used in this study is the correlational design method. The correlational design was chosen to measure the statistical relationship between two variables, namely sibling rivalry as the independent variable (X) and psychological well-being as the dependent variable (Y). The population of this study refers to certain characteristics to be

analyzed, namely: Men and women, aged 18-29 years, domiciled in Jakarta and have at least 1 (one) sibling, either step, biological or adopted. The sample of this study was 114 respondents. This study used an online questionnaire distribution method with a Likert scale hosted on the Google Forms platform. The survey link was distributed across various social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram, and X). To ensure adequate statistical power, the minimum sample size was determined using G\*Power software. After the collection period, the raw data was compiled and organized using Microsoft Excel for initial data cleaning. The primary statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics and non-parametric hypothesis testing, were conducted using Jamovi and IBM SPSS Statistics. These tools were utilized to ensure the precision and reliability of the correlation and difference tests reported in this study

The sibling rivalry measurement tool is the Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (ASRQ) Rivalry Subscale. This measurement tool is derived from the Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (ASRQ) developed by Stocker et al. (1997) with 81 items. This study will only take items from the Rivalry dimension, with a total of 12 items divided into two dimensions: maternal rivalry and paternal rivalry. The ASRQ Rivalry Subscale scale has been used by Lupo (2021) in her thesis. which was adapted into Indonesian by the researcher. To ensure the quality of the adaptation, a validity test was conducted through Expert Judgment by two experts. The results showed an Aiken's V value of .875, indicating that the scale is valid. Subsequently, after conducting the CFA test twice, 5 items were eliminated and 7 items passed with loading factors ranging from .612 to .840, CFI .991, TLI .986, and RMSEA .038. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .741.

The psychological well-being measurement tool used is the scale of psychological well-being from Carol D. Ryff's theory, adapted into Indonesian by Fadhil (2021) into 28 items with 6 dimensions. 16 items are favorable and 12 items are unfavorable. This measuring tool has a minimum score of 28 and a maximum of 112. The lower the score obtained, the lower the level of psychological well-being, and vice versa. The results of expert judgment on this measuring tool are Aiken's V for each item ranging from .6 to .95. The KMO value in the EFA test is .850 and sig.

.00, and the loading factor ranges from .325 to .829. For the reliability test, Cronbach's alpha was used with a result of .855.

### **Result**

The demographic profile of the 114 respondents in this study are young adults residing in Jakarta, with ages ranging from 18 to 29 years old. The sample is predominantly composed of females (54.4%) and individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree (64.0%). Furthermore, the majority of respondents are currently unmarried (86.8%) and are actively employed (62.3%). Regarding their family structure, most respondents share a relatively close age proximity with their siblings, with 42.1% reporting an age gap of less than five years and 41.2% reporting a gap between five to ten years.

Table 1.  
Respondent Demographic Data

Characteristic	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Education Level	S1 (Bachelor's)	73	64.0
	S2 (Master's)	2	1.8
	High School/Equivalent	39	34.2
Gender	Male	52	45.6
	Female	62	54.4
Marital Status	Unmarried	99	86.8
	Married	15	13.2
Employment Status	Working while studying	18	15.8
	Not Working/Studying	25	21.9
	Working	71	62.3
Age Gap with Siblings	Close Gap (< 5 years)	48	42.1
	Medium Gap (5–10 years)	47	41.2
	Wide Gap (> 10 years)	19	16.7

Table 2.  
 Mean Scores of Sibling Rivalry and Psychological Well-being by Demographic Category

Characteristic	Category	Sibling Rivalry	Psychological Well-being
Gender	Male	7.04	81.67
	Female	7.53	78.61
Sibling Gender	Male - Male	7.18	81.25
	Female - Female	7.50	78.62
	Female - Male	7.57	78.60
	Male - Female	6.88	82.17
Age Gap	Close (< 5 years)	7.02	78.96
	Medium (5–10 years)	7.34	79.83
	Wide (> 10 years)	7.95	83.11
Education Level	High School/Equivalent	7.23	78.51
	Bachelor's (S1)	7.22	80.59
	Master's (S2)	12.00	88.00
Employment	Not Working/Studying	8.20	75.56
	Working	7.13	80.58
	Working while studying	6.78	83.94
Marital Status	Married	7.00	80.93
	Unmarried	7.35	79.87

In the gender category, women have higher levels of sibling rivalry than men. However, men have higher levels of psychological well-being than women. In terms of sibling gender, female respondents with brothers tend to have higher levels of sibling rivalry, and male respondents with sisters tend to have lower levels. In the same category, male respondents with sisters have higher levels of psychological well-being, and female respondents with brothers tend to have lower levels of psychological well-being. In terms of age gap, respondents with a large age gap of >10 years with their siblings tend to have higher levels of sibling rivalry and psychological well-being, while respondents with a close age gap of <5 years with their siblings have lower levels of sibling rivalry and psychological well-being. In the education category, respondents with a master's degree tended to have higher levels of sibling rivalry and psychological well-being, while those

with a bachelor's degree had lower levels of sibling rivalry and those with a high school/vocational school/equivalent tended to have lower levels of psychological well-being. In the employment section, respondents who were not working/college had higher levels of sibling rivalry and lower psychological well-being, while respondents who worked while studying had lower levels of sibling rivalry and higher levels of psychological well-being. As for marital status, unmarried respondents tended to have higher levels of sibling rivalry than married respondents. Meanwhile, married respondents tended to have higher levels of psychological well-being than unmarried respondents.

Based on the results of the normality test. value for the sibling rivalry variable, both Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk, is .000 and .008, respectively, which are not normally distributed. Meanwhile, for the psychological well-being variable, both Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk are .200 and .512, respectively, which are normally distributed.

A significance value of .400 in the Deviation from Linearity indicates that there is a linear or unidirectional relationship between the sibling rivalry variable and psychological well-being. Because one of the classical assumption tests of the variable has a non-normal distribution, the researcher will conduct a hypothesis test using non-parametric statistics.

Table 3.  
 Spearman's Rank Correlation Hypothesis Test

<b>Correlations</b>				
			Psychological Wellbeing	Sibling Rivalry
Spearman's rho	Psychological Well-being	Correlation Coefficient	1	.068
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.47
		N	114	114

Sibling Rivalry	Correlation Coefficient	.068	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.47	.
	N	114	114

The results of the Spearman's rho correlation test showed a significance value of sig. .47, meaning that the correlation between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being or psychological well-being and sibling rivalry was not statistically significant.

Tabel 4.  
 Correlation Matrix Test

	Dimensions of Psychological Well-being		Sibling Rivalry
Spearman's rho	Self-Acceptance	Correlation Coefficient	.059
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.535
	Personal Growth	Correlation Coefficient	-.197*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036
	Positive Relations with Others	Correlation Coefficient	.214*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.022
	Purpose in Life	Correlation Coefficient	.024
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.796
	Environmental Mastery	Correlation Coefficient	.064
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.496
Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	-.028	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.767	

Using a significance threshold of  $p < .05$ , the analysis primarily shows that sibling rivalry has a statistically significant relationship with two dimensions: Personal Growth ( $r = -.197$ ,  $p = .036$ ) and Positive Relations with Others ( $r = .214$ ,  $p = .022$ ). Specifically, a negative correlation was found with Personal Growth, while a positive correlation was observed with Positive Relations

with Others. In contrast, other dimensions showed no statistically significant relationship with sibling rivalry, including Self-Acceptance ( $p = .535$ ), Purpose in Life ( $p = .796$ ), Environmental Mastery ( $p = .496$ ), and Autonomy ( $p = .767$ ).

Table 5.  
Mann Whitney U Test

Demographic Variables		N	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
Gender	Male	52		No Significant Difference
	Female	62	.35	
Marital Status	Married	15		No Significant Difference
	Single	99	.748	

Based on the analysis of the Mann Whitney U Test, it was found that for the demographic variable of gender, there was no statistically significant difference in the level of sibling rivalry between male and female respondents with an asymptotic significance value (2-tailed) of .350. Furthermore, the test results for the marital status variable also showed similar findings. with an asymptotic significance value (2-tailed) of .748. Therefore, it can be interpreted that there is no statistically significant difference in the level of sibling rivalry between married and unmarried individuals. This means that marital status is not a significant differentiating factor in the experience of sibling rivalry in this study sample.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for psychological well-being based on gender with a significance value (p-value) of .176 and based on marital status with a significance value (p-value) of .877. This means that there is no significant difference in psychological well-being between women and men and between married and unmarried respondents.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test show that for the education variable, with the respondent groups from high school/vocational high school/equivalent, undergraduate, and postgraduate, it has a sig. value of .147. This means that there is no significant difference in sibling rivalry between education level groups. Similarly, for the employment variable which includes the groups not working/college, currently working, and working while studying, the sig. value is .338, indicating there is no significant difference in sibling rivalry based on employment status. Furthermore,

analysis based on the combination of gender between male respondents and male brothers, male respondents and sisters, female respondents and sisters, and female respondents and brothers, produces a significance value of .757. It can be concluded that the gender between respondents and siblings does not significantly affect the level of sibling rivalry. Finally, the age variable categorized based on age distance (Close <5 years, Medium 5-10 years, and Far >10 years) also showed insignificant results with a significance value of .687, which means that the age distance between siblings does not have a significant influence on sibling rivalry.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test between the influence of demographic variables (education, occupation, age, and gender) on the level of psychological well-being. In the education variable with a significance value of .318, there is no significant difference in psychological well-being between education level groups. However, the occupation variable has a significance value of .029, this indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being between different employment status groups. Furthermore, the test results for the gender variable with a sig. value of .528, indicate there is no significant difference in psychological well-being based on the combination of gender. This means that male respondents with brothers, male respondents with sisters, female respondents with brothers, or female respondents with sisters do not affect the occurrence or level of psychological well-being. Similarly, the age variable grouped by age distance shows a significance value of .386, which means there is no significant difference in psychological well-being based on the age distance between siblings. Thus, overall, this study found that employment status was the only demographic factor that significantly influenced psychological well-being in the sample studied, while education, age and gender did not show any significant influence.

### **Discussion**

Based on the analysis above, the lack of a significant relationship between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being. In this study is inconsistent with earlier literature (Hasanah, 2020; Lupo, 2021). This discrepancy may be attributed to developmental factors specific to early adulthood. While not directly measured in this study, existing theories suggest that as individuals

enter adulthood, their focus often shifts from family dynamics toward career management and professional goals (Hurlock, 2011; Deviarga, 2025). This means that as a person grows into adulthood, levels of conflict and competition between siblings decrease, and warmth between siblings is equal to or higher than during adolescence (Stocker et al., 2020). Furthermore, Marsidi (2022) states that adults living in Jakarta have backgrounds and goals to meet their living needs, find work, study, and marry. Furthermore, Nasution's (2024) research states that conditions correlated with psychological well-being in early adulthood are economic independence and social involvement.

The correlation analysis conducted between variables and dimensions obtained interesting findings, where there is a negative and positive relationship between 2 dimensions of psychological well-being that are correlated with the sibling rivalry variable, namely, the Positive Relations with Others dimension and the Personal Growth dimension. A positive relationship between sibling rivalry and the positive relations with others dimension. This means that when a person's sibling rivalry increases, their positive relations with others will also increase, likewise when a person's sibling rivalry decreases, their positive relations with others will also decrease. This is in line with previous research conducted by Fardiyanti (2017) which stated that individuals who experience sibling rivalry have a positive impact by being able to understand the thoughts and actions of others, creating awareness and caring for themselves in social relationships. It can be concluded that mild experiences of parental injustice make individuals have healthy and meaningful relationships with other individuals, be warm and trusting, show empathy, affection and deep intimacy, understand the meaning of giving and receiving something and create closeness.

Meanwhile, sibling rivalry has a negative relationship with the Personal Growth dimension. This means that when someone's sibling rivalry is high, their personal growth will decline, and vice versa. This indicates that the higher the level of parental injustice, the more hampered their personal growth or development, and vice versa. This aligns with Lupo's (2021) research that sibling rivalry can lead to a decline in self-concept. Individuals experiencing sibling rivalry will feel uncomfortable with themselves and their abilities. It can be concluded that

individuals will struggle to develop, one participant highlighted a lack of emotional support and parental supervision during their university years. The subject felt that while they were encouraged to attend college, there was no genuine interest in their academic journey or personal struggles. This lack of guidance led to a loss of self-control and motivation, which ultimately resulted in poor academic performance (low GPA) compared to their peers.

The analysis revealed no significant differences between sibling rivalry and psychological well-being, related to respondents' differences in several areas, such as gender, gender of respondent and siblings, marital status, age, occupation, and education. However, for the psychological well-being variable, occupation had a significant effect. This means there are differences in psychological well-being related to individuals' occupational categories. This is consistent with research conducted by Riskesdas (see Marsidi et al., 2022), which found that Jakarta is a province with a relatively high prevalence of mental and emotional disorders in the occupational category, amounting to 10.1% or 28,746 respondents. Furthermore, adults with mental and emotional disorders living in Jakarta were more employed than unemployed individuals (Marsidi, 2022).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that there is no significant correlation between sibling rivalry and the overall psychological well-being of young adults in Jakarta. However, specific dimensions show significant results: a positive correlation with Positive Relations with Others and a negative correlation with Personal Growth. These findings suggest that while sibling rivalry remains present, its impact on the general psychological state of young adults in this context is limited. This may be due to the shifting priorities of early adults, such as career and personal independence, which could overshadow the influence of sibling dynamics.

For the future research could utilize qualitative research methods or case studies to explore the experiences of individuals who have experienced the extreme impact of parental injustice, thereby understanding the nuances and depth of trauma not captured by quantitative analysis. Furthermore, a reconstruction of the measurement scale for sibling rivalry variables is needed, incorporating not only parenting styles or parental injustice but also several other external behaviors.

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