

## FAMILY STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS: INFLUENCE ON PERSONALITY AND WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS

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### ABSTRACT

Family structure holds a great impact on the well-being of individuals. This study was conducted in order to understand the influence of family structure on personality and well-being of individuals. This study comprises of three family structures including nuclear family, joint family and single-parent family that are more prominent in Pakistan and the effect of these family structures on well-being of individuals. For well-being six important indicators were measured which include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The main objective of this study was to see the impact of family structure such as nuclear family, joint family and single-parent family on the well-being of the individuals. Convenience sampling was used in this research and population was the students of Government College University Lahore. There were 105 respondents from whom data was collected by online forms. Findings of this research indicates that individuals from joint family and single-parent family had higher level of well-being than individuals from nuclear family system. Another finding of this study was that male participants had slightly higher level of well-being than female participants. This research also indicates that monthly family income has an impact on the well-being of individuals. There was a significant difference in the well-being of individuals who belong to different economic classes. It was found that individuals with monthly family income between 20000-70000 have lower level of well-being as compared to individuals with monthly family income more than 220000. Overall, findings suggest that students from joint family and single-parent family have better well-being as compared to nuclear family structure.

**Keywords:** Family Structure, Personality, Well-Being, Personal growth, Purpose in life

### INTRODUCTION

Family is the most important and most influential social institution through which people learn the norms, values, expectations and behaviors. Family is the first and primary agent of socialization. There are different types of families existing in different societies. Sociologists study what constitutes a family, how it forms and what is the role of family in a society and its effect on individuals. There are different types of family structures in different societies. Family structure changes overtime in a society and it also varies from culture to culture. There are different family

structures existing today and these have different dynamics. A nuclear type of family consists of two parents and children forming a traditional family structure. Single-parent family comprises of one parent and children, it may be single mother and kids or single-father and kids. Extended family structure is the one in which adults related by blood live in the same home with their families. Extended family structure includes grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts and cousins living together. Blended or stepfamily is the one in which individuals

remarry and two separate families constitute a single family (Blessing, 2022).

The definition of well-being is different for every individual but generally it is just about feeling good. Well-being is experiencing good health, happiness, ability to manage stress and life satisfaction and prosperity. Well-being comes from different experiences, actions, thoughts, it is a broader term. Breaking well-being in different types we see emotional, social, workplace, societal, and physical well-being. Emotional well-being is feeling good about oneself, self-love, managing stress, be resilient and learning techniques to improve mental health. Physical wellbeing is the ability to improve functioning of body, healthy living that made people feel better and prevent from diseases. Social well-being is meaningful personal relationships with others, ability to communicate and develop a social network that provide support and help people to feel less lonely and disconnected. Workplace well-being is finding a purpose of life, pursuing interests, academic performance that provides happiness. Societal well-being is the ability to interconnect with others, build stronger communities and maintain a positive culture in which people support one another and live happily. There is need to work on building well-being of individuals that is a life-long pursuit but totally worth it (Davis, 2019).

Family structure has the most influence on the well-being of individuals. The results of the researches show that children of broken families, fragile, divorced, blended, single parent families negatively affect the well-being of individuals as compared to individuals of nuclear and joint family structure (Bernardi F, 2013 & Mackay, 2005).

Family structure is very important and it has greater influence on the well-being of individuals. Family structure vary across countries and culture impacts family system. Western countries have different types of family structures like fragile families and blended families but these family structures are not common in Pakistan. Nuclear family and joint family are more common in Pakistan. This study will see the impact of single-parent family, nuclear family and joint family structure on the well-being of individuals in young adults of Pakistan. Family structure has influence

on individual's life, family relationships impact the well-being of an individual across the life course. People of Pakistan does not realize the importance of family structure and family relationships and its effect on the well-being of individuals. This study will focus on the diversity of family structures, quality of family relationships and their impact on the well-being of young adults in Pakistan.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Family is the most important unit of socialization and it affects every aspect of human life. Much work has been done in this area in Western countries. In Pakistan, the researcher found few studies that focus on the effects of family structures on well-being of children, work is done on this topic but to a lesser extent and people are not aware in Pakistan about the importance of family structure its roles, expectations and people should know about its importance. When a family knows about the importance of family structure, then family will consider the problem residing in their family structure and try to resolve it so that the well-being of the individual will not be affected.

Following are the key research questions

1. What is the impact of single-parent family structure on the well-being of individuals?
2. What is the impact of nuclear family structure on the well-being of individuals?
3. What is the impact of joint family structure on the well-being of individuals?

### **Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to help the scientific community and general public about the importance of family structure and how it is affecting the well-being of individuals. Mental health and wellbeing is mostly ignored in Pakistan. People do not take well-being as a significant topic that need to be addressed and the type of family system and family environment in which they are raised. This study would help people to know about the importance of family structure and its impact on the well-being of individuals because family setting affects all aspects of an individual's life.

### **Conceptualization**

#### **Family Structure**

Family structure is a term that describes the members of a household who are linked by marriage or bloodline and is typically used in reference to at least one child residing in the home under the age of 18 (Kay Pasley, 2015).

#### **Well-being**

Well-being has been defined as the combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships (Kai Ruggeri, 2020).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Government College University Lahore was chosen as research site for this study. Students from various departments were taken in this research. Students belong to different social classes and family structures in the university.

#### **Population and Sampling**

The population of this research includes young adults of Government College University Lahore (GCUL). This research was conducted to see the influence of family structure on personality and well-being of individuals. In GCUL, there are students from different family structures so, it was convenient to get access to the respondents coming from different family structures. Sample was taken from students of different departments. Non-probability sampling technique was used for this research. Convenience sampling was employed to collect data for the present study because it was efficient and simple to implement. Researcher collected data from the students in the university who were available.

#### **Method**

Quantitative research approach was chosen for this research. Survey method was used to conduct this research. The study was conducted to see the influence of family structure on personality and well-being of individuals. For this research survey method was good to get a better understanding of these variables and get responses from the larger number of participants in limited time. From

survey method it was feasible to approach students who belong to different family structures and get responses from more participants in shorter period of time.

#### **Data collection**

It is a quantitative research so questionnaire was used as a tool of data collection. It is an instrument in which series of questions related to the research are asked to the respondents that is useful for collection of relevant data. The instrument included written questions with Likert scale. It was a firsthand information that was given directly to the researcher through online questionnaire form. In the socio-demographic variables the questions of age, gender, and monthly family income were asked. These questions were asked to see whether these indicators effect well-being of individuals or not. Questions about family structure were asked. For measuring well-being Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (PWB) 42 item version was used in which questions about autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance were asked. These questions assess level of well-being of individuals living in different family structures (Ryff, 2007).

#### **Data analysis**

For data analysis of this research Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used by the researcher. To enter data researcher made sure that no duplicate response or questionnaire with null response was added in analysis. Reliability of the tool was tested by applying normality of the scale and pilot-testing. Ryff's Psychological well-being scale was also reliable, and the standardized value of Chronbach's Alpha was 0.769.

### **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

#### **Demographic information of the respondents**

In the section of socio-demographic information of the respondents, the researcher asked the questions of age, gender and monthly family income. Demographic information is important in research because the researcher is able to understand background characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Gender of respondents


The above table no.1 shows that 105 respondents took part in this research out of which 41% respondents were male and 59% respondents were female.

Table 2: Age of respondents


The above table gives the percentage distribution of different age groups. Table no.2 indicates that 13.3% of the respondents had their age between 18-20, 59% of the respondents had their age between 21-23, 25.7% of the respondents had their age between 24-26 and 1.9% of the respondents had their age between 27-29. Majority of the respondents were between the age group 21-23.

Table 3: Table of monthly family income


Monthly family income of respondents was also collected. Table no.3 indicates that over one-third of the respondents had their monthly family income between 20000-70000, 35.2% of the respondents had their monthly family income between 70001-120000, 10.5% of the respondents had their monthly family income between 120001-170000, 11.4% of the respondents had their monthly family income between 170001-220000

and 7.6% of the respondents had their monthly income above 220001. Maximum respondents had their monthly family income round about 20,000120,000.

**Percentage distribution of Family Structure**

This section is about the percentage distribution of family structure of the respondents. The researcher asked the questions about the individuals’ family structure. The researcher also asked the questions to the respondents of single-parent family with whom they are living and the reason of being in a single-parent family.

Table 4: Table of family structure


The above table gives the frequency and percentage of individuals living in different family structures. Table no. 4.4 shows that 49.5% of the respondents were living in nuclear family system, 21.9% of the respondents were living in joint family structure and 28.6% of the respondents were from single-parent family structure.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of the respondents


The researcher also asked to the individuals from single-parent family with whom they are living. Table no. 5 indicates that 4.8% of the respondents who belongs to single-parent family structure were living with their father, 19.0% of the respondents who belongs to single-parent family were living their mother and 4.8% of the respondents who belongs to single-parent family system were living with their guardian.

Table 6: Reason of being single parent family

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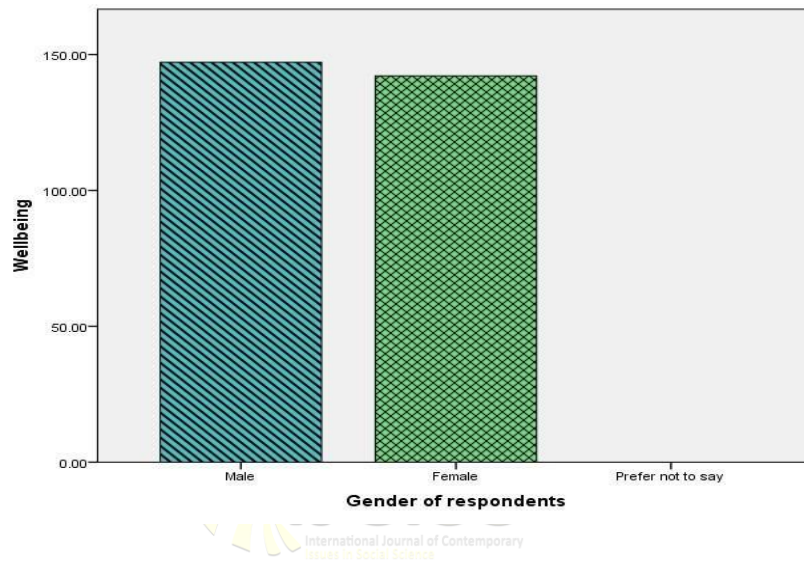



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above table gives the percentage distribution of well-being of individuals. Table no. 7 gives the percentage distribution of well-being. The table shows that 45% respondents agree with the statement no. 1, 49% of the respondents agreed with statement 2, 31% people disagreed with statement no. 3, 56% respondents agreed with statement no. 4 that is ‘‘most people see me as loving and affectionate’’. 45% respondents disagreed with statement no. 5, 49% respondents agreed with statement no. 6, 21% people were neutral about the statement no. 7, 34% of the respondents agreed that ‘‘the demands of everyday life often get me down’’ that is statement no. 8, 55% respondents agreed with statement no. 9, 38% respondents disagreed with statement no. 10, 54% respondents agreed with statement no. 11, 55% respondents agreed with statement no. 12 that means they feel confident about themselves, 31% respondents agreed with statement no. 13, 38% respondents disagreed with statement no. 14, 42% respondents disagreed with statement no. 15, 32% respondents disagreed with statement no. 16, 36% respondents disagreed with statement no. 17, 31% respondents disagreed with statement no. 18, 54% respondents agreed with statement no. 19, 49% respondents agreed with statement no. 20, 60% respondents agreed with statement no. 21, 49% respondents agreed with statement no. 22, 43% respondents disagreed with statement no. 23, 53% respondents agreed with statement no. 24, 55% respondents agreed with statement no. 25, 44% respondents agreed that they are overwhelmed by their responsibilities that is statement no. 26, 30% respondents agreed with statement no. 27, 45% respondents agreed with statement no. 28, 45% respondents agreed with statement no. 29, 38% respondents disagreed with statement no. 30, 38% respondents disagreed with statement no. 31, 32% respondents agreed with statement no. 32, 45% respondents strongly

agreed with statement no. 33, 33% respondents disagreed with statement no. 34, 42% respondents agreed with statement no. 35, 38% respondents disagreed with statement no. 36, 51% respondents agreed with statement no. 37, 36% respondents agreed with statement no. 38, 46% respondents disagreed with statement no. 39, 43% respondents agreed with statement no. 40, 37% respondents disagreed with statement no. .41, 36% respondents agreed with statement no. 42.

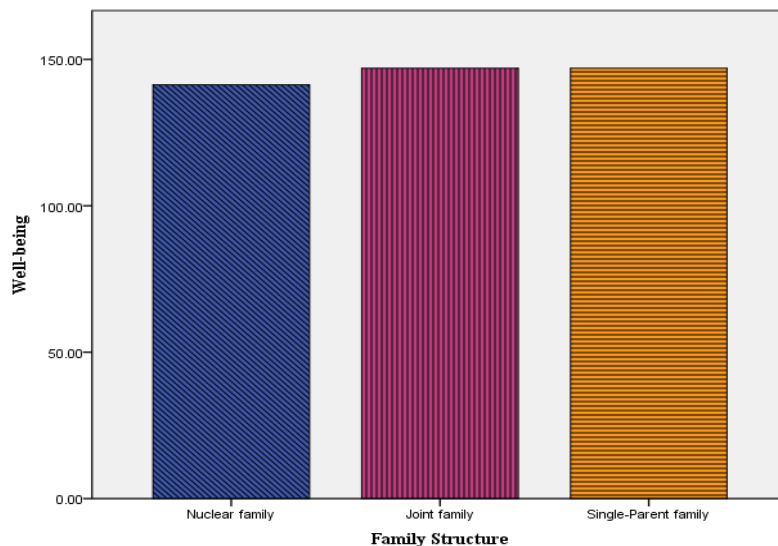
Figure 1: Well-being of individuals by gender



According to the above respondents of this have higher level of as compared to well-female respondents.

graph, male research well-being being of

Figure 2: Family structure of respondents

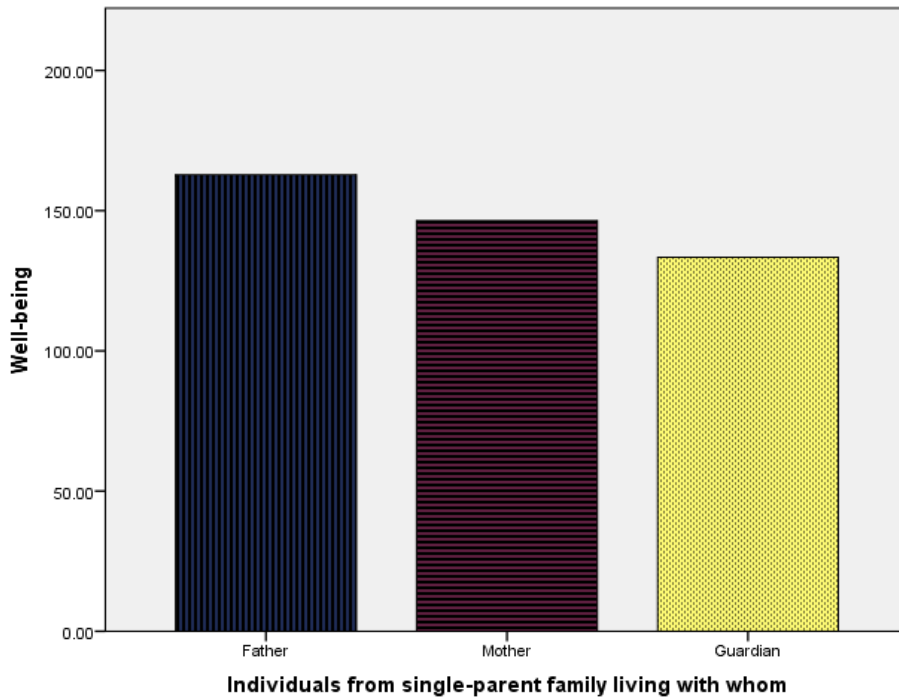


The above graph shows of wellbeing of

the percentage individuals

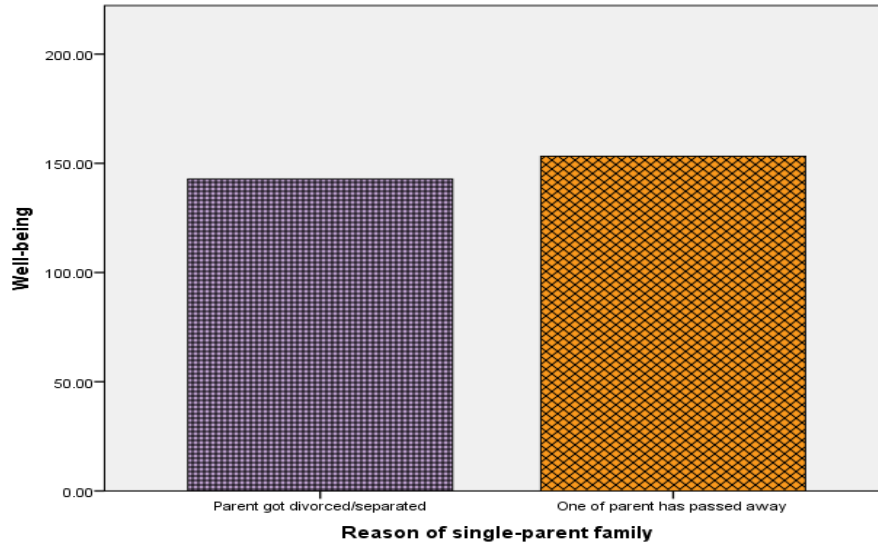
living in nuclear, joint and single-parent family structure. Individuals living in joint family structure has the highest wellbeing score then comes the individuals of single-parent family structure and individuals living in nuclear family system has the lowest level of well-being. There is no significant difference between the well-being of individuals of joint and single-parent family structure but the wellbeing of individuals from nuclear family has significant difference with other family structures.

Figure 3: Individuals from single parent family and their well-being



There were 30 individuals who belonged to single-parent family structure in this study. The above graph indicates that the individuals who are living with their father have the higher level of wellbeing then comes the individuals who are living with their mother and the well-being of individuals who are living with guardian other than father or mother have the lower level of wellbeing as compared to the individuals who are living with father or mother.

Figure 4: Reason of single parent family and well-being of individuals



The above graph shows the well-being of individuals of single-parent family structure. The individuals whose one parent has passed away has higher level of well-being than individuals whose parents got divorced or separated.

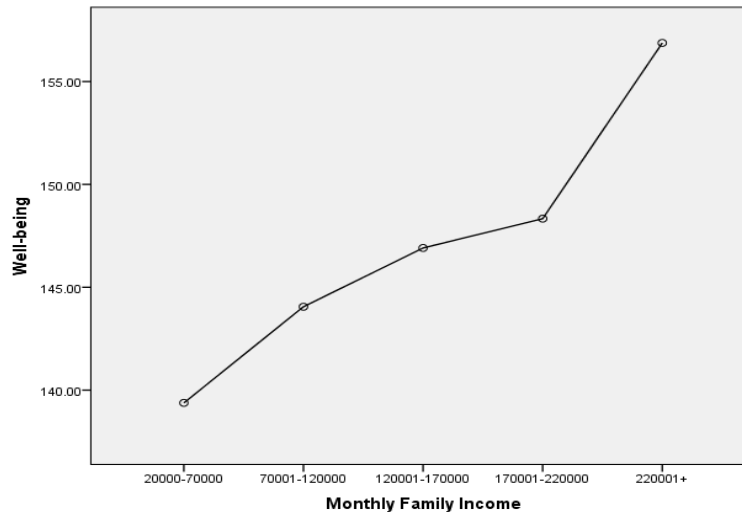
**Statistical Analysis**



**One way ANOVA**

One way ANOVA was applied to see the difference of relationship of monthly family income of individuals and its effect on well-being. The figure below indicates that there is a significant difference between the groups of individuals with 20000-70000 monthly income and more than 220001 monthly income. Figure shows that well-being of individuals is higher with monthly family income above 220001 as compared to the well-being of individuals with monthly family income between 20000-70000.

Figure 5: Graph of monthly family income and well-being



## **DISCUSSION**

Family structure is very important in a person's life. An individual learns core values of life from his family and those teachings molds him in either good or a bad way. Family is the first and most important agent of socialization and it has greater impact on individuals as well as society.

This study shows that family structure has greater impact on an individual's well-being. Prior studies also shows that family structure is very important for a person's well-being and changes in the family arrangements also changes the family ties and affect a person's wellness (MECE, 2015). Well-being is a broader and a complex term that means feeling of goodness, feeling good about oneself and the environment in which he lives. Firstly, family provides the environment to a child whether conducive or not it will influence on a child's mental health and he will behave accordingly. Waldfogel, (2010) shows the same results, the research indicates that social behavior of children is affected by the structure of the family and child's mental and psychological well-being have the influence of parents. This research weighs well-being on six indicators which includes autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The results of this study indicates that all these indicators are being affected by family arrangements and family structure. Individuals have positive relations in life when their family structure is stable, almost half of the respondents agreed with the statement that most people see them as loving and affectionate. Almost one half of the respondents agreed that they enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends, most of the respondents agreed that they trust their friends and their friends trust them. Former researchers also quoted the same results that individuals from stable family arrangements have positive relations in life and they share a sense of belongingness with family members or friends because they learn it from their family. When family members have close ties then children will automatically adopt it. When children are surrounded by people who are loving and affectionate towards them, they will start building close relationships in their lives too. Children seek those qualities that family is teaching them, when

family members treat everyone with respect, behave decently, offer a healthy communication, the child will learn the same things. This study indicates that most of the respondents are autonomous about their decisions in their lives, they agreed that their own thinking is important for them and they have confidence in their opinions even if they are contrary to the general consensus. So, they get self confidence from their family, when individuals grow up in a stable household they know about the support system that boosts their confidence (Mlodzienski, 2019).

This study indicates that most of the individuals have a sense of direction and purpose in life, individuals agreed that they are not wandering aimlessly in life, they have a set of goals and a purpose in life. Most of the respondents agreed that they are working on their future plans to make them a reality. Prior studies shows similar results that children from good home environment have all the qualities that need a person to flourish in life. When parents feel competent and confident in their ability and create a healthy home environment, it will help the child to go out and face the world. When parents are ambitious about their children's future and success then children will be willing to compete in every step of life and achieve their goals (Children Need Stability To Do Well In Life, 2018). This research shows that family structure have impact on self-acceptance of a person. The results shows that most of the respondents are pleased about their life and feel positive about themselves. Individuals agreed that they like most aspects of their personality, and they feel good about themselves when they compare their lives with friends. Former researches shows similar results that family has a strong influence on child's feeling about his own self and positive family functioning is directly related to higher level of self-esteem in children. When families provide safe environment to children it will enhance their self-value and it influence their personality development. Parents-children healthy relationship plays a key role in psychosocial development of children. High self-acceptance and positive feelings are directly related to parenting style and their bonding (Shi J, 2017). The results of this research shows that family structure has an impact on an individual's personal growth. Most of

the respondents agreed that they try new experiences in life because it challenges a person's perspective about his own self and the world. Most of the respondents agreed that they have improved a lot as a person over the years. Personal growth is very important and being in new situations that expands new horizons because life is a continuous process of learning, changing and growth and mostly respondents agreed in this study.

The results of this study shows that individuals living in joint family structure have the higher level of well-being than individuals living in nuclear family structure. Joint family structure is very common in Pakistan, traditionally people live in joint family systems. In a joint family system, elderly members of the household have respectful position. Responsibilities of the house are distributed in members of the house in a joint family structure and bonding within a family is strong. Elderly people are dependent on their children for every basic need of life and it is more convenient in a joint family system. A study conducted in India shows similar results. The research revealed that mental health and psychological well-being of adolescents living in joint family system is higher than individuals living in nuclear family system and there is a significant difference between adolescent wellbeing of nuclear and joint family system (Panchal, 2013). A research conducted in Pakistan shows that elderly people who are living in a joint family system have better quality of life and they are receiving more social support from their children (Naz S, 2014). The Express Tribune in a survey reported that 67% of Pakistan it means two-third of population prefers to live in a joint family system (Two-thirds of Pakistan prefers joint family system, 2010). Another study shows similar results and stated that children living in joint family system have higher level of psychological well-being than children who belong to nuclear family system (Two-thirds of Pakistan prefers joint family system-, 2010). A research conducted to see the role of family system in the psychological well-being of children reported that psychological well-being of individuals was higher in joint family system in comparison to individuals living in single family system (Gul N, 2017).

In a joint family system, individuals get more care, affection and love from their parents, grandparents and relatives. In a nuclear family system, children get less attention of parents and feel alone because of engagement in other household work and if both parents are working then it becomes even more difficult for parents to give proper attention to their children. One more important finding of this study indicates that well-being of individuals from single-parent family system was also high. These findings are contrary to other researches because results of other researchers reported that children of single-parent family structure are at a greater risk of low level of well-being and they have to face undesirable circumstances in their life (Smith, 2017). Individuals who grow up in a single-parent family have to face unpleasant circumstances in their life as they face developmental problems, get lower grades, face economic hardships, and psychological problems (Brennan, 2021). Children of single-parent family system can also be happy and can be successful in life with extra care and love. Single-parents can raise their children with extra love and can develop strong bonds with their children. According to a report, individuals who belong to single-parent families are on the risk of mental health problems and they are twice as likely to suffer from psychological illness (Batty, 2006). The results of this research shows that male individuals have higher level of well-being as compared to female respondents. Another research shows similar results and they found that men scored higher in autonomy and self-acceptance but this study has some results contrary to the current research and they stated that women respondents scored higher in positive relations and personal growth (M. Pilar Matud, 2019). Another research indicates similar results and their results shows that female respondents have lower psychological well-being than male respondents (Diego Gomez-Baya, 2018). A study conducted in Pakistan shows results that are contrary to the current research and their findings indicated that female participants scored higher on psychological well-being scale than male participants (Gul N, 2017).

Another important finding of this study was that monthly family income had impact on the wellbeing of individuals. The results of the research indicates that individuals whose monthly

family income was in range of 20000-70000 scored lower on well-being scale as compared to individuals whose monthly family income was more than 220001. There was a significant difference of wellbeing score between the individuals of both these groups. Another study found similar results and stated that family income was significantly associated with individual's life satisfaction, happiness, and well-being (Chen, 2016). Another research shows similar results that family income has positive effect on children's emotional well-being and family income is strongly associated with parents' emotional well-being (Wu, 2020). Children well-being is affected through parents' wellbeing so, family income is important in determining well-being of individuals.

## CONCLUSION

Family structure plays a key role in an individual's well-being. Family is the first agent of socialization. A child has his first interaction with his family members and he learns values, rules, attitudes and behaviors from their elders. This study was conducted to see the influence of nuclear family, joint family, and single-parent family on the well-being of individuals. Wellbeing is a complex combination of happiness, health and comfort level. Health is not just absence of disease it means mental health, physical health and emotional health. In this study, six well-being indicators were measured which includes autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The researcher concluded that family structure is playing a significant role in the well-being of individuals. This study concluded that individuals from joint family structure and single-parent family structure have the higher level of well-being than the individuals from nuclear family structure. Well-being of individuals belong to single-parent family structure is higher which is in contrast from prior studies. Another important finding of this research is that male respondents have slightly higher level of well-being than female respondents. The results of this study indicates that monthly family income was strongly associated with well-being of individuals. Individuals from joint family and single-parent

family had a better level of well-being than individuals from nuclear family system. Joint family structure is positively increasing the level of well-being in individuals.

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