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The Influence of Early Childhood Experiences and Family Socioeconomic Status on Big Five Personality Development

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Abstract. Personality development is one of the main subjects in developmental psychology because personality traits affect people's emotions, relationships with others, school life and work life, etc., at all times. Based on the previous studies, both early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status (SES) are related to personality development. However, the combined effect of the above environmental factors on the Big Five personality traits has not been studied in the previous studies. Therefore, this paper will first summarise the relevant literature on the influence of early childhood experiences and family SES on personality development. According to the above studies, supportive parenting, a sense of security, good socioeconomic conditions are generally related to better mental health in childhood, whereas negative childhood experiences and poor socioeconomic conditions can increase risks of various mental disorders. Previous studies have shown that resilience and a supportive social environment can reduce the negative impacts of childhood adversity. In short, this paper shows that the development of personality is influenced by various psychological and social-economic factors, offers practical suggestions for parents, teachers and government agencies, and suggests some directions for further study.

Keywords: Early childhood experiences, family socioeconomic status, Big Five personality traits, personality development, literature review

1. Introduction

Personality development has long been one of the main subjects of developmental and personality psychology because individual differences in personality are related to behaviour, emotional life, relationships with others and life outcomes throughout one's life. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism are the five factors in the Big Five model that have been used to study differences among individuals in personality and to predict various results in education, work and life [1]. Therefore, in recent years, more attention has been paid to identifying the environmental factors affecting personality development in childhood.

Among these reasons, early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status (SES) have gained considerable attention. Previous studies have shown that parenting styles, attachment relationships and adverse childhood experiences can all affect a child's emotional regulation, social skills and behaviour [2]. Family SES affects children's access to educational resources, parenting quality, healthcare and other developmental opportunities; thus, it can also influence the formation

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of personality [3, 4]. Although most of the above studies have indicated that the environment influences personality development, there are still differences in the degree, direction and duration of these effects. Some scholars have studied the long-term effects of childhood experiences, and others believe that personality development results from the interaction of biological endowment and environment. Recently, very few studies have investigated in detail how early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status together affect the development of the Big Five personality traits.

Therefore, the following paper will first review the relevant research in recent years. Based on the above, through comparison and synthesis of previous research results, this paper will present what is known now and what still needs to be studied.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to review the existing literature on the impact of early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status on the Big Five personality traits. First, this paper will present some basic information on childhood experiences, socioeconomic status and the Big Five personality factors. Then, it will review the previous studies on the impact of early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status, compare their results, discuss current deficiencies, and finally offer some practical suggestions and research directions.

2. Key concepts and definitions

2.1. Early childhood experiences

Early childhood experiences refer to the environmental, social and emotional events that children encounter in their first few years of life. The above experiences can be classified as relational experiences (e.g., parenting and attachment), developmental resources (e.g., education and cognitive stimulation), and adverse exposures (e.g., family conflict, neglect and trauma). Developmental psychologists believe that early childhood is a crucial period for the development of children's cognition, emotions and social skills. Therefore, the experiences of early childhood can have prolonged impacts on personality and mental health.

Researchers have listed some typical categories of early childhood experiences. Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles can all affect a child's emotional regulation and social skills. Attachment relationships are also a problem here. Children who have formed a secure attachment to their caregivers are more likely to build good relationships with others and be emotionally stable in life. On the other hand, insecure attachment is associated with anxiety, low self-esteem and other emotional problems. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to abuse, neglect and family dysfunction; they are also associated with poor mental health and problems in adaptive personality development. Therefore, the first days of life lay the foundation for future personality formation.

2.2. Family Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) refers to the social and economic position of a family. The three general measures are family income, the education level of parents, and their jobs [3]. The above will affect the resources and opportunities for the development of children.

Children of affluent families generally have better access to education, medical care and extracurricular activities, but the actual advantages they enjoy are also affected by family relationships, the extent of parental involvement and the surrounding community environment. Parents with higher education are also more likely to be able to learn good parenting skills and

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provide intellectual enrichment for their children. Children from lower-income families may face financial stress, lack educational resources and be more exposed to environmental problems; therefore, Scholars believes that their temperament and personality development are affected by parenting and the family environment rather than just by money [5]. Thus, SES should be regarded as an intricate environment that shapes the developmental experiences of children.

2.3. Big Five Personality Traits

The Big Five Personality Traits, also known as the Five-Factor Model (FFM), are among the most widely used models of personality. A general model of human nature has been put forward to explain the differences among people in terms of personality, and it has been tested extensively around the world [6]. Soto and Tackett proposed that the five main types of personality are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism [1]. Openness is about imagination and curiosity; Conscientiousness is about being organised and self-disciplined; Extraversion refers to being outgoing and sociable; Agreeableness is about being kind and cooperative; Neuroticism means being anxious or moody.

Due to its excellent reliability in various cultures and at different ages, the Big Five model has been widely used in developmental and personality psychology. Research has shown that although personality traits are relatively stable over time, they continue to change in childhood and adolescence. Early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic conditions are among the reasons for the individual differences in these traits [1]. Therefore, the Big Five will be used as an analytical tool in this paper to study the influence of children's environments on their personalities.

3. The influence of early childhood experiences on personality development

Early childhood is generally considered a time when people develop their personalities because they are growing rapidly in terms of cognition, emotion and social skills. Researchers generally believe that the quality of children's early experiences is positively correlated with the development of their personalities at later stages. Most of the previous research on the environment affecting personality development has focused on parenting styles, attachment relationships and adverse childhood experiences. Although the research methods and subjects of these studies vary, they all indicate that supportive childhood environments help children develop good personalities and negative experiences increase the likelihood of having maladaptive personality traits.

One of the more frequently mentioned reasons is parenting style. Parenting influences children's emotions, behaviour, social skills and other aspects of their lives, which are related to the Big Five personality traits. Children who grow up in a warm and caring family are generally more confident, emotionally stable and socially adept. Stronger self-regulation can promote conscientiousness, cooperation is associated with agreeableness, social confidence is related to extraversion, and emotional stability can reduce neuroticism. Harsh or inconsistent parenting can lead to behavioural problems, emotional insecurity and poor self-regulation; thus, there is a higher risk of high neuroticism and low conscientiousness.

Different Parenting Styles have been associated with various levels of child development. Generally speaking, warm and responsive authoritative parenting with reasonable discipline is associated with the best psychological development for children. Children brought up by authoritative parents tend to be more responsible, cooperative and emotionally stable. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting is too controlling and lacks emotional support, so it has been associated with low self-esteem, high anxiety and reduced willingness to try new things. Permissive

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parenting can foster creativity, but it generally does not help children learn self-discipline; neglectful parenting is also linked to poorer mental health. Although researchers vary in the extent to which each parenting style affects personality, most have agreed that good parenting generally promotes good psychological development in children.

Attachment relationships between children and their caregivers are also a subject of study. According to the original research by Bowlby, children form a sense of safety in early relationships and are therefore able to cope better with stress in later life [5]. A safe base will help a child cope with distress and explore the world. People with secure attachments are more likely to be able to trust others and have good relationships in life. Generally speaking, the above attributes are associated with high agreeableness, more extraversion and low neuroticism.

Insecure attachment is likely to result in emotional and behavioural problems among children. Children with irregular or unresponsive care often have difficulty regulating their emotions and form unstable relationships. Therefore, they may have a higher level of neuroticism and be less agreeable. Soto and Tackett have proposed that although personality traits are becoming more stable in life, the impact of early attachment on emotional regulation and social skills will persist throughout one's life [1]. Therefore, attachment should be regarded as one of the links between childhood experiences and adult personality.

Besides parenting and attachment, other studies have also looked at the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect, family violence, parental mental illness and household dysfunction. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study has shown that growing up in a stressful or harmful environment can lead to prolonged problems in mental health and development [7].

Personality consequences of adverse childhood experiences vary with the type, time, duration, severity and frequency of such adversity; they are not the same for all cases of adversity. Chua and others have proposed that people who have experienced more negative events in their youth are generally less conscientious, agreeable and emotionally stable, but more neurotic [2]. Therefore, it is expected that a stressful childhood will adversely affect a child's personality and all-round development. However, not all scholars believe that childhood adversity affects personality in the same way.

Chua and others [2] have proposed that although adverse childhood experiences can influence the development of personality, individual differences and environmental factors also affect how children react to early problems. Supportive caregivers, a positive school environment, and good relationships with peers are all protective factors against the harm of stress in childhood. Therefore, it can be concluded that both negative experiences and the capacity to cope with difficulties in life have shaped children's personalities. Therefore, childhood adversity should not be considered an unavoidable cause of poor mental health in life. Although most studies have found that early childhood experiences affect the development of personality, there are some differences among them.

Another is that genetics and the environment do not affect all individuals equally. Genetic predispositions and childhood environments may work together; for example, a child's temperament can affect how caregivers react to it, and repeated responses from the environment will change this temperament over time [1]. believed that personality development results from all these interactions between biological factors and environmental factors, not just one or the other. At present, the interactionist view has been widely accepted in developmental psychology.

Another is a research way. Cross-sectional and retrospective designs are not suitable for causal inference because the present personality can affect one's memories of childhood, and reports on

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early experiences and personality are often collected from the same person at the same time. Over the course of time, more data will be gathered through observation of people. Longitudinal studies are usually expensive and time-consuming, so the number of subjects is relatively small. Different cultures can also have different parenting styles and ways of showing emotion, so what is done in one country may not be applicable in another. Most studies have shown that children's early lives affect how they develop as people. Parenting style, attachment security and childhood adversity are all reasons for differences in people's Big Five personality traits.

Although researchers have not yet determined the proportion of genes and environment, most believe that a supportive and stable childhood environment can promote the all-round growth of children, and adverse experiences increase the risk of problems. Based on the above results, the present study this paper have obtained some theoretical support for understanding the effect of early life experiences on personality and recognized that personality development at any age is influenced by many factors.

4. The impact of Family Socioeconomic Status on personality development

Family socioeconomic status (SES) is an external factor that can influence the psychological development and personality formation of children by affecting their access to resources, stability and other opportunities. SES refers to the social and economic background of a family, which is generally indicated by parents' education level, family income and occupation. Previous studies have found that SES does not directly affect personality but rather influences the development of personality by altering children's living environments, educational resources, parenting styles and stress levels. Therefore, to understand how SES affects the development of personality, researchers need to consider all the different ways that socioeconomic conditions influence children's lives.

One of the reasons for the link between SES and personality development is family resources. Previous studies have shown that different family resources, parents' investment in their children, education opportunities and exposure to environmental stress affect a child's development [8]. Children from affluent families are more likely to have access to good schools, healthcare, enrichment courses and supportive study spaces. The above resources can give children more chances to develop their cognitive functions, social skills and emotional regulation, and gradually foster personality traits such as open-mindedness, conscientiousness and emotional stability. Olson and others have shown that socio-economic status (SES) is related to various differences in the brains of children, such as learning, emotion regulation and self-control [3]. Since these attributes are in line with the five-factor model of personality, good socioeconomic conditions may indirectly result in relatively high levels of conscientiousness, open-mindedness and emotional stability.

Parental education is another factor of SES that affects the development of children's personalities. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to have learned about child development through various channels and are more likely to use supportive parenting. They can stimulate their interest in learning, encourage them to think independently, and cultivate a spirit of exploration. The above experiences can help to foster the traits of openness and conscientiousness. Parents with lower levels of education may face more economic and social difficulties and are therefore less able to provide stable emotional support and developmental opportunities for their children. Parents' education is not to be considered a direct reason for the children's personality differences, but rather one of many factors that shape their development environment.

A family's income can affect the emotional growth of children as well. economic resources affect the stability and quality of life for children. Families with more money can generally afford to provide safe houses, better education for their children and other activities. These experiences can

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help people develop good social skills and emotional stability, so they are usually more agreeable and less neurotic. Financial problems will cause sustained stress and insecurity for the children, affecting their other opportunities. Strickhouser and Sutin have shown that the socioeconomic conditions of a family and neighbourhood affect the development of temperament during childhood and adolescence; thus, economic environments can influence people's emotions and behaviours over time [4].

Another way that SES can influence personality development is through parenting behaviour, specifically the consistency, warmth and responsiveness of parent-child interaction. Economic problems can make parents more stressed and thus affect their time with their children. Parents who are in a bad financial situation may have less emotional energy for caring for their children and responding to their emotions properly. As a result, children who grow up in disadvantaged environments are more likely to develop high levels of neuroticism and low levels of conscientiousness. The Association between SES and personality is not necessary. Many children from low-income families are more resilient after receiving emotional support, stable guidance and meaningful learning opportunities from their parents, schools, communities and other protective environments. Research has been conducted on how neighbourhood socioeconomic conditions affect personality development.

Besides the family's social and economic background, other places in children's lives also matter. Nieuwenhuis and others examined the association between neighbourhood deprivation and the Big Five personality factors and found that people in deprived areas showed some differences in personality [9]. Children in poor areas may have less access to safe places for leisure, less support from society, fewer educational resources and other benefits; thus, they are more vulnerable to environmental stress and may experience harm to their emotional and social growth. Although many studies have shown that socioeconomic status is related to the development of personality, the extent and nature of this relationship differ among cultures and societies. Support from the family and community can help alleviate the problems of poverty for some people. Cultural values affect parenting and expectations, so the effect of SES on personality development may vary in different countries. Lechner et al. found that differences in Big Five personality traits between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds were relatively small, while the relationship between Conscientiousness and academic achievement varied according to parental socioeconomic status [10].

A limitation of the above studies is that they have used only general indices for SES and have not examined the individual effects of income, parental education, occupational status, parenting style and stress on personality development. Many studies have also used self-reported data for SES and personality traits, so there may be some bias. In the future, longitudinal studies will be conducted, and all kinds of information from parents, teachers, behaviour observation, etc., will be gathered to better understand how socioeconomic conditions affect children's personalities at different times.

In short, previous studies have shown that family socioeconomic status affects a child's personality indirectly by changing the availability of resources, parenting style, educational opportunities and environmental stress. Generally, people with high socioeconomic statuses achieve better development results; however, they are not necessarily worse off in terms of personality development. Personality development is the result of many links among socio-economic conditions, individual traits and protective factors in children's environments.

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5. Discussion and suggestions

Based on the above research, it can be concluded that both early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status influence personality development. Research on early experiences shows that parenting styles, attachment relationships and childhood adversity are important factors, and studies on SES have found that family resources, education and the social environment are also influential. Taken together, the above results indicate that personality development is the result of many factors and is constantly shaped by a person's life experiences and the environment.

Another finding of the above studies is that early childhood experiences and socioeconomic status (SES) are often correlated in shaping personality, and supportive relationships can offer some protection against the negative effects of low SES. For example, the socioeconomic situation may affect the kind of parenting children receive; financial pressure can change how parents behave and feel. At the same time, positive parenting and a sense of security can reduce the harm of socioeconomic disadvantage. Thus, the support network can provide emotional support and help young children cope with difficulties in life.

However, the current literature also has some deficiencies. Most studies have looked at children's experiences or socioeconomic status in isolation and have not considered their interaction. Children's development is influenced by many factors simultaneously, so in the future, more comprehensive models that study the joint effects of family relationships, economic conditions and social environments will need to be built.

Second, most of the previous research has focused on Western countries and thus is not widely applicable elsewhere. Since cultural values affect parenting, education systems and social expectations, more cross-cultural studies are needed to learn how different places in the world foster children's personalities. Another is the problem of measuring personality development. The Big Five model is a good reference, but people have other traits and are not fixed over time. Some studies only observe personality at a particular time and do not record changes in development, so they cannot be distinguished from temporary circumstances or other known reasons. Research in the future will be longitudinal studies to follow how personality changes with age. Therefore, it will be known how early life experiences and socio-economic background influence changes in personality over time. Based on the above results, the following practical suggestions are made. To help children develop good mental health, parents should also create a happy and loving family atmosphere. Promoting children's independence, offering steady support, creating a safe environment, and establishing good relationships can all help them develop emotionally and socially. Schools can offer extra support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the form of learning materials, emotional support activities, group activities and other mentoring to boost their confidence, sense of responsibility and social skills. Therefore, there will be fewer developmental disparities due to income differences. The government will also provide some support for the children's growth. Increase the number of people who are deprived of education, health and family support due to their socioeconomic background. Providing resources for families in poor health may help create more equal development opportunities and improve the mental health of children. In short, according to the above studies, personality development is the result of various factors in early life and family economic conditions. A good childhood environment, stable relationships and sufficient resources help children develop normally; conversely, problems at home or in society can harm their growth. Environmental problems are not the sole determinants of children's future lives; resilience and protective factors can also affect this. In the future, more research will be conducted to explore the

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intricate connections among biological, psychological and social factors in the development of personality.

6. Conclusion

The effects of early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status (SES) on the development of the Big Five personality traits have been studied. It investigated how different childhood environments lead to various differences in people's personalities and showed that both family life and economic conditions in childhood are important factors.

Based on the above studies, the early life of children, such as parenting styles, attachment with family, and adverse experiences, all affect their personality. Generally speaking, supportive parenting and a sense of security are positively correlated with high levels of conscientiousness, agreeableness, open-mindedness, emotional stability, etc.; on the other hand, negative childhood experiences are associated with an increased risk of neuroticism and poor psychological adjustment.

Family SES can affect how a child is educated, the quality of their care, and other growth conditions. Socioeconomic disadvantages are associated with higher risks of development problems, but good family relationships, supportive schools and communities, etc., can help reduce these problems and improve children's resilience. Based on the above, this paper proposes that parents, teachers and society should cooperate to build a good upbringing environment for children. Parents should provide stable and responsive caregiving. Schools should provide equal educational and emotional support for children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Increase the availability of family support services and educational resources for people. The above work will help people grow up healthy and reduce the gap in living standards.

In short, this paper introduced some psychological and social factors in the development of personality. Based on the evidence of early childhood experiences and family socioeconomic status, this literature review will explore all aspects of the environment shaping personality. These results will add new material to the field of theory and help to improve the health of children and guide future research in developmental and personality psychology.

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