Individual Personality Traits and Communicative Behavior in Adoptive and Non-Adoptive Families

Bibiana D. Koh, Ascan F. Koerner, Laurel Davis, & Martha A. Rueter

**Introduction**
- The most consistent finding in studies examining family communication is characterized as less warm and more conflictual compared with non-adoptive families (Lansford et al., 2001; Rosnati & Marta, 1997; Rueter, et al. 2009). However, research examining this difference is limited.

**Theoretical Frameworks**
- Person-environment transactional theory (Caspi et al., 1987, 1988; Scarr & McCartney, 1983)
- Actor-partner interdependence model (APIM; Kenny & Cook, 1999; Kenny et al., 2006; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010).

**The Present Study**
- The goal of the present study is to understand how parent and adolescent individual personality traits and adoption status independently contribute to individuals’ communicative behavior (directed toward other family members) in adoptive compared to non-adoptive families.

**Participants**
- Data for this study were from the Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study (SIBS; McGue et al., 2007). Participating families at intake (N = 617) had at least one parent and two adolescent siblings (M = 14.9 years, SD = 1.9). The present study used data from the mothers (M = 45.56, SD = 4.23), fathers (M = 48.23, SD = 4.42), elder (M = 16.14, SD = 1.51), and younger sibling (M = 13.8, SD = 1.6). In 384 (308) families, the elder (younger) sibling was adopted (International: n = 253 (203), 67% (65%) Asian). In 231 (208) families, the elder (younger) sibling was the biological offspring of both parents. Two adoptive families were removed from the sample due to ineligibility resulting in a final sample of 615 families.

**Results**
- **Conformity Model**
  - **Mother-Father**
  - **Father-Elder (Younger)**

**Discussion**
- Overall, findings from this study supported complex associations among personality, communication, and adoption status.

**Future Directions**
- Prospective studies should measure additional traits (e.g. adolescent social potency, absorption, and social closeness).
- Present study was cross-sectional; future investigations should establish direction of effects.
- Inquiries into ramifications of dyadic relationship patterns (i.e. contrast, compensatory) on family relationships in adoptive and non-adoptive families.
- Implications of communicative behavior in adoptive families (i.e. adoptive mothers warm, responsive, and adopted adolescents less warm, responsive).