



The Impact of Growing Up as a Single-Child vs. Non-Single-Child on Psychological Traits and Decision-Making

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single-child consumers



non-single-child consumers

Relatively more emotional support

Relatively more companionship

Relatively more financial support

Cognition resources

Time resources

Financial resources

Relatively less emotional support

Relatively less companionship

Relatively less financial support

Q1: Differences in Scarcity mindset?

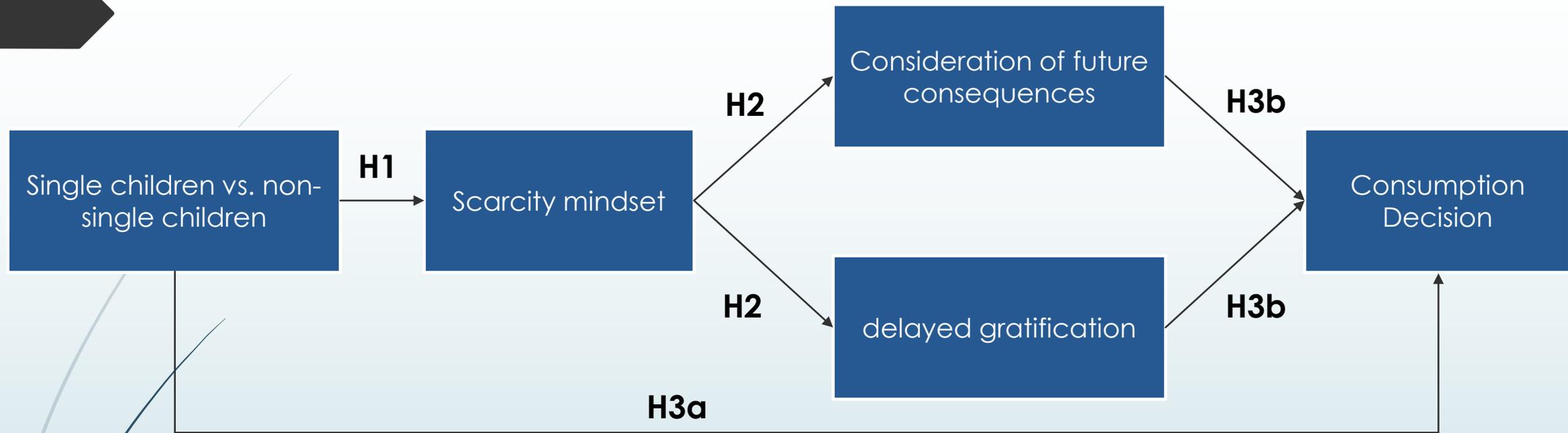
Q2: Differences in other psychological traits and consumption decisionsg?

Differences between single and non-single children

- Single children exhibit higher levels of creative and intelligence (Gaynor and Runco 1992; Yang et al., 2017)
- Single children outperform their peers in academic achievement (Liu et al., 2010).
- Single children face certain challenges, including tendencies towards self-centeredness, social awkwardness, and issues with interpersonal relationships due to the heightened parental attention they receive (Cai et al. 2012; Cameron, 2013).
- Single children benefit from greater financial and human capital investment from their parents (Shi et al., 2021) and they receive more emotional resources, such as increased attention and higher expectations from their parents (Cai et al. 2012; Li et al. 2021).

Scarcity mindset

- Scarcity mindset, wherein individuals feel that they are always lacking essential resources (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013; Sarpong et al., 2023)
- Limiting cognitive bandwidth, reducing individuals' ability to process information effectively (Shah et al., 2015; Schilbach et al., 2016) and impairing self-control (Roux et al., 2015).
- Absolute versus relative scarcity (Viswanathan, Madhubalan, and Ashok K. Lalwani, 2020)



H1: Non-single-child consumers have a higher level of scarcity mindset compared to single-child consumers.

H2: Non-single-child consumers, compared to single-child consumers, give less consideration to future consequences and are less likely to delay gratification due to their higher level of scarcity mindset.

H3a: Non-single-child consumers, compared to single-child consumers, prefer to allocate more resources to the present rather the future.

H3b: The effect is mediated by consideration of future consequences and delayed gratification.

Study 1: Survey

- 335 Chinese college students (Credamo: M age = 22.28, 69.7% female)
- 32.2% participants (N = 116) grew up as single children
- Scale of future consequences consideration (Hevey et al., 2010); Scale of delayed gratification tendency (Hoerger et al., 2011); Scarcity mindset (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013)
- Resource scarcity mindset: non-single children (M = 5.26) exhibited a significantly higher level than single children (M = 4.49; $F(1, 359) = 23.518, p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.55$)
- Future consequences consideration: non-single children (M = 4.93) showed significantly less consideration for future consequences compared to single children (M = 5.74, $F(1, 359) = 47.669, p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.78$)
- Delayed gratification tendency: non-single children (M = 5.85) were less likely to delay gratification than single children (M = 6.03; $F(1, 359) = 4.886, p = 0.028$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$).
- Resource scarcity mindset significantly mediated the effect of participant type on both future consequences consideration (95%CI: [0.0012, 0.1252], effect size = 0.0539) and delayed gratification tendency (95%CI: [0.0076, 0.0928], effect size = 0.0434).

Study 2: Single factor (resources allocation: today vs. tomorrow) within-subjects

- 300 participants (Credamo: M age = 31.02, 67.7% female)
- 42% participants (N = 126) grew up as single children
- Nine sushi coupons to be redeemed over two days (today vs. tomorrow)
- Non-single children allocated less sushi coupons (M = 4.267) to tomorrow compared to single children (N = 4.46; $F(1, 299) = 3.845, p = 0.051, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.23$).
- Mediation role: future consequences consideration (95%CI: [0.0227, 0.1338], effect size = 0.0716) and delayed gratification tendency (95%CI: [0.0070, 0.1080], effect size = 0.0466).



Academic contribution

- **Relative scarcity mindset**
- **Differences in psychological traits and consumption decisions**

Future Study

- **More consumption scenarios and decisions**
- **Tailor-made Marketing strategies**