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Gender Composition of Siblings: A Study of Adult Sibling Relationship and Self-Esteem in Middle Aged Adults



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Abstract

The main objective of this work is to study gender composition (mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings) of middle aged adults in relation to adult sibling relationship and self esteem. Ex-post facto design has been adopted to study the sample of 300 middle aged adults-140 mixed sex siblings (brothers and sisters as siblings) and 160 same sex siblings (only brothers or only sisters as siblings), of the age group 40-65 years selected through Quota sampling technique. Adult sibling relationship and self-esteem was assessed through 'Adult sibling Relationship Scale' (S. Nandwana and Katoch); while 'Self-Esteem Scale' was measured by (R.N. Singh and Ankita Srivastava, 2004). The result reveals that there was no significant difference between mixed -sex and same -sex dyads on adult sibling relationship and on its various dimensions but shows higher mean score on its dimensions i.e. (contact, emotional closeness and confiding) Whereas, result exhibits significant difference for gender composition (mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings) on self-esteem at 0.05 level.

Keywords: Adult Sibling Relationship, Self-Esteem, Gender Composition of Siblings (Mixed Sex Siblings and Same Sex Siblings), Middle Aged Adults.

Introduction

The sibling relationship is one of the most enduring relationships throughout a person's life (Dew, Balandin, & Llewellyn, 2008). Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important the course of a life time. Sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity throughout a child's life time and likely to be the longest relationships the most people experience. Sibling relationship last longer than other family relationships and are often characterized by higher levels of interaction shared experiences and support. Gender composition of the dyad may affect the timing and sequence of life transitions (Bedford et al., 2000; Conley, 2004). Mouw (2005) found no gender differences in the five pathways to adulthood between individuals from different families, there may be differences between brothers and sisters within the same family. maturity of individual siblings (Stewart et al., 2001), decreased daily interaction (Cicirelli, 1996; White, 2001), as well as ethnic and cultural factors (Riedman & White, 1996; Suggs, 1989). In addition, structural variables, such as sibling age, gender composition, birth order, and family characteristics affect relationship properties such as satisfaction, support, or competition (see Connidis, 2001; Riggio, 2006; Sullaway, 1996).

The sibling relationship is one in which a sibling is able to express emotions of loving and liking toward their sibling, while simultaneously engaging in aggressive behaviors, competition and rivalry (Rittenour, Myers & Brann, 2007). The sisters-sisters relationships analyze in terms of their intimacy and communication. Thus the factors comprise intimacy in these relationships, as well as the ways in which this intimacy is communicated between the sisters.

The handfuls of studies that have examined age differences in self-esteem during old age have produced somewhat conflicting findings. Several cross-sectional studies showed that middle-aged adults had higher self-esteem than did older adults (Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001). In contrast, Gove et al. (1989) found that their oldest cohort (age 75 and older) had the highest level of self-esteem, and several studies have failed to show any significant age differences. Only two longitudinal studies have examined self-esteem in old age; one reported no change over a 2-year period for individuals aged 58 years to 64 years (Reitzes, Mutran, & Fernandez, 1996), and the other reported a decline from age 65 years to age 75 years.

Reflecting this lack of consistency, reviews of the literature do not agree about whether self-esteem increases, decreases, or remains stable in old age.

People with high self-esteem are successful in their careers but so are many people who have low self-esteem. The source of Self-Esteem makes us believe that it is very important for life successful. Studies have generally shown small, gradual increases in self-esteem across adulthood. Several cross-sectional studies have shown that young adults have lower self-esteem than do middle-aged adults (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006; Gove et al., 1989; Two longitudinal studies have also shown increases in self-esteem from age 43 years to age 52 years (Helson & Wink, 1992) and from the college years to the 40s (R. E. Roberts & Bengtson, 1996).

Aim of the Study

Sibling relationship fulfils different needs and sibling bond becomes more salient in later life as a source of emotional support. Mid adulthood is defined to include those years, when a person no longer resides with his or her parents and siblings. Siblings become actively involved with his or her family of procreation or economic endeavors. With advanced age, support from siblings becomes more important. The sibling role potentially has the longest duration of any human relation (Cicirelli, 1980b). Over 80% of American children grow up in a family that includes siblings (Mussen, Conger, and Kagan, 1974), and in late adulthood 79% have living siblings (Harris and Associates, 1975).

Siblings are always there in support of each other in their good and bad time and also share their feelings, sorrows, emotions, societal and family related issues as well as find appropriate guidance or solution with each other whenever needed.

The aim of the present study was to examine and compare the quality of the sibling relations among mixed sex sibling (brothers and sisters as siblings), and same sex sibling pairs (only brothers or only sisters as siblings) with respect to the interactions and differences relating to physical and psychological issues. The study complied to seek the differences on the sibling relationship and their self-esteem.

Research Design and Methodology

Objectives

1. To compare the middle aged adults of mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings on adult sibling relationship and its dimensions.
2. To compare the middle aged adults of mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings on self-esteem.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a significant difference amongst middle aged adults of mixed sex and same sex siblings on the dimensions of Adult sibling relationship.
2. There will be a significant difference amongst middle aged adults of mixed sex and same sex siblings on self-esteem.

Variable

Independent Variable

Gender composition of Siblings-

1. Mixed Sex Siblings (brothers and sisters as Siblings)

2. Same Sex Siblings (only brothers or only sisters as siblings).

Dependent Variable

1. Adult Sibling Relationship
2. Self-Esteem.

Tools

Adult Sibling Relationship Scale by S. Nandwana and Katoch

This scale consists 50 items divided into 4 dimensions- contact, emotional closeness, confiding and conflict.

Self-Esteem Scale by R.N.Singh and Ankita Srivastava (2004), test consists of 20 items and each item is accompanied by five alternative response categories, namely very much, much, average, low and very low.

Sample

Quota sampling technique was used for selection of 300 subjects (140 mixed sex siblings and 160 same sex siblings) falling within the age range-40-65 years.

Results and Discussion

The main objective the data was processed with the help of statistical technique using mean, S.D and 't' which are represented in tables.

Table 1- Mean S.D. and 't' Value for Mixed Sex Sibling and Same Sex Sibling on the Dimensions Adult Sibling Relationship. (N=300)

Dimensions of Adult Sibling Relationship Scale	Mixed Sex Siblings (140)		Same Sex Siblings (160)		t-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Contact	26.25	4.03	27.43	4.31	-2.43
Emotional Closeness	26.03	5.07	26.19	4.28	-.292
Confiding	43.86	2.79	44.32	2.76	-1.43
Conflict	35.31	5.39	34.38	5.25	1.50
Total- Adult Sibling Relationship Scale	131.46	11.62	132.33	11.72	-.646

(**) Highly Significant at .01 Level, (*) Significant at .05 Level

Table 1 exhibit higher mean score of total adult sibling relationship for same sex siblings with its various dimensions that adults having same sex sibling obtained higher mean score for contact, emotional closeness and confiding whereas adults of mixed sex sibling were found higher mean score in conflict. On analyzing the t-value, the result of the study does not found significant difference between adults of same sex and mixed sex sibling on adult sibling relationship and its various dimensions.

Floyd & Morman, (2006) found that if there are many conflicts within the sibling relationship, due to an inability to dissolve the sibling stratum, siblings are more likely to maintain their relationship, with significant amounts of conflict. Ponzetti and James (1997) found that the level of closeness felt between siblings can have positive mental health effects, such as reducing feelings of loneliness. Although siblings may affect each other's cognitive, emotional, social, and identity development, the sex of the sibling can

greatly affect the degree of influence and closeness between siblings.

Figure 1: Mean for mixed sex sibling and same sex sibling on the dimensions Adult Sibling Relationship.

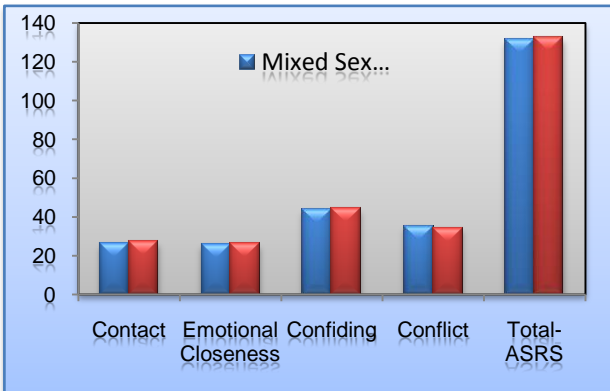


Table 2 Mean S.D. and 't' Value for Mixed Sex Sibling and Same Sex Sibling on Self-Esteem (N=300)

Variable	Mixed Sex Siblings (140)		Same Sex Siblings (160)		t-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Self-Esteem	71.01	5.65	71.02	4.18	-.019*

(**) Highly Significant at .01 level, (*) Significant at .05 level

Table 2 depicts that adults having same sex sibling obtained higher mean score than mixed sex sibling. The 't' value of total self-esteem for mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings found significant relation at .05 level. This result shows that middle aged adults of mixed sex sibling and same sex sibling differ with each other.

White & Riedmann (1992), Women (sister-sister) are thought to engage in intimate relationship with they are sibling and family more frequently than men. That brother-brother, sister-sister, and mixed-sex sibling relationships believe change the level of closeness between them. If gender compositions (mixed sex sibling and same sex sibling) had close good intimate relationship with each other than it is understood that they are having healthy self-esteem. And the above table shows that same sex siblings score higher means brother-brother and sister-sister are having healthy self-esteem.

Figure 2: Mean for Mixed Sex Sibling and Same Sex Sibling on Self-Esteem.



Conclusion

It is concluded that present study reveals no significant difference for mixed -sex versus same -sex dyads on adult sibling relationship and on its various dimensions but adults having sex same siblings (only brothers or only sisters as siblings) scored more on adult sibling relationship and on its dimensions (contact, emotional closeness and confiding). Whereas, for gender composition (mixed sex siblings and same sex siblings) on self-esteem result exhibits significant difference at 0.05 level, which shows that healthy adult sibling relationship boosts the self-esteem of the person as well as helps in maintaining the decent behavior among the siblings.

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