

A STUDY ON LEVELS OF DOMINANCE IN A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND TOLERANCE FOR DISAGREEMENT IN ONLY CHILD

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Abstract

The sphere of influence in an individual's life is his family, the number of people in the family, the environment that the individual grows up in affects their behavioral patterns. The children raised without siblings are tend to be more authoritative and also display lower levels of agreeableness. Here arises the need to do a study that focuses on the levels of dominance in only child in a romantic relationship and the tolerance for disagreement in the only child. Dominance was measured using the 32-item Dominance Scale (for relationship research) (Hamby, 1996). The Dominance Scale (for relationship research) measures 3 facets of a dominant partner: Authority- about being the boss, Restrictiveness - about restricting one's partner, Disparagement - about undervaluing one's partner. Tolerance for disagreement was measured using the 15-item Tolerance for Disagreement Scale (TFD) (Teven, Richmond & McCroskey, 1998), the Scale was used to measure the degree to which an individual can tolerate other people disagreeing with what the individual believes to be true. The study was conducted in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The sample consisted of 50 individuals without siblings who were in a relationship/ engaged/ married and 50 individuals with siblings who were in a relationship/engaged/married. It is a quantitative study using the purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods. The results show a significant difference among Individuals without siblings and individuals with siblings in terms of dimensions of Dominance in a relationship which are Authority ($t=6.026$), Restrictiveness ($t=2.874$), Disparagement ($t=2.183$), and Tolerance for disagreement ($t= 3.929$).

Key Words: *Dominance of only child in a relationship, tolerance, disagreement.*

Introduction

Dominance

What is dominance? It is the disposition of an individual to assert control in dealing with others. Dominance is a negatively viewed trait, and it is a trait that plays an important role in psychological studies about partner violence (Shamby, 1996).

Analysts are till date trying to recognize the authority in the families and who should make the decisions and who should hold the authority, the phenomenon of acquiring and dominance is a historical event and are considered both mentally and practically. The meaning of dominance in society is not yet clear. The desire for power and its accessibility is one of the most important issues in the families. In more traditional societies, the power and authority of decision-making was an important phenomenon in the family and most often it belonged to the men where as in the contemporary societies, gender roles in family in not convincing any more. However the term “decision making” is used by many scholars for dominance in families. The question on who holds authority, it specifically refers to decision making in families. Moreover, the degree of patriarchy in families can be determined through the criterion of authority among couples (Sarookhani, 2005).

Dominance In A Romantic Relationship

A new conceptualization of dominance has been offered (Hamby, 1996) that further explicates the links between dominance and partner violence (Hamby, Sherry. (1996). Violence and Victims). Hamby (1996) defines dominance as any attempts that a life partner in a relationship makes to take control over the other partner. Dominance in romantic relationship is an important but underappreciated phenomenon. A person who behaves dominantly is perceived as assertive, self-confident, forceful, and competent (Wiggins, 1979).

How dominance has negative impact on a relationship?

Dominance is linked to lower relationship satisfaction because a partner's dominance can make one feel unhappy and less autonomous. Dominant behavior has also been related to lower quality romantic relationships (Gentiana Sadikaj, D. S. Mokowitz, David C. Zuroff, 2016). Having a dominant partner affects a

person's self-esteem. Research on close relationships has documented a link between dominant behavior and lower relationship satisfaction (Cundiff, Smith, Butner, Critchfield, & Nealey-Moore, 2015). The dominant spouse may become dictatorial and abusive.

Three Forms of Dominance

Three different forms of dominance were outlined by Sherry Hamby, (1996) in this new conceptualization: authority, restrictiveness, and disparagement. Perhaps each can best be defined as one kind of deviation from an egalitarian relationship.

- a) Authority - Authority is very closely related to decision-making power. In this pattern, one partner holds a majority of decision-making power, instead of both partners in a relationship having equal input on decisions about the relationship. He or she is 'in charge' of the relationship.
- b) Restrictiveness - Restrictiveness departs from an egalitarian concept of equal individuals. One partner feels the right to intrude upon the other's behavior, even when the behavior does not directly involve the restrictive partner, as when restrictive partners prohibit their partners from spending time with certain individuals or going to certain places.
- c) Disparagement - Disparagement occurs when one partner fails to equally value the partner and has an overall negative appraisal of his or her partner.

Tolerance

What is tolerance? Tolerance is a fair, permissive and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, race, practices, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry. Tolerance means "respecting, accepting and acknowledging cultural differences and is the expression of our humanness. It is based on knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and beliefs. A person's standpoint is considered tolerant if the person accepts the beliefs of others (even though they differ from his own) and accepts other behavioral patterns which differ from his own".

Disagreement

Disagreement can be defined as a difference of opinions and if negotiated and communicated in a productive manner, can produce positive outcomes and helpful contributions. Whereas conflict was categorized as hostility, suspicion, competition, distrust and self-perpetuation by McCroskey and Wheelless (1976). A conflict arises when disagreement is taken personally. Disagreement does not have to lead to conflict which produces negative emotions and very little positive productivity.

Tolerance for Disagreement

Tolerance for disagreement is the ability to engage in communication with people who have a different opinion or worldview from your own without becoming emotional (John Spacey, 2016). Individuals who have strong tolerance for disagreement will often support a person's right to express their ideas, even if they strongly disagree with them. They may view a lively debate as appositive experience as opposed to a stressful or traumatic ordeal (John Spacey, 2016). This conceptualization is similar to that of argumentativeness. People with high argumentativeness are likely to be able to deal with more disagreement than those people who are low in argumentativeness. People with a low tolerance for disagreement are highly conflict prone whereas people with a high tolerance for disagreement are relatively conflict resistant (McCroskey, 1992).

The family size we choose, or end up with, affects not only the environment in which children grow up, but also their behavioral patterns. Siblings play a very important role in social lives of most individuals. Most individuals consider their siblings as their best friends, and interact with them frequently (White & Riedmann, 1992a; Spitze & Trent, 2006). A study has found that children who grow up without siblings are likely to have a different brain structure than those who do (Junyi Yang et.al, 2016). Many parents view having another child, so that their son or daughter will have a sibling, as an important consideration for childbearing (National Survey of Families and Households, 1990). Thus, not only is the sibling relationship thought to be one of the most enduring of human relationships (Connidis, 2001; White & Reidmann, 1992a), but there is also a visible concern that a lack of siblings will be adverse not only the during childhood but throughout the life course (Blake, 1981). Only child receives too much attention and excessive praise from their parents and

grandparents, which may cause undesirable personality traits in the children, such as dependency, selfishness and social ineptitude. Additionally, due to the absence of siblings, only-children usually miss out on important opportunities to rehearse some of the more complicated aspects of relationships within a safe environment. To the extent there are differences in adult behavior between the children growing up with and without siblings; these differences may have implications for social lives, particularly in terms of available support and for the overall well-being of adults (Glenn & Hoppe, 1984).

A study was conducted by Kitzmann, K. M., Cohen, R., & Lockwood, R. L. (2002) to compare the peer-related social competence of only children and children with siblings. The sample was 139 elementary school-age children (aged 6-12 years). The results suggested that Only children were similar to classmates in terms of number of close friendships and friendship quality, but were less liked by classmates as a group. Only children were more likely both to be victimized and aggressive in the peer group, suggesting that having a sibling may be especially helpful for learning to manage conflict.

A research was conducted by Sherry Hamby (1996) to examine the levels of dominance in partners in a romantic relationship. The sample was 131 undergraduate male and female students (from courses on sociology and justice studies courses) who were in a relationship or had been no longer than a year ago. The data were used for factor analysis which created the final scale. The Dominance Scale: Preliminary Psychometric Properties. The Preliminary psychometric data provided support for the internal consistency of each of the dominance constructs: Authority, Restrictiveness, and Disparagement. The data also suggest that there may be important differences among dominance patterns.

A study was conducted by Gunnur Karakurt (2012) to examine the relationship between egalitarianism, dominance, and violence in intimate relationships. The participants of this study included 87 heterosexual dyads recruited from a large Midwestern university campus. Results indicated that for females and males, physical assault frequency and psychological aggression variables had a slight positively skewed distribution with unsatisfactory normality.

A study was conducted by O’Gallagher, Aoibhin (2015) to examine the relationship between need to belong, tolerance for disagreement, attachment Style and Life Satisfaction. Participants were (N=114) in total with (N=67) females and (N=47) males. The study shows that it possible to predict life satisfaction from tolerance for disagreement, need to belong and attachment qualities secure, avoidance, ambivalence-worry and ambivalence-merger. Spearman’s rho’s also showed correlations between attachment qualities and both need to belong and tolerance for disagreement.

Objectives

- To compare the levels of dominance and TFD between individuals without siblings who are in a relationship/ engaged/ married and individuals with siblings in relationship/ engaged/ married.
- To know if there is a correlation between dimensions of dominance and tolerance for disagreement.
- To know if the individuals without siblings displayed lower levels tolerance for disagreement.
- To know if individuals without siblings are tend to be dominant in the romantic relationship.
- To know the relationship between age and levels of dominance.
- To know the relationship between age and tolerance for disagreement.

Hypotheses

H1: The individuals without siblings tend to be dominant in a romantic relationship.

H2: The individuals without siblings display lower levels of tolerance for disagreement.

H3: There is a relation between dimensions of dominance and tolerance for disagreement.

H4: There is relation between age and dimensions of dominance.

H5: There is relation between age and tolerance for disagreement.

Method

Population and Sample

The researcher has taken 50 individuals without siblings who were in a relationship/ engaged/married and 50 individuals with siblings who were in a relationship/engaged/married. The age group of 17- 35 years old were taken. The research was conducted in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The researcher used purposive sampling method and Snowball sampling method to get the sample.

Research Design

The present study is performed using a descriptive research design to understand the impact or the presence of the variables on the sample.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants who were within the Twin Cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad were included in the sample.
- Participants who have migrated were included in the sample.

Exclusion Criteria

- Participants who were not in a relationship at present were excluded from the sample.
- Non-Residential Indians.

Research Instrument

The Dominance Scale:

Sherry Hamby (1996). The Dominance Scale (for relationship research) measures 3 facets of a dominant partner: Authority, Restrictiveness, and Disparagement. This is a straightforward scale questionnaire with 32

Likert scale items, some of which are reverse scored. The respondent is asked to rate each statement on a 4-point scale ranging from 4 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree. The internal consistency was found to be between .92 and .95.

Tolerance for Disagreement (the TFD scale):

Teven, J. J., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C (1998). The Tolerance For Disagreement (TFD) Scale is designed to measure the degree to which an individual can tolerate other people disagreeing with what the individual believes to be true. It contains 15 items. The respondent is asked to rate each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Scoring- Step 1- Add the scores for the following items: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 14, and 15. Step 2- Add the scores for the following items: 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. Step 3- Complete the following formula: $TFD = 48 + \text{total of Step 1} - \text{total of Step 2}$. Interpretation- Scores above 46 indicate High TFD. Scores below 32 indicate Low TFD. Scores between 32 and 46 indicate moderate TFD. Alpha reliability estimates for the TFD scale can be expected to be in the neighborhood of .85. The instrument demonstrates good discriminant validity .31.

Data analysis

After the completion of data collection, data analysis was done by using SPSS version 20, according to the manuals. Various tests like co-relation, t-test and measures of central tendency which are mean median and mode were used.

Procedure

After selecting the measures, a few arrangements were made for data collection. The researcher used questionnaire method to collect data. Rapport was established with the subject and they were made aware that their participation in the study was purely voluntary. They were assured of maintaining confidentiality throughout the study. The participants were requested to go through the 'Informed Consent Form' and sign it. Next, instructions for the questionnaires were given and then the participants were

requested to answer the questions with complete honesty and were supposed to be as reliable as possible. They were also informed that there was no definite time limit to finish the questionnaires.

Results

Table 1 shows the *t*-test ration between Individuals without siblings and Individuals with siblings to authority, restrictiveness, disparagement and tolerance for disagreement.

	Individuals without siblings (n=50)		Individuals with Siblings (n=50)		<i>t</i> -ratio	Significance
	M	SD	M	SD		
Authority	26.42	4.046	21.82	3.573	6.026	.000
Restrictiveness	23.54	4.176	20.96	4.781	2.874	.005
Disparagement	21.08	3.702	19.60	3.044	2.183	.031
Tolerance for disagreement	38.16	12.141	46.40	8.514	-3.929	.000

*** $p < 0.001$

*** $p < 0.005$

In Table 1, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare scores of individuals who are only child and individuals who have siblings. There was a significant difference found among individuals without siblings and individuals with siblings in terms of dimensions of Dominance in a relationship which are Authority ($t=6.026$), Restrictiveness ($t=2.874$), Disparagement ($t=2.183$), and tolerance for disagreement ($t=-3.929$). The levels of dimensions of dominance i.e., Authority, Restrictiveness, and Disparagement are high in the individuals without siblings than the individuals with siblings as the means are high whereas the Tolerance for disagreement is low in the individuals without siblings as the mean is lower than the individuals with siblings.

Table 2 shows the correlation between Authority and Tolerance for disagreement and correlation between Restrictiveness and Age.

	Tolerance for disagreement	Authority	Restrictiveness	Disparagement
Authority	-.217*			
Restrictiveness	-.043			
Disparagement	.012			
Age	.044	.011	-.357**	.092

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

The results exhibited by Table 2 show that there exists negative correlation between the dimension of Dominance and Tolerance for disagreement. Where in a negative correlation was found between Authority and Tolerance for disagreement ($r = -.217$; $p < 0.05$), which means that if authority is high, tolerance for disagreement is low and if authority is low, tolerance for disagreement is high. A negative correlation was found between Age and Restrictiveness ($r = -.357$; $p < 0.01$), which means higher the age lower the higher the levels of restrictiveness. No significant correlation was found between Age and Authority ($r = .011$). No significant correlation was found between Age and Disparagement ($r = .092$). No significant correlation was found between Age and Tolerance for disagreement ($r = .044$). No significant correlation was found between Restrictiveness and Tolerance for disagreement ($r = -.043$). No significant correlation was found between Disparagement and Tolerance for disagreement ($r = .012$).

Summary of Results

In the following section the obtained results have been summarized. The findings of the present study revealed:

- Significant differences among individuals without siblings and individuals with siblings in terms of in levels of dominance in a relationship
- Significant differences among individuals without siblings and individuals with siblings in terms Tolerance for disagreement.

- Significant negative correlation between Restrictiveness and Age.
- No significant correlation between other dimensions of The Dominance Scale i.e., authority and disparagement and Age.
- No significant correlation was between other dimensions of The Dominance Scale i.e., restrictiveness and disparagement and Tolerance For Disagreement.
- No significant correlation between Tolerance for disagreement and Age.
- Significant negative correlation between Authority i.e., first dimension of The Dominance Scale and Tolerance for Disagreement.

Discussion

Only-children usually miss out on important opportunities to rehearse some of the more complicated aspects of relationships within a safe environment. The children without sibling do not learn to share unlike children with siblings, and also tend to become self-centric and selfish. The children with no siblings have a habit of getting much attention from their parents since their childhood days and they are assumed to have grown into self-confident adults who are unable to compromise in a relationship which might result in them being the dominant partner in a romantic relationship. Children with siblings on the other hand learn to share and closeness between siblings may serve as the primary relational anchor in adulthood (Avidan Milevsky, 2015).

The present study has been done to analyze if the only child displays higher levels of dominance in a relationship when compared to those with siblings. The study also attempts to analyze if the only children display lower levels of tolerance for disagreement, and if individuals with siblings have higher levels of dominance.

The present variable that is dominance and tolerance for disagreement haven't been studied together in any sample.

In a study conducted by Kitzmann, K. M., Cohen, R., & Lockwood, R. L. (2002) to compare the peer-related social competence of only children and children with siblings the results suggested that Only children were more likely both to be victimized and aggressive in the peer group, suggesting that having a sibling may be especially helpful for learning to manage conflict.

The results show that there was a significant difference found among individuals without siblings and individuals with siblings in terms of dimensions of Dominance in a relationship which are Authority ($t=6.026$), Restrictiveness ($t=2.874$), Disparagement ($t=2.183$), and tolerance for disagreement ($t=-3.929$). The results also show that there exists negative correlation between the dimension of Dominance and TFD. Where in a negative correlation was found between Authority and Tolerance for disagreement ($r= -.217$; $p<0.05$), which means that if authority is high, TFD is low, this could be because authority at times gives rise to arguments, A person with authority finds it easy to put forward an argument than a person without authority. A negative correlation was found between Age and Restrictiveness ($r= -.357$; $p<0.01$), which means higher the age lower the levels of restrictiveness. High levels Restrictiveness by a partner shows extreme investment in their partner but with age this investment might decrease and so there is negative correlation between the two. No significant correlation was found between other dimensions of The Dominance Scale i.e., Restrictiveness and Disparagement and TFD. TFD has less to do with a person's restricting and under evaluating their partner and more to do with authority as discussed above and so there was no significant correlation found.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the small sample size. The results of this study cannot be applied to the whole population due to the dynamic nature of the participants and the very nature of each individual. There is also a limitation of inability to generalize the results due to geographical barriers. Another limitation of the study is parenting styles.

Application value

With growing trend of nuclear families and growth of working women most of the young couples today opt for is a single child, this study could help the parents, teachers

to understand the behavioral patterns of an only child. The results of this study will help by giving a different dimension to look at the reason behind the increasing number of divorce. The study will help the partners in a romantic relationship to understand their partner better and overcome difficulties in the relationship.

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