



Role of Sibling Relationships in Human Development: A Comprehensive Exploration

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Abstract

Sibling relationships play a crucial role in shaping an individual's development across various dimensions. From early childhood through adulthood, siblings serve as influential socializing agents, introducing individuals to the intricacies of social norms, values, and behaviors within the family context. Drawing upon a synthesis of empirical research and theoretical perspectives, this review examines the dynamic interplay between siblings and its impact on various domains of human development. During early years siblings often serve as a child's first peer group, influencing language acquisition, social cognition, and emotional regulation. Moving into adolescence, the focus shifts towards the role of siblings in identity formation, autonomy development, and the navigation of peer relationships. Importantly, sibling dynamics contribute significantly to the formation of individual identities as siblings differentiate themselves and develop a sense of self within the family unit. Interactions with siblings also lay the groundwork for effective communication skills, conflict resolution abilities, and the foundation of peer relationships. Beyond these immediate impacts, siblings serve as carriers of familial and cultural influences, contributing to the transmission of values, traditions, and moral beliefs. The enduring nature of sibling connections, extending into adulthood, provides a consistent source of support, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging. Overall, sibling relationships play a multifaceted role in fostering personal growth, resilience, and the development of essential life skills, enriching individuals' experiences throughout their lives.

Keywords: sibling relationships, socialization, family dynamics, peer relationships, conflict resolution

A **sibling** is a relative that shares at least one parent with the subject. A male sibling is a brother and a female sibling is a sister. A person with no siblings is an only child.

Introduction: The Tapestry of Sibling Relationships

From the playful squabbles of childhood to the comforting presence in adulthood, sibling relationships weave an intricate tapestry throughout our lives. These bonds, forged in the crucible of shared experiences and familial ties, are marked by a unique blend of intensity, intimacy, and complexity. Exploring the dynamics of this relationship unveils a treasure trove of insights into human development, social learning, and the very fabric of family life.

This review embarks on a comprehensive journey through the multifaceted world of sibling relationships. We delve into the theoretical perspectives that illuminate the emotional currents and interpersonal dynamics at play, from psychoanalytic explorations of attachment to social learning theories that explain how interactions shape behaviors and identities. We then trace the developmental trajectory of these relationships, examining how siblings influence each other's emotional well-being, social skills, and even parenting styles. Through a kaleidoscope of research findings and real-life examples, we shed light on the myriad ways siblings contribute to and shape each other's lives, from the turbulent waters of conflict to the quiet harbors of support and love.

Whether navigating the joyous chaos of family gatherings or seeking solace in a shared history, understanding the intricacies of sibling relationships enriches our appreciation for the human experience. This review serves as a compass, guiding readers through the complexities of this enduring bond, revealing its profound impact on individual growth and the lasting echoes it leaves on our hearts and minds.

Theoretical Perspectives on Sibling Relationship

four key psychologically oriented perspectives that have been applied in describing and explaining variations in sibling relationships:

- (a) psychoanalytic-evolutionary, (b) social-psychological,
- (c) social learning, and
- (d) family-ecological systems perspectives.

Given that the majority of research on sibling relationships has focused on childhood and adolescence.

Psychoanalytic-Evolutionary Perspectives

Two theories that have been used to explain sibling relationship dynamics, Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and Adler's theory of individual psychology (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956), are grounded in writings from the first half of the 1900s within the field of psychoanalysis.

Attachment theory

Grounded in the early writings of John Bowlby (e.g., Bowlby, 1969), attachment theory purports to explain developmental changes, but primarily individual differences, in social relationships. This perspective targets the early bond between infants and their primary caregivers as critical to the infants' survival. By their characteristics and behaviors (e.g., crying, clinging), infants promote proximity to their caregivers, beginning in the first days of life. Across the first year of life in humans, an attachment relationship forms, and this relationship varies in its degree of security depending on the sensitivity and responsiveness of the infant's caregiver. As children develop, in the second year, the attachment figure can become a secure base from which children explore the world around them but return to stressful circumstances for comfort and a sense of security. Separation or loss of an attachment figure, in contrast, gives rise to anxiety and distress.

From this theoretical perspective, the nature of the relationship with a primary attachment figure, most often the mother, becomes the basis for an internal working model of relationships, that is, individuals' expectations, understanding, emotions, and behaviors surrounding their interpersonal relationships as a whole. From this perspective, children's relationships with a primary caregiver have long-term implications for the qualities of their sibling relationships: Emotionally secure caregiver–child relationships are thought to lead to close and trusting relationships with others, whereas insecure relationships may lead to conflictual, distant, or otherwise less satisfying relationships, including with siblings.

Consistent with the notion that parent–child attachment relationships serve as internal working models for children's interactions with siblings, longitudinal research across infancy and early childhood has suggested that infants who are insecurely attached to their mothers show higher rates of sibling conflict and hostility in the preschool years (Volling, 2001; Volling & Belsky, 1992). Similarly, Teti and Abellard (1989) found that two siblings who were both securely attached to their mother were more likely to form a positive relationship together than were dyads in which both siblings were insecurely attached to their mother.

In some cases, older siblings may take on the role of an attachment figure or a secure base for younger siblings. For example, a sibling attachment bond may be evidenced by an older sibling who facilitates exploration (Samuels, 1980) or provides comfort during a distressing situation when the primary caregiver is unavailable (Stewart, 1983; Teti & Ablard, 1989).

Child gender may also play a role in sibling attachment bonds: Stewart (1983) found that older siblings were more likely to serve as sources of comfort in mixed dyads as opposed to same-gender dyads

In early adulthood, research indicates a trend of distancing in sibling relationships, marked by reduced contact and proximity (e.g., White, 2001). This distancing is understandable given the numerous life changes occurring during this period, including moving out of the parental home, completing formal education, entering the workforce, forming long-term romantic relationships, and becoming parents. During this phase, it appears that siblings prioritize their families of procreation over their families of origin, with transitions like marriage and parenthood negatively impacting sibling contact and interactions (White, 2001).

In adulthood, attachment bonds may manifest through siblings seeking contact via phone or email, occasional visits, and deriving satisfaction and well-being from the relationship (Cicirelli, 1995). Supporting this perspective, contact between siblings stabilizes in middle and later adulthood, and the majority of siblings maintain ongoing contact throughout their lives (White, 2001).

The advent of computer-mediated communication, such as email, blogs, and social media platforms like Facebook, has facilitated easier and more frequent connections among adult siblings. Older adults, in particular, are adopting these technologies at higher rates, likely enhancing the involvement and information exchange among adult siblings compared to recent times (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2010). Despite variations influenced by personal and situational factors, most adult siblings report feeling close to one another (Cicirelli, 1995; White, 2001; White & Riedmann, 1992).

In short, research suggests that an attachment perspective may provide a solid foundation for research on sibling relationships across the lifespan. In childhood, attachment bonds between siblings may resemble and complement parent–child bonds, but they may also compensate for parental inadequacies in cases of stress or deprivation. As siblings transition from adolescence into adulthood, their relationship becomes more voluntary and peerlike; correspondingly, attachment behaviors also change. A body of work by Cicirelli (1992, 1995), for example, highlights that qualities such as contact, help and support, and feelings of closeness and security are markers of sibling attachment in adulthood, and those behaviors are in turn related to linked psychological and physical health in old age.

Adler's theory of individual psychology

Alfred Adler was a part of the psychoanalytic movement of the early 1900s that focused on the causes of personality. Although originally a central figure in the Freudian school, Adler took issue with Freud's focus on the libido—an internal source of motivation for behavior and development—and instead highlighted the important role of external social influences on personality development. Specifically, Adler targeted the role of the family system, including sibling influences, as central to personality. A key construct in Adler's theory was the inferiority complex, and Adler was especially interested in how such psychological dynamics had implications for individuals' style of life and the management of their self-esteem. He also highlighted how individuals compensate; they create sometimes maladaptive styles of life when they find themselves in circumstances that are less favorable to themselves than to others.

Adler's ideas about the centrality of sibling experiences in personality development were a basis for his interest in birth-order effects on individual development, a topic beyond the scope of this review, and they also were central in his ideas about sibling relationship processes—particularly siblings' rivalry around parents' attention and time and for family resources. According to Adler, rivalry between siblings is grounded in each child's need to overcome potential feelings of inferiority. As a means of reducing competition, siblings often differentiate or “de-identify,” developing different personal qualities and choosing different niches. In this way, sibling differentiation is a key dynamic in families.

Research on parents' differential treatment of siblings is consistent with Adler's theory in documenting that parental favoritism of one sibling over the other is linked to poorer sibling relationships. Furthermore, a growing body of evidence suggests that parental differential treatment is linked to less positive sibling relationships from early childhood through adolescence (Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987; Shanahan, McHale, Crouter, & Osgood, 2008; Stocker, Dunn, & Plomin, 1989).

Social Psychological Processes in Sibling Relationships

Social psychological theories are directed at explaining how others influence individuals—including their cognitive constructions of what others are like and what motivates others' behaviors.

Attribution theory (Heider, 1958), for example, focuses on individuals' explanations of the causes of behavior and events, including their behavior and the behavior of their social partners, and stresses the significance of attributions for individuals' reactions to interpersonal events and experiences. From this perspective, harmony and conflict in social relationships are grounded in relationship partners' understanding of the motivations for one another's behavior.

There are only a handful of studies that directly assess social comparison processes in siblings. Feinberg, Neiderhiser, Simmens, Reiss, and Hetherington (2000) found that social comparison processes depended on birth order, with older siblings more likely to make downward comparisons and younger siblings more likely to make upward comparisons. Others have noted that the implications of social comparison dynamics depend on factors such as age spacing, whether the domain of comparison is important to the individuals involved, and the nature and history of the sibling relationship (e.g., Connidis, 2007; Noller, Conway, & Blakeley-Smith, 2008; Tesser, 1980).

Social Learning Theories

Social learning processes are probably the most common set of mechanisms used to explain sibling relationship dynamics, especially the dynamics of child and adolescent siblings. **According to social learning theories**, individuals acquire novel behaviors, including cognitive behaviors such as attitudes and beliefs, through two key mechanisms, reinforcement and observation of others' behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Parents also influence sibling relationships when they serve as models in the context of marital interactions and their dyadic exchanges with their children. This type of influence has been termed *indirect* because the goal is not to explicitly shape sibling relationships (Parke & Buriel, 1998). Evidence suggests that marital and sibling relationship qualities are correlated, and it shows that the parent–child relationship may serve as a mediator of those linkages (Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1994; Dunn, Deater-Deckard, Pickering, & Golding 1999; Noller, Feeney, Sheehan, & Peterson 2000; Reese-Weber & Kahn, 2005; Stocker & Youngblade, 1999).

Family and Ecological Systems Approaches

A family systems framework directs attention to the larger context in which sibling relationships develop. The tenets of family systems theory are derived from general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1950). In that perspective, families are best understood when studied holistically. Families are seen as hierarchically organized into interdependent, reciprocally influential subsystems; that “hierarchy” ranges from individuals to dyads (sibling relationships, marital relationships, parent–child relationships), triads (e.g., parent–sibling triad), and beyond to ultimately encompass the entire family system, including grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Ideally, subsystems have flexible boundaries that allow for, but are not determined by, influences of other subsystems; furthermore, some boundaries, particularly intergenerational boundaries, such as those between the marital and child subsystems, are more important to maintain than other boundaries, such as those between pairs of siblings.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological systems theory proposes multiple levels of contextual influence on individual development, but those levels of influence also are relevant to sibling relationships. The *microsystem* refers to the immediate contexts of everyday life, such as family and neighborhood. Forces at this level can support close and involved sibling relationships, and they can define distinct activity niches for siblings based on their age and gender. The *mesosystem* refers to the connections between microsystem contexts. The *exosystem* refers to contexts that siblings are not directly engaged in but that have an indirect impact on their relationship by their effects on the microsystem. Parents' long hours in the workplace, for example, may have an impact on older siblings' caregiving responsibilities for their younger brothers and sisters and thereby promote complementarity rather than egalitarianism in sibling roles. Finally, the *macrosystem* refers to the broader societal context, including political, economic, and cultural forces that affect individuals and family relationships. For example, by some accounts, the sibling rivalry that is considered central to sibling dynamics in individualistic, Western cultures is not a dominant feature of the dynamics of sibling relationships in Eastern, more communally oriented cultures (Nuckolls, 1993).

Characteristics of sibling relationships

- **Emotional Dynamics in Sibling Relationships**

One prominent characteristic of sibling relationships, evident from infancy to adolescence based on systematic research, is the remarkable emotional intensity and the unreserved expression of these emotions. One observational study reported that around 20% of interactions between siblings of the preschool and toddler age group were characterized by intense negative emotions (Dunn, Creps, & Brown, 1996) – a far higher percentage than was found for children's interactions with their parents or friends; intense positive emotions expressed in

sibling interaction were also notably high. For many siblings, the relationship is one of mixed emotional color – both positive and hostile emotions are freely expressed (Dunn, 1993).

- **Intimacy as a Key Feature**

A second characteristic of sibling relationships is their intimacy. Most children spend more time interacting with siblings than with parents (Larson & Richards, 1994; McHale & Crouter, 1996). They know each other extremely well, and this intimacy means the relationship can be a source of support or conflict. Teasing, for example, depends on knowing an individual well enough to be able to gauge what will upset and annoy them. The familiarity of siblings, coupled with the emotional power of the relationship, means that the potential for siblings' influence on one another is high.

- **Individual Differences in Sibling Relationships**

A third characteristic of the relationship is the great range of individual differences which is evident from early infancy through to adolescence, in both observational and interview studies. Some siblings show affection, interest, cooperation, and support in the great majority of their interactions; when interviewed they describe their affection and positive feelings vividly. Other siblings show hostility, irritation, and aggressive behavior, and describe their dislike very clearly. Yet other children are ambivalent about their relations with their siblings, and show both hostility and positive interest in one another (for siblings' perceptions of their relationship, see for instance, Dunn & Plomin, 1990; McGuire, Manke, Eftekhari, & Dunn, 2000).

Factors affecting sibling relationships

Sibling Characteristics and Attachment Relationships

Research indicates that characteristics of siblings and the dyad, including shared experiences and empathy, play a crucial role in shaping attachment relationships between siblings. Studies involving multiple-birth siblings, such as twins, highlight that adult twins are more likely to exhibit attachment features in their relationships (Neyer, 2002; Tancredy & Fraley, 2006)

Technological Advancement and Adult Sibling Relationship

The advent of computer-mediated communications, including e-mail, blogs, and social media platforms like Facebook, has facilitated easier connectivity among adult siblings. Older adults, in particular, are increasingly using these technologies, enhancing the level of involvement and information exchange among siblings (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2010).

Distancing in Sibling Relationships During Early Adulthood

Empirical evidence suggests a distancing phenomenon in sibling relationships during early adulthood, marked by decreases in contact and proximity (White, 2001). Life changes during this period, including leaving the parental home, pursuing higher education, entering the workforce, and forming long-term romantic relationships, contribute to this distancing trend.

SIBLINGS' DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT

Older siblings who assume teaching and caregiving roles earn higher reading and language achievement scores, gain a greater sense of competence in the caregiving role, and learn more quickly to balance their self-concerns with others' needs than do older siblings who do not assume these roles with their younger siblings (Zukow-Goldring, 1995).

Children who are nurtured by their older siblings become sensitive to other people's feelings and beliefs (Dunn, 1988). As in all relationships, though, nurturance does not occur in isolation from conflict. Sibling relationships that are characterized by a balance of nurturance and conflict can provide a unique opportunity for children to develop the ability to understand other people's emotions and viewpoints, to learn to manage anger and resolve conflict and to provide nurturance themselves. Indeed, younger siblings who experience a balance of nurturance and conflict in their sibling relationships are more socially skilled and have more positive peer relationships compared with children who lack this experience (Hetherington, 1988).

Sibling relationships also have the potential to affect children's development negatively. Younger siblings growing up with aggressive older siblings are at considerable risk for developing conduct problems, performing poorly in school, and having few positive experiences in their relationships with their peers (Bank, Patterson, & Reid, 1996).

SIBLINGS' INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS

Parental Influence on Sibling Expectations:

- **Impact of Older Children:** Conventional wisdom asserts that parents' experiences with older children shape expectations for subsequent children.

- **Child-Rearing Strategies:** Parental child-rearing strategies are influenced by experiences with older siblings, influencing perceptions of conduct problems, drug use, rebellious behavior, helpfulness, and concern for others in younger siblings.

Educator Expectations Influenced by Older Siblings:

- **Teacher Expectations:** Experiences with older siblings, both in the classroom and through anecdotes, influence teachers' expectations for younger siblings.

- **Anticipation of Academic Ability and Conduct:** Teachers form expectations regarding the academic ability and conduct of younger siblings based on experiences with their older counterparts.

Indirect Impact of Older Siblings on Parenting Quality:

- **Parental Reflection on Care Abilities:** Older siblings' characteristics may indirectly influence the quality of parenting younger siblings receive.

- **Effect of Negative Experiences:** Negative experiences with earlier-born children may lead parents to question their caregiving abilities and lower expectations for the behavior of younger siblings.

Significance of Siblings for the Child's Development

- **Early Bond**

The well-known story of two twins, Kyrie and Brielle Jackson, who were born premature, 12 weeks before the due date in a hospital in Massachusetts, on October 17, 1995, began with little chance expressed by doctors for their survival. After delivery, Kyrie was strong and put on weight quickly, whereas her sister was much weaker and smaller, having problems with vascular and respiratory systems. Upon critical moment the nurse placed the stronger girl into the incubator of the dying Brielle. When Kyrie put her arms around her sister, something unusual happened, as the condition of the weaker twin improved. Today, the inseparable sisters are 19 years old and their love is still growing strong. It should not cause amazement as the bond between twins is usually particularly powerful and long-lasting [Kawula 2006, pp. 273–282; Brazelton, Sparrow 2014, p. 177].

- **Positive Aspect of Having Siblings**

Taking into consideration the current reflections there are many positive aspects of having a brother or sister that can be stressed [Faber, Mazlich 1995]. Sibling provides emotional support in crisis and difficult situations. When

death or divorce affects a given family, relations with a brother or a sister allow one to go through such trauma quickly and easily. Elderly sibling provides support for the younger ones, preparing for new experiences such as attending preschool, entering the educational system, or giving advice on managing new, unfamiliar situations. Moreover, it helps in practicing emotional expression and the growth of trust.

Functioning with a brother or a sister strengthens self-esteem amongst children as having someone who loves us unconditionally and almost adores us, helps to build up self-esteem and a high level of self-confidence, as it often happens among siblings. Younger children learn from the elder through imitation but the relationship works both ways, i.e. the elder children, help their younger sibling in trouble, and develop their intellectual and emotional skills, thus they both inspire themselves to explore the reality around them creatively.

SALIENCE OF SIBLING CONFLICT IN CHILDHOOD

Sibling conflicts are targeted in the child literature as somewhat unique from conflict in other social relationships. One reason for the uniqueness of sibling conflict is that it is particularly intense (Katz et al., 1992; Volling, Youngblade, & Belsky, 1997). Most relationships end before conflict reaches such intensity, but children cannot put an end to their sibling relationships. Adult sibling relationships cannot dissolve either, but at least adults can usually terminate contact with the distressing sibling. The high intensity of conflict between siblings in childhood is due to several characteristics of the relationship. These characteristics include the greater familiarity and access that siblings have to one another compared to other relationships, parental expectations that conflicts among siblings are quite normal (Brody & Stoneman, 1987), unequal distribution of power and dominance between siblings (Katz et al., 1992), and forced contact in an intense, complex longterm relationship before sufficient social competence has developed (Newman, 1994). Further, rivalry and jealousy, two forms of conflict, are intensified in Western families due to the nuclear family structure and individualistic cultural values (Stearns, 1988).

BENEFITS OF SIBLING CONFLICT

According to Dunn and Slomkowski (1992), family conflict experiences are potential learning opportunities because children are motivated to consider their self-interest and defend it.

The unique characteristics of sibling conflict may reap additional benefits. These characteristics of sibling conflict include its intense level and the obligatory nature of the sibling bond. One advantage of the high intensity of sibling conflict is the opportunity to learn to tolerate negative effects. This tolerance of negative affect is seen among adolescents during disputes with their siblings. Teens allow these disputes to escalate and often do not repair the relationship after the dispute. They view conflict as less detrimental to this relationship than to others such as friendship, and they can resume interactions without reference to the dispute (Raffaeli, 1990, cf. Katz et al., 1992).

Self-Development

Disputes with siblings can lead to a process of accentuating differences between individuals. Children are encouraged to individuate when they take a stand against their sibling, or their sibling takes a stand against them (Volling et al., 1997) which Schachter refers to as “deidentification” (Schachter, Shore, Feldman-Rotman, Marquis, & Campbell, 1976). This process of self-differentiation contributes to an understanding of who one is, and to forming a sense of identity. Because of the relational consequences of taking a stand in conflict situations, sibling conflict makes children aware of the tension between concern for self and social relationships (Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992).

Social Understanding

Several empirical studies of very young children confirm that siblings develop greater social competence as a result of how they handle disputes with their siblings. For instance, Katz et al. (1992) found that the quality of peer interaction was directly related to the quality of the sibling relationship. At age six these children used a higher level of argument with friends in disputes and they were successful at resolving conflicts with friends

(Herrera & Dunn, 1997). Dunn and Slomkowski (1992) found that the argument style children used with their siblings (other- and self-oriented).

Improved Sibling Relationship

The sibling relationship itself is also known to benefit from sibling conflicts. According to Bank and Kahn (1982), a moderate amount of aggression, when not interfered with by parents, gives a distinctive subsystem identity to the sibling group. In fact, in several studies (e.g., Stormshak, Bellanti, & Bierman, 1996) the sibling relationship benefited from some aggression, provided there was also warmth between the siblings.

Parenting Skills

There may also be unexpected benefits of negative sibling experiences in childhood in parenting skills. Kramer and Baron (1995) reported that the children of mothers with recollections of negative sibling relationships (but not fathers with such recollections) were observed to interact more positively with one another than children of mothers reporting positive sibling experiences in their childhood.

Mothers with negative sibling histories were less likely to use authoritarian parenting strategies, less likely to show favoritism toward one child over the other, and more likely to be sensitive to how family conflict affected the children's relationships (Kramer & Baron, 1995; Volling & Bedford, 1998).

Developmental Influence of Sibling Relationships

The emotional depth of interactions among siblings, shaped by their close bonds and regular childhood engagement, along with the competitive dynamics for parental affection, implies a potential impact on each other's development. Two particular domains of development have been studied about children's experiences with their siblings: children's adjustment, and their social understanding.

- **Siblings and children's adjustment**

Recent studies have sought to explore the extent to which siblings' hostile relationships contribute to the development of behavior problems independently of the parent-child relationship. For instance, Garcia and colleagues investigated conduct problems in a low-income sample of 5-year-old boys and found that the interaction between destructive sibling conflict and rejecting parenting predicted aggressive behavior problems over time and across different informants. Children experiencing both high levels of sibling conflict and rejecting parent-child relationships showed an increase in aggression scores. Moreover, sibling conflict was directly linked to later delinquency (Garcia, Shaw, Winslow, & Yaggi, 2000). These findings suggest the direct effects of sibling interaction on behavioral adjustment outcomes.

It is important to note, however, that while sibling aggression not only heightens the risk of aggression in other social contexts but also leaves adolescent siblings with feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, these associations are likely intertwined with other sources of stress.

- **Siblings as sources of support**

Siblings can also be an important source of support to children faced with stressful experiences. For example, Jenkins (Jenkins, 1992; Jenkins & Smith, 1990) reported that children growing up in disharmonious homes have fewer problems if they have a good sibling relationship. It seems that both offering comfort to and receiving comfort from, a sibling are associated with benefits for children.

Note that other studies of parental separation and family reconstitution report that siblings are relatively infrequent confidants for children (Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, & Sturgess, 2001). However, children faced with other negative life events report becoming more intimate and closer with their siblings following the stressful event (Dunn et al., 1994a).

- **Siblings and the development of social understanding**

The study of siblings has played an important role in changing our views of the nature and development of children's discovery of the mind – their understanding of others' emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and their grasp of the links between such inner states and people's behavior. In standard experimental settings, young preschool children show limited understanding of "other minds" and feelings; in contrast, in the context of the emotional drama and the familiarity of interactions with siblings, they reveal remarkable powers of manipulating others' emotions, anticipating intentions, and of understanding the significance of inner states for human action (Dunn, 1999). Throughout their daily interactions with siblings in the second, third, and fourth years of life, children showcase noteworthy skills in teasing, deceiving, managing conflicts by anticipating perspectives, engaging in shared imaginative play, and participating in conversations about the motivations behind people's behavior, referencing mental states as both causes and consequences of actions. These behaviors collectively illustrate a progressing sophistication regarding inner states and social interactions. Consequently, research on siblings has provided a fresh perspective on a fundamental aspect of early socio-cognitive development.

- **Siblings and peer relationships**

The notion that the quality of sibling relationships will be associated with, and possibly influence, children's relationships with other children outside the family would be supported by several different developmental theories: attachment theory, social learning theory, and by those who propose that an individual's characteristics will elicit similar responses from different people (e.g., Caspi & Elder, 1988). While the mechanisms underlying these connections vary across theoretical frameworks, each theory predicts positive associations between sibling and peer relationships. In the context of social learning theory, there's an expectation that what is learned through interactions with siblings would extend and apply to dealings with familiar peers beyond the family.

In contrast, it can also be argued that the clear differences between sibling and peer relationships mean that simple positive associations should not be expected. Although both are intimate, dyadic relationships with other children, friendships involve a commitment of trust and support that not all siblings feel about each other, and friendships do not involve rivalry for parental love and attention or resentment about differential treatment. Children do not choose their siblings, but they do select their friends. The evidence for positive links between individual differences in sibling and peer relations is inconsistent.

- **Siblings and the Nature of Family Influence**

One important discovery from studying siblings that has big implications for psychology is how family experiences shape how each person grows up. Recent research has found something surprising – even though brothers and sisters share the same family, they turn out to be very different from each other in terms of their personality, how well they adjust to things, and if they face any mental health issues (Dunn & Plomin, 1990)—these finding challenges what we thought about how families influence a child's development.

The things we believed were crucial for a child's development, like the parents' education and jobs, their mental health, how well they get along with each other, and the place where the family lives, are all the same for siblings. But somehow, these siblings end up being quite different from one another. Scientists studying behavior genetics, which looks at how genes and experiences affect behavior, suggest that the experiences each sibling has within the family are the key to these differences, rather than the differences between families that researchers have focused on before. This doesn't mean that family influence isn't important, but that each child in a family experiences it in their own unique way (Hetherington et al., 1994).

Sibling relationship during middle adulthood about emotional intelligence

Negi and Badla conducted a study in Uttarakhand and Haryana among adults of age 40-50. Results showed that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with various aspects of sibling relationships, regardless of location, rural/urban residence, and gender. Strong emotional intelligence was linked to increased contacts, closeness, and overall positive sibling relationships while showing a negative association with conflict. Higher emotional

intelligence predicted better sibling relationships, and vice versa, suggesting a bi-directional influence between emotional intelligence and sibling relationships.

Adult Sibling Relationship in Indian Families: A Study on Middle-Aged Adults

Barthwal et al. conducted a study examining adult sibling relationships in middle-aged individuals residing in extended and nuclear families. The findings indicated that those in extended families tend to experience more harmonious sibling relationships compared to their counterparts in nuclear families. Adults living in extended families not only maintain frequent contact with their siblings due to proximity but also display greater emotional closeness in comparison to adults residing in nuclear families.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIP AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

B.E. and Patil conducted a study in 2015-2016 examining the sibling relationships and socio-emotional behavior of school children. The study encompassed students in grades 5 to 10 residing in both urban areas of Dharwad taluk and rural areas of Dharwad and Bagalkot taluk in Karnataka. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between sibling relationships and socio-emotional behavior problems. Internalizing and externalizing problems exhibited a negative correlation with the warmth/closeness dimension of sibling relationships and a positive correlation with the conflict and rivalry dimension. These findings suggest that higher levels of sibling relationship quality were associated with lower socio-emotional behavior problems among school children.

Influence of familial factors on sibling relationship of normal children with mentally challenged children

Shali and Patil conducted a study titled "Impact of Familial Factors on Sibling Relationships among Typically Developing Children with Mentally Challenged Siblings" in 2015-16. The study involved a population of 90 children hailing from urban and rural areas in selected districts of Northern Karnataka, as well as special schools for mentally challenged children in Hubballi-Dharwad city. The findings indicated that the majority of children from joint families exhibited a moderate level of sibling relationship, while those from nuclear families displayed either a moderate or low level of sibling relationship. Among rural children from small-sized families, all of them exhibited a moderate level of sibling relationship, whereas children from medium and large-sized families primarily demonstrated a moderate level, followed by a low level of sibling relationship. Children from economically disadvantaged families consistently displayed a moderate level of sibling relationship, while those from higher socio-economic backgrounds exhibited both moderate and low levels of sibling relation. These results underscore the need for educational programs directed at parents and siblings to foster healthy sibling relationships among children.

Sibling Relationships during Middle Adulthood Years: A Qualitative Analysis

Madhur and Raj conducted an in-depth exploration of middle-aged sibling relationships using the case study method. A representative sample of 20 middle-aged adults, aged between 40 and 60 years, was selected from Udaipur city in the state of Rajasthan, India. The findings unveiled that the nature of the brother-brother dyad relationship, categorized as Loyal and Apathetic, is influenced by societal expectations, parental favoritism, and property disputes, significantly impacting the dynamics between siblings. Life transitions were identified as catalysts for fostering amicable relationships within brother-sister dyads. Sister-sister dyads reported an intimate bond arising from emotional closeness. Conversely, sister-sister-brother dyads exhibited hostility, stemming from past discrimination and parental favoritism experienced by the sister during childhood. The results also underscored that, while middle-aged adults do share some aspects of their lives with their siblings, the sharing tends to be predominantly superficial.

The severity of mental challenge: determinant of quality of sibling relationship

Singh and Mehra conducted a study to explore how the severity of mental challenges impacts the sibling relationships of typically developing children with their mentally challenged siblings. For this research, 150 families with mentally challenged children were randomly selected from three rehabilitation centers in Delhi, with 50 children chosen from each degree of mental challenge—mild, moderate, and severe. Respondents for the study included one parent and one normal sibling of mentally challenged children, totaling 300 participants. The study's findings revealed that as the severity of the mental challenge increased, there was a significant increase in

warmth/closeness and relative status/power and a noteworthy decrease in conflict and rivalry between mentally challenged children and their non-challenged siblings.

Siblings relations and their impact on adolescent's personality

Kumari and Singh researched to examine the impact of the presence of siblings on the personality of adolescents. The study included a sample of 160 adolescents in classes 7th to 9th, purposefully selected from schools in Udham Singh Pantnagar, Uttarakhand. The findings indicated significant differences in adolescents' personalities based on the presence of siblings. Various personality domains such as academic achievement, competition, creativity, enthusiasm, excitability, general ability, guilt-proneness, individualism, innovation, maturity, mental health, morality, self-control, sensitivity, social sufficiency, social warmth, and tension exhibited highly significant differences between class I and class II, as compared to class III and IV. On the other hand, adaptability, boldness, and leadership showed a high level of significant difference among the number of siblings in class III and class IV when compared across different sibling classifications.

Sibling Relationship in Connection with Social and Emotional Competence

Abbi and Mahapatra conducted a study to understand how having siblings affects how well people get along with others and handle their emotions. They gathered information from 200 young adults, both men and women aged 20 to 30, using three different scales to measure emotional competence, social competence, and the quality of sibling relationships. The results showed a clear connection between the quality of sibling relationships and how well individuals could handle social situations and emotions. Having siblings, the study suggests, gives people chances to learn about social rules, communication, working together, and solving problems. It also helps in developing understanding and ways to manage emotions.

The dynamics of sibling relations in adolescent development: Understanding the protective and risk factors

Kumar et al. conducted a study aiming to comprehend the intricacies of sibling relationships and their impact on adolescents. The research underscores that sibling dynamics are influenced by factors like family type, structure, size, economic conditions, and gender. Positive and harmonious sibling relationships contribute to the healthy development of a child, while negative interactions involving rivalry, bullying, or abuse can lead to adverse consequences such as shame, aggression, fear, and even severe mental and physical health issues. The study emphasizes that the quality of sibling relationships significantly reflects in an adolescent's personality, socialization, and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, evidence suggests that supportive and healthy sibling bonds play a crucial role in boosting confidence and fostering positive mental development, even for adolescents facing disabilities or other disorders.

Perception of Sibling Relationship during Middle Adulthood Years: A Typology

Nandwana and Katoch conducted a study to identify prevalent types of sibling relationships during middle adulthood, focusing on a sample of 120 married adults aged 40-60 years with at least one living biological sibling having a 1- 4 year age difference. The participants were selected from purposefully chosen nuclear families in Udaipur city, Rajasthan. The findings showed that the majority of respondents (33.34%) exhibited a Loyal type of sibling relationship, followed by Apathetic (29.17%), Congenial (24.16%), and Intimate (7.50%) types. Only 5.83 percent of respondents demonstrated a Hostile style of sibling relationship.

The role of siblings in identity development in adolescence and emerging adulthood

Wong et al. investigated how siblings contribute to identity formation during adolescence and emerging adulthood. After accounting for age differences, the study found that earlier-born siblings tended to report the highest levels of advanced identity formation, while later-born siblings reported the lowest levels. Positive associations were observed between the identity of siblings and changes in the respondents' identity, suggesting support for modeling processes within sibling relationships. Specifically, the identity of earlier-born same-sex siblings appeared to play a significant role in influencing identity formation. Interestingly, contrary to expectations, processes of differentiation between siblings did not seem to have an impact on identity formation.

The Essential Ingredients of Successful Sibling Relationships: An Emerging Framework for Advancing Theory and Practice

Kramer proposed that as we make progress in researching sibling relationships and enhance theoretically and empirically grounded prevention and intervention programs, the crucial elements for successful sibling relationships will become more evident. The ultimate framework will recognize the dual nature of typical sibling relationships and incorporate components that assist children at various developmental stages in forming successful connections. As research findings guide the creation and implementation of prevention and intervention initiatives, evaluating them through experimental intervention paradigms will be essential to shed light on potential processes of change. Developing a more comprehensive framework for comprehending sibling relationships will entail a reciprocal exchange of information between research, intervention strategies, and evaluation, contributing significantly to the advancement of both theory and practical applications.

Why Siblings Are Important Agents of Cognitive Development: A Comparison of Siblings and Peers

Azmitia and Hesser looked into how older siblings and peers influence the cognitive development of young children. In the study, young children, their older siblings, and a familiar older peer took part in an activity where they built things. Then, one of the older kids taught the younger child how to make a model windmill. After that, the younger child tried making the windmill on their own. The findings showed that although older siblings and peers had similarities in guiding the children, the sibling relationship stood out. During the building activity, young children were more likely to watch, copy, and ask their older siblings for help compared to their older peers. Older siblings were also more likely to offer guidance without being asked compared to older peers. In the teaching session, older siblings explained more, gave positive feedback, and let the younger ones take more control of the task compared to older peers. However, the behavior of older siblings wasn't entirely independent, as the younger children often prompted their explanations and pressured them to let them have more control of the task.

A sibling adoption study of adult attachment: The influence of shared environment on attachment states of mind

Caspers et al explored how siblings share similar attachment patterns by studying concordance for adult attachment in a group of 126 sibling pairs who were not genetically related. The participants, with an average age of 39 years, showed a resemblance in their attachment working models. Importantly, this similarity was observed irrespective of genetic relatedness between the siblings and across different generations, including parent and child relationships.

The Role of Siblings and Psychological Needs in Predicting Life Satisfaction During Emerging Adulthood

Hollifield and Conger emphasized the significance of life satisfaction during emerging adulthood, as it plays a crucial role in fostering positive psychological well-being and preventing engagement in risky behaviors that may adversely impact health. Given that siblings act as emotional support throughout life, the study aimed to explore how sibling support could predict well-being through these psychological needs. Using a sample of 337 individuals from the Family Transitions Project, the research assessed sibling support at 17 years old, the sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness at 19 years old, and life satisfaction at 20 years old. The findings revealed that sibling support during adolescence significantly correlated with autonomy, competence, relatedness, and life satisfaction in emerging adulthood.

Conclusion

Sibling relationships are important for various reasons. They offer emotional support, serving as companions in both joy and sorrow. Siblings contribute to the development of social skills, helping individuals navigate relationships and communicate effectively. The shared history between siblings creates a unique bond and influences identity formation. Differences among siblings provide opportunities for learning and growth. Sibling relationships serve as a training ground for future interpersonal interactions, teaching conflict resolution and negotiation. As individuals age, siblings often become a crucial support system, offering advice and companionship. Siblings also share responsibilities and experiences, fostering a sense of teamwork. Overall, these

relationships play a vital role in shaping individuals' emotional well-being, social development, and life experiences.

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