2222

Ramitha BE
College of Rural Home Science,
Department of Human
Development and Family
Studies, University of
Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad
580005, India

Sibling relationship among school children

Ramitha BE

Abstract
A study on sibling relationship of school children was conducted during 2015-2016. The population of the study comprised of children studying in 5th to 10th grade from urban areas of Dharwad taluk and rural areas of Dharwad and Bagalkot taluk, Karnataka. Further the sample comprised of 24 students from each school leading to 96 students from urban area and 96 students from rural area. Totally, the sample size consisted of 192 school children. Sibling relationship questionnaire and Teacher report form was used to assess sibling relationship and socio-emotional behavior of school children respectively. There was significant negative correlation that was found between sibling relationship and socio-emotional behavior problems. Internalizing and externalizing problems was negatively correlated with warmth/closeness dimension of sibling relationship and positively correlated with conflict and rivalry dimension indicating that higher the sibling relationship lower was socio-emotional behavior problems among school children.

Keywords: Sibling relationship, Socio-emotional behavior, externalizing problems, internalizing problems

1. Introduction
Sibling relationship is one of longest lasting relationships in most people's lives and one of the most important ones: "Relationships between brother and sister have often been called life's most influential and longest lasting relationships – lasting longer than ties to parents, spouses or children." (Bank and Kahn, 1997) [1]. It plays a significant role in one's development as an individual and brings joy, rage, pain, pleasure and frustration in life. But everything is not nasty or unpleasant in the world of siblings. There is altruism, love, companionship and loyalty as well. As sibling hostility begun in childhood may last into adulthood, so can the solidarity among them remain forever.
The sibling tie is special in that it is characterized by closeness as well as rivalry (Dunn et. al., 1994) [2]. Siblings usually are age peers and go through the same life course transitions, yet a different ordinal position in the sibling group is associated with different functions in the family (Cicirelli, 1995) [3].
In general, sibling relationships during childhood/adolescence have characteristics that set them apart from other family relationships (such as those between adolescents and their parents) as well as from relationships with peers (such as those between adolescents and their close friends (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) [4].
During childhood years, children are faced with a number of developmental tasks, including the regulation of emotions and behavior and the sibling relationship is one context in which children attempt to master these goals (Bedford & Volling, 2004) [6]. Relationships theorists argue that close intimate relationships with siblings are important contexts for children's development (Carpendale and Lewis, 2006) [7]. These dyadic relationships may provide a context for the disclosure of intimate, personal information which is a defining feature of close relationships. As children move into early adolescence, they develop greater abilities to engage in self-disclosure.

2. Material and Methods
The study on "Sibling relationship of school children" was conducted during the year 2015-2016. The prior permission was taken from Block Education Officer before carrying out the study. The schools were randomly selected and the Heads of the institutions were contacted and permission was taken for conducting the study.

Correspondence
Ramitha BE
College of Rural Home Science,
Department of Human
Development and Family
Studies, University of
Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad
580005, India

The population of the study comprised of children studying in 5th to 10th grade from urban areas of Dharwad taluk and rural areas of Dharwad and Bagalkot taluk of Karnataka. In urban locality of Dharwad, four schools were randomly selected. In rural locality of Dharwad two schools and two schools from Bagalkot taluk were randomly selected for the study. For the present study, four children from each class of 5th to 10th grade were selected based on their performance in previous exam and teacher's opinion where both high achievers and low achievers were considered. On the whole, the sample comprised of 24 students from each school leading to 96 students from urban area and 96 students from rural area. Totally, the sample size consisted of 192 school children. The sibling relationship of children was assessed through the Sibling Relationship Questionnaire developed by Furman and Buhrmester (1990) [5, 11]. The questionnaire has 48 statements which is a self-report questionnaire to assess the dimensions of sibling relationships which is categorized into four major dimensions/factors viz., Relative power/status factor, Warmth/Closeness factor, Conflict factor and Rivalry factor that assesses the respondent's perceptions of the relationship and behaviours towards their sibling It is a five point likert format (1=hardly at all to 5=extremely much) that was used for all sub-scales expect the parental partiality scale in which possible choices range from "my sibling most always gets treated better, more attention, etc." To "I almost always get..." and scores were based on deviations from the midpoint of "about the same." Frequency and percentage were calculated to interpret sibling relationship of school children. Multivariate ANOVA was used to know the interactional effects of age, gender and sibling constellation on different dimensions of sibling relationship.

3. Results

From Table 1, it was found that higher percentage of children from both urban (76%) and rural (71.9%) area fell in moderate level of sibling relationship followed by high (urban, 21.9% and rural, 25%) level. Accordingly, 2.1 per cent of the urban children and 3.1 per cent of rural children fell under low level of sibling relationship.

Results related to dimension of sibling relationship (Table 2), it was noted that, on the dimension of relative status/power, it was found that, majority of children from both urban and rural areas fell under moderate level (80.2% and 74% respectively). It was found that 13.5 per cent of the urban children and 24 per cent of the rural children fell under high level of sibling relationship. With respect to warmth/closeness, it was found that, in both the areas children fell under moderate level (urban, 53.1% and rural, 44.8%) followed by high level (urban, 39.6% and rural, 51%). On conflict dimension, it was found that majority of children fell in moderate level (urban, 67.7% and rural, 59.4%) followed by low level (urban, 22.9% and rural, 32.3%) level and 9.4 per cent of urban children and 8.3 per cent of rural children belonged to high level of sibling conflict. With regard to sibling rivalry, it was found that, in urban area 49 per cent were in moderate level of rivalry followed by low (45.8%) level and only 5.2 per cent were in low sibling rivalry. In case of rural area, more than half (52.1%) of them were with moderate sibling rivalry followed by high level (31.2%) of rivalry among siblings. Most of the children being in moderate level may be because of parental interaction and knowledge among parents regarding child care practices. Early adolescents perceived conflict as occurring most frequently with siblings, perhaps due to the nature of the relationship (Furman and Buhrmester, 1990) [5, 11].

When the effects of age, gender and sibling constellation was looked at, the results from Table 3 showed that there was significant effect of age on relative status/power where older (13-16 years) children reported higher power in sibling relationship quality among both urban and rural children. Gender had significant effect on relative status/power among rural children where males reported higher status/power on siblings. In urban area, the gender had no impact over relative status/power. Sibling constellation had no effect on relative status/power among both urban and rural children. There was significant interactional effects of age and gender on relative status/power where older children who were males reported higher relative status/power. The significant interaction of age and sibling constellation was noticed where older children in elder brother, younger sister dyad reported higher relative status/power. There was significant interaction of gender and sibling constellation where males in elder brother, younger sister dyad had higher relative status/power among both urban and rural children. Significant interaction effects of age and gender and sibling constellation was found to be non-significant in urban area but was significant in rural area where older children who are males belonging to elder brother, younger sister dyad had higher relative status/power.

Results show that there was non-significant effect of age on warmth/closeness among both urban and rural children. Gender had significant effect on warmth/closeness among both urban and rural children where females reported higher warmth/closeness in both urban and rural locality. Sibling constellation had significant effect on warmth/closeness among both urban and rural children. Elder sister, younger sister reported higher sibling warmth/closeness. There was significant interactional effects of age and gender on warmth/closeness where older children who were females reported higher warmth/closeness. The significant interaction of age and sibling constellation was noticed where older children in elder sister, younger sister dyad reported higher warmth/closeness. There was significant interaction of gender and sibling constellation where females with elder sister, younger sister dyad had higher warmth/closeness among both urban and rural children. Significant interaction effects of age and gender and sibling constellation was found to be significant for both urban and rural children where older children who are females belonging to elder sister, younger sister dyad had higher warmth/closeness (Table 4)

Results from Table 5 showed that there was significant effect of age on sibling conflict among both urban and rural children where older (13-18 years) children had higher sibling conflict. Gender was found to have non-significant effect on sibling conflict among both urban and rural children. Sibling constellation had non-significant effect on sibling conflict among both urban and rural children. There were non-significant interactional effects of age and gender on sibling conflict among both urban and rural children. The significant interaction of age and sibling constellation was noticed where older children in elder brother, younger brother dyad reported higher sibling conflict. There was significant interaction of gender and sibling constellation where males with elder brother, younger brother dyad had higher sibling conflict among both urban and rural children. Significant interaction effects of age and gender and sibling constellation was found to be significant for both urban and rural children where older children who are males belonging to elder brother, younger brother dyad had higher sibling conflict.

Results from Table 6 showed that there was non-significant effect of age on sibling rivalry among both urban and rural

children. Gender was found to have non-significant effect on sibling rivalry among both urban and rural children. Sibling constellation had significant effect on sibling rivalry among both urban and rural children. Children in elder brother, younger brother dyad had higher sibling rivalry when compared to other sibling constellation dyads. There were non-significant interactional effects of age and gender on sibling rivalry among both urban and rural children. The significant interaction of age and sibling constellation was noticed where older children in elder brother, younger brother dyad reported higher sibling rivalry. There was non-significant interaction of gender and sibling constellation on sibling rivalry among both urban and rural children. Significant interaction effects of age and gender and sibling constellation was found to be significant for both urban and rural children where older children who are males belonging to elder brother, younger brother dyad had higher sibling conflict when compared to other counterparts.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of children's sibling relationship by locality N=192

Levels of sibling relationship	Urban Frequency (%)	Rural Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)	Modified χ^2
High	21 (21.87)	24 (25.00)	45 (23.43)	
Moderate	73 (76.04)	69 (71.87)	142 (73.95)	0.51^{NS}
Low	2 (2.08)	3 (3.12)	5 (2.60)	
Total	96 (100.0)	96 (100.0)	192 (100.0)	

Figure in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 2: Percentage distribution of school children by level of dimensions of sibling relationship N=192

Sl. No	Dimensions	Levels	Urban Frequency (%)	Rural Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)
1.	Relative status/ Power	High	13 (13.5)	23 (24.0)	36 (18.75)
		Moderate	77 (80.2)	71 (74.0)	148 (77.08)
		Low	6 (6.2)	2 (2.1)	8 (4.16)
2.	Warmth/Closeness	High	38 (39.6)	49 (51.0)	87 (45.31)
		Moderate	51 (53.1)	43 (44.8)	94 (48.95)
		Low	7 (7.3)	4 (4.2)	11 (5.72)
3.	Conflict	High	9 (9.4)	8 (8.3)	17 (8.85)
		Moderate	65 (67.7)	57 (59.4)	122 (63.54)
		Low	22 (22.9)	31 (32.3)	53 (27.60)
4.	Rivalry	High	5 (5.2)	30 (31.2)	35 (18.22)
		Moderate	47 (49.0)	50 (52.1)	97 (50.52)
		Low	44 (45.8)	16 (16.7)	60 (31.25)

Table 3: Comparison of variables on relative status/power using MANOVA N=192

Effects		Urban	Rural
Variables	Category	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Age (Years)	Younger (10-12)	33.14 ± 3.22	32.33 ± 4.56
	Older (13-16)	37.23 ± 4.12	39.34 ± 3.22
Gender	Boys	35.21 ± 2.28	38.44 ± 3.45
	Girls	34.45 ± 5.21	34.98 ± 5.22
Sibling Constellation	EB x YB	32.14 ± 3.24	34.32 ± 3.67
	ES x YS	33.33 ± 4.54	36.71 ± 4.53
	EB x YS	37.33 ± 4.65	39.56 ± 4.55
	ES x YB	34.96 ± 3.56	34.98 ± 3.23

Anova

Interactional effects	Urban			Rural		
	F	SEm	CD (5%)	F	SEm	CD (5%)
Age[a] * Gender[a]	5.34**	0.95	2.98	2.94*	0.99	3.43
Age[a] * Sibling Constellation[a]	2.99*	1.23	4.13	5.31**	1.11	4.65
Gender[a] * Sibling Constellation[a]	1.92^{NS}	1.12	-	2.52^{NS}	1.02	-
Age[a] * Gender[a] * Sibling Constellation[a]	2.54^{NS}	1.24	-	4.27*	1.32	3.97

Age[a]=Older (13-16 years), Gender[a]= Males, Sibling Constellation[a]=Elder brother, Younger sister dyad
*Significant at 5 per cent level
**Significant at 1 per cent level

Table 4: Comparison of variables on warmth/closeness using Manova N=192

Effects		Urban	Rural
Variables	Category	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Age (Years)	Younger (10-12)	59.52 ± 12.12	58.23 ± 11.49
	Older (13-16)	62.45 ± 9.43	63.22 ± 8.56
Gender	Boys	54.23 ± 10.10	56.23 ± 10.46
	Girls	61.34 ± 11.13	65.92 ± 11.32
Sibling Constellation	EB x YB	54.17 ± 14.23	55.13 ± 13.26
	ES x YS	70.23 ± 11.43	72.13 ± 13.62
	EB x YS	56.45 ± 7.89	57.73 ± 8.21
	ES x YB	57.23 ± 14. 45	53.32 ± 9.67

Anova

Interactional effects	F	SEm	CD (5%)	F	SEm	CD (5%)
Age^a * Gender^a	5.40**	0.95	2.57	6.72**	0.99	2.78
Age^a * Sibling Constellation^a	2.92*	1.49	4.76	3.14*	1.68	5.11
Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	4.65**	1.81	5.32	5.97**	1.88	5.79
Age^a * Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	3.12*	1.24	4.76	3.28*	1.32	4.91

Age^a=Older (13-16 years), Gender^a= Females, Sibling Constellation^a=Elder sister, Younger sister dyad
*Significant at 5 per cent level
**Significant at 1 per cent level

Table 5: Comparison of variables on sibling conflict using MANOVA N=192

Effects		Urban	Rural
Variables	Category	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Age (Years)	Younger (10-12)	23.14 ± 5.28	24.23 ± 5.66
	Older (13-16)	25.54 ± 4.45	26.22 ± 4.21
Gender	Boys	25.23 ± 5.91	27.33 ± 5.39
	Girls	23.22 ± 4.16	24.87 ± 3.99
Sibling Constellation	EB x YB	27.23 ± 3.45	28.76 ± 5.89
	ES x YS	24.23 ± 4.60	24.69 ± 5.23
	EB x YS	23.22 ± 4.97	23.98 ± 5.23
	ES x YB	24.51 ± 5.21	24.59 ± 4.98

Anova

Interactional effects	F	SEm	CD (5%)	F	SEm	CD (5%)
Age^a * Gender^a	0.88^{NS}	0.25	-	1.12^{NS}	0.61	-
Age^a * Sibling Constellation^a	3.25*	0.86	2.52	3.97*	0.95	2.89
Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	2.99*	0.67	2.12	3.12*	1.20	3.65
Age^a * Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	2.75^{NS}	0.58	-	3.48*	1.21	3.72

Age^a= Older (13-16 years), Gender^a= Males, Sibling Constellation^a=Elder brother, Younger brother dyad
*Significant at 5 per cent level
**Significant at 1 per cent level

Table 6: Comparison of variables on sibling rivalry using MANOVA N=192

Effects		Urban	Rural
Variables	Category	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Age (Years)	Younger (10-12)	12.13 ± 7.56	13.12 ± 6.98
	Older (13-16)	15.13 ± 6.78	16.54 ± 5.97
Gender	Boys	14.35 ± 7.21	14.34 ± 6.57
	Girls	12.37 ± 6.77	13.21 ± 5.82
Sibling Constellation	EB x YB	14.13 ± 5.64	15.86 ± 5.43
	ES x YS	11.96 ± 4.67	13.43 ± 6.13
	EB x YS	12.43 ± 6.49	12.22 ± 5.33
	ES x YB	12.57 ± 5.89	13.33 ± 6.12

Anova

Interactional effects	F	SEm	CD (5%)	F	SEm	CD (5%)
Age^a * Gender^a	2.10^{NS}	0.65	-	2.54^{NS}	0.83	-
Age^a * Sibling Constellation^a	3.97*	0.79	2.56	3.58*	0.85	2.83
Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	1.88^{NS}	0.65	-	2.11^{NS}	0.63	-
Age^a * Gender^a * Sibling Constellation^a	2.85*	1.04	3.23	3.77*	1.32	3.96

Age^a= Older (13-18 years), Gender^a= Males, Sibling Constellation^a=Elder brother, Younger brother dyad
*Significant at 5 per cent level
**Significant at 1 per cent level.

4. Discussion

Among urban and rural school children, majority children fell under moderate level followed by high level and only few were in low level of sibling relationship. When dimensions of sibling relationship were observed, higher percentage of urban and rural children fell under moderate level of relative status/power, warmth/closeness, conflict and rivalry. Most of the children being in moderate level may be because of parental interaction and knowledge among parents regarding child care practices. Early adolescents perceived conflict as occurring most frequently with siblings, perhaps due to the nature of the relationship (Furman and Buhrmester, 1985) [4].
It was found that there was significant interaction effect of age, gender and sibling constellation on relative status/power where older age children who are males in elder brother, younger brother dyad to be higher on relative status/power in sibling relationship. There was also significant interaction effect of age, gender and sibling constellation on warmth/closeness dimension of sibling relationship where older age children who are females in sister-sister dyad expressed higher warmth/closeness with their siblings. Similarly, there was also significant interaction effect of age, gender and sibling constellation on sibling conflict and rivalry dimension where older age children who are males in elder brother, younger brother dyad expressed higher conflict and rivalry. Similar to the present findings, Gass et al. (2007) [8] showed that females

provide more comfort to siblings, particularly to sisters, than do males. Oliva and Arranz (2005) [9] found that for girls, a good relationship with their siblings was linked to good relationships with their parents and peers, as well as increased self-esteem and life satisfaction. For boys, sibling relationships had no relation with other family or personal variables. Sibling conflicts were more frequent than intense by adolescent older siblings (Barr and Smetana, 2010) [10]. Sibling companionship and affection were also lower in the older age groups (Buhrmester and Furman, 1990) [5, 11]. Even though age differences are noted across developmental periods with respect to positive and negative dimensions of sibling relationship quality, the emotional closeness and support in sibling relationships remains stable over time (Volling and Blandon, 2003). The results of Branje *et al*., 2004 revealed that sibling support increased strongly from age 11 to age 12 with a smaller increase from age 13 onwards. Barr and Smetana (2010) [10] reported that same-sex sibling pairs had closer relationships than mixed-sex pairs where sister-sister dyad had better relation than brother-brother dyad. Stach (2007) observed that sisters share unique relationships that sisters use their relationships to develop as an individual and that being individual is important to the relationship and that the intimate nature is highly reliant on their upbringing and family life. Studies examining differences in sibling relationships quality as a function of sibling gender composition generally found higher quality relationships for same-sex sibling pairs (especially sister pairs) than for mixed-sex sibling pairs (Aguilar *et al*., 2001) [13].

5. Conclusion
The present study focussed on sibling relationship of school going children where the significant interactional effect of age, gender and sibling constellation on various dimensions of sibling relationship. This calls for educational program for children and parents to promote the healthy relationships between siblings since sibling relationship having a major impact on individuals for overall developing relationships.

6. References
1. Bank SP, Kahn MD, The sibling bond, Basic Books Publications. 1997.
2. Dunn J, Slomkowski C, Beardsall L, Sibling relationships from the preschool period through middle childhood and early adolescence. Develop. Psychol., 1994; 30:315-324.
3. Cicirelli VG, Sibling influence throughout the lifespan. Sibling relationships: Their nature and significance across the lifespan. 1995; 267-284.
4. Furman W, Buhrmester D, Children's perceptions of the qualities of sibling relationships. Child Development. 1985; 56:448-461.
5. Furman W, Buhrmester D, Age and sex differences in perceptions of networks of personal relationships. Child Develop. 1990; 63(1):103-115.
6. Bedford VH, Volling BL, A dynamic ecological regulation development within the sibling relationship context. Personal Relationships across the Lifespan, 2004; 22(3):76-102.
7. Carpendale J, Lewis C, How children develop social understanding. Blackwell Publishers. 2006; 2(3):223-245.
8. Gass K, Jenkins J, Dunn D, Are sibling relationships protective? A longitudinal study. J. Child Psychol. Psychiat., 2007; 48:167-175.
9. Oliva A, Arranz E, Sibling relationships during adolescence. European J. Develop. Psychol. 2005; 2(3):253-270.
10. Barr MC, Smetana JG, Who said you could wear my sweater? Adolescent siblings' conflicts and associations with relationship quality. Child Develop. 2010; 81(2): 464-471.
11. Buhrmester D, Furman W, Perceptions of sibling relationships during middle childhood and adolescence. Child Develop, 1990; 61:1387-1398.
12. Branje SJT, Lieshout CFM, Aken MA, Haselager GJ, Perceived support in sibling relationships and adolescent adjustment. J. Child Psychol. Psychiat. 2004; 45(8):1385-1396.
13. Aguilar B, Brien KM, August GJ, Aoun SL, Hektner J, M, Relationship quality of aggressive children and their siblings: A multiinformant, multimeasure investigation. J. Abnor. Psychol. 2001; 29(6):479-489.
14. Volling BL, Blandon AY, Positive indicators of sibling relationship quality: Psychometric analyses of The Sibling Inventory of Behavior (SIB). Child Trends' Positive Outcomes Conference, 2003.