



Aggression and its relationship with Self-Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction among Siblings

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Abstract

The present research was conducted with the objective of understanding the elder and younger siblings on their levels of aggression, self esteem and relationship satisfaction. Sixty adult siblings from different cities were contacted, (n=30) were elder siblings and (n=30) were younger siblings. The Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) was used to measure the aggression levels of the siblings. Aggression was measured on four dimensions (Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility). Further, the Rosenberg's Self Esteem questionnaire was used to measure the self esteem of the siblings & Burns Relationship Satisfaction scale was used to measure the level of relationship satisfaction among the siblings. T-Test and Correlation were applied to the data, and the results yielded that there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Keywords: *Siblings, Aggression, Self Esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, Elder Siblings, Younger Sibling*

Introduction

Sibling relationships are the total of the interactions (physical, verbal and non-verbal communication) of two or more individuals who share knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and feelings regarding each other from the time that one sibling becomes aware of the other (Cicirelli, 1985). Various patterns and trends are seen in sibling relationships, as with other relationships. The sibling relationship is one in which a sibling is able to express emotions of loving and liking toward their sibling, while simultaneously engaging in aggressive behaviors, competition and rivalry (Rittenour, Myers & Brann, 2007). The siblings also play an important role in the development of social skills, cooperation, empathy and the ability to share (Pike, Coldwell, & Dunn, 2005). However, the quality of a sibling relationship is often dependent upon the quality of parent child relationship and the psychological adjustment of the child (Pike et al., 2005). For instance, more negative interactions between siblings have been reported in families where parents had poor patterns of communication with their children (Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1994). Not only this, if the conflicts are poorly resolved it can lead for the development of poor self esteem among the siblings and there are higher chances of development of aggression between them. However, contradicting to this fact it has also been seen that sibling interaction and support is also enhanced sometimes in times of crisis, and it can be looked upon as potential sources of support (Hochschild, 1973).

According to a study by Singh and Sakshi, (2015) it was revealed that healthy adult sibling relationship boosts the self-esteem of the person as well as helps in maintaining the decent behavior among the siblings. It was also observed in one of the studies by Stoneman (2001) that the siblings relationships vary drastically when one of the children has a disability with the one where one doesn't. The results showed that there was a huge difference in terms of sibling warmth, affection, love when either of the siblings was disabled as compared to the situation where none /either had a disability.

Kramer and Bank (2005) in their research focused on how sibling relationship acts as an important context for both the individual development and family development. The research also focused on aggression, self-esteem as a variable and how do they effect sibling relationship satisfaction.

Aggression

Aggression is “a response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism” (Buss, 1961). It has also been defined in simpler words by Bushman and Anderson (2001) “as a behavior directed towards another individual with the proximate aim to cause harm, injury and hurt to another person” (Baron & Richardson, 1994), Berkowitz, 1993a). The researchers also suggested that there are different forms and functions of aggression as it is expressed in different ways.

Aggression which is often considered intentional harm to another person can be either physical or verbal and hostile or instrumental. Actions like beating, pulling, shoving and hitting can be termed as physical aggression (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006). Meaningful researches have been conducted on aggression among the siblings. One such study conducted by Hernandez (2020) on 350 individuals (18-35 years). Results revealed that 99% of them had a sibling aggression score above one. Significant gender differences did not emerge on the total sibling aggression scores. The study also supported that age gap of 3 years or less reported more sibling aggression as compared to the farther age gaps. No support was also found for the aggression being more between the same genders or aggression being higher in childhood (before 11 years).

Self Esteem

It is an important component of one's life and can be deeply affected by high levels of aggression. To begin with self esteem simply refers to our positive and negative evaluations of ourselves (Coppersmith, 1967). According to Alesi et al. (2012), self-esteem is regarded “as a personal psychological characteristic relating to self-judgment based on one's values about humans.”

The most common types of self esteem as per modern theorists are Positive and Negative Self-Esteem. Positive Self-Esteem also known as high self-esteem, it refers to feelings positively about oneself. Negative Self Esteem also known as low self esteem, refers to feelings negatively about oneself (Zywica & Danowski, 2008b).

According to a study by Pyszczynski et al. (2004), on the need for self esteem. The study indicates that high levels of self esteem does reduce anxiety behavior , reduces reminders of one's mortality and convincing people in the presence of afterlife.

Satisfaction with Relationship

Relationship Satisfaction can be defined “as the level of satisfaction that an individual has in his/her relationship and this feeling is very subjective and varies from person to person” (Keizer, 2012).

The subjective feeling is an important indicator of relationship satisfaction and plays an important role to understand each person's level of satisfaction with the relationship. The same thing is applicable to a sibling relationship. The level of satisfaction in their relation depends upon their own subjective experience with each other.

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to understand the relationship between Aggression, Self Esteem and Satisfaction with Relationship among siblings.

Hypothesis

- I. There will be a significant negative relationship between sibling relationship satisfaction with aggression and self esteem.
- II. There will be a significant positive relationship between sibling relationship satisfaction and self esteem.

Method

A sample of 60 siblings, 30 (elder) and 30 (younger), within the age range of 18 to 25 years was purposively selected for the study. They all belonged to urban areas and intact families. Participants meeting the inclusion criteria for the study were identified using personal contacts and formal invitation for participating in the study, describing its aim, what the study proposes. Individuals, who showed interest to the formal invites sent on whatsapp, were then sent the link to the Google form, which had a consent form, demographic details and questions related to the number of siblings they had, what is the age difference between both the siblings and what is the frequency of conflict between them.

Measures

The Standardized tools used for the study were:

Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ): The questionnaire was developed by Buss and Perry (1992). This scale has 29 items, with 4 sub dimensions i.e., Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Hostility and Anger, rated on a five point Likert scale, with scoring ranging from 1- Not at all like me to 5- Completely like Me. The Reliability of the scale is 0.78.

Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale: The questionnaire was developed by Rosenberg (1965). It consists of 10 items, rated on a 4 point likert scale with scoring ranging from 1-(Strongly Disagree) to 4-(Strongly Agree). Few items like item 2, 5,6,8,9 were reversed scored. Some of its items were worded like "At times I think I am no good, I feel useless at times" etc. The reliability of the scale came is 0.77.

Burns Relationship with Satisfaction Scale: This questionnaire was developed by Burns (1993). It consists of 7 items, rated on a 7 point likert scale, i.e. 0 being (very dissatisfied) with the relationship and 6 being (very satisfied) with the relationship. There was no reverse scoring in the scale. Lowest score on this scale is 0 and highest is 6. The reliability of the scale is 0.9

Results

Table 1

Includes descriptive stats for the group data i.e. the variables (Aggression (Physical, verbal, anger, hostility)] its sub dimensions, Self-Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction). N=60.

Descriptive Statistics for group data

Variables (Dimensions)	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Total Sample (N)
Physical Aggression	20.7333	5.578	60
Verbal Aggression	13.8167	3.22854	60
Anger	17.2	5.5259	60
Hostility	22.7	5.16934	60
Total Aggression	74.1167	15.3084	60
Self-Esteem	29.3333	5.90509	60
Relationship Satisfaction	34.1333	5.53101	60

Table 2

Consists of t- Test values and Means for Elder and Younger Siblings on all the 3 variables.

t- Values and mean values of Elder (n=30) and Younger (n=30) Siblings

Variables	Siblings	n	Mean	S.D	t-ratio
Physical	Elder	30	20.566	5.98091	-0.23
	Younger	30	20.9	5.24141	
Verbal	Elder	30	13.8333	3.22793	0.04
	Younger	30	13.8	3.28424	
Anger	Elder	30	16.8667	5.07008	-0.0464

	Younger	30	17.5333	6.01569	
Hostility	Elder	30	21.5	4.7179	-0.1834
	Younger	30	23.9	5.397	
Aggression	Elder	30	72.7667	15.41983	-0.68
	Younger		75.4667	15.33698	
Self Esteem	Elder	30	30.5667	5.99243	1.641
	Younger		28.1	5.64679	
Relationship with Satisfaction	Elder	30	38.8333	5.68776	-0.417
	Younger		34.4333	5.44998	

No significant gender differences emerged between the siblings on aggression and its dimensions viz., physical, verbal, anger, hostility, self esteem and relationship satisfaction. However, the younger siblings show marginally higher mean scores than the elder siblings on aggression and its dimensions viz., physical, verbal, anger and hostility, while the elder siblings show higher mean scores than the younger siblings on Self-Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction.

According to research by Dirks et al. (2018), on sibling aggression being harmful for the victims and can act as a clinical risk. The results showed that most aggressive behavior towards siblings was considered atypical as they occurred on most days whereas, aggressive behaviors targeted at the peers occurred on some days.

Table 3

*Correlation between Aggression, Self-esteem and Relationship Satisfaction among siblings
(N=60)*

	Physical	Verbal	Anger	Hostility	Aggression	Self-Esteem	Relationship Satisfaction
Physical	-	0.361**	0.538**	0.343**	0.751**	-0.033	-0.002
Verbal	0.361**	-	0.502**	0.328*	0.638**	0.073	-0.221
Anger	0.538**	0.502**	-	0.579**	0.874**	-0.243	-0.122
Hostility	0.343**	0.328*	0.579**	-	0.726**	-0.299	-0.028
Aggression	0.343**	0.638**	0.874**	0.726**	-	-0.175	-0.112
Self-Esteem	0.751**	0.073	-0.243	-0.299*	-0.175	-	0.006
Relationship Satisfaction	-0.033	-0.221	-0.122	-0.028	-0.112	0.006	-

Results reveal that aggression has a negative relationship with self Esteem and relationship satisfaction.

Table 4

Correlation between Aggression, Self esteem and Relationship Satisfaction Elder siblings (n=30)

Correlation

	Physical	Verbal	Anger	Hostility	Total Aggression	Self Esteem	Relationship Satisfaction
Physical	-	.498**	.502**	0.188	.741**	-0.007	-0.228

Verbal	.498**	-	.616**	.402*	.770**	0.018	-0.105
Anger	.502**	.616**	-	.474**	.846**	-0.165	-0.301
Hostility	0.188	.402*	.474**	-	.652**	-0.115	-0.244
TA	.741**	.770**	.846**	.652**	-	-0.093	-0.335
Self Esteem	-0.007	0.018	-0.165	-0.115	-0.093	-	0.187
Relationship Satisfaction	-0.228	-0.105	-0.301	-0.244	-0.335	0.187	-

(*) means significant at .05 level and (**) means significant at.01 level. Here, Rel Sat- Relationship Satisfaction, S.E- Self Esteem, T.A.- Total Aggression, Physical- Physical Aggression, Verbal-Verbal Aggression. We find a negative co relation between hostility and self-esteem.

Table 4

*Correlation between Aggression, Self-esteem and Relationship Satisfaction Younger Siblings
(n=30)*

	Physical	Verbal	Anger	Aggression	Hostility	Self-Esteem	Satisfaction with Relationship
Physical	-	0.211	.584**	.510**	.768**	-0.051	0.265

Verbal	0.211	-	0.412*	0.285	0.513**	0.131	-0.34
Anger	0.584**	0.412*	-	0.662**	0.902**	-0.301	0.027
Hostility	0.510**	0.285	0.662**	-	0.799**	-0.401*	0.142
Aggression	0.768**	0.513**	0.902**	0.799**	-	-0.232	0.11
Self-Esteem	-0.051	0.131	-0.301	-0.401*	-0.232	-	-0.17
Relationship with Satisfaction	0.265	-0.34	0.027	0.142	0.11	-0.17	-

The results find a negative co relation between Hostility and Self Esteem among the elder siblings. Rest, all the dimensions of aggression are co related to total aggression.

(*) means significant at .05 level and (**) means significant at.01 level.

Discussion of Results

As it can be seen from the above tables, t-test, and correlation were used for analysis. Two alternate hypotheses were studied for the same. Below are the 2 hypothesis and their comparison with the result found in the matrices.

H1: *There will be a significant negative relationship between sibling relationship satisfaction with self esteem and aggression.*

As seen in study by Teven et al. (2009) on verbal aggression in sibling relationship, it was found that verbal aggression was negatively related to relationship satisfaction.

In the present study, the same was in table 3, and found that there does exist a significant negative relationship between sibling relationship satisfaction with aggression and self esteem. So, we accept the hypothesis. Therefore, it is safe to state that the siblings who share a less aggressive relationship with each other have a higher sense of relationship satisfaction.

H2: *There will be a significant positive relationship between sibling relationship satisfaction and self esteem. We can see this in table 3. So, we accept the hypothesis.*

As seen in a study by Ponti and Smorti (2018) on roles of parental attachment and sibling relationship in emerging adults. It was seen that attachment to both parents influenced sibling relationships which in turn impacted relationship in general. This states that the better the sibling relationship, the better is the self-esteem among the siblings.

Conclusions

Sibling relationship not just only involves good relationship among the siblings but also good parent child relations, psychological adjustment. A negative parent child relationship or a negative sibling relation will not only make the child aggressive but also worsen their self esteem, which further makes the child feel lonely, dejected and isolated. A good effort to resolve sibling conflicts, bad parent child relationship will improve self esteem of the child and will reduce anxiety, stress and enhance a positive relationship.

Therefore, one should try and resolve highly negative conflicts at an earlier stage and try and maintain a good relationship.

Limitations & Future Directions

During the study certain limitations emerged which could have contributed meaningfully towards understanding sibling relationship and their aggression and self esteem patterns. The small sample size and not taking a gender view limits our understanding of the pattern of the variables. Research does show evidence of behavioral differences between same and opposite gender siblings. Additionally, studying twins in the family can contribute meaningfully. Exploring the home environment, parental care and socialization patterns can effectsiblings aggression, self esteem and relationship pattern. This is a pioneering study on college going siblings in the Indian context, which opens up an array of research which can contribute towards reducing aggression, enhancing their self esteem and creating harmonious relationships for their future lives.

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