

A comparative study on the adjustment of adolescent single child and child with sibling

B NAVYA SREEJA, S PRASANTHI*, BILQUIS and K DHANA SREE

Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science
Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, Guntur 522034 Andhra Pradesh, India

*Email for correspondence: boyanavyasreeja@gmail.com

© Society for Advancement of Human and Nature (SADHNA)

Received: 01.04.2024/Accepted: 28.05.2024

ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to compare the adjustment in single child and children with sibling adolescents in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. The sample of 160 adolescents (80 single children and 80 children with siblings) in the age of 11 to 19 years was taken. The results indicated that sibling child adolescents were more adjusted than children without siblings and also had significant differences on the adjustment dimensions of home, health and social. Also, children with siblings showed higher emotional adjustment and performance in education. There was a significant difference between single-child and child with sibling adolescents in different dimensions of adjustment such as health, home, social, emotional and education performance. Higher mean was found among adolescents with siblings in dimensions of emotional adjustment and education performance and adolescents without siblings in dimensions of health, home and social adjustment.

Keywords: Adjustment; adolescents; single child; siblings; dimensions

INTRODUCTION

The basic unit of society is family. In India family is a complex and dynamic institution (Niranjan and Nair 2005). Family lays a foundation for optimum development as it stands first and the most immediate social environment for the children.

In all the stages of life cycle, adolescence is a transitional stage in physical and psychological development that is generally confined to the period from puberty to legal adulthood (Zaky 2016). This is the period an adolescent faces numerous psychosocial challenges.

Many expectations are built from adolescents by society like independence, peer adjustments, educational and vocational preparation and for the evolution of social and emotional values. Because of multiple people in a family, it can help in developing a child's skills in multiple ways. Something very helpful for family members to do is to teach children basic

emotions when the children are very young (https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/the-role-of-family-in-child-development/#:~:text=In%20a%20family%2C%20because%20there,to%20teach%2020children%20basic%20emotions.)).

The world of modernism and materialism has revolutionized the outlook of Indian culture. Pradhan and Sekher (2014) found that trend towards single-child families has increased and was an outcome of several factors such as higher status and employment of women, availability of improved contraceptives and healthcare facilities, liberalized abortion laws, rising costs of living including cost of medical attention and schooling, attitudinal and behavioural changes, financial status etc.

The only children get excessive attention due to absence of siblings which might turn them selfish, demanding and independent, exhibiting moody behaviours and with raised self-esteem. It is always a known fact that socialization with family makes the

children to learn how to trust, seek friendships from others and find comfort with others as well and learn how to make and sustain relationships.

Adolescence is the phase of life related with adjustments and behavioural problems. The rate of single child has been increasing gradually making an important requisite to know his/her problem of adjustments during adolescence. There is minimal research focused on adjustment on single child and children with siblings in India especially in Andhra Pradesh. The current research tried to explore the adjustment among single child and children with siblings due to parental treatment, birth disorders, personalities, personal experiences, less interactions, family structures, mental health issues etc.

METHODOLOGY

Purposive random sampling and snowball sampling methods were adopted for collecting the sample. Adjustment inventory of Sinha and Singh (1971) was used. Data were collected from one school, one intermediate college and two degree colleges in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. In compliance with age, the respondents were chosen randomly for sibling adolescents.

The single adolescent children were picked from family members, friends and neighbours using snowball technique method. Prior acceptance was taken from all the respondents and parents while collecting the data. The research study was presented before the Institutional Human Ethics Committee (IHEC) of the university and its approval was taken before taking up the work. Frequency and percentage were utilized to determine the respondents' distribution on the basis of factors that were chosen.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data on frequency distribution of adjustment of single-child adolescents is given in Table 1.

Home: In case of gender, in the adjustment of home, 50.00 per cent of the males and 60.00 per cent of the females were highly adjusted in home dimension. High adjusted adolescents were usually active and good at home circumstances. On the other hand, 50.00 per cent of males and 40.00 per cent of females had low home adjustment due to low home values and lack of siblings

for support and sharing. In total, 55.00 per cent children had high and 45.00 per cent had low home adjustment.

Health: Half of the single-child males (50.00%) and 57.50 per cent of the single-child females had high health adjustment. Thus majority of respondents had peace in mind and were good at physical hygiene, while, 50.00 per cent males and 42.50 per cent females had low health adjustment due to non-adjustment behaviour and being rude to other people. In overall, 53.75 per cent children had high and 46.25 per cent had low health adjustment.

Social: It was found that 37.50 per cent of the males and 50.00 per cent of the females had high social adjustment. Overall, 43.75 per cent single-child adolescents had high social adjustment due to pro-social behaviour and good at morals. As against it, 62.50 per cent of the males and 50.00 per cent of the females were low in social adjustment. In overall, 56.25 per cent of the adolescents felt low due to lack of affection and caring as they did not have siblings.

Emotion: It was observed that 55.00 per cent of the single-child males and 45.00 per cent females had high, while, 45.00 per cent males and 55.00 per cent females had low emotional adjustment. In overall, equal number of children (50.00% each) showed high and low emotional adjustment indicating that single children had poor self-regulation and lack of emotional bonding as they lacked siblings.

Education: It was found that 67.50 per cent of the single-child males and 65.00 per cent females experienced high level of educational adjustment, whereas, 33.50 per cent males and 35.00 per cent females had low educational adjustment. Thus 66.25 per cent of single-child adolescents were highly interested in education, committed to goals and future-oriented mind-set, whereas, 33.75 per cent were low in this educational adjustment which could be due to less interest in educational skills and lack of creativity.

The data on frequency distribution of adjustment of children with siblings are given in Table 2.

Home: High home adjustment was exhibited by 62.50 per cent of the males and 65.00 per cent of the females, while, low home adjustment was exhibited by 37.50 per cent of the males and 35.00 per cent of the females. Overall, 63.75 per cent of the sibling adolescents were

Table 1. Frequency distribution of adjustment of single-child adolescents

Adjustment dimension	Number of single-child adolescents					
	Females (n = 40)		Males (n = 40)		Total (N = 80)	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Home	24 (60.00)	16 (40.00)	20 (50.00)	20 (50.00)	44 (55.00)	36 (45.00)
Health	23 (57.50)	17 (42.50)	20 (50.00)	20 (50.00)	43 (53.75)	37 (46.25)
Social	20 (50.00)	20 (50.00)	15 (37.50)	25 (62.50)	35 (43.75)	45 (56.25)
Emotion	18 (45.00)	22 (55.00)	22 (55.00)	18 (45.00)	40 (50.00)	40 (50.00)
Education	26 (65.00)	14 (35.00)	27 (67.50)	13 (33.50)	53 (66.25)	27 (33.75)

Figures in parentheses are per cent values

Table 2. Frequency distribution of adjustment of children with sibling adolescents

Adjustment dimension	Number of children with sibling adolescents					
	Females (n = 40)		Males (n = 40)		Total (N = 80)	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Home	26 (65.00)	14 (35.00)	25 (62.50)	15 (37.50)	51 (63.75)	29 (36.25)
Health	23 (57.50)	17 (42.50)	26 (65.00)	14 (35.00)	49 (61.25)	31 (38.75)
Social	25 (62.50)	15 (37.50)	25 (62.50)	15 (37.50)	50 (62.50)	30 (37.50)
Emotion	11 (27.50)	29 (72.50)	17 (42.50)	23 (57.50)	28 (35.00)	52 (65.00)
Education	26 (65.00)	14 (35.00)	25 (62.50)	15 (37.50)	51 (63.75)	29 (36.25)

Figures in parentheses are per cent values

high in home adjustment, depicting that they had acceptable home environment setting, encouragement and high expression from the family, whereas, 36.25 per cent exhibited low home adjustment due to low support from family.

Health: The data show that 65.00 per cent of the males and 57.50 per cent of the females possessed high health adjustment, while, 35.00 per cent of the males and 42.50 per cent of the females had low adjustment. Thus majority of siblings (61.25%) were highly adjusted to health and 38.75 per cent were low in health adjustment in sibling adolescents.

Social: The data pertaining to the social adjustment show that equal number of males and females (62.50% each) were high in social adjustment and 37.50 per cent each were low in social adjustment.

Overall, 62.50 per cent of the adolescents demonstrated high social adjustment which means that

the adolescents were socially active and good at interpersonal skills, while, 37.50 per cent showed low adjustment in social area because they had low interaction with community and low participation in social groups.

A study by Bahreasemani and Ostovar (2015) compared the social adjustment among only-child adolescents and adolescents with siblings. The results revealed that there was a significant difference between both groups of adolescence in social adjustment.

Emotion: The data show that 42.50 per cent males and 27.50 per cent females had high emotional adjustment, while, 57.50 per cent males and 72.50 per cent females had low emotional adjustment. In overall, 35.00 per cent of the adolescents showed high and 65.00 per cent low emotional adjustment indicating that adolescents had low emotional bonding, required modification of attitude with siblings and had poor expression of emotions.

Education: Majority of males (62.50%) and females (65.00%) exhibited high educational adjustment, whereas, 37.50 per cent males and 35.00 per cent females showed low educational adjustment. Overall, 63.75 per cent of the adolescents were found to be organised and interested in education.

The data on mean difference in adjustment of male and female single-child adolescents and children with siblings are given in Table 3.

In case of females, negative significant difference was observed at 1.00 per cent level of significance between the adjustment of single child and children with siblings except home and social adjustment.

Female children with siblings had greater mean value in all the dimensions in contrast to single-child females except for home and social adjustment which indicated that females in children with siblings were more adjusted in dimensions of health, emotion and education in comparison to females in single child except in home adjustment that means they had a high exposure in home and social adjustment.

Equal mean values were observed in both the females of single child and children with sibling adolescents which indicated that they were highly exposed in home and social gatherings.

Borzoo et al (2018) revealed that the adolescents' adjustments in social, emotional and educational domains were at moderate level.

Bahresemmani and Ostovar (2015) compared the social adjustment between only-child adolescents and adolescents with siblings and revealed that there was a significant difference between both groups of adolescence in social adjustment ($p < 0.01$).

In case of males, positive significant difference was observed at 1.00 level of significance between the adjustment of single child and children with siblings except emotional and educational dimensions. Single-child males had greater mean value in all the dimensions in contrast to children with siblings except for emotional and educational adjustment which indicated that males in children with siblings were more adjusted in dimensions of home, health and social in contrast to males in single child except in emotional and educational adjustment that means they were low at emotions and poor at academics which lead to lack of emotional intelligence, low maturity level and low self-confidence in academics and thus poor grades were obtained.

Chen and Liu (2014) compared only children with those who had siblings on academic related outcomes and reported that there were no differences in academic outcome between single child and children with siblings which could be due to the reason that singletons might be able to spend more time on home work than who had siblings.

CONCLUSION

Adolescent period adjustment is a major challenge, especially for the adolescents studying in schools and colleges as they experience challenges in

Table 3. Mean difference in adjustment of single-child and child with sibling

Adjustment dimension	Type of adolescent	Females (N = 80)		Males (N = 80)	
		Mean \pm SD	t-value	Mean \pm SD	t-value
Home	Single child	7.125 \pm 2.44097	0.521**	7.225 \pm 2.06916	0.871**
	Child with sibling	6.825 \pm 2.17076		6.800 \pm 2.53387	
Health	Single child	6.725 \pm 2.58186	-0.376**	7.150 \pm 2.54750	0.798**
	Child with sibling	6.950 \pm 2.43847		6.750 \pm 2.30662	
Social	Single child	9.600 \pm 2.16972	0.000**	10.27 \pm 2.51138	1.706**
	Child with sibling	9.600 \pm 2.59980		9.275 \pm 2.35326	
Emotional	Single child	16.90 \pm 4.66190	-1.658**	15.52 \pm 4.26066	-1.180**
	Child with sibling	18.72 \pm 4.64641		16.70 \pm 4.45030	
Educational	Single child	8.700 \pm 3.53880	-0.973**	8.425 \pm 3.73403	-0.754**
	Child with sibling	9.500 \pm 3.78255		8.975 \pm 3.38539	

**Significant at 1 per cent LoS

their physical, mental, social and psychological adjustment in different situations. The present study depicted that more adjustment was found in case of children with siblings in the dimensions of home, social, health and education because they were staying with their families, could share everything in the families and were more adjusted in all situations. Lower adjustment was observed in single-child adolescents as they had less social involvement and family support.

The findings of the current research depicted that the positive and negative significant differences were there between the single child and children with sibling adolescents. Higher adjustment levels were observed in single-child female adolescents and children with sibling male adolescents. Higher levels of adjustment were observed in single-child and children with sibling female adolescents in all the dimensions as compared to single-child females except for home and social adjustment. Higher levels of adjustments were observed in single-child male adolescents except emotional and educational adjustment as compared to children with sibling male adolescents.

More number of single-child adolescents scored high mean difference in dimensions of home, health and social except for emotional and educational dimensions compared to children with siblings adolescents. Single child had maximum support from the families than the children with siblings.

The findings of the study would help to create awareness among families and communities about the significance of family support and parenting practices on adjustment of children, thereby, increasing the standard of survival of adolescents in both single child as well as children with siblings.

REFERENCES

- Bahresemmani OG and Ostovar Z 2015. Comparison of social adjustment, self-worthiness and achievement motivation among only-child adolescents and adolescents with siblings. *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences* **5(S2)**: 1575-1583.
- Borzoo T, Renani HA, Rostami S and Haghighizadeh MH 2018. Comparison of social, emotional and educational adjustments of adolescent girls in single-child and multiple-child families in Khorramshahr. *Journal of Advanced Pharmacy Education and Research* **8(S2)**: 100-104.
- Chen Z-Y and Liu RX 2014. Comparison of adolescent only children with those who have siblings on academic-related outcomes and psychosocial adjustment. *Hindawi Publishing Corporation Child Development* **2014**: 578289; doi: 10.1155/2014/578289.
- <https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/the-role-of-family-in-child-development/#:~:text=In%2a%20family%2C%20because%20there,to%20teach%20children%20basic%20emotions> (Retrieved: 28.03.2024)
- Niranjan S and Nair S 2005. A socio-demographic analysis of the size and structure of the family in India. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* **36(4)**: 623-652.
- Pradhan I and Sekher TV 2014. Single-child Families in India: levels, trends and determinants. *Asian Population Studies* **10(2)**: 163-175.
- Sinha AKP and Singh RP 1971. Adjustment inventory for college students. National Psychological Corporation, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India.
- Zaky EA 2016. Adolescence: a crucial transitional stage in human life. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Behavior* **4(6)**: e115; doi: 10.4172/2375-4494.1000e115.