

THE TEENAGER'S SIBLING STATUS AND ITS CONNECTION TO INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Annotation: This article presents the opinions of scientists based on the results of studies of the influence of birth order on personality formation. The conclusions are presented based on the results of a study on the problem of relationships between siblings and the influence of birth order, that is, the status of siblings, on the personal characteristics of a teenager.

Key words: family, teenager, birth order, sibling status, sibling relationships, eldest child, middle child, youngest child, only child, interpersonal relationships, socio-psychological characteristics.

Currently, special attention is being paid worldwide to researching and strengthening families and family relationships. This is because the family climate and interpersonal relationships within it, specifically the child's relationships with parents and siblings, play a crucial role in shaping and determining an individual's future. Sibling relationships, as a unique manifestation of these family dynamics, hold a special place in personality formation. This includes both the relationships between children and parents' attitudes towards their children, taking into account birth order. However, in most studies, sibling status and sibling relationships are not sufficiently considered as a specific component of child development. It should be noted that many foreign studies aimed at examining the psychological aspects of birth order and sibling relationships on personality development have revealed that people with different sibling statuses manifest themselves differently in interpersonal relationships.

In scientific literature, the concept of sibling status is used to explain the implications of birth order. Sibling status represents a unique social situation in the formation of a child's personality, which influences their attitude towards life, communication, and activities, as well as their relationships with adults and peers.

Scientists A. Adler and S. Freud proposed the idea that the formation and development of a child's personality depends on their birth order in the family, the presence of siblings, and the age differences between births. They emphasized that a child's sibling status influences their personality, the nature of their relationships with people, and, in general, how they will find their place in future life. A. Adler identifies four main types of sibling status: first child (oldest), middle child, youngest child, and only child.



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Foreign scholars, including W. Toman, R. Richardson, R. Driscoll, D. Eckstein, R. Brayington, R. Zajonc, F. Galton, S. Schachter, K. Isaacson, G. Homentauskas, T. Dumitrascu, and others, have studied family and interpersonal relationships within it, sibling status, and its influence on personality formation within the context of their cultural environment.

Walter Toman, having studied thousands of families, found that despite differences in value systems, financial situations, and education levels, there are many similarities in the character of people with the same sibling status in the family. Toman believed that siblings teach each other to interact closely with people, especially peers. From this perspective, the relationship between siblings is, in a sense, more important than the relationship between parents and children, as it represents the experience of "horizontal" relationships, while the relationship between parents and children always remains "vertical."

Based on birth order theories, Cliff Isaacson argued that a person's birth order influences their psychological type and studied sibling status using specific methods. He also emphasized the possibility of providing psychological assistance taking into account birth order and provided his own definition for each sibling status. In his opinion, along with birth order, the age gap between siblings and the relationships among children in the family significantly influence the formation of an individual's psychological type. Generally, according to Isaacson, the firstborn, that is, the eldest child, becomes kind-hearted. Parents place great hopes on them. They often demand high responsibility from the firstborn, instilling the idea that they should be an example for younger siblings. As a result, the child may grow up to be authoritarian and serious. The second child's situation is different: the constant leadership of the older sibling fosters a spirit of rivalry in the child, who always strives to surpass the older one. In families with many children, second children often feel ignored. The child struggles for self-expression, and competition can become the meaning of their life. Results of many studies show that most patients with mental illnesses are second-to-last in birth order within their families. This can be explained by the difficulty they face in adapting to their younger sibling being pampered. However, middle children calmly perceive unpleasant events and patiently endure failures that befall them. Although they cannot tolerate injustice and fight for fairness, they may find it somewhat difficult to find their place in life. The youngest child, however, is more spoiled because they have many protectors. At the same time, there will be enough people who control and manage them. Although they strive to grow up quickly, they remain "little ones" for life.

Research on the influence of sibling relationships on personality formation is also conducted in our country. In particular, our study found that among the adolescent participants, firstborns take on greater responsibility for resolving conflict situations compared to their siblings. Among the older adolescents in the study, according to T. Leary's methodology results, a tendency towards a dominant style in interpersonal relationships was observed, characteristic of those who are the eldest child and the only representative of their gender in the family. Older boys are more inclined to dominant attitudes towards others compared to girls, while older boys who are the only male child in the family tend to have dominant attitudes towards peers who have younger brothers. They exhibit qualities such as independence, self-esteem, aggressiveness, and hot-temperedness. At the same time, older adolescents were also noted to possess qualities such as responsibility and care for others.



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In our study, significant differences were observed in the results of adolescents with middle child sibling status. It was noted that their self-confidence, self-esteem, and competitive style in interpersonal relationships surpass those of older and younger children. Additionally, adolescents with middle child status possess qualities such as firmness in their word, persistence, stubbornness in pursuing goals, and uncertainty. It was found that adolescents with middle child status in the family more frequently argue with their siblings compared to adolescents with other sibling statuses. They more often conflict with their older sibling rather than their younger one. This behavioral style turned out to be average, but higher in boys with siblings than in boys who are the only male child. According to psychologist G.T. Homentauskas, middle children often consider themselves detached from parental attention, which leads to the establishment of managerial, authoritative relationships with others; they become intolerant of injustice and fighters for justice. In our opinion, the middle child always strives to stand out among the children, to be ahead, which cultivates a spirit of rivalry and qualities such as a dominant attitude towards people. As evidence of our opinion, we can cite the results obtained using T. Leary's methodology in our research work. According to the research results, it was established that middle children in a family have a dominant, controlling attitude towards others, preferring to compete compared to adolescents with a different sibling status.

The younger children who participated in the study expressed reluctance to take on responsibilities within their families and peer groups. Nevertheless, according to sociometric results, adolescents with the status of the youngest child were recognized by their peers as communicative leaders. This indicates their desire for social interaction and relationships. They also evaluated sibling relationships in the family more positively compared to older and middle children. In our opinion, the patient and lenient attitude of parents and adults towards younger children may have fostered their skills of caution, forgiveness, and friendliness in interpersonal relationships. Certainly, factors such as the family's spiritual, social, and economic status, parents' education level, and their attitude towards children play an important role in this development. Additionally, younger only sons demonstrate a more pronounced dominant and controlling attitude towards others compared to peers who have older brothers, while younger only daughters exhibit stronger traits of distrust and sensitivity to offense. Consequently, younger children strive to maintain friendly relations with others, and alongside sociability, communicativeness, and the ability to forgive, they are also characterized to a certain extent by a lack of responsibility.

Our research results indicate that only children in families experience certain difficulties in relationships with their peers. About 70% of them responded "no one" to our question, "Which of your classmates would you like to work or study with after graduation?" It has also been established that only children in families have a lower ability to compromise in conflict situations compared to adolescents with different sibling statuses. Consequently, the presence of brothers and sisters in the family and the development of a tendency towards concession and compromise in relationships with them contributes to some extent to achieving compromise with peers in conflict situations.

Moreover, the research results showed that when choosing a friend, adolescents are more likely to select a peer who matches their own sibling status. This suggests that sibling status is also



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associated with the establishment of friendships. Based on the results of the conducted research, it can be concluded that sibling relationships and sibling status within the family influence the development of each child's personality and the formation of socio-psychological characteristics such as sociability, flexibility, tolerance, and friendliness. To date, research on sibling status and its connection to personality indicators continues, as there is insufficient comprehensive and accurate scientific evidence regarding the essence of sibling status. Nevertheless, according to the findings of many studies, it has been observed that a person's sibling status influences their personality, even affecting marital and parental roles, relationships with friends, and the nature of communication with superiors and colleagues at work.

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