

Exploring Effective Communication Dynamics in Young Adult Sibling Dyad Relationships: An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

Background: Sibling relationships are generally lifelong and play an important role in emotional and social development. Despite extensive research on childhood sibling interactions, little emphasis has been paid to sibling communication in young adulthood, particularly within the Indian cultural setting. This study explores the communication dynamics between young adult sibling dyads (ages 18-30) in an Indian setting, where sibling dynamics undergo significant changes due to life transitions such as higher education, employment and greater autonomy. It also explores how siblings manage emotional reciprocity, conflict resolution, emotional transparency, emphasizing the influence of cultural factors on their communication dynamics.

Method: A qualitative approach was adapted to examine five sibling dyads (both same and different sex) through semi-structured interviews, and the sample was chosen through convenience sampling. The data was analyzed using Collaço et al.'s (2021) framework of dyadic analysis, focusing on finding significant communication themes from each sibling dyad such as emotional reciprocity, conflict resolution tactics, and emotional transparency.

Findings: The study found that siblings rely substantially on emotional reciprocity, in which reciprocal trust and openness build closeness. Conflict resolution styles differed between dyads, with humor and avoidance being common. Furthermore, cultural pressures such as respect and familial duty had a substantial impact on communication patterns.

Conclusion: Communication quality, rather than frequency, determines emotional intimacy among young adult sibling dyads. Humor and empathic understanding are conflict resolution tactics that promote emotional equilibrium, particularly within the context of cultural norms.

Future Implications: Future research could explore sibling communication dynamics across different cultural contexts or longitudinally to observe how these relationships evolve over time. The findings can also inform family counseling interventions, focusing on improving emotional transparency and conflict resolution skills amongst siblings.

Keywords: Young adult siblings, communication dynamics, emotional reciprocity, conflict resolution, cultural influences

Background

Sibling relationships have a major impact on social, cognitive, and emotional development (Pearson, 2023). Beyond biological relationships, these ties—which are frequently defined by similar experiences and cultural backgrounds (Cicirelli, 1995)—also include step-, adoptive-, and half-siblings (Cicirelli, 1980). Positive sibling relationships have been shown to improve social skills and mental health (Gilligan et al., 2020; Milevsky, 2021). Technology has become an essential tool for preserving these relationships, especially when physical distance is involved (Vaterlaus et al., 2022; Abbi & Mahapatra, 2023; Kabiru & Alabi, 2024). This study intends to advance the knowledge of Indian sibling relationships by exploring the communication dynamics between young adult dyads while taking into account the role that technology plays in preserving these ties as well as the impact of cultural variables.

Transparency in Sibling Relationships

A study by Paulsen (2013) focused on communication styles, conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction as it investigated sibling relationships among emerging adults. According to the study, siblings wanted more candid and open communication, particularly when it came to private issues. Even though arguments were frequent, developing adults learned how to resolve them amicably by emphasizing candid communication and self-disclosure. The key components of healthy sibling relationships were honesty, trust, and shared experiences. However, the sample population, which mostly consisted of people with healthy sibling relationships, and the study's emphasis on emerging adults limit its generalizability.

Everyday Conversations and Turning Points

A study by Corti (2009) investigated how everyday discussions and shared experiences affected the intimacy and contentment of sibling relationships among college freshmen. Distance did not significantly affect the quality of relationships, but the frequency and intimacy of conversations—especially intimate ones—did. According to the study, sibling intimacy was significantly impacted by certain turning points, such as family crises or important life events. However, the study's shortcomings include its reliance on self-reported data, lack of diversity in the sample population, and possible bias towards experiences of the middle and upper classes. In order to get a more thorough understanding of sibling communication dynamics, future research should overcome these shortcomings.

Functions, Closeness and Gender Dynamics

The dynamics of sibling relationships among young people were examined in the study by Weaver et al. (2003), with particular attention to gender variations and the influence of sibling type on closeness and supporting roles. The study, which used the Sibling Relations Questionnaire, discovered that sisters in particular exhibited more supportive behaviors and felt closer to one another. Nonetheless, there were clear gender differences, as women reported being more involved in supportive activities than men. The study calls for more research that takes into account a variety of family structures and cultural contexts, while also highlighting the significance of sibling connections in early adulthood for identity formation and emotional support.

The Role of Technology in Sibling Communication

Hamwey, Rolan, and Jensen (2018) focused on sibling relationships in early adulthood and emphasized the value of effective communication, particularly via technology. The study emphasized the value of

candid and open communication, even though physical distance can improve sibling ties during this time. A gender bias, a small age range, a lack of investigation into parental influence, and a limited comprehension of how technology affects communication patterns are some of the study's drawbacks. To provide a more thorough knowledge of sibling relationships during emerging adulthood, future research should overcome these constraints.

Emotional Dynamics and Communication in Sibling Bonds

A study by Gulløv & Winther (2021) examined how sibling relationships change as people grow older, with a focus on the importance of emotional and verbal exchanges. Even though life events may reduce the frequency of interaction, communication quality becomes more crucial, especially when sharing personal experiences. Positive and negative shared experiences build empathy, understanding, and trust while fortifying emotional ties. Resolving disputes and preserving emotional closeness need open communication. Siblings build emotional resilience by negotiating both routine and important life events, which benefits their relationship in the long run. The study emphasizes how special sibling ties are, formed over the course of a lifetime of shared experiences and emotional interactions.

Influence of Sex Composition on Sibling Closeness

Silverstein (2013) conducted a quantitative investigation on how sibling sex composition affects intimacy as an emerging adult. The study supported the sex-commonality concept by finding that same-sex siblings reported higher levels of closeness. The results may not be as broadly applicable as they may be due to the study's limitations, which include a limited sample size, an emphasis on close-knit sibling relationships, and a lack of variety in the sample group.

Differential Treatment by Parents

Jensen et al. (2013) quantitatively investigated how differing parental treatment affected the relationships and general well-being of young adult siblings. According to the study, sibling bonding deteriorated and depressed symptoms increased when people felt they were receiving different care. The degree of differential treatment, sibling gender composition, and parental gender all affected these impacts. A cross-sectional design, possible measurement problems, and a limited assessment of sibling conflict are some of the study's drawbacks. To better understand the long-term effects of unequal parental treatment on sibling relationships, future studies should overcome these constraints.

Sibling Relationship among Indian Young Adults

A quantitative study by Law & Imran (2024) investigated perceived sibling ties among 101 Indian young adults via the Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire - Very Short Form (ASRQ-VSF) based on age and gender. T-tests and ANOVA found no significant variations in whole connection quality among both older and younger siblings. However, sister pairs expressed greater warmth and felt parental fondness than brother-sister combinations. These findings indicated that sibling gender composition affects relationship dynamics, emphasizing the need for additional research into contributing elements and generalizations across different ages and cultures. Recognizing sibling relationships can help guide support and treatment systems. The limitations of the study include a possible social desirability bias and a restricted geographic sample.

Unhealthy Verbal Communication

A quantitative analysis of seven verbally hostile communication styles employed by emerging adult siblings was conducted by Myers and Bryant (2008). Although the study's findings regarding the perceived severity, hurtfulness, and aim of these messages did not differ much, it does have drawbacks. The frequency of these actions and the baseline level of verbal hostility among siblings were not evaluated in this study. These limitations should be addressed in future studies to obtain a more thorough grasp of the characteristics and effects of verbally aggressive communication in sibling relationships.

Emotional Closeness in Young Adulthood

LeBouef & Dworkin (2021) investigated how sibling intimacy in early adulthood is facilitated by communication quality, namely emotional reciprocity, rather than frequency. According to the study, siblings frequently retain emotional ties despite having little contact since relationship strength is greatly influenced by mental and emotional health. In sibling relationships, where emotionally charged encounters foster growth and connection, particularly during major life transitions, it emphasized the importance of social well-being. In the end, the study highlighted how long-lasting strong emotional bonds may be maintained with even little communication.

With respect to the theoretical framework, two theories will be primarily focused throughout the entire study as they serve as a foundation for the topic.

Social Penetration Theory

The Social Penetration Theory (SPT), developed by Altman and Taylor (1973), sees relationships as a self-disclosure process that resembles an onion. People share more personal details and reveal more aspects of themselves as their relationships grow. A cost-benefit analysis that balances the possible benefits of intimacy against the dangers of vulnerability has an impact on this process. Relationship development can be impeded by unfavorable encounters, while deeper ties are fostered by effective communication and reciprocal transparency. Particularly in situations such as friendships and sibling ties, SPT offers important insights into the early phases of relationship formation.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1986) created the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which holds that behavior, contextual effects, and individual characteristics interact dynamically to produce learning. People learn by watching and copying others in addition to from their own experiences. A key component of this process is self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can succeed. SCT highlights how these elements are mutually reinforcing, with each influencing and being influenced by the others. This theory offers a useful framework for comprehending how people interact with their social environment, learn, and grow.

Even though sibling relationships have been examined extensively, little is known about young adult sibling dyads. Studies tend to overlook the distinct dynamics of young adult partnerships in favor of concentrating on larger groups or distinct life phases. Age differences between dyads have also been disregarded. This study attempts to close this gap by investigating the ways in which young adult Indian siblings handle emotional expression and communication while taking shared experiences, life changes, and cultural heritage into account. How do young adult Indian sibling dyads handle communication dynamics in light of these factors is the question that this raises.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how young adult sibling dyads communicate with one another and how these dynamics affect the growth of successful communication in their relationships.

An important research gap on sibling relationships in early adulthood is filled by this study. Although a

lot of research has been done on childhood and later adulthood, little is known about the intricacies of sibling relationships during this time of transition. This qualitative study intends to explore the complexities of sibling dyads' communication styles and how they deal with individual and collective difficulties. The goal of this study is to improve our knowledge of sibling relationships at this crucial juncture. This study also seeks to supplement current quantitative research by offering a qualitative viewpoint. This study aims to address significant research gaps by analyzing age differences within dyads and concentrating on a collectivist society such as India. In order to provide insights for culturally sensitive interventions and a more comprehensive understanding of sibling dynamics in this environment, it seeks to understand how individual, shared, and cultural elements impact sibling relationships.

The purpose of this study is to improve our knowledge of sibling relationships, especially those between young people. This study will advance the subject of family communication by utilizing a qualitative method and concentrating on dyadic connections. By identifying efficient communication techniques and emotional support networks within sibling relationships, the findings may have a positive effect on mental health outcomes. The creation of focused treatments to enhance the wellbeing of young people can be guided by this understanding. With ramifications for professionals operating in culturally heterogeneous environments, this study presents a sociocultural viewpoint on sibling communication. The results can guide the creation of interventions that are responsive to cultural differences. This study intends to provide the groundwork for future research by examining sibling relationships across many cultures, family structures, and life stages, thereby expanding our comprehension of these intricate human interactions.

Method

Sample

Convenience sampling was used to choose five young adult sibling dyads (ages 18 to 30) in order to fully grasp their communication dynamics. Convenience sampling was used to select participants based on their availability and desire to take part. Participants in the study came from a variety of places, including Abu Dhabi, Bengaluru, Brighton, and Panipat, and included both dyads living together (P1-P2, P3-P4, P7-P8) and those living apart.

Study Design

The communication patterns between young adult siblings were investigated in this qualitative study. To give a thorough and descriptive understanding of sibling relationships, a qualitative technique was selected. This method's adaptability made it possible for participants to freely express their ideas and experiences in a natural, unstructured manner.

Tool

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for both structured questions and a thorough examination of participants' answers. Based on earlier studies, the interview guide addressed family dynamics, sibling communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support. To ensure a thorough grasp of participants' experiences, probes were employed to delve deeper into particular themes.

Final Questions

In order to obtain detailed answers regarding the experiences, viewpoints, and dynamics of the participants' sibling relationships, a 14-question interview schedule was created. The questions, which covered both specific instances and broad views, attempted to strike a balance between breadth and depth.

This method made it easier to examine the verbal and affective facets of sibling interactions.

Expert Validation

Two professors with backgrounds in both clinical psychology and qualitative research validated the interview guide. Their suggestions helped to improve the questions' clarity, applicability, and data quality. The emphasis and depth necessary for qualitative research were preserved during this approach.

Setting and Participants

In order to accommodate participant preferences and practical demands, interviews were performed both offline and online. While online interviews were carried out in safe virtual environments, offline interviews took place in private locations. Word-of-mouth, social media, and personal networks were used to recruit participants in order to guarantee a varied sample.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were done with each sibling pair for a minimum of 30 minutes in order to watch their interactions in real time. Common experiences and communication patterns, such as conflict resolution, emotional reciprocity, and support, were the main emphasis of dyadic interviewing techniques. With the participants' permission, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The approach of dyadic analysis, which was first introduced by Collaço et al. (2021), was employed to analyze the data. Because it looks at the interactions, agreements, and differences between two people, dyadic analysis is especially useful for examining the dynamics between two people. In this dyadic analytic procedure, the following steps were taken:

Transcription

Transcripts were generated with large margins for coding, and audio files from the interviews were verbatim transcribed.

Familiarization with Data

By reading the transcripts again and going over any thoughtful notes made during the interviews, the researcher was able to get a full understanding of the data.

Coding

Themes including emotional support, conflict resolution, and reciprocity were the focus of codes that were applied to pertinent lines in the transcripts based on the communication dynamics seen.

Organizing Codes into Themes

The codes were arranged according to study-relevant themes, including cultural influences, emotional reciprocity, and communication methods.

Dyadic Analysis

In order to show how the siblings' communication impacted their emotional bond, this phase entailed assessing the degree of agreement and disagreement between them on important themes.

Framework Development

In order to classify the themes and subthemes found in the dyadic analysis, a framework was created. As more transcripts were examined, this framework was improved to provide a thorough comprehension of the sibling interactions.

Application of Analytical Framework

In order to find trends and variances in the communication and relationship dynamics of sibling pairs, the framework was used in later analyses of the pairs.

Interpreting the Data

In the last phase, the data were interpreted through a comparison of sibling pairs, with an emphasis on the communication dynamics, emotional support, and conflict resolution techniques that were comparable and different. Certain elements like their relationship's duration, cultural influences, and family background were also taken into account in the investigation.

Ethical Approval

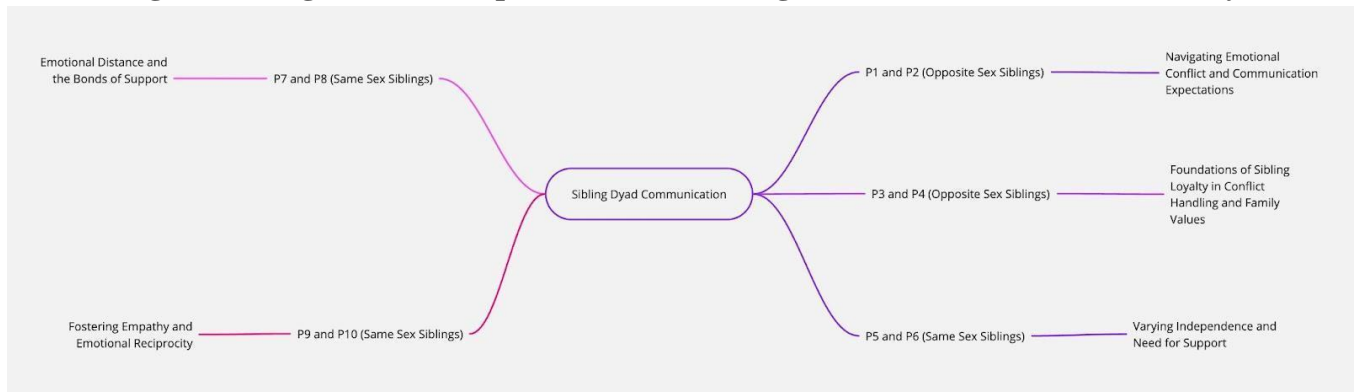
The study was carried out in an ethical manner and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition to being guaranteed anonymity and secrecy, participants gave their informed consent. Interviews took place in confidential environments, and all information was safely kept.

Results

Name/ Initial	Participant	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Number of Siblings	Place of Residence
ED	P1	23	Female	BA	Tax Consultant	2	Abu Dhabi
VC	P2	18	Male	High School Diploma	Student	2	Abu Dhabi
AF	P3	23	Male	BBA, MBA (Currently Pursuing)	Wealth Manager	1	Bengaluru
DW	P4	20	Female	B.Sc.	Student	1	Bengaluru
PE	P5	22	Female	BA, M.Sc.	Student	1	Bengaluru
HS	P6	27	Female	MBBS, MD	Doctor	1	Brighton
MP	P7	22	Male	M.Sc.	Student	1	Bengaluru
RJ	P8	18	Male	BA	Student	1	Bengaluru
SL	P9	22	Female	M.Sc.	Student	2	Panipat
SC	P10	26	Female	MA	Graphic Designer	2	Panipat

Table 1 Sociodemographic Details of the Study Sample

Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation Showing the Overall Themes of the Study



Note. This mind map was created from the website Miro (*Mind Map - Miro*. (n.d.)).

P1 and P2 (Opposite Sex Siblings)

Theme: Navigating Emotional Conflict and Communication Expectations

P1's Perspective P1 believes that keeping peace and fortifying her emotional bond with P2 depend on settling disputes. In line with studies on the value of effective communication in sibling relationships, she sees dispute resolution as a chance to develop intimacy via candid discussion (Dunn et al., 1991).

"We quickly resolve. We try to quickly resolve our conflicts as soon as possible... We've never extended our fights for days."

In order to establish a solid emotional connection with P2, P1 underlined the value of emotional transparency. She felt that being honest about how she felt encouraged intimacy and trust. She felt obligated to provide an example of emotional honesty as the older sibling. Studies back up the connection between sibling relationships' emotional openness, support, and contentment (Çıtak et al., 2023).

"I do share my emotions... I don't hesitate when it comes to sharing my emotions."

Being the older sibling had an impact on P1's communication expectations, which placed a strong emphasis on deference to conventional values. Conflict occasionally resulted from this and P2's more modern communication style. Sibling relationships frequently exhibit such disparities in emotional expressiveness (Yelland & Daley, 2009). Arguments and misunderstandings are frequently caused by perceived differences in communication styles (Furman & Shaffer, 2003).

"I expect a certain degree of respect."

P2's Perspective Particularly when he needs P1's help, P2 used a selective and practical approach to dispute resolution, emphasizing speedy resolutions to return things to normal. This demonstrated a utilitarian viewpoint, giving avoiding difficulties precedence over participating in an emotionally charged procedure. His objective was to settle disputes amicably in order to keep his connection with P1 cooperative and functional.

"If I need help... I just say sorry and ask her for help."

P2 exhibited selective, frequently restrained, and pragmatic emotional expression. P2 wanted to express his emotions only when required, in contrast to P1, who valued emotional transparency. A clear emotional dynamic in their relationship was brought to light by this cautious approach.

"I am not very open... it depends on what it is."

Even though P1 and P2 belonged to the same generation, their communication methods were different. P2's irritation with P1's ignorance of contemporary culture occasionally made it difficult for them to

communicate. Feelings of alienation and a perceived lack of acknowledgment resulted from this generational divide.

“She’s a bit outdated... she won’t understand the current humor or memes.”

P1 valued transparency and deference, whereas P2 preferred pragmatic conflict resolution and selective emotional disclosure. A helpful and positive relationship was maintained despite sporadic disagreements, particularly those involving cultural sensitivity, because of their shared dedication to finding prompt solutions.

P3 and P4 (Opposite Sex Siblings)

Theme: Foundations of Sibling Loyalty in Conflict Handling and Family Values

P3’s Perspective P3 views P4 as a very emotionally supportive person, particularly in trying times. He remembers a memorable time when P4 made him feel better following a breakup, demonstrating their close relationship and compassion.

“When I broke up with my first girlfriend... she saw me crying on the terrace, and she came up crying too, to give me emotional support.”

P3 valued P4's unwavering support, which improved their trust and emotional stability. He often referred to their connection as one of mutual care, which allows them to overcome obstacles together and creates a sense of safety.

“She always looks out... whatever happens, she looks out for me.”

P3 took a pragmatic attitude to disagreements, preferring to "agree to disagree" over having drawn-out conversations. His approach centered on preserving harmony by preventing escalation and proceeding without attempting to influence P4's viewpoints. This approach allowed them to settle disputes amicably since it demonstrated their emotional maturity and mutual understanding.

“We agree to disagree... we avoid having unnecessary conversations or fights.”

P3 ascribed their communication style, which prioritizes loyalty, respect, and religious beliefs, to their upbringing and family values. He considered how these principles were ingrained in them by their parents, especially their father's emphasis on morality and self-control, which influenced their relationships and gave them a moral basis for resolving conflicts and supporting one another.

“Our parents have constantly made it a point that we treat everybody in this house with respect, no raising voices.”

“My father always believed in not sparing the rod... but it isn’t abusive. It was constructive in terms of building character.”

“God is the most important factor in our relationship... we base our entire life around that.”

P4’s Perspective P4 concurred with P3 that mutual support is important, pointing out that his commitment gave her security and confidence, particularly amid family disputes. During difficult times, his emotional support helped her feel less alone and bolstered their relationship.

“If I disagree with mom and dad, he’s always been the voice to take my side.”

P4 reported that when common hardships like the COVID-19 epidemic, their emotional dependence increased. They were able to strengthen their bond, learn new facets of one another's personality, and get closer while they were imprisoned together.

“COVID really helped us get closer... we were stuck in the same house and had no option but each other.”

P4 endorsed P3's approach to conflict resolution and credited their close age difference for preventing protracted arguments. Their similar ages promoted harmony, decreased miscommunication, and made it possible for them to settle disputes amicably.

“Our age gap isn't that much, so it's easier to relate to the same things, and we communicate without feeling like there's a barrier.”

Instead than having meaningless debates, P4 thought that people should accept their differences. They were able to concentrate on preserving their supporting relationship and create a more harmonic family dynamic as a result of this mutual acceptance.

“We agree that we're not going to agree on a lot of things. Arguing further won't really do anything for us.”

P4 emphasized the value of family values, attributing loyalty and coherence to their father's family-oriented upbringing. These principles further cemented their cordial and cooperative relationship by providing a firm basis for empathy and conflict avoidance.

“Our dad grew up in a very family-centered life, and he brought us up the same way. Family is everything.”

Furthermore, P3 and P4's interactions were intricately linked to emotional support, dispute resolution, and family values. By upholding these values together, they created a culture of loyalty, respect, and understanding that bolstered their sibling bond and guaranteed harmony.

P5 and P6 (Same Sex Siblings - Sisters)

Theme: Varying Independence and Need for Support

P5's Perspective P5 valued independence and seldom asked for emotional or practical help until it was absolutely required. She saw independence as a means of keeping her life under control and avoiding bringing personal matters to the forefront of her sister relationship. Her conviction in maintaining emotional equilibrium and fostering a cordial relationship with P6 through cautious emotional expression management to prevent burdening others was mirrored in her approach.

“I don't really ask for help unless I absolutely need it. I prefer to figure things out on my own.”

She placed a high priority on keeping her relationship with P6 emotionally balanced. Despite being at ease expressing her emotions, she stressed the significance of making sure that feelings did not have an adverse effect on the other sibling. Her dedication to creating a bond in which both siblings could thrive on their own while feeling emotionally secure was evident in this.

“We ensure our emotions don't rub off against each other. If you're sad, you figure it out and don't let it affect the other.”

“I think both of us a little bit apprehensive about being sad, but other emotions are usually okay with communicating, I think.”

P6's Perspective Since P6 is the oldest sibling, she valued mutual reliance and believed that a strong bond required emotional reciprocity. By fostering a sense of community, she thought that asking for and providing assistance improved their relationship. While acknowledging P5's independence and boundaries, P6 sometimes desired for a tighter relationship to be more involved in P5's hardships.

“I think it's okay to ask to help sometimes, but she rarely does. I feel like they try to do everything alone, and it's not always necessary.”

Even if P5 tends not to express her feelings publicly, P6 is nonetheless sensitive to her sibling's emotional state. While being there as a supporting presence in the background, she respects P5's boundaries and decides to give her the space she requires. Although P6 understands that P5 needs autonomy, she sometimes longs for a closer bond that would enable her to be more involved in P5's struggles. As she works to close the distance caused by their divergent views on emotional transparency, this desire demonstrates P6's dedication to developing a closer emotional connection.

“I know to keep my distance and let her figure her stuff out.”

The dynamic conflict between P5's self-sufficiency and P6's desire for mutual reliance was brought to light by their connection. P6 showed a profound awareness of P5's emotional boundaries by providing assistance without interfering with her independence. P5 gave private emotional management top priority in order to prevent bothering other people. Although P5's independence was respected, P6 occasionally wanted more engagement to deepen their emotional tie, striking a balance between the need to build a stronger bond and emotional limits.

P7 and P8 (Same Sex Siblings - Brothers)

Theme: Emotional Distance and the Bonds of Support

P7's Perspective P7 prefers to stay out of arguments rather than participate, especially when it involves delicate or personal subjects. This tactic ensures harmony and prevents the unease that comes with emotional conflicts.

“I prefer to step back and avoid arguments, especially when it comes to personal matters. It's easier not to engage.”

In order to preserve peace and prevent mental stress, P7 avoided arguments, particularly when they involved private matters. He stressed being trustworthy amid major life issues but concentrated on conserving emotional energy by avoiding small arguments.

“I might not engage much during small arguments, but when it really matters, I'm always there to support them.”

This suggests that P7 avoids what he views as less significant emotional confrontations and appreciates meaningful support, placing a higher priority on being dependable during times of need.

P8's Perspective P8 finds P7's approach towards conflict-avoidance quite frustrating and frequently interprets it as a lack of emotional commitment. P7's lack of involvement during disagreements can come across to P8 as disinterest or indifference, which makes him feel as though his worries are invalid.

“Sometimes, it feels like he just doesn't care enough to engage... it makes me feel like my concerns aren't valid.”

Despite his frustrations, P8 appreciated P7's dependability in times of need. The emotional distance in everyday contacts was lessened by the knowledge that he could rely on P7 for important life events.

“When something big happens, I know I can count on him. He always shows up when it really matters.”

P8's annoyance with P7's conflict-avoidance strategy is lessened in part by this consistent support in high-stakes scenarios since it strengthens the sibling dynamic's sense of trust and emotional stability.

P8's desire for emotional involvement and P7's avoidance of routine disagreements revealed a tension in their relationship. But P7's constancy on significant occasions kept their relationship strong by striking a balance between dependability and emotional distance.

P9 and P10 (Same Sex Siblings - Sisters)

Theme: Fostering Empathy and Emotional Reciprocity

P9's Perspective. P9 thought that her emotional transparency with P10 improved their connection and fostered trust, thus she appreciated it. Quickly clearing up misconceptions was made possible by their capacity to communicate both positive and negative feelings. The foundation of P9's relationship was honesty. She stressed the value of emotional regulation and sensitivity in dispute resolution, making sure that arguments didn't sour their relationship.

“We've always been able to talk about how we feel, whether it's good or bad. It helps that we don't hold back.”

“Even when we argue, I make sure to step back and see things from their point of view before saying something I’ll regret.”

The goal of P9's conflict resolution technique is to comprehend P10's viewpoint and make sure that their disagreements don't jeopardize the relationship's emotional stability.

P10's Perspective. P10 concurred with P9 that their extensive time together was the reason for their shared emotional openness. It was simple for them to speak openly because of their mutual understanding, and P10 felt emotionally safe. Taking into account P9's sensitivity, she moderated her approach to conflict since she believed that their friendship was founded on emotional reciprocity.

“We’ve been through so much together, so it’s easy to just be open with each other. There’s nothing to hide.”

“I usually say what’s on my mind, but I try not to be too harsh because I know she doesn’t like conflict.”

In essence, the foundation of P9 and P10's relationship was emotional reciprocity and empathetic dispute resolution. Even when they disagreed, their capacity for honest and open communication allowed them to keep a solid, emotionally stable bond. P10 maintained a calm and encouraging relationship by striking a balance between directness and sensitivity, while P9 concentrated on empathy and understanding amid disagreements.

Discussion

Among the most complex and enduring friendships that humans may create are those between siblings, which alter over time as a result of social, family, and developmental shifts. Early adulthood sees a shift in these relationships from hierarchical to more egalitarian ones, with mutual understanding and emotional reciprocity being essential to preserving the connection (Portner & Riggs, 2016).

Sibling communication is essential to mental health and wellbeing and is impacted by personality, culture, and birth order (Portner & Riggs, 2021; Prewitt, 2018). Family structures and cultural norms influence how people communicate and resolve conflicts in collectivist settings like India (Prewitt, 2018). Sibling relationships change as they become older, moving from parent-centered interactions to more egalitarian ties that prioritize understanding and emotional support (McHale et al., 2000). In India, young adult siblings must balance the demands of their families, personal requirements, and cultural norms (Prewitt, 2018). Gaining knowledge of these relationships helps one better understand the emotional and social roles that siblings play in one another's life (Portner & Riggs, 2021; Prewitt, 2018).

Conflict Resolution and Emotional Maturity

P3 and P4's emotional maturity is demonstrated by their capacity to "agree to disagree" without intensifying arguments. Their strategy, which was based on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), called for self-awareness, self-control, and empathy. They were able to maintain a polite and understanding relationship by putting emotional harmony first and refraining from emotional outbursts (Gross, 1998). Their capacity for self-awareness (Mayer & Salovey, 1990) and empathy for one another's emotions (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990) also aided in their successful dispute settlement. Their sibling link was reinforced and long-term harmony was encouraged by this emotionally mature approach, which was cultivated by emotional intelligence and inspired by their family's beliefs (McHale et al., 2012; Reed, 2006).

Navigating Emotional Transparency

In order to keep the relationship harmonious, P5 gave priority on emotional self-control, as Gross (1998) suggests. Aldao et al. (2010) point out that although this strategy is good at avoiding emotional overload

and conflict, it may also cause emotional distance. According to McHale et al. (2012), healthy sibling relationships require striking a balance between emotional independence and connection. Although P5's self-regulation, a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), contributed to emotional stability, it occasionally caused P6 to feel emotionally detached. Both siblings had to be able to communicate openly and sympathetically in order to reach a common ground that respected their distinct limits as well as emotional intimacy.

Generational Communication Gaps

Despite belonging to the same generation, P1 and P2 had trouble communicating because of their different communication methods and cultural preferences. According to Hsieh et al. (2021), P2's annoyance with P1's ignorance of modern society brought attention to how crucial cultural sensitivity is in sibling relationships. Effective communication was hampered by their disparate approaches to cultural involvement, which were affected by age differences and media consumption patterns (Twenge et al., 2012). Both siblings could gain from active listening, empathy, and a readiness to comprehend one another's viewpoints in order to close this gap. P1 and P2 could improve their relationship and avoid future miscommunications by accepting their differences and promoting cultural awareness.

Emotional Reciprocity and Support

The sibling connection between P 9, and P10 was marked by reciprocal support and emotional responsiveness. Honesty and open communication promoted trust and made it possible for them to overcome obstacles as a team. According to Klimecki (2019), P9's sympathetic communication style improved their relationship and facilitated successful conflict resolution. According to Kahn and Antonucci (1980), they fostered a sense of stability and resilience by actively offering emotional support. A robust and satisfying sibling relationship was ensured by their dedication to open and honest communication, emotional transparency, and understanding, all of which promoted a stronger emotional connection.

Limitations

The comparatively small sample size of five sibling pairs is one of the study's limitations. Although the goal of qualitative research is depth rather than breadth, a small sample size may limit the findings' applicability to a larger group of young adult sibling dyads. Given the wide range of cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds, this small sample size might not adequately represent the experiences and communication dynamics that can exist between siblings. A bigger and more varied sample size could help future studies improve the findings' reliability and relevance.

Furthermore, the study may be biased due to its dependence on self-reported data. In order to conform to societal desirability norms, participants could underreport problems or portray their sibling relationships in an unduly positive way. This propensity could result in an inadequate comprehension of the communication dynamics involved. Future research could use a variety of data collection techniques, such as observations or reports from third parties, to overcome this barrier and present a more complete picture of sibling interactions.

The study's emphasis on sibling dyads without taking into account the impact of outside variables like peer connections or parental relationships is another drawback. Sibling interactions are impacted by the broader family and social context; they do not live in a vacuum. The study can miss significant elements that influence sibling communication styles and emotional dynamics if these outside variables are not taken into consideration.

Finally, because the study was qualitative, its conclusions are context-specific and might not be readily generalizable to other situations or sibling relationships. Despite being detailed, the participants' subjective perceptions might not represent universal truths that apply to all sibling relationships. To find trends and variances that might appear in other circumstances, future studies could examine these dynamics in sibling configurations and other cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This study shed light on the complex dynamics of communication among young adult sibling dyads in India, highlighting how shared experiences, cultural background, and age disparities influence their interactions. By taking a qualitative approach, the study gained a better understanding of how these siblings navigate their relationships during a critical time of life marked by significant transitions and shifting roles. The findings highlight the significance of effective communication in maintaining strong sibling links and provide useful insights for developing culturally relevant treatments to improve sibling relationships. As so, this study adds to the scholarly literature on sibling interactions while also having practical implications for improving young adults' mental health and relational well-being. Future study can expand on these findings to investigate sibling relationships in a variety of circumstances and life stages, thereby improving our understanding of this essential feature of human interaction.

Finally, the study intends to build the framework for future research by investigating sibling communication across various cultures, family systems, and life stages. This will help to broaden our understanding of sibling relationships and educate future research into the intricacies of these important human interactions.

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