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MARITAL SATISFACTION AND SIBLING INTERACTIONS

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*Marital satisfaction is the result of a happy and satisfying quality of marriage. While studies have found that marriage can promote mental and physical well-being, it is the marital satisfaction that provides the benefits. In the last 20 years, research studies have found that marital satisfaction results from a number of different factors. In our study, we wanted to find out how the order of birth of siblings affected their marital satisfaction.*

**Introduction.** Over the years, various researchers have studied parent-child relationships. For example, the supporters of the psychoanalytic theory, S. Freud and A. Adler, described how the sibling relationships developed within family and how they affected adult life of siblings.

Researchers believe that relationship of children and parents from the very first years of a child have a tremendous influence on family atmosphere and children’s behavior outside the family. Important factors of family atmosphere are gender of children, their age, and time gap between the birth of children and how parents react to the birth of the first and subsequent children. These factors affect the formation of personal characteristics of sisters and brothers, their individual differences, and that is why their personal adult lives and their own families will differ [1].

**Task formation.** It seems quite interesting to us to reveal the personality differences between older and younger brothers and sisters of the same family; find out how the order of birth affects their marital satisfaction. It is noteworthy how the combination of the order of the birth of a child and his future spouse can affect their relationship in their life and if the order of birth really influence the future family life of brothers and sisters.

**Methods of research.** To study the level of marital satisfaction and sibling position, we used the method “Test Questionnaire of Marital Satisfaction” and the author’s questionnaire aimed at revealing peculiarities of sibling relationships.

Older and younger brothers and sisters of various age who were married took part in our study: 21 were older children in the family and 21 were younger children.

For quantitative data processing, Statistics 8.0 was used. We used the -Pirson criterion.

**Results, their discussion and perspectives.** Empirical research has shown the following.

Table 1. – Percentage ratio of different levels of marital satisfaction for older and younger sisters

Siblings	High level of marital satisfaction	Low level of marital satisfaction	Average level of marital satisfaction	Total
Older children	369	88	159	616
%	59,90%	14,29%	25,81%	
Younger children	453	52	157	662
%	68,43%	7,85%	23,72%	
Total	822	140	316	1278

Thus, we can conclude:

- 59.90% older and 68.83% younger siblings have a high level of marital satisfaction;
- 14, 29% of elder and 7.85% of younger brothers and sisters have a low level of marital satisfaction;
- 25.81% of elder and 23.72% of younger brothers and sisters have an average level of marital satisfaction.

It follows that elder and younger siblings differ in the level of marital satisfaction.

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Older siblings showed low results on marital satisfaction. Low level can be explained by the fact that they want to be first always and everywhere, they try to marry soon in order to set an example of family life for their younger siblings. In their families, they also want to play the role of a "firstborn leader" who will be the only one to make decisions.

The personality traits of a child largely depend on whether he is an older, younger, middle or only child in the family. The order of birth sets a specific model; according to this model, a child develops [10].

There are two reasons why different types of behavior are characteristic of children with different "birth order". Firstly, parents react differently to the birth of the first and subsequent children and they do not expect the same things from them. Secondly, a placement among brothers and sisters in many respects predetermines the character of relations between children.

The first children are something new, unknown and interesting for parents. From the very beginning, these children receive tremendous care and attention from adults. Their well-being and behavior constantly excite others. As a rule, parents expect a lot from the firstborn and treat them with tenderness, but also punish them more severely. With later children, parents are much calmer and more realistic [2].

The firstborns usually acquire many parental qualities: they know how to be a mentor, they are able to take responsibility and fulfill the role of a leader, and they have striving for achievements and integrity. Older children acutely perceive criticism, but they themselves are often too critical and intolerant of other people's mistakes [1].

The youngest children are free from psychological trauma associated with the appearance of the newborn; they do not suffer feelings of dethronement, no longer being the centre of attention. They are paid much attention and are forgiven more than the older ones. For their family, they can always be babies, because parents expect much less from younger children, are less demanding on their achievements and put less pressure on them. The main problems of younger child are related to self-discipline and difficulty of making decisions. Often, even in adulthood, they continue to expect from others, for example, their spouses, to solve their problems for them [2].

R. Richardson points out in his work that marital relations depend both on the models of parent family, where identification, projection and projective identification mechanisms act, and on the sibling positions of marital partners, in which the interaction models with siblings are transferred to marital relationship [9].

W. Touman's theory says that marital satisfaction largely depends on its complementarity, i.e. additions to the roles of spouses in all sibling characteristics. As a rule, the younger brother among brothers and the younger brother among sisters, for example, will have different characteristics and requirements for their future spouses.

Considering their sibling positions, future spouses will be able to foresee some peculiarities in each other's character and prevent conflicts based on not reconciling with one or another characteristic of their partner.

Younger children are generally more submissive and affectionate, since their childhood, they receive maximum attention and care from parents and close relatives. Parents react relatively calmly to their success and achievements; they do not punish younger children as severely as their elder siblings. Others often make decisions for younger children. Thus, they get used to the fact that there is always someone nearby who can assume all the responsibility. They expect to find such personal characteristics in their future spouses.

Now let us discuss satisfaction with sibling relationship.

95.2% of older brothers and sisters are satisfied with their relationship with younger brothers and sisters. 4.8% of them were less satisfied with sibling relationships. Younger children showed the following results: 80.95% were satisfied with their relationships with older brothers and sisters, and 19.05% were less satisfied.

85.7% of older children want to be somehow similar to younger ones, and 14.3% do not want to; 57.14% of younger siblings want to be like older ones and 42.86 do not.

It was very important for us to define the amount of parental attention, according to the interviewed siblings. The results were as following- 23.8% of older brothers and sisters believed that they received more parental attention, 52.38% - that their younger brothers and sisters had more attention and 23.8% were sure that parental attention was distributed equally among them. 66.6% of younger brothers and sisters thought that they got more attention, 19.04% - that their older brothers and sisters and 14.2% - attention was shared equally.

Regarding the responsibility imposed on siblings by their parents, it can be said that 71.4% of older children believe that they had responsibility, 14.2% - that their younger brothers and sisters had and 14.2% - that

responsibility was equally distributed siblings. 9.5% of younger children thought that the parents gave them responsibility, 80.95% were sure that their older brothers and sisters had responsibility and 9.5% found the distribution of responsibility fair.

**Conclusion.** According to the above-mentioned data, we can conclude that older brothers and sisters are satisfied with sibling relationships. Most of them praised the relationship with their younger siblings. They thought that their brothers and sisters had many positive traits that they would like to have. Most likely, this is due to their greater tolerance, because since childhood, they were forced to receive less attention from their parents, to help them take care of their younger children, to be a role model for them. Because of their children's experience, they might not pay much attention to some of shortcomings in the behavior and personality of their younger siblings. Younger children, unlike older ones, are more demanding and intolerant of the disadvantages of others because of a placement among brothers and sisters, where they are used to have all the best.

Thus, older and younger brothers and sisters differ in the level of marital satisfaction and birth order of siblings influence their further marital satisfaction and matrimonial life.

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