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CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS FROM
CHILDHOOD TO EMERGING ADULTHOOD: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Change And Continuity in Sibling Relationships from Childhood to Emerging
Adulthood: A Qualitative Study

Çocukluktan Beliren Yetişkinliğe Kardeş İlişkilerindeki Değişimler ve
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ABSTRACT

Many studies have been conducted on sibling relationships, yet a few of them have examined the nature of sibling relationships and their transformation and continuity in different developmental periods. Studies of sibling relationships in different developmental periods have been included in recent literature. In this study, relationships between siblings were investigated in the context of childhood and emerging adulthood. The changes and continuities in their relationship dynamics were also examined through their narratives.

The present study was carried out by using theme analysis, a qualitative research method, by referring to the experiences of 14 participants with 7 sibling pairs consisting of older and younger siblings between 18-25 years of age. The results of this study showed that sibling relationships develop positively from childhood to emerging adulthood. It has been found that conflicts between siblings during childhood continued into adulthood, but the disagreements were decreased over time. In young adulthood, siblings used the conflict resolution skills of their parents that they have observed in their childhood. The results indicated that siblings communicated less in young adulthood due to various life events. However, their relationships were not negatively affected; on the contrary, they had closer, more sharing, and mature relationships. Their sibling relationships became more egalitarian in young adulthood, like a friendship. The roles of the older and the younger siblings in the relationship were preserved in specific contexts, possibly under the influence of cultural factors. The study also found differences in relationship dynamics such as topics that causes quarrels and the topics that older siblings' give support to younger ones between same-sex sibling dyads.

Sibling relationship studies in Turkey have increased in recent years. There was, however, insufficient research covering the emerging adulthood period. The present study was an attempt to fill this gap in the literature. The results will provide some important information for future researchers and clinicians who will be working with sibling relationship problems.

Keywords: Sibling Relationships, Childhood, Emerging Adulthood, Change, Continuity

ÖZET

Kardeş ilişkileri üzerine birçok çalışma yapılsa da, bunlardan birkaçı kardeş ilişkilerinin doğasını, farklı gelişim dönemlerindeki değişimlerini ve sürekliliklerini incelemiştir. Ancak son yıllarda farklı gelişim dönemlerinde kardeş ilişkilerini inceleyen çalışmalar, literatürde yer bulmaya başlamıştır. Bu çalışmada, kardeşler arası ilişkiler, çocukluk ve beliren yetişkinlik bağlamında incelenmiştir. İlişki dinamiklerindeki değişim ve süreklilikler de anlatılar üzerinden incelenmiştir.

Bu çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden tema analizi kullanılarak, 18-25 yaş arası büyük ve küçük kardeşlerden oluşan 7 kardeş çifti ile 14 katılımcının deneyimlerine başvurularak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, kardeş ilişkilerinin çocuktan beliren yetişkinliğe olumlu yönde geliştiğini göstermektedir. Çocukluk döneminde, kardeşler arasında yaşanan çatışmalar, yetişkinlik döneminde de devam etmiş ancak çatışma sıklığı azalmıştır. Ayrıca kardeşler, çocukluklarında gözlemledikleri ebeveynlerinin çatışma çözme becerilerini, genç yetişkinlik döneminde kullanmışlardır. Sonuçlar, kardeşlerin çeşitli yaşam olayları nedeniyle genç yetişkinlik döneminde daha az iletişim kurduklarını, ancak ilişkilerinin olumsuz etkilenmediği; aksine daha yakın, daha paylaşımcı ve olgun ilişkilere sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Beliren yetişkinlik döneminde kardeş ilişkileri, bir arkadaş ilişkisi gibi, hiyerarşik olarak daha eşitlikçi bir yapıya bürünmüştür. Ancak, büyük ve küçük kardeşlerin ilişkideki rolleri, muhtemelen kültürel faktörlerin etkisi altında, belirli bağlamlarda korunmuştur. Araştırmada aynı cinsiyetten kardeşler arasında kavgaya neden olan konular ve büyük kardeşlerin küçüklere destek verdiği konular gibi dinamiklerde farklılıklar bulunmuştur.

Türkiye'de kardeş ilişkisi çalışmaları son yıllarda artış göstermiştir. Ancak beliren yetişkinlik dönemini kapsayan yeterli araştırma yoktur. Bu çalışma, literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmaya yönelik bir girişimdir. Sonuçlar, gelecekteki araştırmacılar ve kardeş ilişkisi sorunlarıyla çalışacak klinisyenler için bazı önemli bilgiler sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kardeş İlişkileri, Çocukluk, Beliren Yetişkinlik, Değişim, Devamlılık

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The sibling relationship is one of the earliest interactions people cannot choose; it comes with birth and develops throughout a person's life. This relationship might be one of the most extended relationships people have throughout their lives (Cicirelli, 1995; Dunn, 2000, 2007). While the effects of parenting on human development were extensively studied (Stocker et al., 2020), sibling relationships, which similarly play an essential role in personality development (Sanders, 2004), have not been sufficiently examined. As the number of divorces increases in our modern society, sibling relationships, especially in nuclear families with fewer children, have become increasingly important (Connidis, 1992; Stocker et al., 2020).

Dunn (1988) defined sibling relationships as unique interactions in closeness and emphasized their potential influences on the person. This relationship contains contradictory feelings towards one another, contestability, and emotional connection, which can be both positive and negative. The quality of these relationships, both in emotional and behavioral aspects, seem to be correlated with the later social and emotional development of the person (Pike et al., 2005; Stocker et al., 2020)

Previous research on the siblings mainly focused on the age differences, birth order, and the role of these characteristics on the siblings' lives (Brody et al., 1985; Jacobs & Moss, 1976; Vandell et al., 1987). However, this previous research has been criticized for its neglect of the siblings' point of view by its lack of individual perceptions. Thus, it became insufficient to reflect the dimensions of sibling interaction as a whole (Brody et al., 1982; Edwards et al., 2006). In recent studies, sibling relationships, in different developmental stages, have been discussed in terms of various relational dynamics such as intimacy, communication, conflict, etc. (Campione-Barr & Killoren, 2019; Lindell & Campione-Barr, 2016;

Stocker et al., 2020). The latest studies have started to include qualitative aspects and subjective dimensions of sibling relationships across time (Pike & Oliver, 2017; Hamwey et al., 2018). Yet, more research is needed to fully comprehend the dynamics of sibling relationships from development to adulthood (Irish, 1964; Dunn, 1984; Conger & Little, 2010; Jensen et al., 2018; Hamwey et al., 2018).

This study aims to increase our knowledge about the development of Turkish sibling relationships from childhood into adulthood. In this study, the determinants of the continuity and/or change in sibling relationships will be examined. The result of this study will shed light on the various dynamics of Turkish sibling development.

1.2. SIBLING RELATIONSHIP

The word “sibling” (‘sibb’, ‘gesib’, ‘sib’) originally comes from Anglo-Saxon roots, its means one’s own blood relatives who have the same parents (sibb) and has secondary meanings in having conversations and spreading rumors (gesib) (Perlman, 1967). Sibling interaction starts when one realizes the other as a human being (Cicirelli, 1995), but it gains another aspect once the younger sibling becomes more actively involved in the relationship with age (Cicirelli 1995; Munn & Dunn, 1989). The sibling relationship is a lifelong process in which siblings can accompany each other through their life experiences (Connidis, 1992). One of the features that make a sibling relationship unique is that this a relationship in which feelings of both love and hate can be experienced intensely and sometimes simultaneously (Campion-Barr & Killoren, 2019). The studies on siblinghood during childhood (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) and emerging adulthood (Stocker et al., 1997) have found that the themes of “warmth, conflict, and rivalry” form the nature of sibling relationships. Moreover, adult sibling relationships have been categorized into five groups as “hostile, apathetic, competitive, longing and supportive” (Stewart et al., 2001). This ambivalent nature of the sibling relationships showed the complexities, feelings, and attitudes observed in the sibling dyadic interactions.

The researchers indicate that both positive and negative experiences of sibling relationships during childhood have an impact on individual's later social lives; for example, people who experienced positive sibling relationships have been found to develop better social skills in future relationships (Pike et al., 2005; Pike & Oliver, 2017). It's also indicated that teenagers who had an intimate relationship with their siblings experienced fewer self-esteem problems than others (Yeh & Lempers, 2004). The competition between siblings has been stated to help them discover themselves and find their strengths (Tesser, 1980). Research also emphasized the impact of intimate joint activities between siblings on one's ability to understand other's feelings (Pike, Coldwell & Dunn, 2005). Thus, siblinghood has been said to help children in their socializations and interactions with the outside world (Edwards et al., 2006).

Hierarchical evaluation of sibling relationships in terms of age reveals that the older sibling plays an essential role in the development of the younger one (Ainsworth, 1989; Stewart, 1983; Cicirelli, 1995). Compared to the younger siblings, the older siblings significantly influence sibling interaction due to their power over the sibling dynamic (Pike & Oliver, 2017). It is indicated that because the older siblings experience school and academic life before the younger ones, they could share their experiences with their young siblings (Cicirelli, 1995). Ainsworth (1989) claimed that siblings, especially older siblings, can take care of and soothe others. In the absence of parental care, they were prone to take the role of an attachment figure for their younger siblings. A study conducted with siblings demonstrated that even young children around 3 or 4 years of age could take over the role of the primary caregivers for their younger siblings in the absence of the actual parental figures (Stewart, 1983).

Siblings who grow up together spend almost an equal amount of time with each other as they do with their parents (Kosonen, 1999). While other relationships, like parental relationships, may be emphasized during adult life, sibling relationships are acknowledged as one of the most durable and adaptable relationships that people form (White, 2001). Nevertheless, several authors pointed

out the uneven distribution of studies on the effects of parents versus siblings on child development (Sanders, 2004; Kim et al., 2006; Stocker et al., 2020).

While several studies focus on the overall structure of sibling relationships during emerging adulthood (Dolgin & Lindsay, 1999; Pauldine et al., 2015; Portner & Riggs, 2016; Van Volkom et al., 2017), these studies are insufficient at qualitatively portraying the sibling relationships (Jensen et al., 2018; Milevsky et al., 2005).

1.2.1. The Developmental Course of Sibling Relationships

People encounter various experiences and go through different paths in life; as a result, these experiences may influence people's relationships. Sanders (2004) emphasizes how changeable and dynamic the nature of sibling interactions can be under the influence of time. Similarly, the theories that examine sibling relationships extensively indicate the importance of approaching sibling relationships from a longitudinal perspective (Gilligan et al., 2020). Therefore, to better understand the nature of sibling relationships and investigate changes and continuities about them, it is essential to take a developmental approach while analyzing sibling dynamics.

1.2.1.1. Childhood Period

Childhood is one of the most popular periods in sibling research (Baydar et al., 1997; Brody et al., 1994a; Erel et al., 1998; Pike et al., 2005). Dunn (2002) points out that studies about sibling relationships during childhood mainly focus on understanding the characteristics of the relationships, how they change, how they contribute to family studies, and how they affect the individual's development. In their research involving school children, Furman and Buhrmester (1985) found four qualitative dimensions of sibling relationships; "warmth-closeness, relative status/power, conflict, and rivalry." Vandell et al. (1987) explored the effects of age difference with sibling pairs aged between 4-11 and laid out elements reflecting the

characteristics of sibling interactions. Their research showed that, as the siblings grow, with time, these characteristics in their relationship evolved into a more balanced interaction while still containing more disagreements (Vandell et al., 1987). A longitudinal study examining sibling relationships through middle childhood to early adolescence for the role of temperament and parent-child interactions showed that the nature of sibling relationships differs from middle childhood to early adolescence depending on the familial characteristics and idiosyncrasy (Brody et al., 1994b). The results revealed that, with increasing age, the intensity of relationships among siblings decreases (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). Several developmental steps could affect this change. When the older sibling first starts school, sibling interaction was expected to decrease because of this new environment that the older sibling was exposed to (Cicirelli, 1995).

Similarly, Newman's study (1991) suggested that college students' sibling relationships involved less conflict than their adolescent period. It is also suggested that siblings become increasingly physically distant during the pre-adulthood period due to the need for independence. As a part of this process, they drift apart from their siblings (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). While relationships among siblings may evolve into a more balanced interaction in terms of power and status, the reverse is similarly possible where the relationship can become detached (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). However, a study conducted on adolescents showed that disagreements among siblings decrease compared to childhood; similarly, the intimacy between them increases in adolescence (Kim et al., 2006).

1.2.1.2. Emerging Adulthood Period

Arnett (2000) emphasized the differences between emerging adulthood and young adulthood concepts and claimed that ages between 18 to 25 should be called emerging adulthood. The emerging adulthood period of life is seen as an active stage for people; it contains possibilities of various developmental steps (Arnett, 2015). As Furstenberg (2010) stated, due to the changes in the family systems and the developments globally, the growth process of young adolescents into adulthood has also changed. According to Arnett (2000), categorizing and interpreting this

period of human life is more difficult as there can be many changes in one's life at these ages. There are no specific characteristics regarding the people or the relationships. This is a period when people see themselves neither as adolescents nor as adults (Arnett, 2000).

Although emerging adulthood is considered developmentally crucial for understanding sibling relationships, very few studies have addressed this period (Jensen et al., 2018). This stage refers to persons who newly became adults by gaining their freedom from their families in terms of development. However, they do not yet have the full responsibilities of an adult (Arnett, 2000). A qualitative study with young adults showed that siblings were closer to each other during this period (Hamwey et al., 2018). In this period, the sibling relationship, like other familial relationships, ceases to be an obligatory and naturally maintained bond and turns into a relationship that the person can arrange as they wish (Jensen et al., 2018).

In addition, a qualitative study conducted with young adults reported fewer disagreements among siblings in the emerging adulthood period (Hamwey et al., 2018). Siblings reported having fewer arguments while getting along better in general during the emerging adulthood period (Jensen et al., 2018). Hamwey et al. (2018) claimed that the physical distance among siblings during emerging adulthood does not affect the positive characteristics of sibling relationships; on the contrary, a different bond was observed between siblings due to the voluntary maintenance of sibling relationships in this period.

All developmental stages have distinct characteristics in terms of sibling relationships, which have various impacts on humans. Considering various research examining sibling relationships and the scarcity of their results in emerging adulthood life, it would be essential to explore the experiences of the emerging adult group in the Turkish population.

1.2.2. Cultural Factors in Sibling Relationships

Sibling relationships might vary from culture to culture, to the point where that culture and its social structure influence the concept of a sibling, rather than simply describing a biological bond (Edwards et al., 2006). For example, in Hindu culture, Raksha Bandhan's festival is organized to celebrate the bond between sisters and brothers (Mayer, 1960). Different societies place different expectations on sibling relationships, affecting the parental expectancy of children and siblings (Edward, 2011). Although romantic relationships with siblings are strictly prohibited worldwide, mythological stories mention sibling incest, and it is historically known for cultures to marry siblings to maintain nobility (Abramovitch, 2014).

Industrialization has been seen as another critical factor influencing culture and how people interact (Durkheim, 1933). Cicirelli (1994) studied sibling relationships in different cultures concerning their level of industrialization. The study revealed that sibling interactions in highly industrialized cultures, like Europe and the US, tend to be more optional, and people feel less responsible for their siblings' problems (Cicirelli, 1994). Whereas, in nonindustrial societies such as Asia and Latin America, characteristics and roles of siblings mainly were well defined, with the older sibling having more authority and burden than the younger one (Cicirelli, 1994).

1.2.2.1. Sibling Relationships in Turkey

Turkey is categorized as a collectivist culture, and as a result, familial and social relationships have a significant place in the culture (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Önderman, 1999, 2011). Although there have been some changes in the Turkish family structure under the influence of modernization (Karaca, 2014), Turkish families still maintain their mainly collectivistic characteristics in family dynamics (Kale & Siğirtmaç, 2020). Sirman (2014) emphasized the importance of hierarchy in relationships of Turkish culture and approached sibling relationships from this

perspective. According to Sirman, equality cannot have a place in Turkish siblings' interaction, and therefore, often, siblings are respected according to their age and gender (2014). The study which compared Turkish and American siblings' perceptions of maternal discrimination showed that Turkish participants believed their mothers favored sons. They associated this discrimination due to higher hopes from male children, whereas the American participants believed female children were favored by the mothers (Con et al., 2019). Effects of gender differences were also examined in the sibling interactions. The study that focused on high school children's relationships with their siblings found gender as an essential determinant among Turkish siblings in terms of contentment of their relationships (Çelik Örucü & Er, 2017). Another study that was conducted in Turkey involving university students showed strong sibling bonds reported between female siblings (Yıldırım & Sezer, 2018).

The distinction in the roles of older and younger siblings in Turkey was examined in several studies. A qualitative study (Kale & Siğirtmaç, 2020), conducted in the Turkish rural family structure, investigated the role of older siblings in the caretaking of younger siblings with disabilities. The results showed that older siblings were highly involved with the needs of younger siblings and played an active role in their care. Another study that involved nomadic Yuruk Turkmen families that live in southern Turkey supported the caregiver role of older siblings and indicated that it's an essential part of this specific Turkish community (Kale & Aslan, 2020).

These studies show that the dynamics of sibling relations may differ in urban and rural areas of Turkey. However, it is noteworthy that in Turkey and even in the worldwide literature, samples of sibling relationships were generally selected from the urban population (Kale & Aslan, 2020). The scarcity of studies comparing sibling relationships within families living in urban and rural areas, especially in different regions of Turkey, is insufficient in showing the differences between urban and rural areas.

1.3. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE QUALITY OF THE SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

1.3.1. Child Related Factors

1.3.1.1. Age Differences and Birth Order

Age difference has been subjected to sibling research many times (Milevsky et al., 2005; Riggio, 2006; Vandell et al., 1987). Conger and Little (2010) indicated that siblings with a smaller age gap experience developmental pathways at nearly similar times, influencing their relationship. According to the study, similar ages could create a higher level of competition and conflict and generate understanding and cooperation from mutual experiences (Conger & Little, 2010). Similarly, the study conducted with young adults found that siblings with a smaller age gap experienced more disagreement (Milevsky et al., 2005). Riggio (2006) emphasized the explicit hierarchical structure of the two sibling families and the specific characteristics of each sibling position in these systems. Alternatively, Buhrmester and Furman (1990) pointed that as siblings grow in age, they become equal in terms of power and hierarchy dynamics; with age, they were expected to reach a similar position.

Another qualitative study showed that as the age difference between siblings increase, the older siblings report more parental themes in the relationship (Milevsky et al., 2014). Although these studies portrayed the dependency between sibling relationships and the ages of siblings, more research would be required to observe the transformation of these relationships in time (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990).

The order of birth has also been one of the leading research topics of sibling studies since the beginning of this field (Adler, 1927; Canel Çınarbaş & Nilüfer, 2019). Theoreticians introduced birth order theories such as Adler's (1927) and Sulloway's (1996) and explain the effect of birth order on one's personality characteristics. Being the oldest child or the youngest child starts with the birth of

the second child. While the number of siblings seems to be a significant variable in the interaction of birth order and sibling relationships (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), the scope of this study only involves two-child families. Thus the focus of this study will be on the dyadic sibling relationship.

Adler (1927) asserted the strong connection between one's environment and personality and suggested that if there is a need for understanding the essence of one and its characteristics, one cannot be approached without its surroundings. Starting from there, Adler (1927) defined determinants of the person's personality traits and emphasized the person's importance born into its family. According to Adler (1927), someone's feelings about the place he or she has in the family and emotions that emerged from this role forms one's characteristics as a person. He indicated the unique experience of each sibling and claimed that although siblings may seem like they share the same family, they do not experience the same surroundings (Adler, 1964). He believes each sibling has their unique adventure in the family because of their position at home (1931/2000). He explains this diversity in siblings' reality with his birth order theory, which categorizes the siblings based on their birth order and specifies their personality traits according to that ranking (Adler, 1927). According to him, the effects of being an "only child, middle child, youngest or eldest child" of the family can be traced in one's personality indisputably, and feelings originated from these roles will serve as the driving force of one's life (Adler, 1927, 1931/2000). Adler pointed out the possibility to predict the order of birth by looking at people's personality traits, given that we have enough information about that subject (1927).

According to Adler's birth order theory, eldest siblings were often seen as the parents' helpers about family chores and sibling care (1927). They tend to care about power as merit since it is expected from them to be powerful and capable (Adler, 1927). Moreover, Adler defined having a younger sibling as a challenge for the older child since this is likely to arouse feelings of loss in the emotional world of the older sibling (1927). From Adler's perspective, even though the youngest sibling is born into a more caring home environment compared to the others, they are also born into a reality that makes them emotionally powerless among others

(Adler, 1927). He indicated that the youngest siblings are predisposed to feel inadequate and incapable among their big sisters or brothers (Adler, 1927).

However, it is important to note that the researchers have not reached an agreement on this topic. While some researchers explored and emphasized the importance of birth order on personality development (Adler, 1927; Minnett et al., 1983; Sulloway, 1996), other studies contradicted this hypothesis and suggested that birth rank does not have a substantial impact on the personality of the child (Schooler, 1972; Marini & Kurtz, 2011). In addition, Manaster (1977) pointed out concerns about the changeable definitions of birth order, possible important factors that were not considered while studying birth order, and inconsistencies in the related research.

In a study conducted by Dolgin and Lindsay (1999), it was determined that opening up and asking for help is more complicated for older siblings than their younger siblings. Their study also examined the topics that siblings opened up to each other. They indicated that the primary motivation for opening up to an older sibling is asking for an opinion or help. In comparison, the cause for opening up a topic to a younger sibling is more likely for educational reasons (Dolgin & Lindsay, 1999). From a similar point, Lamb's (1978) study with preschoolers and their infant siblings showed that the younger siblings take their older siblings as an example, and they tend to imitate their behaviors.

Another dimension that was investigated on sibling interaction was the non-egalitarian dimension between older and younger siblings (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). The research conducted with children of school ages found that older siblings tend to display a prominent and controlling character when they were with their younger siblings (Brody et al., 1982). In addition, this role asymmetry between the younger and the older ones declines in direct proportion to age (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). According to Buhrmester and Furman (1990), the reason for this equalization is that with age, siblings start to gain similar abilities, which evens up their status. Research supports the connection between siblings' age and balance of power in sibling dyad (Dunn, 2002).

In sum, the literature shows the effects of birth order and age difference between siblings on individuals and sibling relationships. Although there are different perspectives regarding the power of the impact of these dynamics on individuals and relationships, it is vital to consider them while evaluating sibling relationships.

1.3.1.2. Gender of the Siblings and Temperament

Studies including gender-related issues about siblings report several different results (Dolgin & Lindsay, 1999; Minnett et al., 1983; Pulakos, 1989). Pulakos (1989) pointed out distinctive attitudes of female and male siblings in opening up to their siblings, while Dolgin and Lindsay (1999) demonstrated no gender-related difference in terms of siblings expressing themselves to one another. Additionally, Dolgin and Lindsay (1999) reported differences in expressing themselves to others between male and female siblings; female siblings tend to open up with the anticipation of moral support.

Several researchers also suggested that male-female gender matching sibling dyads tend to have less intimate relationships than female-female and male-male gender matching relationships (Burhmester & Furman, 1990). Similarly, Akiyama and her friends' (1996) study emphasized the role of the subject's gender on their relationships and introduced the concept of "sex commonality." However, this idea also remains controversial. In Fowler's work (2009) regarding sibling communication, the data doesn't show any same-gender-related differences in communication. There is also a relevant theory on the roles of females in relationships, which claims that females may be prone to have more intimate relationships, referring to the concept of "femaleness" in Akiyama's work (1996). This claim was further supported in other studies (Furman & Burhmester, 1992; Gold, 1989). Fowler (2009) questioned this by referring to another study that investigated the attitudes of males when they interact with each other and claimed that male behaviors with the purpose of connection with another were overlooked in the academic community (Wood & Inman, 1993). Similarly, in a study that

analyzed school-aged children's behavior towards their siblings, it was demonstrated that females and males interact with their siblings differently. They found that males were more likely to do everyday activities with their siblings while females often complement their siblings and educate them in general (Minnett et al., 1983).

The temperament of siblings is another topic of interest in sibling studies. People bring their characteristic features with them into their relationships, so to investigate the qualities of a sibling relationship, the personal characteristics of siblings have to be taken into consideration (Munn & Dunn, 1989; Stevenson-Hinde & Hinde, 1986). Researchers indicated the importance of first and second-born siblings' natural tendencies to determine sibling interactions (Stocker et al., 1989).

While most research acknowledges the role of temperament in sibling relationships, these studies do not agree about dyadic sibling temperaments. Brody et al. (1987) suggested that different temperament qualities between siblings are advantageous for their relationship, as they would compensate each other. This research indicated that when one sibling is less active and the other is more active, it's a good match for the relationship quality (Brody et al., 1987). On the contrary, according to Munn and Dunn (1989), this mismatching between temperament characteristics of siblings correlated with more significant disagreements in the dyad. Stoneman and Brody (1993) tested both of these ideas. They concluded that both of these arguments could be supported from different perspectives. They emphasized the importance of considering various aspects of temperament and the uniqueness of the dyads (Stoneman & Brody, 1993).

1.3.2. Parental Factors

1.3.2.1. Parental Attitudes

It could easily be assumed that siblings raised in the same house by the same parents would have the same experiences (Daniels & Plomin, 1985). However, research shows the opposite. Although siblings share many aspects of their lives, they may not share the same treatment, such as parental involvement, warmth, or

responsiveness from their parents (McHale et al., 2000; Mekos et al., 1996). Research demonstrates that siblings may not be treated equally by their parents regarding several different parental behaviors (Brody et al., 1992; McHale et al., 2000; Volling & Belsky, 1992). Daniels and Plomin (1985) used parental control and parental affection as their two essential variables to evaluate the differences in parental behavior. They found a considerable number of children growing in the same family experience different house environments.

Brody et al. (1994a) compiled different interpretations originating from social learning or attachment theories and examined the studies of other independent researchers that were not attached to any specific approach. Despite their perspectives, these studies all described a relationship between positive parental behaviors such as expressing love, showing affection and attention to the child, and a positive sibling interaction and vice versa. (Brody et al., 1994a)

There are various studies on the maternal differential behavior and its possible impacts on sibling interaction (Bryant & Crockenberg, 1980) compared to the paternal differential treatment (Volling, & Belsky, 1992). The results showed that when mothers favor last-born children, verbal communication between siblings decreases and the genuine interest in each other (Brody et al., 1987). Participants of a qualitative study expressed negative feelings and sometimes negative actions towards their siblings caused by feelings of being excluded from their parents (Milevsky et al., 2014). Rage and competition among siblings were stated as possible reactions emerging from differential parental treatment, and these feelings may have resulted in negative behavior among siblings (Brody et al., 1994a). In addition, Edward (2011) emphasized the effects of being favored by parents on the favored child; how it may arouse feelings of guilt and might be psychologically disturbing for them.

The jealousy between siblings might be one of the issues that should be considered in relation to parental treatment. Jealousy was defined as series of feelings and acts towards the other who is threatening for that person's relationship to someone or something important (Volling et al., 2002). Sibling jealousy is seen as a regular day-to-day experience for children since it does not seem realistic for

parents to answer each child's demands all the time during the day (Volling et al., 2002). It can be a powerful and persistent emotion. Researchers suggested that even though the situations and people change over time, jealousy might linger like a song playing in the background (Volling et al., 2002). Adler (1927) emphasized that jealousy is inevitable among siblings, and he especially drew attention to possible feelings of jealousy aroused in the older sibling after the birth of the younger sibling. He pointed out that disguised versions of these feelings might show up as big sisters' nurturing attitudes towards their younger siblings (Adler, 1927). The latent purpose behind this substitution was defined as turning their feelings of jealousy, which might be threatening for them, into a more functional role. Thus, this also puts them hierarchically above their younger sibling (Adler, 1927). From a similar point, an observational study with older pre-schooler kids and younger toddler siblings showed that the older siblings could manage situations that might evoke jealousy better than their younger siblings, resulting in advanced abilities of emotion regulation (Miller et al., 2000).

1.3.2.2. Marital Conflict

The impacts of parental marital disagreements on children's characteristics and abilities have been studied from different perspectives over the years (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Riggio, 2004). Since research indicates impacts of paternal conflict on offspring and sibling interaction is most likely to occur at home where other family members also live, it is important to remark the studies investigating the marital conflict in relation to sibling relationships.

Studies indicate that marital conflict and negative sibling relationships result in a hostile home environment (Brody, 1998). The hypothesis behind this connection is that stressful situations might lead to disturbance in children's emotional world, resulting in the projection of these awakened feelings to another, in this case, to a sibling (Brody, 1998; Emery, 1982). Similarly, in another study, Brody et al. (1994b) suggested that parent-child interaction played a mediator between marital conflict and sibling interactions and emphasized the indirect effect

of marital discord. A study that was conducted with divorced parents emphasized the importance of the quality of relationships between parents, whether they are divorced or not, and indicated that it is vital as a determinant of sibling relationships (MacKinnon, 1989). As previously mentioned, children living in the same environment might have different experiences regarding their relationships with their parents. Research showed the opposite of this interaction could also be true. A study that was conducted with older and younger siblings suggested that interparental conflict negatively affects the behavior of the first-born children rather than second-born in terms of sibling interaction (Erel et al., 1998).

These studies about parental discourse demonstrate the possible direct or indirect impacts of home environment on sibling interactions.

1.3.3. Environmental Factors

1.3.3.1. Life Events

Even though every person has a different life story, everyone experiences several similar pathways through their development. These events might be big or small, expected or unexpected, yet all take place in one's life through childhood to adulthood. Several significant developmental changes that people go through when stepping into adult life are, moving out from the family house, graduation, marriage, having a child, and getting a job (Mouw, 2005). Similarly, research shows that sibling interactions are affected by these certain life events (Spitze & Trent, 2016). The ecological system theory states that family members, and therefore siblings, have an undeniable influence on each other's development and lives in general (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, as cited in Lindell & Campione-Barr, 2016). However, this effect may increase or decrease depending on the time and the impact of significant life events. In light of this information, it is imperative to investigate the relationships between siblings through childhood to adulthood and at different considerable life events.

Various life events that people experience throughout their developmental stages result in changes in interactions between siblings and family members by

changing their regular patterns (Spitze & Trent, 2016). Studies pointed out that while some events bring siblings closer and strengthen their connection, some have a diminishing effect on sibling interactions (Jensen et al., 2018; Spitze & Trent, 2016; White, 2001). White (2001) studied the impacts of several familial events on adult sibling relationships and indicated relatively small but considerable results. According to White's study (2001), the physical distance among siblings and the marriage of a sibling reduce sibling interactions. Similarly, a study conducted with young adults supported the claim that physical proximity positively impacts closeness among siblings (Spitze & Trent, 2016). Another study showed that while one of the siblings starting a new relationship negatively affects their visits to each other, it does not seem to impact their contact (Spitze & Trent, 2016). Researchers have also found that the divorce of a sibling enhances sibling communication (White, 2001). In addition, the decease of a parent was indicated as a factor that increases closeness among siblings (Connidis, 1992).

Starting a full-time job is another factor that decreases contact among siblings since long work hours make people less accessible (Spitze & Trent, 2016). In the emerging adulthood period, even though one of the siblings' employment could be a factor that reduces communication in sibling dynamic, it also results in less conflict between siblings (Jensen et al., 2018).

The studies given above show that the relationship between siblings can change due to many different life events. In light of this information, when examining sibling relations, it would be essential to consider the characteristics of the siblings and their life events into the equation.

1.4. THE PRESENT STUDY

This study investigated themes of sibling interaction and determinants of particular relationships between siblings and how these dynamics continued and changed in specific developmental periods. Themes in childhood and the emerging adulthood period were analyzed, considering the variables in different lifetimes. The effects of external dynamics such as parental attitudes and life events on this

potential change and continuity were investigated. The aim was to explore the similarities and differences in perceptions of sibling relationships between first-born and second-born children. Both older siblings' and younger siblings' perspectives were examined through separate interviews with sibling dyads.

This study focused on the emerging adulthood period because of the rareness of sibling research in this age group (Cicirelli, 1995). In addition, emerging adulthood was defined as a unique position in between childhood and adulthood developmental periods, and it has been suggested that it should be considered as a separate stage of the developmental course (Arnett, 2000). It is also expected that this study would contribute to sibling research in Turkey. It is hoped that the results of this study will be a helpful resource for mental health professionals working with children and emerging adults on sibling issues.

CHAPTER 2

2. METHOD

2.1. Primary Investigator (PI)

As the primary investigator of this study, I would like to introduce myself and share my background and experiences, which may contain some of the reasons that prompted me to study sibling relationships. I am a 27-year-old woman, and I am a student in the Clinical Psychology Master Program–Child/Adolescent track at Istanbul Bilgi University.

I was born in Istanbul and lived here my whole life. I am a child of a civil servant family; my mother is a teacher in high school, and my father is a librarian. I have a sister who is 19 years old. And I believe my journey for wondering about sibling interactions started with the relationship between my sister and me. We have had a good, nurturing relationship from childhood to this day. Many of my friends also have siblings, and their relationships vary in many ways. I had a chance to observe them very closely and also experience my relationship with my sister. There are similarities and differences. I also noticed that being an older sibling or a younger one also had a saying in the narration. All of these have been driving reasons for me to choose to study this topic.

It is a long path, from childhood to adulthood, and each person experiences it in their way, and it just makes me curious about what happens between siblings during the journey, from their point of view.

2.2. Participants

Participants of the study were selected by using snowball and convenience sampling methods. There are 7 sibling dyads that participated in the study, 14 participants in total. Data was collected with in-depth interviews using semi-structured questions. Participants were expected to meet the following criteria to join the study: a) all siblings had to be between 18-25 years old, b) only two-

children-full-sibling-dyads could join the study, c) siblings had to live in the same house until they were both 11 years old. Siblings who volunteered and met these inclusion criteria were accepted to the study. PI paid attention to the variety of sibling dyads in terms of gender match in the participant selection process. There were three male and male sibling dyads, three female and female sibling dyads, and one male and female sibling dyad in the study. Participants were represented by using letters and numbers for confidentiality reasons. Sibling dyads were coded with the same numbers, and older siblings were coded with the letter B. In contrast, younger ones were coded with the letter K. Information for each sibling dyad was given in the following. Demographic information about participants was presented in Table 2.2. below.

Table 2.2.*The Demographic Information of Participants*

	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Living situation	Working situation	Relationship status
B1	25	M	Bachelor/Undergraduate student	Student	With family	Not working	In a relationship
K1	22	M	Bachelor	Engineer	With family	Not working	No relationship
B2	25	M	Bachelor/Undergraduate student	Finance	With family	Working	No relationship
K2	19	M	Associate degree student	Student	With family	Not working	In a relationship
B3	22	M	Undergraduate student	Student	With roommates	Not working	No relationship
K3	18	M	Undergraduate student	Student	With family	Not working	No relationship
B4	25	F	Bachelor/Graduate student	Psychologist	With family	Working	No relationship
K4	21	F	Undergraduate student	Student	With family	Not working	No relationship
B5	20	F	Undergraduate student	Student	With sibling	Not working	No relationship
K5	18	F	Undergraduate student	Student	With sibling	Not working	No relationship
B6	25	F	Bachelor	Psychologist	With family	Not working	No relationship
K6	23	F	Bachelor	Architect	With family	Not working	In a relationship
K7	22	F	Bachelor	Molecular biologist	With family	Working	No relationship
K7	20	M	Undergraduate student	Student	With relatives	Not working	No relationship

Sibling Dyad 1 (B1 & K1)

First sibling dyad, participants B1 and K1 are both male, and they have lived in the same house with their parents since they were born. B1 is 25 years old, and he is studying his second major, psychology. He has been in a relationship for over a year. K1 is 22 years old, he is an engineer, and he is currently not working. He is single.

Sibling Dyad 2 (B2 & K2)

Participants B2 and K2 are also both male and have been living in the same house with their parents since they were born. B2 is 25 years old. He is studying for a master's degree. He has been working in finance for two years. He is not currently in a relationship. K2 is 19 years old, and he is studying in an associate degree program. He is not working. He has been in a relationship for more than six months.

Sibling Dyad 3 (B3 & K3)

Third sibling dyad, participants B3 and K3 are also both males. Their parents are together. B3 is 22 years old. He is studying out of town, so he has been living with his friends for three years. He is an undergraduate student, and he is not working. K3 is 18 years old. He is studying for the college exam. He is not working, and he is single.

Sibling Dyad 4 (B4 & K4)

Participants B4 and K4 are both females. Their parents are together, and they have lived with them in the same house since they were born. B4 is 25 years old. She is a psychologist, and she is studying for her master's degree. She is single. K4 is 21 years old. She is an undergraduate student, she is not working, and she is also single.

Sibling Dyad 5 (B5 & K5)

The fifth sibling dyad, B5 and K5, are also both female participants. They go to the same university, and they have lived together, away from their parents for five months. Their parents are together. B5 is 20 years old. She is an undergraduate

student, and she is single. K5 is 18 years old, and she is also an undergraduate student. And she is also single.

Sibling Dyad 6 (B6 & K6)

The sixth sibling dyad, B6 and K6, are both female participants. They live together with their parents. B6 is 25 years old. She has a bachelor's degree, and she is a psychologist. Currently, she is not working. K6 is 23 years old. She has a bachelor's degree too. She is an architect but currently doesn't have a job.

Sibling Dyad 7 (B7 & K7)

In this sibling dyad, B7 is female, and K7 is male. B7 is 22 years old. She has a bachelor's degree, and she is studying for a master's degree. She is a molecular biologist, and she has been working for 1,5 years. She lives with her mother. Their father works and lives abroad. K7 is 20 years old, and he is an undergraduate student. He studies out of town, so he has been living with other relatives for 1,5 years. And he is currently not working.

2.3. Procedure

Participants who meet the inclusion criteria were reached using convenience and snowball sampling methods after getting approval from Istanbul Bilgi University Human Studies Ethics Board. PI announced the study and participation criteria to her immediate circle and her connections from different surroundings. After one sibling volunteered, the other was asked for approval, and meetings were scheduled for a suitable date for all. Interviews were held in the private office of the PI and office rooms in Istanbul Bilgi University. Siblings were asked to come together, but meetings were made separately with each sibling, with no specific order. The pilot study was conducted with one sibling pair. After the pilot study, questions were not changed, but the need for follow-up questions was noticed. Before the interview process started, informed consent forms (See Appendix 1) were given to participants to notify them about confidentiality, the procedure, and volunteering. Participants were also asked to fill out the Demographic Form (See Appendix 2) earlier on the process. When the interview started, PI asked semi-

structured Interview Questions (See Appendix 3) in order. Interviews were audio-recorded to be transcribed afterward. Before the data analysis started, participants were contacted, and transcripts were sent to each participant via email to receive their approval for transcribing to text as it was. Subsequently, the data analysis process was started.

2.4. Data Analysis

PI read transcribed texts many times to gain familiarity before the data analysis process was started. Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to interpret the data. In the Thematic Analysis method, actions and thoughts that form models and themes are examined (Aronson, 1995). The reason why this method of data collection was selected is because of its dependability and credibility as a qualitative research technique (Guest et al., 2012). Firstly, in-depth interviews were held with participants. 14 interviews, varying in length from 28 minutes to 54 minutes, were transcribed and analyzed. Data analysis was made by using MAXQDA 2020 program, and two independent researchers supported PI during the process.

2.5. Trustworthiness

All interviews were recorded, and the PI listened to the interviews many times and took notes before the analysis started. Two independent researchers were present at the beginning of the data analysis, and they coded one transcript. Final themes and codes were also sent to the thesis advisor for final supervising. In addition to this, the member checking method was used in the study to increase its trustworthiness. A brief summary of the results was sent to all participants for a final review. The text that was sent to participants can be viewed in the appendix (See Appendix 4). Two of the participants replied to the summary of the results, informing that the study results were compatible with their experiences.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESULTS

3.1. Sibling Relationships in Childhood

Participants were asked to define their relationship with their siblings, including both their childhood and present day, emerging into adulthood. Later, they were asked for three adjectives or words to describe and represent their relationships. The table (See Table 3.1.) shows the answers of the participants.

Results show that participants used more negative words when describing their childhood period in their sibling relationships. The majority of the participants reported that their relationship is better today compared to their childhood. Others expressed that their relationships are mostly the same from childhood to emerging adulthood, but mostly more conflicting when they were kids. In addition to this, none of the participants said they had a better relationship with their sibling in the childhood period of life compared to the emerging adulthood period.

Table 3.1.*The Adjectives Used to Describe Sibling Relationship in Childhood and Emerging Adulthood*

Adjective for childhood period	Adjective for emerging adulthood
B1 protective - avoidant - playful	restrained - didactic - neutral
K1 close - simple - normal	experienced - oddly close and equal - normal
B2 not healthy - cannot get along	more understanding - sharing - best period of the relationship
K2 conflicting - distant	recently developing - good communicated
B3 fun - conflicting	trustworthy - fun - spending money together
K3 impish - fun - playful	close - like a friend
B4 distant - accusing - loving	parent child relationship - fun - one sided care giving
K4 close - good - happy	close - happy - fun
B5 ease - social - sentimental - out of balanced	ease - sentimental - social
K5 conflicting - obstinate - not sharing	intimate - obstinate - loving
B6 sharing - affectionate	understanding - respectful - easily expressing feelings
K6 distant - selfish sister – nurturing/responsible big sister	fluctuate - supportive - motivating
B7 bad - boring	out of balanced - fun - mature
K7 conflicting - sharing - friendly	like a friend - annoying - trustworthy

B1 expressed his feelings about his brother when they were kids:

“In our childhood, we probably didn't love each other because we were boys. We were always fighting. We were bickering and beating each other. We were playing games too; we were always playing games and fighting with each other. I don't remember things like, 'I don't like my brother,' etc. But I showed no interest in him either; I was like, what is a brother anyway, to me, he was a regular person that was in the house. It didn't mean anything to have a brother. Every other year, it started to mean something. I mean, I didn't understand the importance of it when I was little.” (B1)

Many of the participants pointed out the importance of age difference when they were children. For these participants, age difference mattered more when they were kids, and it affected their relationships more in childhood. It seems important that especially older siblings are the ones that complain about the age difference.

B2 and K2, one of our male sibling dyads, have the highest age difference; they have 6 years between them. B2 expressed himself as follows:

“For example, he started primary school; he was 6-7 years old. And I was starting secondary school. I mean, we have nothing in common. He was learning how to read and write, and I was in secondary school; I was going to start high school very soon. Again, there wasn't any sharing between us. I was going out, and if I came back and told him stuff, I knew he would not understand me. Or even if he does, he would not understand most of it.” (B2)

One of the other participants, B7, who had 2 years of age difference between her brother, also mentioned the effects of age difference in their relationships. One of the adjectives she uses when she defines their childhood relationships is 'boring.' And here she expressed why:

“Yes, because we couldn't share anything. You know, right now, we watch movies, we do things. But even though two years of age difference seems like nothing right now, back then, it felt like a lot. I wanted to do more mature things, like going out with my friends, but he was always on the computer. That's why we couldn't get along very much; we couldn't find common ground, it was boring for me. (B7)

Another dimension that sibling relationships seem to have is the parental role of older siblings. Older male siblings stated they were very protective of their brothers, especially against the outside world. One of the participants, B1, who describes an unsolid childhood relationship with his brother, explains that he was very protective of his brother, but he also added he did not know why:

“But there was always this thing; when we were little, when someone did the slightest disturbing thing to K1, I would go and beat the kid who did it. Absolutely, we were in the same elementary school, and if they hit K1 even slightly, I was beating the kids. When we were little, I was 10 years old, and K1 was 7; there was one kid, who got K1 wet with the water gun he bought recently; I broke the water gun on his head.” (B1)

On the other hand, female participants defined their big sisters more like a caregiver and that they supported their younger siblings emotionally.

“My sister is more like; I don’t want to say like a mother, like a caretaker maybe. Caretaker sounds strange. Okay, I’ll say like a mother, she was more like a mother rather than a sister to me. She was caring towards me when we were kids.” (K6)

Another participant, K4, expressed that it was her big sister that calmed her down when she was scared.

“When I was little, I used to go to my sister when I was scared. Or when I woke up in fear, she was the person I went to, since we were already in the same room. That’s why we were always close. Even if I needed to go to my parents, I woke her up first.” (K4)

3.1.1. Activities Done Together

(Question: How did you spend time with your sibling in your childhood? What would you do together?)

Participants were asked how they spent time with their siblings when they were kids. One of the most common activities that almost every sibling dyad said they did was playing together. They exemplified the following games that they

played with their siblings, playing house, puzzle, playing PlayStation, painting, playing with sand, playing marbles, toy blocks, playing ball, riding bikes, and crafting.

There is one sibling couple that has opposite genders, a big sister and a brother. And their indicated joint activities were a little different from other sibling dyads. They express that although they might have had different interests in games in these playing times, they still tried to string along with each other. And they tried to compromise with each other in terms of what games to play. They both expressed these activity times as:

“As I said, we were playing games together. Sometimes I was keeping up with her; sometimes she was keeping up with me; I mean, we were playing both football and playing house; I remember these very clearly.” (K7)

“When I feel like it, I was playing PlayStation, football, etc. What my mother told me is that I was convincing my brother to play house when we were even younger. I used to be very convincing if I wanted to.” (B7)

On the contrary, one sibling couple express they did not spend much time together in their childhood, and they both expressed that the reason for this is the age difference between them.

“When we were kids... We didn't spend a lot of time when we were kids. Let me think... I mean, I was not very close to my brother when I was little. I was running away from him because there were many conflicts and fights. We weren't too close. As I said, this is because of the big age difference between us. My brother was also keeping a little distance. That's why we were a little distant. We weren't spending much time together. We didn't do a lot of things together.” (K2)

3.1.2 Conflicts in Sibling Relationships During Childhood Period

This study aims to understand sibling interaction from different angles. Since all relationships have both positive and negative aspects, it seems important to analyze the possible negative dimensions of sibling interactions and understand how siblings experience conflicts in their interactions. Participants were asked

whether they had conflicts with their siblings in their childhood. 13 over 14 participants indicated that there were disputes in their relationships. The majority of the participants replied that they had experienced more arguments in their childhood compared to the present day. In this following part, reasons for conflicts, siblings' coping mechanisms during and after conflicts, and parental attitudes will be examined throughout the childhood period of sibling interaction.

3.1.2.1. Cause of Conflicts

(Question: When you were children, did you argue with your sibling? If yes, what were the reasons?)

Reasons and events that caused conflicts were asked to participants. The majority of the participants indicated that they had conflicts about sharing stuff such as toys, remote control, dresses, and belongings. And many of them also added that these reasons for arguments are not reasonable; they describe the fights as “ridiculous,” “silly.” One of the participants, K5, mentions their arguments with her big sister:

“We were fighting a lot over the toys. You took my barbie; it is my Barbie's outfit; we used to fight like this. We used to have a seat-grabbing race at home; it's a ridiculous thing. B5 really had a separate, beloved seat at home, so she would never let me sit. We used to fight for such ridiculous reasons when we were children.” (K5)

Participants indicated that they had “small,” “minor” arguments in their childhood and topics that caused discussions that are not very important. K3 describes their fights as following:

“We used to pull things from each other's hands. I will play with this; for example, I will play with the lion, you will play with the tiger, and so on. While putting the puzzle pieces together, I will put it; no, I will. There would be an argument like I was going to put the last piece on or something. For example, how can I say we would play ball, arguments about who will throw it or who will bounce

it would happen? There would be such absurd scenes. Arguments were minor. It was a little bit of fun. Actually, we laughed at each other” (K3)

K5 also expressed their fights with her big sister:

“It often comes to the part of not being able to share toys and my mother. All of them are actually the same thing; I don’t know, she would get annoyed at something I did, and she pulled my hair, yes, she pulled my hair a lot, I never forget it. For example, there was something I would do when I said the same thing, called jinks; we used to do it. And after saying that, she would pull my hair out, and she says my husband would be more handsome than yours, and I would be very annoyed that she pulled my hair, we would fight over it. I said, ‘enough’ don’t pull my hair. Like that, we had ridiculous fights; I don’t remember us having a big fight.” (K5)

Participants also indicated that their arguments tended to get more physical when they were kids. Some of the participants described scenes hitting each other, pulling each other’s hair, punching, biting, etc. It was noteworthy that the fights were more physical in the three sibling dyads, where both siblings are male. All of the three sibling dyads indicated that they had physical fights when they were children.

B1 exemplifies his fight with his younger brother as follows:

“We were fighting back then. We were yelling; we were cursing. We were shouting idiot, stupid, or something to each other. We were cursing a lot, pushing each other, throwing things at each other. We were throwing each other to the bed, throwing each other to the door. We were physically fighting with each other.” (B1)

B3 expressed their fight with his younger brother:

“There are lots of examples. Have you seen the scars on my brother’s face? He also has cuts and scratches on his arm. They are all glass cuts. After that, for example, I was in there when he injured his eyebrows; I was in one of them. One of his eyebrows got cut while we were playing. His arm was injured while fighting. I mean, I closed the door, he came and hit the door glass with his hand, the glass broke, and he injured his arm. After that, while we were fighting, we would break things even if we could not reach each other; most of the time, we could not reach each other because my mother intervened so that things would break.” (B3)

Another participant, B2, expressed their fights with his younger brother as follows:

“As I said, rather than the argument, there was more of a fight; it was the hustle and bustle. It is not an argument; what can we sit and discuss? There is no subject to discuss, but since we were kids, we fight over the games, the television, this, and that He wants to open a cartoon, I want to open something else. Generally, we had a fight every morning. We used to go to school at the same time, so we left the house at the same time. Every morning he wants to turn on a cartoon or something. And I want to watch sports channels. Every morning we had an argument about it; every morning, we had a fight, constantly. We would fight every morning, we would argue every morning. Same thing again the next morning. He never said, okay, take it, just watch it this morning. And I would never say, okay, take it, you watch it this morning. So, we had that discussion every morning.” (B2)

3.1.2.2. Coping Mechanisms During and After Conflict in Childhood

(Question: What would you do in situations like that?)

After they described their conflicts, participants were asked what they would do after the conflicts and their coping skills. Many of the participants indicated that, after the conflicts, they would avoid their siblings in different ways, such as being separated from each other for a short while, getting offended and locking themselves into a room, trying to get away from the sibling, doing different activities. Some of the participants also stated that their parents, especially their mother intervened in their fights as they were children.

Participant K5 expressed her experiences as follows:

“Often, my mother would intervene. My father, I do not remember what my father was doing, I guess my father was not involved in our discussions much, but my mother would intervene, and she would punish us; yes, I remember it. For example, she would say; don’t pass this part of the carpet, and you will not pass this part of it. I remember my mother did these kinds of things; it was my mother who found a compromise. (K5)

Participant B3 also shares his memories as follows:

“We would not cope. While we were still fighting each other, my mother would come and separate us, hold one of us in the corner, lock the other in a room sometimes. Somehow, after 15-20 minutes, we would suddenly get together and start playing again.” (B3)

Participants also stated that the arguments would not last very long, and they made up quickly. Many of them share that they got together after a short period, and they were able to continue where they left off as nothing happened:

“Our relationship was a little more unstable than now. You know when you are a kid, you always quarrel over something. We always jostled a lot. I mean, even if nothing happened, she would lie on a sofa, and I would lie on her saying I want to lie on that sofa, she would shout, and we would fight for ten minutes. After that, we would stay away for ten minutes and then act as if nothing had happened. It was always like that. Apart from that, we had a happy childhood” (B5)

Another participant, K3, expressed his experiences as follows:

“We would fight for a moment; then we would be apart for about five minutes. Then either he would come to me, or I would go to him, he would say whether to play this, he made up with me. And I sidled up to him even more.” (K3)

3.1.2.3. Parental Attitudes during Childhood Conflicts

(Question: What would your parents do in these situations?)

Participants were asked about their parents' attitudes during their conflicts. Mothers seem to intervene more in sibling conflicts compared to fathers. Some of the participants indicated that their fathers got involved after a while when the argument heated up:

“My father was never involved in such things. I mean, a little if our argument was very serious, he doesn't talk normally when he is angry, he talks when he gets very angry like he could not hold it in anymore, and he starts yelling.” (K6)

Parents also tend to separate siblings physically when they had an argument. Participants remembered scenes about their parents sending them to different rooms in order to solve the conflict.

“They must have tried to separate us; they tried that for a long time. When they intervened, they tried to separate us. After that, they were saying you stay here, and you stay there. After that, we were secretly going to each other, we were making peace, and when they came, they saw that we were in peace. They were motivating us by saying “yes, play like this” and so on.” (K3)

One brother and big sister sibling dyad, B7 and K7 mentioned their parents as mediators in their arguments. They indicated that their parents did not get angry easily, and they approached their arguments patiently. They made time for them to talk, and they confronted both siblings about their mistakes. Big sister B7 expressed it as follows:

“My mother is a very patient person. My father is not very patient normally, but I don’t know; maybe he became patient after he saw my mother. But they never solved it with violence. They tried to find a middle ground by talking with us. For example, if it was a big fight, which was rare, they sat and talked with us, they searched for reasons, and they confronted us about mistakes” (B7)

3.2. Sibling Relationships in Emerging Adulthood Period

In this chapter, sibling relationships during the emerging adulthood period of one’s life will be examined. In general, participants were able to bring more memories about their current relationships compared to their childhood. They were able to elaborate their answers in more detail, resulting in the data about this period of their relationship.

3.2.1. Activities Done Together

(Question: How do you spend time with your sibling? What do you do together?)

According to the results of the data, as the siblings grow, the activities they do together become varied. In childhood, participants tend to do physical activities with their siblings. In the emerging adulthood period, activities including communication also seem to enter siblings' lives. They started to do activities that allowed them to share their feelings with each other, such as chatting, going out for a coffee, complaining about their troubles, and talking about their internal worlds.

Participants also stated that they go out with their siblings. Some of the outside activities that siblings do together were: shopping, going out for coffee, going to concerts, going out for dinner, catching a movie, traveling, doing chores together.

Some of the indoor activities that siblings did were spending time in the kitchen, listening to music and dancing, reading together, daydreaming together, spending time with their family, playing games, chatting about their lives, school, or things they see on the internet.

Several participants expressed how much they like to spend time together with their siblings. Participant K3 expressed their relationship with his big brother:

“It’s good, it’s not boring, on the contrary, it is very fun in every aspect. It is enjoyable, how can I say, we go out sometimes, we spend time together. We study together; we play games, we watch tv together. All of them give continuity to our relationship. Our conversations during these events make us laugh, and it becomes fun.” (K3)

There are also participants who stated that they don't spend much time with their siblings.

“I can't say we spent too much time. We don't spend much time together, maybe except for weekends. He has school on weekdays. Only for weekends, we go shopping sometimes, sometimes we go and play PlayStation. Other than that, I can't say we spend much time together. Are there any other... Sometimes I help him with his lessons. But that's all; it's not much.” (B2)

One of the most common activities that participants share in this life period is their socialization. It seems like younger siblings commonly join older siblings' social life, hanging out with older siblings' friends. In 6 over 7 sibling dyads, older

siblings seem to invite their younger siblings to their social life. Moreover, 5 over 6 younger siblings express their gladness about this. One of the participants, K3 exemplified how close they are with his brother as following:

“What I mean by close is him inviting me to any trip with his friends. For example, it warms my heart when he says do you want to come along while going out with friends. He sees me as a friend; I really like that.” (K3)

It also seems like, for some younger siblings, this became a socialization channel. One of the participants K5, who studies at the same university with her big sister, expressed herself as follows:

“She has a very wide circle; for example, when I came to the university from a different town, and she has been here for two years, I trusted her that I would not be alone here since she already has a social circle here. There is a university club that she is in right now, and I know everybody in this club, for example. I met all her friends, and they greet me when they see me. Thanks to her, I have a whole other social circle.” (K5)

3.2.2. Conflicts During Emerging Adulthood Period

Participants were asked if they argue with their siblings. 13 out of 14 participants indicate that they have arguments and half of them added that they argue occasionally. 6 of the participants defined their arguments as small, temporary, and nothing big or serious.

3.2.2.1. Cause of Conflicts in Emerging Adulthood

(Question: Do you argue with your sibling? If yes, what are the subjects?)

Participants were also asked if they do, what are the topics that they argue about. According to the participants, one of the most common causes of their arguments is not being able to share their belongings. There is also a noticeable difference between both female sibling dyads and other groups. All 3 of the female-

female sibling dyads reflected that they argue with their sisters about their belongings, especially clothes.

“I got mad when she smokes, it’s not like I got mad mad, but I guess I do. She wears my clothes a lot; she doesn’t shop a lot. In fact, we share our stuff, I mean, they are personal, but we share a lot of things. However, I am the one that always does the shopping, and she wears what I buy, this makes me a little bit angry. And since she smokes, it also makes me angry when the clothes smell. It is not like I get angry because she wears them, but for example, she wears my coat and walks into a smoking area, and my coat smells like smoke. I get really angry about that. I said to her if you wear this coat, don’t walk into a smoking area, or if you would like to go there, then don’t wear it. For example, she wears something, and she put it in the laundry, and I look for it if it’s clean or ironed or dirty. We have problems with sharing clothes and belongings.” (B4)

“We argue with each other, especially about clothes. I want to wear that etc. For example, I had a class this morning, and my sister texted me did you wear my coat? And I said yes, and she said I wish you let me know before.” (K5)

“For example, our quarrels are usually like this, so let’s say she bought something from my closet, and she does not bring it back for some time. I say, why don’t you return it? She says what a materialist thought. Actually, yes, she is right, but there is also this, I take good care of my stuff, and why don’t they come back?” (K6)

Another topic that causes conflict between siblings is the untidiness of one of the siblings. Several participants indicated that they have arguments because of the messiness in the house.

“While we were moving, we fought, and it was about me sitting and not placing things. At that time, we thought about how we organize this place for the whole year, and we had a big fight, we yelled at each other. We said things like; you are not a tidy person, I guess we can’t live together for four years, we can’t do it. We had a fight about that.” (K5)

Two of the participants also exemplify how their different personality characteristics cause conflicts between them. They expressed difficulties in

understanding each other's needs, and since they have different personality traits, this may lead them to have conflicts.

“If there is a conflict, it is caused by his obsession about things. For example, since he just started college, he doesn’t know much about the grading system. And if he is obsessed with something, he needs to figure it out in his head. I am a more relaxed person about these kinds of things, and since I have more experience, I get tired of listening to him about his grades. I tell him to stop worrying about these.” (B7)

“When we are planning an activity together, the fact that she would not want to do it, I think she has a problem about adjusting rather than not wanting. I just define her as an easy-going person, but she is not very easygoing with me; it’s her role in the house. We might argue at times like that when we are about to do an activity together. (B6).

Some participants expressed that they argue when they don’t agree with each other about things or have a different opinion.

“In the simplest term, our preference of music. What I mean by argument is that he turns on some music, and I want to change it; I want to listen to something else. And he says no, don’t change it. Stuff like that.” (B2)

“Usually, we fight about silly things. For example, if she wants to watch something on tv, and I want to watch something else. I used to do something; if you have a sibling, maybe you do it too. When one of us try to change the channel, the other one put her hands in front of it so that the sensor would not see it and the channel won’t change. We used to always be obstinate with each other.” (K5)

3.2.2.2. Coping Mechanisms During and After Conflict in Emerging Adulthood

(Question: What do you do in such situations? How do you cope with it?)

In this part, participants were asked for their coping mechanisms during times of conflict. What they do during and after a sibling conflict, how they respond, and how they deal with it are the main questions for this section.

The most common mechanism that siblings use during a conflict is to avoid talking about the situation, and they also avoid talking to their siblings. Siblings prefer to be apart from each other, and after a short while, they get together and continue right where they left. These attitudes of siblings during and after the arguments are similar to their behaviors in their childhood conflicts. As stated in the previous sections, when siblings had a disagreement during childhood, with the encouragement of their parents, they resolved the conflicts by staying away from each other for a while. Considering the similarity of the attitudes showing in these developmental periods, to all appearances, the mechanisms used in conflict resolution continue in childhood and emerging adulthood.

“Usually, we go to different rooms. At that moment, we cut off communication completely. Either I snap at him, or he snaps at me one last time, and then I go to my room and listen to music or something. At that moment, for example, if I'm watching something, I watch it. K7 also gets in front of the computer and does whatever he does. After that, after half an hour or so, we start to talk again nicely as if nothing had happened.” (B7)

“We don't talk about it usually; we leave it, and after a few hours, we continue our lives as if nothing happened. We only talk about it during the discussion, and after that, for example, she says, okay, K5, that's okay, and she doesn't talk to me for one or two hours. But then she says let's go to the mall as if nothing happened.” (K5)

Several siblings expressed their willingness to talk during or after the discussion, but they complain about how their siblings don't want to talk about it and avoid them.

“Because when I get mad about something, I just say why I got mad right away. K1 is either avoid it or, says whoops sorry, or he acts like he is right, and the discussion is already over.” (B1)

“It's always the same, I guess I usually just leave when I can't get a response from her. I leave, and the next time we see each other, we act as if nothing has happened.” (B6)

However, these sibling dyads also indicated that their attitude is different if they argue about something important or severe.

“During a conflict between my brother and me, I act differently depending on if it is a discussion or it’s a fight. When we have a discussion, I act dismissive, I act as if I would like to end the discussion. But if it’s a fight, I think of ways to piss him off more.” (K1)

But if I am hurt, if it touches me in any way, or something she said upset me, she usually doesn’t say anything, but the next time we see each other or the time after that, when we are calmer, we talk about it. So it’s not like we totally ignore it or cover it up. We talk about the things that hurt us at some point.” (B6)

3.2.2.3. Parental Attitudes During Conflict

(Question: What do your parents do in these situations?)

Participants were asked about their parents’ attitudes during the conflict. Their answers can be divided into two categories. According to participants, there are parents that intervene in the conflict, and there are parents that don’t get involved and expect siblings to solve the problem on their own. Although there are examples of parents who intervene in sibling conflicts, when developmental periods are evaluated, the involvement of parents in sibling conflicts decreased in this period compared to the childhood period.

Generally, parents who intervene in sibling conflict get involved after a particular time, and they tend to silence the siblings.

“They say okay shut up, okay that’s enough. If there is something serious, like in the past, they came to the room, and they say stuff like okay both of you be quiet now.” (B4)

“If we increase the dosage too much, if we scream a lot in the house, my father usually says enough, what are you doing, what are you fighting for. He gets upset about us arguing. My mom doesn’t intervene at all. They usually do not intervene, and if we increase the dosage, my father intervenes. Otherwise, they are

probably just observing; they don't say anything. And we keep it in check anyway; it ends like that." (B6)

In some cases, parental intervention becomes a necessity for siblings to stop fighting. Participant K2 expresses the importance of these interventions of their parents; he believes if the parents don't intervene, they won't be able to stop.

"Usually, our parents do something. Our voices are getting louder, the discussion is flaring up, and if our parents don't say anything to stop us, we will continue. (laughs) We don't stop; without our parents, it will never end.

"(How do your parents intervene?)"

"They say, okay, that's it, you yell a lot, just be quiet, stop. Once they get involved, voices are dropped; we are both silents. (K2)

Participant K5, indicated their parents try to find common ground by talking with the siblings and understanding their thoughts and emotions.

"My father generally keeps himself out of these, and my mother tries to find common ground. But I guess we don't fight very often in front of them. What they do is, my mother asks about opinions on the topic. And she explains who is right about what, and she looks from different perspectives. And she directs us to talk with each other, and she usually tries to find a compromise." (K5)

Some parents don't get involved in siblings' conflicts.

"When we fight? They do not intervene e at all. I mean, our parents are especially careful not to intervene or take sides as long as it does not evolve into something big. (B7)

"They do nothing unless there is swearing. My mother does nothing, even if there is swearing. If my father is home, and I said idiot to my brother, my father would get very angry. He says you can't use bad language; you are brothers. Stuff like that hasn't happened for a long time, though." (B1)

Participant K4 expressed how she sometimes tries to talk to her mother about their discussions and how her mother rejects being a part of it.

"They do not intervene too much into our discussions. But if my sister is not at home, I grouch to my mother about it, and she says, why are you telling me these? It's usually like that. My father does not intervene too much either." (K4)

3.3. Parental Role of the Older Sibling

During the interview process, both older and younger siblings mentioned parent-like attitudes of the older siblings several times. In this part, these will be exemplified. Adjectives used by the participants to define their role and their siblings' roles in the family are given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3.*The Adjectives Used to Describe Self and Sibling*

	Perception of self	Perception of sibling
B1	nervous, indifferent, funny	confused, extremely rational, really indifferent
K1	funny, quiet, fast runner	not quiet, funny, fast runner
B2	hardworking, honest, determined	unsensitive, not responsible, extraverted
K2	aggressive, incompatible	easy going, calm, mediator, total opposite of me
B3	impatient, rational, stubborn	impatient, inconsiderate, very smart
K3	cheerful, friendly, fun	friendly, generous, neat
B4	ambitious, calm, cheerful	compassionate, sensitive, emotional
K4	strong, anxious, funny	strong, understanding, warmhearted
B5	outspoken, social, emotional	social, naive, emotional (hiddenly)
K5	social, friendly, leader	dominant, social, helpful
B6	determined, free spirited, adventuresome	stubborn, shy, sensitive
K6	introverted, curious	extroverted, energetic, free
B7	impatient, ambitious, fun	detail-oriented, obsessive, confidant
K7	detail-oriented, anxious, punctual	hardworking, aggressive, cold

3.3.1. Providing Emotional and Social Support

Younger siblings often mentioned the supportive role of the older siblings in their emotional and social lives. When they need help, they feel bad and need someone to take care of them; they mentioned that often they seek help from their older siblings. Older siblings also seem to embrace this supportive caregiver role naturally. Younger siblings indicated that their older siblings help them dealing with their emotions. The gender of the siblings also seems to play a part in this specific support. The sibling pairs where both siblings are female mentioned their sisters' emotional support compared to other sibling dyads.

“There is not much of an age difference between us; it is only two. But I guess it is also about me; I saw her as someone like I can consult about stuff like all the time. I feel like I can ask her anything when I am in distress, or even if on a normal day. I may lean a little too much on her. We have this kind of relationship; I couldn't explain it well, but. She is a pillar of support for me.” (K6)

“Maybe because I am older and K4 can be a little more childish sometimes, we also have kind of a parent-child relationship between us. Even yesterday, my sister was saying to our mother that I am her new mother now (laughs).” (B4)

She also expressed possible reasons for this situation.

“Maybe some of the difficult times K4 has had since childhood etc. I may have started to become the more mature one, and it compelled me to have a big sister role. It may also have nurtured a little more of her childish side and kept her a little more attached to her family members. And while I experience these and she experience those, our relationship started to turn into a parent-child relationship rather than a sibling relationship after a while.” (B4)

3.3.2. Providing Support in Academic Life

Several participants also mentioned their older siblings' role in their academic life. Participants expressed that they take advice from their older siblings on what major to study. One of the participants B3 explained how he directed his

brother to choose a certain type of high school. Another participant, K5 expressed how her big sister advised her to choose psychology as her college major.

“She helps me a lot in everything. I ask her about what course to take since she already took some of them before. She tells me which ones are for me. For instance, even when I was choosing this major, she advised me that economics won’t be good for me. Normally I wanted to study law; at the end of the eleventh grade, she made such a speech, and she said, “do you really want it? It’s really hard,” and she gave examples of her friends, told me about the difficulties. This was when I realized I didn’t want to study law. She showed suitable choices for me. She told me, “You can do psychology, it is very difficult, you have to study, but I believe you can do it, your relationships with people are good, etc.” And she directed me to this major.” (K5)

“My brother went to a business high school. I told him to go to a business high school.” (B3)

3.4. Life Events

As the siblings grow up, they face different events throughout their lives. In this study, participants mentioned several life events they experienced while narrating their interactions with their siblings. In this section, the life events that these participants encountered and the effects of these events on their sibling relationships is presented.

3.4.1. Moving to Another City due to university

In 2 out of 7 sibling dyads (K3 & B3 and K7 & B7), one of the siblings lives in a different city because of college. And there is also another sibling dyad (K5 & B5) that experienced living in other cities for a while. Then they started living together away from their parents, again, due to college. Several times, they mentioned the effects of these experiences in their relationship.

None of the participants indicated that living in different cities had a negative impact on the intimacy and closeness of their relationship. Several participants expressed that being physically separated from each other does not affect their closeness with each other. K3 expressed the effects of living separately on their relationship as following.

“As we grow up, we became separated for a bit due to school, etc. But, the intimacy between us is still the same. Even if we are far away from each other, we are always close to each other; we always call each other and ask about each other's lives. The intimacy between us has not changed since childhood.” (K3)

“He is my brother no matter what, and he always wants to be there for me. Even when he is in Edirne for school, he wants to be with me; he wants to hear from me. For example, he tells me to call him when I need something. It is like that; he is really there for me.” (K3)

Also, his big brother B3 pointed out the importance of physical distance in their relationships. According to him, being physically separated from their siblings might be a reason why their relationship became more mature.

“What I mean by maturity is maybe, us staying apart for a while.”

...

“It might be me leaving for college or senior year of high school. Since then, I have not been in the house very much, so we see each other less. And when we see each other, we talk about our problems, he talks, and I talk, we share stuff with each other. Yes, I guess it happened during those times; separation has improved us. I may have just realized that.” (B3)

B5 also indicates a similar experience regarding the impact of living separately on their relationship. She believes their relationships got more matured over time. When she is asked about the reasons for this change, she expressed their relationship started to change when she moved to another city.

(Question: When do you think this change started?)

“I guess it started when I moved away for college.”

(Question: What do you think is the reason for this change?)

“I think the reason is us starting to live in different rooms for the first time. We used to go to summer camps, we stayed somewhere else for a few weeks, but this was the first time that we lived separately for two years, I guess this is the reason. I mean, for example, when I went to Ankara, I used to go to Ankara for holidays, if I can't spend enough time with her, she got upset, because we used to be together. So, I guess the reason is my leaving for college.” (B5)

For K5, living together brought them closer to each other. She also expressed that they are also very close during the time they lived in different cities.

“Especially when I moved from Ankara, we have become closer like this since we started staying in the same house. We were already very close when I was in Ankara and when she was in Istanbul, even though we were in different cities. We were talking every day when I was in Ankara. She was telling me what she did that day, and I was telling her what I was doing. When I was in Ankara, I was calling B5 very often, especially when I was studying for the university entrance exam; I was telling her, “I was so overwhelmed, what should I do?” I was going to Istanbul to stay with B5 in order to relax.” (K5)

Her big sister B5 also thinks that living together brings them closer and increases their intimacy.

“Especially now that we live in the same house, we have more intimacy between us, apart from the family. (B5)

3.4.2. School and Work Schedule

Several participants expressed the effects of their work and school schedule on their interactions with siblings. They indicated that they get to spend less time lately because of their busy school program and work. Participants expressed their experiences as:

“We are close, but we just haven't been able to meet much lately. I mean we see each other, but only because we stay in the same room. It's like we see each other for a little time. And it's because her school schedule is very busy. I am

constantly outside; my school has also started. So usually, we are both outsides, all day long. That's why we can't meet much.” (K4)

“We haven't been able to meet with my brother much lately. I am not at home on weekdays anyway, because of school. I come home at the end of the day. He leaves in the morning and comes home in the evening. I am also out in the evenings. We can hardly see each other on weekdays.” (K2)

3.5. Changes in Sibling Relationships

(Question: When you think about your relationship with your sibling from the past to the present, do you think there have been changes in your relationship?)

If any, what kind of changes have occurred?

Participants were asked if their relationships changed over time. 13 out of 14 participants answered yes to the question and indicated that their relationships had changed over the years. Then, the participants that marked a change in sibling relationships were asked what these changes were. All participants expressed positive changes in their relationships. They stated that they have become more mature, and their ability to understand each other has increased; they have become closer with their siblings, they argue less, and they share more about their lives with their siblings. In the following part, participants' expressions about the changes are exemplified.

The most common change that many of the participants expressed is how much better they are able to understand each other now. K6 thinks that people are able to understand each other's characters better in adulthood. She expressed her opinions as such:

“We can understand each other a little more. When you are young, you cannot realize that much; you cannot understand that people have personalities; you cannot understand who did what and why and analyze others. Children are a little more selfish, or I guess I was a selfish child, maybe.” (K6)

Another participant, K1 believes that they started to be more understanding with each other:

“The biggest change is that we are more understanding with each other.”
(K1)

Several older siblings believe that it’s a development in younger siblings’ ability to better understand things and the older sibling. One of the participants, B2 expressed his experience with his little brother.

“Now, this age period, we experience one of the best times in a relationship. He is no longer actively in puberty; he is not peevish anymore. He understands, shares, speaks more. Now is our best time since he understands that he can share. We can get along better; we can share things on common ground. I can understand when he talks; he can understand when I talk; you can feel it. You can tell that he understands you, but when we were younger, he was a pain in the neck.” (B2)

B7 also shared a similar opinion that since she believes her brother can understand her better, she shares her life with him more easily.

“I mean, we couldn't talk in the past, of course, we were telling each other some stuff when we found something we were both interested in, but these were mostly about specific events. Now, for example, I can talk K7 about my relationships; I do not hesitate about it, I think he can understand more, it might be related with age, it may be maturing, it may be a result of him solving some of his problems about himself, I don't know, but it is better.” (B7)

One of the other common thoughts that many of the participants indicate is how mature their relationship is now. Participant B5 expressed the meaning of maturity for their relationship as following:

“As I said, we used to fight because of our childish desires, or we used to do very childish things and hurt each other unintentionally. I mean, we did not do those things on purpose, but we were acting childishly. But we are grown up now. And we share a house now; this brings responsibilities too. Now I have responsibilities over K5. As the responsibilities increased, we matured. When we grew and the way of mind and logic settled, we matured; the two of us matured together. We also understand how we treat each other. We both know what reaction we got when we treated each other in certain ways. This is why we have a more solid, steady relationship now.” (B5)

Some participants also express that they have a closer relationship with their siblings. Compared to the childhood period, they can share more stuff with their siblings. B4 expressed they also share more now; they have more things in common.

“But now I think we are getting closer. I'm sharing more stuff with her too. She knows more about my life.” (B4)

In addition, two of the female, young sibling participants talked about how they look up to their big sisters. And they both explained its effects on them, how it makes them more alike and makes them closer.

“It's like we are turning into more parallel characters now as we're growing up. Or it may be as a result of the fact that I saw her as a great idol. The music we love, the things we watch, and the places we go to are more similar. We started to get along much better; we started to be with each other much more. We started sharing our belongings. So, it's like we have a more intertwined life.” (K4)

“Yes, we became more intimate; as we grew older and matured, we started to be closer. And I follow her example for many things. She warns me, and I tell her no, it is not like that, I won't do that, and then I realize a year later that yes, it is like what she said. Since she is older than me, she has all these experiences, and she knows the truth even if I don't accept it. It's like we become more intimate as if we are getting closer and closer.” (K5)

3.5.1. Causes of Change

(Question: What do you think are the reasons for these changes?)

A great majority of participants revealed changes in their relationships with siblings. Since there are transformations, it's important to discover the reasons for these changes. Participants were asked for their opinions about the causes of these changes.

Younger and older siblings' answers were evaluated separately to gain a better understanding of their perspectives. Yet, the most common answer for their explanation about the changes in their relationships was the same; age. Both

younger and older siblings referred to the age factor as the main reason for the change in their relationship.

“The older I get, the closer my brother becomes. I noticed that. I mean, in the past, when I was younger, he was more distant, and as my age gets older, he also realizes that I have grown up. And this brings him closer to me.” (K2)

And his older brother expressed a very similar explanation:

“I think we had more problems when we were younger. But now, for example, when we become 18 and 25 or 19 and 26, we have more things in common. It seems to me that I can understand him better since he can find more things in common with me.” (B2)

Several participants mentioned difficult life experiences that happened in younger siblings' lives that brought them closer. According to the participants, these experiences, such as difficult events in the family or psychological processes that siblings have gone through, have something in common; they tend to bring siblings together. B4 expressed difficult psychological processes that her sister experienced recently and how this experience affects their relationship:

“I mean, maybe the events we lived through, for example, the difficult process that happened this summer, also brought us closer.” (B4)

Another participant, K7 explained how his big sister helped him to overcome these challenges:

“Since it was not an easy childhood and we were together all the time, we helped each other to get through things. Usually, she helped me. I had great difficulty in many parts of it because of my anxiety. She helped me a lot back then.” (K7)

K6, indicated the increase in their empathy skills and capacity for emotional awareness as the reasons for the change in their relationships. And she added that the reason behind the improvement of abilities is these conflicts they had in the family and that it brings them together.

“It's because of these disagreements in our family, I believe. When there was an argument between our parents and us, for example, when we were kids, my mother was yelling at my sister, and I went and checked if she was okay. So, it started when we were kids, but when you grow up, you start to look a little more

like, personally, I started to think about it more. She is a free person too, and she can do whatever she wants, and she can't control her emotions. We started to align against our parents, and that strengthened our relationship.” (K6)

One of the siblings highlights the effects of the therapy process that they were both in. According to B6, her relationship with her sister was positively affected by the individual therapy process that they were both in. With the help of therapy, they both started understanding each other's needs and emotions, and they started to talk about these, which led them to have a better relationship. She expressed these as such:

“In general, we both go to our own therapies at the same time and go through our own internal processes, become aware of some things and come to the point where we can share this with someone else, open that space for each other, and feel that it is right for each other.” (B6)

3.5.2. Time of Change

(Question: When do you think these changes started?)

Participants were asked when they think the change started. The majority of the participants expressed the time of this change by stating their or their siblings' age or the academic stages they have been through, such as the beginning of college or the end of high school. Only two participants explained the time of the change without using specific times; K3 expressed those changes started with puberty and continued after puberty, and B5 indicated that the changes began when they started to live separately.

From the point of the younger siblings, 3 out of 7 participants pointed out that the changes started in their high school period between the ages 14 and 17. The other 3 participants believed the change started around college times between the ages of 18 and 23. According to older siblings, 3 out of 7 participants also believed that their relationships started to change when younger siblings were in high school, and 2 of the participants believed the change started when younger siblings started

college. One of the older siblings stated the change started 6-8 months ago with their therapy processes.

Another perspective to look at the time of change is how the older and the younger siblings in a sibling dyad perceive the time of change and whether they express similar periods or not. The majority of the sibling dyads indicated different timelines. Only in one sibling dyad, both older and younger siblings referred to the same time for the change in their relationship.

3.5.3. Expectations about the Relationships

(Question: Is there anything you want to change about your relationship with your sibling? If so, what are they?)

Participants were asked if they wanted to change anything about their current relationships, if so, what they would like to change and what they would prefer to stay the same. The answers will be given separately to better understand the perspectives of older and younger siblings.

3.5.3.1. Older Siblings

The majority of the older siblings expressed their desire to spend more and share more things with their siblings. They would like to share more about their lives, and they also want their siblings to share more.

“I wish he could communicate more. I would like him to tell me about what he is doing and what he is thinking. I would prefer to have a relationship that involves more conversations. There is nothing else that I would like to change.”
(B1)

“As I said, I don’t tell him much. Maybe if I could talk more, it would be different. But I don’t know why it is like that either; it’s not just something special for him. As I said, I don’t share much with anyone in the house. But maybe if I do, he will also start to share more. Because he is always on the giving side, and I am always on the receiving side, he never gets to be the receiving side. Or I never can

be on the giving side (laughs). Maybe if we can change this, things would be different. What I mean by different is when he sees that I tell him things, he would think that I can tell him that too. When he sees that I share more, he can share more too. It could be a more solid relationship. Maybe this is the issue we need to fix for now. Other than that, we don't have a problem in our relationship.” (B2)

In addition to these, in the sister-brother sibling dyad, the big sister B7 believes that the lack of sharing in their relationship comes from the gender difference.

“I wish he could tell me more. I mean, since I don't have a sister and I am the only daughter in my mother's family also, I don't have any female cousins. You know, when you have a brother, you can't tell everything; he doesn't understand. Or he can act protective; the way he looks at things is different. I wish he could be more relaxed; I would like to share more with him.” (B7)

Several older siblings also explain that they would like their relationships to be less hierarchical and more friendly. They would like their relationship to be more egalitarian, and they express their wish about wanting their siblings to treat them more like friends.

“I said, I don't know, I don't really think that these roles will change much, but I would like this parent-child role in our relationship to be a little more balanced and eventually turn into a friend-like relationship over time. I would like her to be able to support me more emotionally when I feel sad. I would like to balance this a little more.” (B4)

“I would like to hang out with his friends more because I don't know any of his friends. I mean, I know them, but not really. For example, I don't want him to call me sister; we only have two years between us. I told him that, but he didn't accept it. I mean, we get along well, we are like friends, but I want to be more like real friends.” (B7)

3.5.3.2. Younger Siblings

From the perspectives of the younger siblings, the most common wish that 3 out of 7 siblings express is to spend more time with each other. However, two of them complained about how their siblings work, and they don't have enough time to spend together.

"I wish we could spend more time together lately. We cannot go out because she also works on the weekends, I wish we could go out. I would like to change that." (K4)

"I think we should spend more time with each other, especially these days. I came here, but we couldn't make time for each other because of her work and school. I believe we can spend a little bit more time together both at home and outside." (K7)

Two of the younger sibling participants also express that they would like to change their siblings' behaviors during a conflict. K5 explained how she feels like she needs to assume a humble attitude during a conflict. And she wishes to change that.

"It might be better if we were obstinate with each other a little less, especially about outfits since we do it very often. For example, it would be good if she tries to go easy on me. It will be okay if she couldn't do it too, but I would be much happier if she does." (K5)

Participant K7 also expresses that his sister tends to raise her voice to him sometimes when she feels upset. He explains how he would like to change that.

"All I want to change is her raising her voice, that's all. I mean, I think it would be better if she could stay a little calmer." (K7)

3.5.4. Pleasantness About the Relationships

(Question: Is there anything you don't want to change about your relationship with your sibling? If so, what are they?)

Participants were also asked about what they would like to keep the same, the aspects of their relationships that they are pleased with. Some of the answers of older siblings are as follows.

3.5.4.1. Older Siblings

Several participants exemplify the characteristics that show their closeness and the values in their relationships.

“I want our protective attitude towards each other never to change. I mean, nobody can tell me anything about my sister. I believe it is like that for her too. We are very protective of each other. I especially don’t want that to change.” (B5)

“Being this close. We also dream together a lot such as, we will live in England for a while, okay, or we will definitely go to Bora Bora Islands, like that.

....

No matter how old we are, I always want to have these conversations about us going to America together.” (B4)

Two participants expressed their gratitude about the attitudes after a conflict and how they keep their bond.

“No matter what happens, we will never be cross with each other; I hope this will never change. (B3)

“This is a tough question. Well, I don’t know how to tell. No matter how angry we are, even if we are in a position that we can’t handle being touched, this usually happens at home; when we hug each other, it feels like everything is reset. I would say no to anyone else at that point, but I can’t say that to her usually; I don’t want that to change.” (B6)

And one participant expressed their pleasantness about the boundaries that they have.

“We are different people and our limits... Our expectations from each other are very regulated. It’s very clear that what we should get from each other and what we should give to each other. I think this is the reason behind the confusion in the Turkish family structure, and I don’t think we will experience that because

we don't have an enmeshed relationship just because we are brothers. We are aware that everyone has their responsibilities. We are aware that helping each other and being brothers are different things. I would like it to stay that way.” (B1)

4.5.4.2. Younger Siblings

In addition, 2 of the younger siblings expressed their gladness about the friendship between them.

“The fact that we are friends. Because of what I see, and I see that in my family too when people grow up, a lot is going on between siblings; there could be situations that will end the relationship. I don't want that; that is the most important thing.” (K1)

Participant K3 expressed his gratitude for his older sibling's support, and he would like to keep it that way.

“I would not want to change how he is right now, the fact that he is friendly, and he is close to me. We are pleased about the fact that he is neat, and he cleans the house and helps us. It's beneficial for me.

...

“He helps me with chores. Sometimes I can't clean my room, I need to leave in a hurry, and he helps me to clean up the house, or he does it when I am out. It serves me well, it's nice.” (K3)

In a similar scenario, participant K6 also expressed how her sister supports her about her social life, but she also believes that this has to change.

“It is more like a feeling. She started to accept me as who I am; I don't want that to change. And there is also something else that I don't want to change, but actually, it's not very efficient for both of us. I guess I feel like I am a little bit dependent on her. I may need a little help with some things, like social life. But she has to let me go at some point. I mean, I would not want to change that, but it has to change.” (K6)

CHAPTER 4

4. DISCUSSION

The study aims to understand the dynamics, possible changes, and continuities of sibling relationships from childhood to emerging adulthood. Overall, the majority of the findings of the study are compatible with the previous findings. The themes which occurred as the result of the semi-structured interviews are discussed below.

4.1 Changes in Sibling Relationships from Childhood to Adulthood

The results of this study show that sibling relationships change over time. A great majority of the participants, both younger and older siblings, indicated changes in their interaction. In addition, none of the participants expressed any negative changes over time. Instead, participants stated that they began to share their lives more, they started to understand each other better, and their interactions started to become more egalitarian. These results show that, according to the outcomes of this study, siblings began to get along better in the emerging adulthood period of their lives, compared to the childhood period. These results support earlier work that indicates sibling relationships tend to improve over time (Cicirelli, 1995; Gilligan et al., 2020; Stewart et al., 2001; Parker et al., 2012;). Previous findings suggested that sibling relationships during the transition into emerging adulthood have more positive aspects than the earlier stages. (Parker et al., 2012; Hamwey et al., 2018). In this developmental period, siblings started to connect less (Lindell & Campione-Barr, 2016), but they report that they are more attached and intimate (Jensen et al., 2018; Parker et al., 2012). Similarly, the study participants defined how they inevitably spend most of their time with their siblings in their childhood. Many of the participants shared the same schools with their siblings and lived together at the same house. Some participants also indicated how their younger siblings tagged along even if they didn't want them. It seems that the siblings had to spend more time physically together in childhood. In young adulthood, siblings

started to spend less time physically together for various reasons (school responsibilities, work, living in a different city, etc.). Compatible with the results, previous studies also reported that siblings communicate and connect less in the adolescence and emerging adulthood period (Lindell & Campione-Barr, 2016; Hamwey et al., 2018). Although siblings speak less during this period, it is seen that the content of the conversations is more profound and more significant (Hamwey et al., 2018).

Newman expressed a correlation between sibling conflicts and physical closeness and claimed that one reason for sibling conflict during childhood is being together all the time (1991). Similarly, Scharf et al. (2005) concluded that the time siblings spend together in adulthood decreases, making them more interested in each other's lives. They start to be more aware of each other's feelings, and this results in experiencing less conflict over time. In a more recent study reviewing sibling relationships from a longitudinal perspective, sibling disagreements were observed to decrease around the time of emerging adulthood and maturity. Spending less time with the sibling has been suggested as the main reason for this decrease in sibling conflict in emerging adulthood (Jensen et al., 2018).

Similarly, Stewart et al. suggested that physical distance does not necessarily result in emotional distance between siblings; on the contrary, siblings reach out and remain in touch despite physical distance. (Stewart et al., 2001). Some of the participants in the study also indicated similar situations, such as how they kept in touch when one sibling moved to another city and how they called each other to let each other know what was going on in their lives. Moreover, two participants who moved to another city for college added that the distance between them was the reason for the change in their relationship. It matured them, and they started to communicate more about their problems. Siblings during emerging adulthood gain the ability to perceive each other's emotions and demands; this may stem from their improved analytical thinking skills and increase in emotional intelligence due to maturation (Scharf et al., 2005). Studies show that sibling relationships preserve this favorable structure in the future, and the problems

experienced in previous developmental periods decrease with adulthood. (Gilligan et al., 2020; Stocker et al., 2020).

Riggio (2006) claimed that since having only one sibling rather than multiple means more one-to-one interaction with the only sibling, the intensity of the unfavorable emotions could be a lot. This study contradicts Carstensen's research that claimed a decrease in sibling interaction in communication and intimacy between 17 and 30 (Carstensen, 1987, 1991, as cited in Stewart et al., 2001). Similar to Bedford, affection that siblings show each other has an "hourglass effect"; it drops in emerging adulthood and grows in the late adulthood period of life (Bedford, 1989, as cited in Milevsky et al., 2014). This contradiction in literature might be because of the measurement methods or interpretations of several concepts.

4.1.2. Partial Decrease in Hierarchy

The nature of the sibling relationship changes over time. Many of the participants reflected that they started to socialize more with their siblings with time. They began to get involved with each other's social life, meet with each other's friends and spend time together. According to the result of this study, it is more common for younger siblings to socialize with older siblings' friends. Older siblings seem to invite their younger siblings to their social circle more often than the younger ones do. When the older sibling invites the younger ones, they may want to spend time with their younger sibling, or they may be trying to support their sociality. This behavior may result from the older siblings' desire to develop a more friend-like dynamic. According to the results of this study, the majority of the participants defined their relationships as friendly or indicated that they wished to have a more friend-like relationship with their siblings. This supports the theories claiming that as the siblings grow up, their relationships become more equal and less hierarchical in terms of power dynamics (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Cicirelli, 1995). According to Dunn (2002), younger siblings play a more passive role during the interaction, and when they come to school age, they start to be more involved and play a more significant part in the relationship. It's also suggested that

the younger siblings need and ask for less caring and nurturing from the older ones as they mature with age and start to become more self-sufficient (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990). As their relationship becomes more equal, it becomes easier for siblings to understand each other and help each other without criticism (Connidis, 1992).

In addition to supporting the previous research, this study indicated a later change in sibling interactions. According to most participants, change in their relationship started in high school and college years or later. Only one participant expressed changes beginning with puberty, and none of the others indicated any change earlier than when the younger siblings started high school. Although these changes described by the participants were not limited to egalitarianism, their examples pointed out a great resemblance with its description. Differences in Western and Eastern cultures can explain these age differences between siblings in this study and the literature. In collectivist societies, the needs and expectations of community and family occupy a more important place in people's lives (Claes, 1998). Newman's study (1991) with young adult siblings indicated that parental attitudes and expectations vary from culture to culture. American families give less importance to power dynamics between siblings.

In contrast, families from other ethnic groups pay more attention to this issue and support this hierarchical order between siblings. Studies also show higher expectations from older siblings in Turkey and similar to collectivistic cultures regarding parental care and nurturing (Kale & Siğirtmaç, 2020). According to Sirman (2014), the hierarchy between younger and older siblings is more distinct in Turkey, even in very modern families. This can be exemplified with one of the younger participants' refusing to call his 2-years-old-bigger sister only by her name, even at her request. Although she expressed her wish to have a more friend-like relationship, there seems to be something stopping him from breaking this hierarchical relationship between them.

4.2. Conflict Resolution Strategies of Siblings

The meta-analysis that Laursen et al. (2001) conducted about disagreements among peers, including siblings, showed the methods people use during conflict and the motivations behind them. The results of this meta-analysis demonstrated that while people choose to talk about their disagreements, they negotiate and play an active role in trying to resolve the conflict when they have a problem with their peers. However, they don't seem to apply this same method when discussing it with their siblings (Laursen et al., 2001). He and his colleagues explained that people don't have the motivation to solve sibling conflicts by negotiating actively. Unlike peers, sibling interactions are inevitable and lifelong, so people don't make the extra effort to keep them (Laursen et al., 2001).

Similarly, most participants indicated that they try to stay separated and leave their disagreements when they experience problems unless crucial. Thus, the outcome of this study corresponds with the results of this meta-analysis. Similarly, according to Collings and Laursen (1992), the extent to which relationships can tolerate negative affect and conflict is regulated by the category of that relationship, according to a theory created from the social-relational point of view (as cited in Campione-Barr & Killoren, 2019). Collings and Laursen (1992) indicated that connections, such as relationships between family members where the bond is primarily involuntary, are described as closed-field relationships. In contrast, the relationships that do not rely on an obligatory bond, such as romantic relationships or relationships with colleagues, are described as open-field relationships (as cited in Campione-Barr & Killoren, 2019). Relationships between siblings are also categorized as closed space relations. Although there is a hierarchy between younger and older siblings, this relationship can handle more negative emotions and disagreements. It has a relatively egalitarian structure compared to the parent-child relationship (Campione-Barr & Killoren, 2019).

In addition to these, the results show similarities between conflict solving skills in childhood and adulthood with one difference: parental involvement. While most of the participants mentioned an intervention by their parents to separate

siblings during the conflict, the percentage of this interference decreased in the emerging adulthood period. Although parents became less involved with sibling conflict, siblings seemed to maintain the parents' methods when they were children. For example, while parents physically separated siblings from each other to solve their conflict, in emerging adulthood, siblings tend to be distant, avoidant, and stay separated from each other for a while when they disagreed. Several theories may explain this similarity between parental attitudes during the conflict and attitudes of siblings. According to the theorists working on attachment, a person's interaction with others is mainly related to early experiences with primary caregivers (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Brody et al., 1994a). Attachment was described as a continuous tie between child and caregiver, which is very important, affectionate, and long-lasting for the child (Ainsworth, 1986, as cited in Buist et al., 2002). And several researchers believe that attachment theory is critical to understand the structure of sibling interactions (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Teti & Ablard, 1989;). Similar to this study's results, one research conducted in a controlled environment indicated the connection behind hostile behaviors towards siblings and attachment; siblings who show secure attachment patterns are less aggressive to their siblings (Teti & Ablard, 1989). Since these studies showed how parent-child interaction could affect sibling interactions, this interaction became a factor in understanding the conflicts between siblings. Children might have internalized the coping mechanisms and attitudes that primary caregivers display during the sibling conflict in childhood.

Another theory explaining the similarity between children's and parents' behavior while dealing with conflict might be the social learning theory. Bandura conceptualized that people obtain knowledge from others' behaviors, ideas or thoughts by seeing and witnessing them. According to Bandura, this leads them to learn and adopt these behaviors or opinions (1977). Studies support the idea that children tend to notice and copy their parents' attitudes during a fight or show affection (Patterson, 1984; Whiteman et al., 2011). The study conducted in the Middle East to understand what strategies siblings prefer to use during a conflict showed similar results; adolescents were prone to use the same strategies as their parents when they had a conflict with their siblings (Haj-Yahia & Dawud-Noursi,

1998). While these theories take different paths in terms of conceptualization, they come to similar conclusions about how attitudes or actions of caregivers influence the children and how this affects their relationship with their siblings.

4.2.1 Subjects of Conflicts

Subjects of conflicts among siblings are mostly unexplored in sibling literature (Campione-Barr et al., 2013). Campione-Barr and Smetana (2010) investigated the reasons behind sibling quarrels with a study on adolescent siblings. They concluded that there were two main reasons behind sibling conflicts: personal belongings and disagreements about equal opportunities and justice. Another study that was conducted with children's siblings found that siblings repeatedly experience the same discussion, and they generally argue about inequality and psychological abuse (Recchia & Howe, 2009).

The results of this study are compatible with the literature. Data shows that the majority of siblings tend to have disputes about topics such as sharing their belongings. Besides, this applies to both childhood and emerging adulthood periods of sibling interaction.

4.3. Sex Differences in Sibling Interaction

Even though this study does not directly aim to investigate how sibling relationships differ by the gender of the siblings, the results show some variation according to the gender-matching of the dyads. The dyads that have female-female gender configuration tend to share their emotions and opinions more. Younger siblings of female-female sibling dyads express their admiration for their older siblings and state that they often take advice from their big sisters. The study conducted with university students in Turkey showed that female siblings tend to have a healthier relationship with their siblings than male siblings (Yıldırım & Sezer, 2018). Brothers were less involved and less connected with their siblings than sisters (Newman, 1991).

Older siblings' protectiveness of their younger brothers is a prominent theme for the sibling dyads, consisting of two male siblings. Older siblings of male-male gender configuration defend their brothers and protect their younger brothers from peers and schoolmates. A more recent study also suggested that women experience more intense; often, these are positive emotions in their relationships with their siblings. It has been recommended that this difference in emotional intensity may be because women may invest more in their relationships with their siblings (Witte et al., 2020).

The study investigating attachment styles of adolescents with different family members showed that attachment characteristics between siblings might also be affected by the gender compositions of siblings; cross-gender sibling dyads show the lower quality of attachment relationships compared to same-sex sibling dyads (Buist et al., 2002). A study conducted with high school students in Turkey demonstrated that adolescents indicate less positive sibling interactions when they have an opposite-sex sibling (Öz Soysal, 2016). Since there is only one female-male sibling dyad in the study, there is not enough data to generalize the nature of this sibling dyad in terms of gender configuration.

4.4. Conclusion

In light of the data obtained from this study, several changes regarding the dynamics of the sibling interaction were observed from childhood to emerging adulthood and some ongoing themes. According to the study results, sibling relationships take on a more mature structure in the transition from childhood to emerging adulthood. This maturation was seen through a shared experience and an increase in sharing that comes with the growing age. Emotions, thoughts, life experiences seem to be shared more among the siblings during emerging adulthood. In particular, it appears that the older siblings invite the younger siblings to their social environments more often. In addition, the older siblings provide emotional, relational, or academic guidance to their younger siblings.

Conflicts reported in childhood were observed to continue as a relationship dynamic during emerging adulthood. Moreover, the ability of the siblings to continue their relationships after having a conflict, almost as if there were no conflicts, stands out as a common theme both in childhood and in emerging adulthood. On the other hand, disputes between the siblings during childhood appear to be more frequent and severe, involving more parental intervention. It appears that the methods parents use to resolve sibling conflicts in childhood become the methods that siblings use to resolve disputes among themselves in later life, which reveals the significant impact of parental attitudes on sibling relationships.

Remarkably, the changes expressed in the relationships are experienced by the participants as positive developments, indicating that the sibling relationships evolve positively from childhood to emerging adulthood. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the literature on dyadic sibling dynamics in Turkey and will be a helpful resource for clinicians working in this field.

5. CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study are important in terms of showing the development of sibling relationships over the years and the dynamics in sibling relationships during the onset of adulthood. Based on the results of this study, it is predicted that the conflicts between siblings during childhood will decrease in emerging adulthood and will be replaced by a closer and collaborative sibling relationship. However, the importance of parents in sibling relationships becomes prominent once again with this study.

This study shows that siblings' attitudes in their sibling relationships are related to parental attitudes in childhood. The attitudes of parents towards children in childhood are internalized by children and applied to their relationships with a sibling. Thus, it is recommended that experts working with children, parents, and families investigate parental attitudes towards children and emphasize the importance of these attitudes to parents to understand the dynamics of sibling relationships and help families build more constructive sibling relationships.

Conflicts are seen to be a dynamic of sibling relationships for both childhood and emerging adulthood. The fact that siblings have a closer relationship in emerging adulthood has also shown that conflicts experienced in childhood do not necessarily have to cause negative consequences in sibling relationships in the future. In conclusion, it is important for experts working in this field, as well as parents, to know that childhood conflicts are a part of relationship dynamics. Instead of trying to prevent conflicts between siblings, it is recommended that experts and families guide siblings to gain the skills of constructive conflict resolution.

6. LIMITATIONS

This study aimed to investigate sibling interactions from childhood to emerging adulthood period. Although most of the results concluded from the data are meaningful and compatible with the literature, this study also has some limitations..

In this study, participants were only interviewed once when they were in their emerging adulthood period. And they were asked for their childhood memories with their siblings and the attitudes of their parents. However, some of them had a hard time remembering and recollecting these memories from their childhood period. It has been observed that participants took more time to think about questions regarding their childhood, and they especially experienced difficulties when they were asked to remember their relationships before the adolescent period. Additionally, since this study aimed to examine sibling interaction from childhood period to emerging adulthood period, less emphasis was given to the teenage period and possible puberty effects. This indicates a limitation to the study, and further research should be conducted from a longitudinal perspective.

The gender configuration of the participants can be seen as another limitation of this study. Although there were equal numbers of same-sex siblings, which happened by chance since the gender of the participants was not controlled in the study, there was only one cross-sex sibling dyad. This uneven distribution of sibling dyads made it challenging to examine and interpret the possible effects of gender configuration on sibling interaction. As a result, it becomes difficult to generalize the information obtained in terms of gender.

In addition, considering the demographic information of the participants, all participants in this study are university students or graduates. When this situation is evaluated in terms of the generalizability of the study to the general population of Turkey, it creates a limitation for the study. In addition, when the study results are evaluated, it is a limitation that while the effects of parents on sibling

relationships are very important, the educational status of the parents was not collected as data in this study and could not be evaluated within the study results.

7. FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to contribute to the sibling literature in Turkey. Like other studies in this field, this study showed the importance of sibling relationships in people's lives. However, sibling relationships continue to be a topic that has not been researched much, especially in the Turkish literature. Although this study was conducted with sibling dyads, from the perspectives of both younger and older siblings, considering that there are limited studies about sibling relationships in Turkey, it will be recommended to examine the characteristics of sibling dynamics in families in future studies with more than two children. Especially in a society with a significant number of large families like Turkey, it will be essential to examine children's perspectives.

As stated in the limitations of this study, retrospective collection of data from participants may have led to fewer details regarding some periods in the participant's lives. In future studies, it will be helpful to conduct a longitudinal study that can examine all developmental stages simultaneously. Thus, mental health professionals working with children and adults can have more comprehensive information on the effects of sibling relationships on mental health and family dynamics.

Once again, gender and being the older or younger sibling in the relationships and social expectations have been revealed. In future studies that will examine this issue, gender configuration can also be a controlled variable, and a deeper analysis of the gender configurations of the siblings can be conducted. In addition, if siblings' attachment styles and temperaments are examined as variables in future studies, more comprehensive results can be obtained.

This study also provided the opportunity to observe the effect of culture on sibling relationships. Considering that most of the literature on sibling relations is based on social norms of Western civilization, it will be helpful to examine the dynamics of sibling relations in Turkish culture in more depth. These studies can be enriched by considering the differences in different regions of Turkey. In future studies, more generalizable results can be obtained in regards to Turkish culture by

examining the urban and rural populations. Additionally, the inclusion of parents in future studies may enrich the research and enable better observation of sibling relationships in regard to family dynamics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – The Informed Consent Form

Sayın katılımcı,

Bu araştırma Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Elif Akdağ Göçek danışmanlığında, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Tuğçe Merve Aytaç tarafından, tez çalışması kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı, kardeş ilişkilerini çocukluk ve yetişkinlik dönemlerinde incelemektir. Araştırmadan elde edilecek bilgilerin, kardeş ilişkilerinin hayatın farklı dönemlerindeki değişimlerini anlamakta yardımcı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Görüşmenin amacına ulaşması için sizden beklenen, rahat hissettiğiniz sürece, bütün sorulara eksiksiz olarak ve içtenlikle cevap vermenizdir.

Bu görüşmenin hiçbir aşamasında, kimlik bilgileriniz sorulmayacaktır. Yanıtlar araştırmacılar dışında kimseyle paylaşılmayacak ve edilen tüm bilgiler anonim olarak değerlendirilecektir. Tüm araştırma verileri güvenli bir şekilde saklanacak ve yalnızca bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacaktır. Tüm görüşme yaklaşık olarak 1-1,5 saat sürmektedir. Soruların doğru veya yanlış bir cevabı bulunmamaktadır.

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Görüşme sorularının herhangi bir risk taşıdığı öngörülmemiştir ancak deneyime dayalı sorular bulunması sebebiyle yoğun duygular uyandırabilir. Bir rahatsızlık hissetmeniz durumunda herhangi bir sebep belirtmeksizin görüşmeyi bitirebilirsiniz. Araştırmadan çekildiğiniz takdirde, iletmiş olduğunuz bilgiler imha edilecek ve değerlendirilmeyecektir. Görüşmelerde araştırma yöntemi gereği ses kaydı alınacaktır. Kayıt alınmasını istemediğiniz durumlarda, görüşme başlamadan sonlandırılacaktır. Alınan kayıtlar ve yazılı belgeler şifreli olarak saklanacaktır. Görüşmeler yazıya döküldükten sonra metinler size okumanız ve onaylamanız için mail üzerinden gönderilecektir. Çözümlemiş metinler üzerinde ekleme, çıkartma, düzeltmeler yapabilirsiniz.

Araştırma ile ilgili şimdi veya sonra daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duyarsanız ulaşabilirsiniz.

Katılımlınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Yukarıdaki açıklamayı okudum. Verilen bilgiler doğrultusunda çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum. Çalışmayı istediğim zaman bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. İletmiş olduğum bilgilerin anonim olarak bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılmasına izin veriyorum.

Ad SOYAD

İmza

APPENDIX 2 – The Demographic Information Form

1.Cinsiyetiniz:

2.Yaşınız:

3.En son mezun olduğunuz okul:

- okula gitmedim
- ilkokul
- ortaokul
- lise
- lisans
- yüksek lisans
- doktora

4.Eğitiminize devam ediyor musunuz?

- evet
- hayır

Cevabınız evetse hangi düzeyde: _____

4.Çalışıyor musunuz?

- evet
- hayır

Cevabınız evetse ne kadar zamandır: _____

5.Mesleğiniz:

- Eğitimci (Öğretmen/Akademisyen vb.)
- Memur
- Mühendis
- Avukat

- Doktor
 Serbest Meslek
 Dięer: _____

6.Çalışıyorsanız sizin, çalışmıyorsanız ailenizin aylık ortalama geliri?

- 0-2.000 TL
 2.000-5.000 TL
 5.000-10.000 TL
 10.000-15.000 TL
 15.000-20.000 TL
 20.000 TL ve üzeri

7.Medeni Durumunuz:

- evli
 bekar
 boşanmış
 eşi vefat etmiş

8.Romantik İlişki Durumunuz:

- ilişkim yok
 6 ay veya daha az bir süredir ilişkim var
 6-12 aydır ilişkim var
 1 yılı aşkın süredir ilişkim var

9.Şu an kimlerle yaşıyorsunuz:_____ (Lütfen süresini belirtin:_____)

Aşağıdaki soruları anne-babanızı düşünerek cevaplayınız.

10.Anneniz:

- hayatta
 hayatta değil (.....senedir)

11.Babanız:

- hayatta
 hayatta değil (.....senedir)

12.(Her ikisi de hayatta ise) Ebeveynlerinizin şu anki birlikteliklerini tanımlayınız:

- evliler
 boşandılar (lütfen süresini belirtin.....)
 diğer (lütfen açıklayın.....)

13.(Her ikisi de hayatta ise) Ebeveynlerinizin şu anki oturma düzenini belirtin:

- aynı evde yaşıyorlar
 ayrı evlerde yaşıyorlar (lütfen süresini belirtin.....)
 diğer (lütfen açıklayın.....)

14. (Her ikisi de hayatta ise) Şu an ebeveynlerinizin arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl tarif ederdingiz?

- oldukça iyi
 iyi
 değişken
 iyi değil
 problemlili

15.Çocukluk döneminizde ebeveynlerinizin arasındaki ilişki nasıldı?

- oldukça iyiydi
 iyiydi
 değişkendi
 iyi değildi
 problemliydi

16.Annenizin kardeşi var mı:

- var
 yok

16a.Cevabınız var ise kaç kardeşi var : _____

16b.Cevabınız var ise annenizin kardeşiyle/kardeşleriyle olan ilişkisini genel olarak nasıl değerlendirirdiniz?

- oldukça iyi
 iyi
 değişken
 iyi değil
 problemlili

17.Babanızın kardeşi var mı:

- var
 yok

17a.Cevabınız var ise kaç kardeşi var : _____

17b.Cevabınız var ise babanızın kardeşiyle/kardeşleriyle olan ilişkisini genel olarak nasıl değerlendirirdiniz?

- oldukça iyi
 iyi
 değişken
 iyi değil
 problemlili

Aşağıdaki soruları kardeşinizi düşünerek cevaplayınız:

18.Şu an kardeşinizle aynı evde mi yaşıyorsunuz?

- evet
 hayır

18a.Cevabınız hayır ise kaç yaşınıza kadar kardeşinizle aynı evde yaşadınız: _____

18b.Bu süreçte ayrıldığınız bir zaman dilimi olduysa lütfen belirtiniz: _____ (sebep/süre)

19.Kardeşinizle ne sıklıkla iletişime geçersiniz?

- yılda bir veya daha az
- ayda bir
- haftada bir
- haftada birkaç kez
- her gün
- diğer (lütfen açıklayınız.....)

20.Kardeşinizle ne kadar yakınsınız?

- çok yakınız
- yakınız
- yakınlık seviyemiz değişir
- yakın değiliz
- hiç yakın değiliz

21.Kardeşinizle ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?

- oldukça memnunum
- biraz memnunum
- memnun değilim

22.Hayatınızda sizi etkilediğini düşündüğünüz önemli bir olay veya olaylar var mı?

- evet
- hayır

22a.Cevabınız evet ise lütfen bu ne/neler olduklarını belirtiniz: _____

22b.Cevabınız evet ise yaşadığınız bu olayın/olayların kardeşinizle olan ilişkinizi etkilediğini düşünüyor musunuz?

- evet
 hayır

APPENDIX 3 – The Interview Questions

Görüşme Soruları

1. Nasıl birisinizdir? Kendinizden biraz bahseder misiniz? Kendinizi tanımlayacak 3 sıfat seçseniz bunlar neler olurdu? (Sıfatların üzerinden tek tek geçilir, örnek sorulur)
2. Kardeşiniz nasıl biridir? Kardeşinizi tanımlayacak 3 sıfat seçseniz bunlar neler olurdu? (Sıfatların tek tek üzerinden geçilir, örnek sorulur)
3. Kardeşinizle şu anki ilişkinizi tanımlar mısınız? Nasıl bir ilişkiniz vardır? Kardeşinizle aranızdaki ilişkiyi tanımlayacak 3 sıfat seçseniz bunlar neler olurdu? (Sıfatların tek tek üzerinden geçilir, örnek sorulur)
 - 3a. Kardeşinizle nasıl vakit geçirirsiniz? Birlikte neler yaparsınız?
4. Kardeşinizle çocukluğunuzda nasıl bir ilişkiniz vardı? Kardeşinizle çocukluk döneminizdeki ilişkinizi tanımlayacak 3 sıfat seçseniz bunlar neler olurdu? (Sıfatların tek tek üzerinden geçilir, örnek sorulur)
 - 4a. Kardeşinizle çocukluğunuzda nasıl vakit geçirirdiniz? Birlikte neler yapardınız?
5. Kardeşinizle aranızın iyi olduğu, iyi geçindiğiniz bir anı anlatabilir misiniz?
6. Kardeşinizle aranızın kötü olduğu, iyi anlaşamadığınız bir anı anlatabilir misiniz?
7. Kardeşinizle aranızda tartışmalar olur mu? Olursa hangi konularda?
 - 7a. Böyle durumlarda ne yaparsınız? Nasıl baş edersiniz?
 - 7b. Böyle durumlarda ebeveynleriniz ne yapar?
8. Çocukluğunuzda kardeşinizle aranızda tartışmalar olur muydu? Hangi konularda?
 - 8a. Böyle durumlarda ne yapardınız?
 - 8b. Böyle durumlarda ebeveynleriniz ne yapardı?
9. Ebeveynleriniz şu anda size ve kardeşinize nasıl davranıyorlar? İkinize karşı olan tutumları arasında bir farklılık hissettiğiniz oluyor mu?
10. Siz büyürken, ebeveynleriniz size ve kardeşinize nasıl davranıyordu? İkinize karşı olan tutumları arasında bir farklılıklar hissettiğiniz oluyor muydu?

11. Kardeşinizle olan ilişkinize dair değiřtirmek istediđiniz řeyler var mı? Varsa neler?

12. Kardeşinizle ilişkinize dair değiřtirmek istemediđiniz řeyler var mı? Varsa neler?

13. Geçmiřten bugüne kardeşinizle ilişkinizi düřündüđünüzde, ilişkinizde deđiřimler olduđunu düřünüyor musunuz?

Eđer varsa;

13a. Ne gibi deđiřimler oldu?

13b. Sizce bu deđiřimler ne zaman bařladı? Nasıl geliřti?

13c. Sizce bu deđiřimlerin sebepleri neler?

14. Benim sormadıđım ancak sizin eklemek istediđiniz bir řey var mı?

APPENDIX 4 – Member Checking

Merhabalar,

Öncelikle zaman ayırıp, çalışmaya katkı sunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim. Sizlerin de bildiği gibi, bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de kardeş ilişkilerinin çocukluktan beliren yetişkinliğe sahip olduğu temaları incelemektedir. Çalışmanın sonucunda elde edilen verilerin bir özetini aşağıda bulabilirsiniz. Bu sonuçlar büyük ve küçük kardeşlerden oluşan 7 kardeş çifti, toplamda 14 katılımcı ile yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen bilgilerin ana temalarının ortak başlıklar altında toplanması ile oluşmuştur. Aşağıda sunulan bilgilerin, sizin deneyiminizi yansıtıp yansıtmadığını veya ne ölçüde yansıttığına dair kıymetli geri bildirimlerinizi öğrenmek üzere sizinle paylaşıyorum.

Kardeş ilişkileri, doğası gereği küçük kardeşin doğumu ile başlar ve hayat boyu sürer. İlişkinin uzun süreli olması, hayatın farklı bölümlerinde nasıl yaşantılandığına dair merak uyandırıcı olmuştur. Öncelikle bu çalışmada, çocukluk dönemine ait bilgiler ve yaşanmışlıklar geriye dönük, retrospektif bir şekilde incelendiği için, beliren yetişkinlik dönemi öncesi ilişkiye dair birtakım bilgilerin bu araştırma kapsamında incelenememiş olması mümkündür. Elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda, çalışma sonucunda, kardeş ilişkilerinde çocukluktan beliren yetişkinliğe birtakım değişimler olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. En fazla vurgulanan değişim, ilişkinin olgunluğa dair ifade edilen değişimler olmuştur. Çalışmanın sonucuna göre, çocukluk dönemine oranla, beliren yetişkinlik döneminde kardeşle daha fazla paylaşımda bulunulabiliyor. Duygular, düşünceler, yaşam deneyimleri bu dönemde daha fazla paylaşılabilir. Burada yaşların büyümesi ile gelen bir ortaklaşma, deneyimleri paylaşma mümkün. İlişkinin yapısının, çocukluk dönemine oranla, arkadaş ilişkisine daha benzer bir yapıya döndüğü görülüyor. İlişkiye dair ifade edilen değişimlerin pozitif değişimler oluşu oldukça dikkat çekici, bu kardeş ilişkisinin çocukluktan beliren yetişkinliğe olumlu yönde geliştiğini gösteriyor.

Çatışmalar, çocuklukta da beliren yetişkinlikte de ilişkinin içinde olan bir dinamik. Çocukken bu çatışmalar daha sık ve şiddetli olabiliyor ve daha fazla ebeveyn müdahalesi içerebiliyor. Ufak çatışmaları çözmeye en çok başvuru

yöntem temasa bir süre ara vermek ve uzaklaşmak oluyor. Öte yandan, yine bu ufak çatışmalar sonrası kardeşler, hızlıca, adeta hiçbir anlaşmazlık yaşanmamışçasına ilişkiye devam edebiliyor. Daha büyük olarak nitelendirilen çatışmalar yaşadığında ise, konu hakkında konuşmak daha fazla başvurulmuş bir yol oluyor.

Birlikte yapılan aktivitelerin beliren yetişkinlikte daha fazla duygu paylaşımı ve sosyallik içerdiğini söylemek mümkün. Özellikle büyük kardeşin küçük kardeşi kendi sosyal ortamına davet ettiği görülüyor. Bunun yanı sıra, büyük kardeşlerin küçük kardeşlere yönelik duygusal, ilişkisel veya akademik konularda rehberlik yapabildiği görülüyor. Küçük kardeşlerin sosyal hayatta, ilişkilerinde veya akademik hayatlarına dair problemlerinde, büyük kardeşlerden destek isteyebildiği görülürken, büyük kardeşlerin de küçük kardeşin yaşadığı problemlerde sorumluluk alarak ve doğal bir şekilde destek olmaya çalışması dikkat çekiyor. Bu noktada kardeş ilişkilerinde kardeşlerin cinsiyetleri açısından bir farklılık görülüyor. Kardeşlerinin ikisinin de erkek olduğu ilişkilerde, büyük kardeşlerin küçük kardeşleri dış dünyadan koruma ve fiziksel olarak savunma davranışları daha yoğun görülürken, kardeşlerden ikisinin de kadın olduğu ilişkilerde, büyük kardeşin küçük kardeşe duygusal ve sosyal desteği öne çıkıyor.

Kardeşlerin ailede sahip oldukları roller açısından bakıldığında ise, büyük kardeşlerin ve küçük kardeşlerin kendileri ve kardeşleri için seçtikleri roller arasında bir uyum görülüyor. Hem büyük kardeşlerin ailedeki kendi rollerini tanımlarken, hem de küçük kardeşler büyük kardeşlerin ailedeki rolünü tanımlarken genellikle aktif, güç ile ilişkili ve ebeveyne rollerine yakın tanımlamalar kullandığı görülüyor. Benzer şekilde hem küçük hem de büyük kardeşlerin, küçük kardeşlerin ailedeki rollerini tanımlarken, daha az aktif, uyumlu, eğlenceli, küçüklüğe dair temalar içeren ve potansiyel gücü temsil eden tanımlamaları seçtikleri görülüyor.

Sizlere tekrar, ayırdığınız zaman ve verdiğiniz bilgiler için teşekkür ederim. Türkiye’de kardeş ilişkilerinin çeşitli gelişimsel dönemlerdeki dinamiğini incelemenin kardeş ilişkilerinin doğasını anlamak için oldukça önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum ve bu konuda yapılan çalışmaların fazlalaşmasını umut ediyorum. Bu yolda başladığım araştırmama desteğiniz oldukça kıymetli. Araştırma sonuçlarının deneyiminizi doğru şekilde yansıtmadığına dair geri bildirim veya

yorumlarınızı bana iletebilirsiniz. Sonularda deęişiklik yapmamı gerektiren bir durum var ise 24 Mayıs 2021 tarihine kadar sizden haber almayı bekleyeceęim. Destekleriniz için ok teőekkürler.

Psikolog Tuęe M. Ayta Bakkaloęlu

ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Ethics Board Approval is available in the printed version of this dissertation.