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# THE ANALYSIS OF SIBLING RELATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS, YOUNG ADULTS AND ADULTS [1]

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to examine the sibling relationships of individuals in adolescence, young adulthood and mid adulthood in terms of various variables and to conduct an in-depth research on sibling relationships. For this reason, both qualitative and quantitative models were used and mixed method was used in the research. The pattern of the research is Asynchronous Mixed Model. The sample of the study is for students attending secondary school and high school between the ages of 12-18 for adolescence; university students aged 19-35 and parents of high school and secondary school students for young adulthood; For middle adulthood, it consists of volunteers who attend high school, middle school and university, among the 36-60 year old parents. In conclusion, although participant descriptions about sibling relations varied based on the age group, the existence and significance of sibling relations remained meaningful. In later studies, it can be studied with different age groups in addition to adolescence, young and middle adulthood. This is a cross-sectional study, with a longitudinal and more comprehensive study, and sibling relationships can be addressed.

**Key Words:** Sibling relationships, attachment, well-being, loneliness

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## Introduction

The family system is the initial social structure. The system includes several subsystems such as parenthood, partnership, and brotherhood/sisterhood. In addition to the bond that the individuals establish with their parents, the bond they establish with their siblings is also important in the family (Cicirelli, 1985). Sibling relations are significant relationships that affect several developmental areas, in particular the social development of the individual. This relationship is different for children since it lasts longer than the relations with the parents and is deeper than the friendship relations.

The content of sibling relations can change with age. The first changes are observed during adolescence. In adolescence, significant changes are observed between the ages of 12 and 18. One dimension of these changes is associated with the romantic relationships. Adolescents' relations with their parents gradually decrease, while their relations with peers start to increase and become important. Thus, the changing needs of adolescents also affect their expectations from their siblings and their relations with them (Cicirelli, 1985; Steinberg, 2007). It was observed that adolescents with problematic sibling relations exhibit various behavioral problems (Bank, Burraston, & Snyder., 1996; Stormshack, Bellanti, & Bierman. 1996), and experience social problems (Parke & Buriel, 1998; Senguttuvan, Whiteman & Jensen; 2014). It was accepted that the quality of sibling relations during adolescence is a predictor of the developmental success in adulthood (Cicirelli, 1992; Conger, Stocker, & Mcguire, 2009, Goetting, 1986).

With age, the responsibilities of the adolescence are replaced by the responsibilities of the young adulthood. Young adults are expected to have an undergraduate degree, find a job, gain economic independence, fulfill civic responsibilities, join social groups, and establish intimate relations with the opposite sex (Havighurst, 1972, cited by Dolgin, 2014; Erikson, 2014). As the expectations of the society from young adults differ, the expectations of the individual from sibling relations differ as well (Bedford, 1989; Gold, 1990). Social and psychological support among siblings improve when compared to their relations with other family members and friends. They mainly talk about loneliness and the daily life routine (Cicirelli, 1980; Pulakos, 1989). Gold (1990) considered sibling relations more important than other close relationships.

By mid-adulthood, individuals usually start their family. In this period, the individual is expected to take on familial responsibilities, raise future generations, contribute to the society as an efficient and productive individual, provide and maintain a certain level of income (Erikson, 2014). The mid-adulthood expectations from siblings include support, coping with the loss of parents, and sharing the common heritage (Avioli, 1989; Goetting, 1986; Gold, 1987; Milevsky, 2004). The closeness between siblings is associated with the marital status of the siblings, whether one of the parents is alive (Brody, 1998; Cicirelli, 1985; Milevsky & Heerwagen, 2013; Milevsky, Smoot, Leh, & Ruppe, 2005), and the proximity of the residences of the siblings (Bonnain, 2005; Bras and Tilburg, 2007).

The lifelong sibling relations include various dimensions. It was reported that the most common dimensions were closeness, jealousy, and support (Bedford, 1989; Brady et al., 1983; Furman and Buhrmester, 1985; Gold, 1989). It could be observed that the most important dimension was the bond between the siblings in sibling relations. According to certain theories, the bond between the siblings is similar to the bond between the mother and the infant (Ainsworth, 1989; Fraley & Tancredy, 2012).

Attachment is an emotional bond or relationship of the individual with herself or himself or with another particular individual (Ainsworth, 1974). The initial attachment is established between a mother and a child. Then, the derivatives of this relationship are observed in different areas throughout the life of the individual. A safe relationship with the mother also affects the relationships with peers, romantic and spousal relationships (Crowell & Waters, 1994). However, the mother may not always be the primary figure of attachment. In cases such as difficulties in birth or the absence of a mother, the primary figure of attachment could be a different person for an infant. In cases where there are no negative developments, sometimes the mother could not be the primary figure of attachment due to cultural attributes. In such cases, grandparents, sometimes siblings, could be the primary figure of attachment (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Cassidy & Berlin, 1999). For example, in certain African societies, an older sibling has to take care of the newborn infant; thus, siblings serve the primary figure of attachment (Ainsworth, 1989). The bond between the siblings, which starts in infancy, continues throughout life.

During adolescence, peers start to become the figure of attachment (Erikson, 2014). Peer relationships are initially established with the siblings. The acquisition of problem solving, communication, and social skills is possible with the relations with siblings (Tucker, Barber, & Eccles, 1997). A safe bond with siblings and educational experiences affect peer relationships in adolescence (Trim, Leuthe, & Chassin, 2006). In

young adulthood, the romantic relationship partner becomes the figure of attachment. The attachment pattern is also manifested in romantic relationships, and young adults share their problems with their siblings during this period. Individuals with a safe attachment with their siblings receive the highest support from their siblings when they experience a problem (Stocker, Lanthier, & Furman, 1997). It was observed that individuals turn to their siblings in cases such as loss of a parent, and the decline in social friendships in middle adulthood. A safe bond with a sibling facilitates coping with loneliness in this period (Cicirelli, 1995). Thus, it was observed that a safe bond with siblings is important through the life of the individual. The attachment dimension of sibling relations is considered important.

Another factor that affects sibling relations is loneliness. Loneliness could be experienced in different domains. Social loneliness is the perception or the emotion about the lack of a network of relationships. Emotional loneliness, on the other hand, is described as the debilitating emotion or behavior due to the perception of a lack of interpersonal intimacy, sincerity and sensuality (Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Sullivan, 1953; Weiss, 1973). The first social setting that eliminates individual loneliness is the family. Sibling relations that develop after parental relationship last longer than parental relations. Previous studies reported that positive sibling relations affect the feeling of loneliness at any age (Bedford, 1989; Cicirelli, 1992; Goetting, 1986; Seltzer, 1989; Yewchuk & Schlosser, 1996). The nature of the relations between siblings change over time. Reasons such as leaving the family home, getting married and finding a job could lead to closer sibling relations (Cicirelli, 1994; Voorpostel, Lippe, & Flap, 2012; Yewchuk & Schlosser, 1996). It was reported that individuals with sibling support and positive perceptions about their siblings exhibited lower levels of loneliness (Milevsky, 2003; Milevsky, 2004; Sandler, 1980). Sibling relations are associated with the loneliness of the individual throughout life. Thus, it was reported that the concept of loneliness is important and should be scrutinized in the current study.

The individual develops the initial perceptions about the environment in the family (Lyubomirsky & Della Porta, 2010). Thus, sibling relations affect the self-perception, environmental perceptions, and perceptions about well-being of the individual (Hillekens et al., 2020; Cuskelly, 2016).

Subjective well-being is the emotions of the individuals induced by the analysis of their happiness and life (Diener, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Lyubomirsky and Della Porta (2010) argued that the environmental perceptions of an individual, and environmental elements affect the subjective well-being of the individual. The family environment, which is the native environment of the individual, determines both environmental perceptions and sibling relations. Thus, good siblings relations would also affect the subjective well-being of the individual (Hillekens et al., 2020; Cuskelly, 2016; Senguttuvan, Whiteman, & Jensen, 2014). Therefore, subjective well-being should be included in the analysis of sibling relations.

Sibling relations affect the affective and cognitive development of the individual. Negative sibling relations lead to the severance of the familial relations and loneliness in young adulthood. Although the element of hostility is dominant in sibling relations in old age, the relations are still intense (Cicirelli, 1994; Lussier et al., 2002; Voorpostel, Lippe, & Flap, 2012). Certain studies reported that problems such as loneliness, depression, inability to cope with stress, inadequate problem-solving skills and lack of empathy are associated with sibling relations in all age groups (Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987; Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1992; Stauffacher & DeHart, 2006). Literature review demonstrated that studies on sibling relations were mostly conducted with Western families. It could be suggested that the analysis of sibling relations in Turkey would be beneficial to develop recommendations based on the findings. Because sibling relations are among the important bonds that determine the life of an individual and the analysis of these relations could lead to a better understanding of sibling relations.

Sibling relations are unique in the sense that they include love and intimacy as well as conflict and rivalry. Literature review revealed no studies directly on sibling relations. It was observed that previous studies were mostly limited to childhood relations (Aksoy & Berçin Yıldırım, 2008; Angın, 2015; Apalçi, 1996; Erginoğlu and Dinçer, 2015). Sibling relations play a key role in the lives of individuals (Dunn, 1995). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK, 2020) data, most individuals in Turkey have at least one sibling. Thus, it could be suggested that the majority of Turkish society has sibling relations. Also, siblings spend more time together when compared to the time they spend with other individuals, including parents (Sanders, 2004). The family system theory emphasized that the relationship and communications between siblings also determines their communications with other family members (Cox & Paley, 1997). Finally, sibling relations affect all psychological and psychosocial functions of individuals (Noller, 2005). Therefore, it was considered significant to address and investigate sibling relations. Furthermore, the present study aimed to investigate the sibling relations of individuals in different age groups based on the attachment, loneliness and subjective well-being dimensions and the social structure of the Turkish society. It could be

suggested that the study findings would contribute to the literature and further understanding of sibling relations. It was expected that the analysis of the lifelong sibling relations that affect personality, social and emotional development based on various variables, would also assist the development of future intervention plans. Sibling relations usually last a lifetime, unless there is an unexpected event. It was considered important to investigate sibling relationships with different perspectives. Thus, the present study aimed to analyze sibling relations of individuals in various stages of life in detail with a specific emphasis on the cultural context. The study was conducted with the mixed design method, which allows the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, in the determination of sibling relations in adolescence, young adulthood and middle adulthood and how sibling relations predicted attachment, loneliness and subjective well-being. Thus, the present study aimed to reveal the extent that the sibling relations of the adolescents, young adults and middle adults predicted attachment styles, loneliness levels and subjective well-being.

## Method

### The Research Design

The methodology of the present study was the "exploratory sequential design." In this model, quantitative techniques are used in one section of the study and qualitative techniques are employed in the other section (Creswell, et al. , 2015). The research conducted with both quantitative and qualitative methods are called mixed design studies (Fischler, 1992). It was argued that the employment of only qualitative or quantitative data could lead to inadequate findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, the mixed design that employs both methods was preferred in the present study. In the study, quantitative data were collected to identify the problems in sibling relations. Qualitative data were collected with the interview forms developed based on the quantitative data.

In the qualitative dimension of the study, individual online interviews were conducted with each participant for the in-depth analysis of sibling relations and to collect data on the causes of the existing problems. Thus, the phenomenological approach was adopted in the qualitative section of the study. Phenomenological studies aim to understand the experiences of participating individuals or an event that the participants experienced (Chapman & Smith, 2002). The phenomenon that the present study focused on was sibling relations and the factors that affected sibling relations. Interview is a technique where questions are predetermined, and these questions are asked to the participants during the interview (Kuş, 2003). The interview could also be defined as an interaction-based communication process, conducted to reach a predetermined and serious goal, where the participants answer the interview questions. In the current study, semi-structured interview technique was employed. In semi-structured interviews, although questions are predetermined, probe questions that allow flexibility in unexpected situations during the interview are also allowed (Türnüklü, 2000). The semi-structured interview technique was preferred since the study aimed to collect in-depth data. The interview technique not only tests the consistency of the data collected in quantitative research but also instrumental in revealing the responses that were not included in the scales (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Thus, the study aimed to collect both in-depth and extensive data on sibling relations.

### Participants

The study population included junior high and high school student adolescents, young adults attending University and adults who were the parents of these students in a city in eastern Anatolia, Turkey. The study sample was assigned with the simple random sampling method. The scales were applied to the volunteering students who attended the above-mentioned schools and were attending the randomly assigned classes on the day of the study.

The qualitative study was conducted on the study findings determined with the application of the scales in the quantitative section. The regression analysis was conducted to determine the participants with high, moderate and low scores. Purposive sampling was adopted to assign the qualitative study group. In purposive sampling, one or more sub-sections are assigned to the sample with a purposive approach instead of a sample that represented the population. In other words, purposive sampling entails the observation of the most adequate section of the population (Sencer & Irmak 1989). To better determine the prediction power of the sibling relations in adolescence, young adulthood and middle adulthood on attachment, loneliness and subjective well-being, 28 individuals were selected from each developmental period based on their scores in the sibling relations inventory and the study findings.

### Data Collection Instruments

"Sibling Relations Scale", "Subjective Well-Being Scale", "Adolescent Subjective Well-Being Scale", "UCLA Loneliness Scale", "Close Relationship Experiences Inventory" and " Parental and Peer Attachment Inventory Short-Form" were employed to collect the quantitative data in the study.

The qualitative study data were collected with the interview forms. The interview forms were developed based on the suggestions by Patton (2005). In this approach, the topics are predetermined, and the questions are developed in advance. During the development of the questions, the literature on sibling relations and quantitative analysis results were reviewed. According to Patton, the researcher could ask supplementary questions at the end when needed, provided that these questions remain on the topic. Probe questions aim to collect in-depth data. Thus, the author asked probe questions to collect in-depth data when unexpected developments arose during the interviews. The views of the field experts were consulted, and a pilot scheme was conducted to finalize the semi-structured interview form. The views of seven academicians and guidance teachers on the semi-structured form were obtained, and the interview form questions were reorganized based on expert opinion. The revised form was employed in the pilot scheme that was conducted with one participant in each age group. Then, the interview form was finalized.

**Data Collection**

The ethics committee approval and authorizations were obtained from University Ethics Committee, Provincial Directorate of National Education and University administration. Randomly selected public junior high and high schools were visited in a city in eastern Anatolia, independent of the school socioeconomic level. A significant part of the applications were conducted by the author, while others were assisted by school counselors. At University, the faculties approved by the administration were visited and the scales were applied to volunteering students who were present in the class on that day. The author conducted the applications in certain departments, the others were conducted by the course instructors. To collect further data, the applications were also conducted with volunteering students in campus cafeterias.

At the stage where the collection of qualitative data was planned, physical-social distancing measures were imposed by the authorities to prevent further Covid-19 cases after the disease was declared as a pandemic (March, 2020). Thus, it was decided to conduct the interviews online and record the online interviews. The interviews were conducted and recorded on days and times convenient for the volunteering participants. One-on-one interviews conducted with the participants lasted about 25 minutes.

**Data Analysis**

Each scale group employed to collect the quantitative data was enumerated and the data were transferred to an adequate statistics software. After the exclusion of missing and incomplete forms, normal distribution of the data was determined. Kolmogor-Smirnov test revealed the significance level was 0.200 in both datasets. The skewness and kurtosis of the data varied between +1 and -1. It was observed that these figures met the recommended values (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007) for adolescent, young and middle adult groups.

The qualitative study data included the scale scores of the participants and other study collected in the interviews conducted with nine individuals in each age group. The interviews were conducted and recorded online. The interview manuscripts were read several times and analyzed with the content analysis method. Content analysis is used to reveal, analyze and report themes based on the collected data (Patton, 2005). Content analysis includes the organization of the collected data, literature review, coding, and finally the development of the study themes (Creswell, 2015). During the content analysis, codes were determined based on the similar statements noticed during the reading of the transcripts. Initially, open coding approach was adopted. Then, focus codes were developed based on the determined codes. The codes were organized under the themes and transformed into a theoretical presentation.

Inclusion of direct participant quotes and discussion of the study findings based on these quotes improves the validity of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Thus, participant quotes were included in the study. The ideas and views of the participants are presented under code names to ensure privacy.

Encoder reliability is ensured by recoding at different times (Miles & Huberman, 2016). Data were recoded again by the author to ensure encoder reliability. In the process, the formula developed by Miles and Huberman (2016) (Reliability = Agreement / Agreement + Disagreement) was used and the recoding was conducted 15 days after the initial coding. In qualitative research, it was accepted that the reliability is achieved when the agreement rate between the coders is 70% or higher (Miles & Huberman, 2016). The two codes assigned in the study were analyzed after 15 days and grouped in different categories, and the reliability coefficient was determined as .98 (P= (101/(101+2) = 98%).

Furthermore, the views of three experts in the fields of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation were consulted about the study codes and themes. Thus, triangulation (data diversity) technique was employed to improve the reliability. The triangulation technique

entails the inclusion of more than one expert in the analysis and interpretation of the data. This method improves reliability in qualitative research (Houser, 2015). Finally, the dense description validity strategy proposed by Creswell (2015) was employed. In other words, the full interview transcripts were used as the study data.

The participants in each age group with high, average and low sub-dimension scores were determined based on the quantitative analyzes, each sibling relation attribute, and multiple correlation analysis findings, and interviews were conducted with 9 or 10 volunteering participants in each group. The interviewed participants were coded as Adolescent1, Adolescent2, Adolescent3, Adolescent4, Adolescent5, Adolescent6, Adolescent7, Adolescent8, Adolescent9; Young Adult1, Young Adult2, Young Adult3, Young Adult4, Young Adult5, Young Adult6, Young Adult7, Young Adult8, Young Adult9, Young Adult10, Medium Adult1, Medium Adult2, Medium Adult3, Medium Adult4, Medium Adult5, Medium Adult6, Medium Adult7, Medium Adult8, and Medium Adult9. Five questions were asked to the participants in the interviews. When deemed necessary, probe questions were included in the interviews.

## Findings

The quantitative and qualitative analysis findings are presented in this section.

### Descriptive Statistics

The frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions for adolescent demographics are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Adolescent descriptive statistics (n = 441)*

| Variable | | f | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 207 | 46.9 |
| | Male | 234 | 53.1 |
| **Age** | 12-14 | 261 | 59.2 |
| | 15-18 | 180 | 40.8 |
| **Number of siblings** | 1-2 | 106 | 24.0 |
| | 3-5 | 268 | 60.8 |
| | 6 or higher | 67 | 15.2 |
| **Birth order** | 1-2 | 232 | 52.6 |
| | 3-4 | 132 | 29.9 |
| | 5 or higher | 77 | 17.5 |
| **The closest sibling** | Sister | 207 | 46.9 |
| | Brother | 177 | 40.1 |
| | All (sister and brother) | 57 | 12.9 |

207 females and 234 males, a total of 441 12-18 years old adolescents participated in the study. Adolescents with 3-5 siblings constituted the group with the highest number of siblings. First or second born adolescents were the majority group. Adolescents often felt closer to their sisters.

The frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions for young-adult demographics are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Young adult descriptive statistics (n = 320)*

| **Variable** | | **f** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 185 | 57.8 |
| | Male | 135 | 42.2 |
| **Age** | 19-20 | 107 | 33.4 |
| | 21-23 | 154 | 48.1 |
| | 24 or older | 59 | 18.4 |
| **Number of siblings** | 1-2 | 52 | 16.3 |
| | 3-5 | 191 | 59.7 |
| | 6 or higher | 77 | 24.1 |
| **Birth order** | 1-2 | 179 | 55.9 |
| | 3-4 | 91 | 28.4 |
| | 5 or higher | 50 | 15.6 |
| **The closest sibling** | Sister | 205 | 64.1 |
| | Brother | 115 | 35.9 |

185 females and 135 males, a total of 320 19-35 years old young adults participated in the study. Young adults with 3-5 siblings constituted the group with the highest number of siblings. First or second born young adults were the majority group. Young adults mostly felt closer to their sisters in the study.

The frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions for middle adult demographics are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. Middle adult descriptive statistics (n = 151)*

| Variable | | f | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 99 | 65.6 |
| | Male | 52 | 34.4 |
| **Age** | 50 or younger | 70 | 46.4 |
| | 51 or older | 81 | 53.6 |
| **Number of siblings** | Less than 6 | 105 | 69.5 |
| | 6 or more | 46 | 30.5 |
| **Birth order** | 1-2 | 58 | 38.4 |
| | 3-4 | 63 | 41.7 |
| | 5 or higher | 30 | 19.9 |
| **The closest sibling** | Sister | 94 | 62.3 |
| | Brother | 57 | 37.7 |
| **Phone call frequency** | Seldom-Sometimes | 68 | 45 |
| | Frequently-Always | 83 | 55 |

As seen in Table 3, 99 females and 52 males, a total of 151 36-65 years old middle adults participated in the study. Middle adults with 1-5 siblings constituted the group with the highest number of siblings. Third or fourth born middle adults were the majority group. Middle adults mostly felt closer to their sisters and most frequently called their siblings.

**Do Sibling Relations in Adolescence, Young Adulthood, and Middle Adulthood Predict Attachment, Loneliness and Subjective Well-Being?**

Sibling relations were significant predictor of friendship attachment during adolescence, avoidant attachment in young adulthood, and both avoidant and anxious attachment in middle adulthood. Sibling relations in young adulthood were not a predictor of anxious attachment. Sibling relations were a significant predictor of loneliness in adolescence, young adulthood and middle adulthood. Finally, sibling relations were a significant predictor of subjective well-being in adolescence and young adulthood, while were not a predictor of subjective well-being in middle adulthood. Qualitative interviews were conducted for in-depth analysis of these findings.

**The Themes Determined in the Interviews Conducted with the Adolescents**

In this section, the themes emerged in the interviews conducted with the adolescents are discussed.

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How is your relationship with your sibling?", "How does your relationship with your sibling affect your relationship with your friends?" and "How does your relationship and interaction with your sibling affect your relationships with other individuals?"**

Adolescents stated in the interviews that "sibling relations had positive or negative dimensions, there could be jealousy among siblings, their mothers exhibited various attitudes towards the siblings, they accepted their relations with their siblings, and they sometimes fought and experienced conflicts with their siblings." The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 4.

*Table 4. Content analysis conducted on the attachment data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| My mother confuses me | Fairness, angry mother, role model mother, partial mother, and helping mother |
| Endless fights | When I need him (her), fight, conflict |
| Thank God for her (him) | Agreement, commitment, support, trust, sharing, respect and tolerance |
| I accepted everything | Acceptance |
| I am jealous | Jealousy |

All interviewed adolescents mentioned maternal attitudes. Four (4/9) adolescents stated that their mothers take sides and they expect fairness and equality. A5 stated the following "*My mother does not criticize my brother, but I think that what I do always stands out. That's why she sometimes discriminates*."

The second theme determined with the interview questions associated with attachment in adolescents was endless fights. Three adolescents (3/9) stated that they experienced conflicts, fought with their siblings, and communicated with them when they had a problem. A4 stated that arguments and fights affected his relations with his sibling: "*I can describe my relationship with my sibling somewhere between normal and abnormal, we usually fight*."

Another theme was "thanks God for him (her)." Adolescents, who stated that their relations with their siblings were good, described their siblings as supportive, trusting, respectful and tolerant. A1 emphasized the positive nature of his relations with his older sister: "*My older sister is also aware of certain things; she is aware that she is more sensitive. I think there is a warmer relationship between me and my older sister. Thus, we at least trust one another more and spend more time together. We are one for one another. I think this helps us. It makes us warmer*."

Another theme was "I accepted everything." One of the reactions to maternal discrimination is acceptance, which has a positive impact on sibling relations. M1 reflected his reaction as follows: "*I sometimes feel accepted, and I sometimes think she loves my older brother more. I think she has more affection for him. That does not mean she does not love me. Maybe she loves me after him since I am younger*."

The final theme in the attachment dimension was jealousy. The mother is the leading influencer of sibling relations. The responses of the adolescents demonstrated that sibling relations were mostly associated with their mothers. Thus, it could be suggested that the maternal bond and attitudes towards the siblings affected the development of jealousy among siblings. A3 stated the following: "*To be frank, I would have felt bad if my mother discriminated against my older sister and I would not love her that much. But since my mother treats us equally, there is no such problem*," demonstrating that maternal attitudes affect jealousy in sibling relations.

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How does having a sibling affect your views about loneliness? and "How does your interaction with your siblings affect your loneliness?"**

The interviews conducted with the adolescents revealed that the relations with their siblings were positive or negative, there could be jealousy among the siblings, and fathers exhibited conflicting attitudes towards the siblings. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 5.

*Table 5. Content analysis conducted on the loneliness data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| Because of my father | Paternal attitudes |

| | |
|---|---|
| Despite everything, thank God for her (him) | Mockery, trust, fortunately, someone to talk to, a con"fidant. |

Four adolescents (4/9) stated that siblings prevent loneliness and allow them to overcome their fear of loneliness even when their relations are not good. The "despite everything, thank God for her (him)" theme was not only positive answers but also negative ones, emphasizing the presence of mutual relations. For example, A6 stated that the presence of his sibling prevented loneliness: *"(S)he knows everything about me, even if I argue with her (him). So even if I wanted to, I can never be alone and feel alone. My family always stands behind me*."

Another theme was "because of my father." One of the factors that affect the intimacy between siblings during adolescence is the paternal attitudes towards his children. A1 stated the following about loneliness and the impact of his older sister on loneliness: "*I think it is my father. Because since the very beginning, my father has been indifferent. The fathers of the people around me were better than him. Their parents could also have experienced difficulties. My parents also had a lot of trouble. As they went through these troubles, we got closer with my older sister*."

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Question "What is the effect of your sibling(s) on your well-being?"**

In the interviews conducted with adolescents, they stated that sibling relations could be positive or negative, there may be jealousy and arguments between the siblings. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 6.

*Table 6. Content analysis conducted on the subjective well-being data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| An advisor, a friend and more | Advisor, friend, fun, reason for survival, sharing |
| We are like that, because… | of arguments, of a friend, of my father, of her (him) |
| Annoying situations | Belittlement, offended one |

The first theme determined in the analyzes was "an advisor, a friend, and more," emphasizing the positive aspect of sibling relations. Adolescents mentioned the importance of sibling relations in the analysis of their well-being. Four (4/9) adolescents considered their siblings as a friend or an advisor. A2 stated the following about the significance of his sibling in his life: "*I do not think there is a negative reason, but there could be several positive reasons. For example, when I am confused about something, I call and consult* [her (him)]."

The other theme that was determined in this age group was "we are like that, because…" Adolescents stated that the reasons for their positive or negative relations with their siblings were their fathers, circle of friends, conflicts with their siblings, and their siblings. A1 blamed his (her) siblings for the relational problems: "*So I think the reason is my older sister. They always say that I am a teenager, okay, I may cause problems, too. I also have sudden outbursts and harsh reactions sometimes, but they could not bear it. They usually say that, anyway, they really exhibit harsh reactions*." A4 stated that the negative sibling relations were due to the friend circle of her (his) siblings and the conflicts they experience: "*I think the reason for the negative consequences of the presence of my brother in my life is his friends, because they constantly fight for no reason at school - maybe for fun, I do not know - and he often does the same at home. Sometimes he gets into fights for no reason, I think his friends are responsible for this.*"

The final theme was "annoying situations." Adolescents, who stated that sibling relations affected them negatively, argued that their siblings had a negative impact on their well-being. A9 stated these effects as follows: "*My sibling does not affect my life well because when I want to prove myself, (s)he belittles me instead of encouraging me*."

**The Themes Determined in the Interviews Conducted with Young Adults**

In this section, the themes determined based on the interviews conducted with young adults are discussed.

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How is your relationship with your sibling?", "How does your relationship with your sibling affect your relationship with your partner/spouse?" and "How does your relationship and interaction with your sibling affect your relationships with other individuals?"**

In the interviews conducted with young adults, it was determined that sibling relations were positive or negative, there could be jealousy between siblings, and their mothers exhibited different attitudes towards the siblings. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 7.

*Table 7. Content analysis conducted on the attachment data (n=10)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| My mom is proud of us | Understanding, supporting, friend, pride, trust, sharing, sincerity, intimacy, absent, guiding |
| A stormy relationship | Unstable, stormy, distant |
| I am jealous | Jealousy, exclusion |
| I feel guilty because of my mom | Fairness, mediating mother, comparison, guilt, discrimination, guiding mother |

The first theme determined based on the answers of the young adults to the interview questions on attachment was "my mother is proud of us." The theme emphasized good sibling relations, and 4 (4/10) young adults focused on sharing. YA2 stated that sharing negative things affected sibling relations: "*I consider my relations with my sibling as follows: Since I have one sibling, I would share any negative development with him. So, I consider him my confidant.*" It was observed that another dimension in positive sibling relations was trust. Two young adults (2/10) mentioned the issue of trust. YA10 stated that (s)he feels safe interacting with other people due to her (his) relationship with her (his) sibling.

Another theme was "stormy relationship." YA9 emphasized the conflicts and arguments between siblings: "*It is a stormy relationship, it is an unstable relationship where there are quarrels, but sometimes it is quite beautiful*." YA8 stated the following: "*It is like we do not have a relationship and every argument we have is reflected on my mom.*"

Another theme was "I am jealous." Six young adult participants (6/10) mentioned jealousy when talking about their relations with their siblings and stated that they sometimes felt excluded. YA4 stated the following: "*I wondered if my mother loved my sister more or my brother. I have always been a jealous individual.*"

The final theme was "I feel guilty because of my mom." The theme included young adult statements on the discrimination of the siblings by their mothers. Nine (9/10) participants stated that their mothers treated the siblings differently. YA2 stated that there was bias in the family: "*I wish we were treated equally. Let me give you a simple example; they let me go on vacation with my friends in high school. But even though they knew everyone in the family that my sister planned to go on vacation, they did not let her go and I was disturbed*." Later in interview the same participant emphasized that he was preferred by his mother: "*Maybe their approach is different, that is why our relations are as such. Our mother treats us differently, you know, to my sister and me*."

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How does having a sibling affect your views about loneliness? and "How does your interaction with your siblings affect your loneliness?"**

In the interviews conducted with young adults, they stated that sibling relations were positive or negative, there could be jealousy between siblings, and the existence of their siblings was important no matter what. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 8.

*Table 8. Content analysis conducted on the loneliness data (n=10)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| It is nice to have someone to talk to | Support, someone to talk to |
| What would it be like to be an only child? | Being an only child |
| His (her) existence is enough | Existence of a sibling |

The first theme determined with the interview responses of young adults on loneliness was "it is nice to have someone to talk to." It was determined that sibling relations and the existence of a sibling prevented the feeling of loneliness. In the theme, which emphasized the positive aspects of sibling relations, 4 participants (4/10) mentioned the significance of the existence of a sibling, and 3 participants (3/10) mentioned that the support of their sibling prevented loneliness. YA9 mentioned that loneliness could be eliminated with the support of a sibling: "*If I want to end my loneliness, I seek my sibling's support*."

Another theme was "what it would be like to be an only child." There were two different views under this theme. YA6 stated that the existence of a sibling was very precious, and it was a cure for loneliness: "*I did not want to be an only child, siblinghood means always supporting each other, being a pillar. That is why I am glad I have a sibling*." YA2 stated that being an only child would have been better.

The last theme was "her (his) existence is enough." This theme reflected the emphasis on the sibling's existence rather than the quality of sibling relations. Two participants (2/10) stated that the mere presence of their siblings prevented loneliness. GY10 stated the following: "*Having a sibling prevents me from feeling lonely.*"

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Question "What is the effect of your sibling(s) on your well-being?"**

Young adults stated that sibling relations were positive or negative, there could be jealousy between siblings, and their mothers exhibited different attitudes towards the siblings in the interviews. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 9.

*Table 9. Content analysis conducted on the subjective well-being data (n=10)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| Expectations/expectations | Expectations, undutiful child, impediment, black sheep |
| We are like that, because… | Of my parents, of my spouse |
| I feel valuable | Togetherness, support, sense of worth, trust, financial support, compassion and loyalty |

The first theme in the subjective well-being dimension that was determined in the interviews conducted with young adults was expectations-expectations. In the theme, young adults emphasized the jealousy dimension of sibling relations, reflected the development of the expectations between siblings, how siblings perceive one another as an undutiful child or an impediment, or what it means to be a black sheep. YA2 summed it up as follows: "*Because (s)he is older. Because (s)he lives closer to my parents, sees them more. Only (s)he thinks about my parents since I started attending university. Then, I never came back. Okay, I do not mess up, but I am an undutiful child candidate.*"

The other theme was "we are like that, because…" Participants searched for the reasons for the impact of sibling relations on their family and spouses. They stated that the reason why their communication with their siblings was good or bad was familial expectations from their siblings or the expectations of their spouse from them. YA1 stated that "*I think it might be associated with our lifestyle. (S)he had several problems at that time. I cannot say that maybe (s)he grew up as a selfish individual, or was trained like that by my parents, and I do not want to judge them. I think his (her) life before I was born also contributed to this.*"

The final theme was "I feel valuable." The theme emphasized positive sibling relations. Five (5/10) participants stated that their siblings made them feel valuable and that they supported each other. YA4 stated that "*After all that time, I am still so valuable for them, if I crave for something, I only need to call them, they will prepare it, buy it right away, they will get it somehow. So, I have never experienced the downside. God forbid. I feel very lucky to have so many siblings*."

**The Themes Determined in the Interviews Conducted with Middle Adults**

In this section, the themes determined based on the interviews conducted with middle adults are discussed.

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How is your relationship with your sibling?", "How does your relationship with your sibling affect your relationship with your spouse?" and "How does your relationship and interaction with your sibling affect your relationships with other individuals?"**

Middle adults stated that their sibling relations were positive or negative, there could be jealousy between siblings, and they were happy with their siblings no matter what. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 10.

*Table 10. Content analysis conducted on the attachment data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| We cannot get along | Disagreement, conflict |
| My mom takes sides | Fairness, equality, comparison, discrimination, privilege, guiding mother |
| (S)he is my confidant | Friend, commitment, confidant, trust |
| I would confront all for my sibling | Appreciation, protective, possessive, responsibility |
| I am jealous | Jealousy, exclusion, insensitivity |

The first theme determined with the analysis of the interview responses of the middle adult participants associated with the attachment dimension was "we cannot get along." The participants emphasized the conflicts and quarrels they experienced in sibling relations. The responses included the involvement of the mothers in the process, demonstrating the impact of sibling relations on the siblings and their relations with their mother during middle adulthood. MA6 stated the following: "*The issues between us have negative effects on my mother, and we have disagreements*."

The second theme was "my mother takes sides." When analyzing the sibling relations, 7 (7/9) participants in middle adulthood stated that their mothers discriminate and compare the siblings, affecting the sibling relations. MA2 described this issue as follows:

"*Sometimes you feel the reasons. No one has to say it. Since we recognize the actions. You want equality, you want equality among the siblings, but in the end you see that she favors one a little. Maybe because that one is the youngest, maybe because they are old and that one takes care of them, maybe they prefer that sibling more.*"

The other theme was "(s)he is my confidant." On the positive dimension of sibling relations, the participants stated that they considered their siblings a friend, a confidant, emphasizing the importance of commitment. OY2 stated current expectations from sibling relations as follows: "*I want a strong bond between siblings, I want this for everyone. But when you really observe, the bonds are broken. People distance themselves from one another. I love people who are bonded, and I want to be like that. I am, but if a person is not as dependent as you are, you step aside.*"

Another theme determined in the analyzes was "I will confront all for my sibling." This theme emphasized the acceptance dimension in sibling relations. It was observed that the siblings protected and were possessive towards one another. MA9 stated the following:

"*There were times when I helped care for my youngest sibling. I still feel a bit like a mother to my youngest sibling. I guess this improved my protective side*."

The last theme was "I am jealous." Three participants (3/9) mentioned jealousy between their siblings. They stated that this led to exclusion. OY7 stated that "*My problems with my sibling reflect badly on my mother. I can say that I am a little jealous. My mother prefers my sibling, so I feel excluded*." It could be suggested that sibling relations generally affected the relationships with mother and other individuals.

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Questions "How does having a sibling affect your views about loneliness? and "How does your interaction with your siblings affect your loneliness?"**

In the interviews conducted with the middle adult participants, it was determined that having siblings was important, and sharing with siblings was essential despite occasional jealousy. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 11.

*Table 11. Content analysis conducted on the loneliness data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Code** |
|---|---|
| I wish my sibling to be beside me no matter what | The existence of a sibling |
| I am jealous | Jealousy |
| My sibling would understand me even when no one would | Sharing |

The first theme on loneliness dimension determined with the analysis of the responses in interviews conducted with middle adults was "I wish my sibling to be beside me no matter what." The theme emphasized the acceptance dimension of sibling relations, and 3 (3/9) participants stated that they wanted their siblings with them whenever they need assistance or are alone. MA2 stated that the presence of a sibling would be good for loneliness no matter what: "*You want your sibling to be with you. Although their absence affects you, as I said, I am lonely inside. You want your sibling to be in your life. So, for example, you want to see your sibling often when (s)he comes, or you want him (her) to come often*."

Another theme was determined as "jealousy." MA1 stated that (s)he is jealous of her elder sister's relationship with a younger sibling and their intimacy. The participant stated that this led to a higher level of intimacy with his (her) younger sibling, and (s)he usually turns to that sibling when (s)he feels lonely.

The last theme was "My sibling would understand me even when no one would." MA4 summarized the issue as follows: "*My siblings were with me in every difficult moment of my life. That is why it is different to be with them. If no one understands me in life, they will.*"

**The Analysis of the Responses to the Question "What is the effect of your sibling(s) on your well-being?"**

The interviews conducted with middle adults revealed that the existence of a sibling and their cooperation was important, and they experienced differences or disengagements in sibling relations. The codes associated with these themes are presented in Table 12.

*Table 12. Content analysis conducted on the subjective well-being data (n=9)*

| **Theme** | **Codes** |
|---|---|
| It has no effect but that is OK | The existence of a sibling |
| We are like that, because… | Of my mother, of (her) his spouse, of my sibling, of the distance |
| We talk on the phone | Someone to talk to, sharing |

The first theme that was determined with the analysis of the responses on subjective well-being in the interviews conducted with middle adults was "it has no effect, but that is OK." Eight (8/9) middle adults stated that sibling relations did not affect their well-being. OY2 stated the following: "My sibling does not really have an effect on my well-being, but it feels good to have a sibling, to know that (s)he exists."

MA5, on the other hand, stated that the lack of the effect of her (his) sibling on her (his) well-being was due to the Corona pandemic; however, her (his) spouse had a significant impact. MA6 stated that the reason behind the lack of the same effect was the distance: "*There is no reason, since we have lived at a distance for years, (s)he has no effect on my life*."

The final theme was "we talk on the phone." The theme was associated with positive sibling relations, and 3 (3/9) participants stated that they try to communicate with their siblings, even only on the phone. MA9 stated that "*We are far from each other and talk on the phone*."

## Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to reveal the extent that the sibling relations of the adolescents, young adults and middle adults predicted attachment styles, loneliness levels and subjective well-being. The study findings demonstrated that the quality of sibling relations was a significant predictor of attachment to friends in adolescence. In adolescence, individual experiences significant changes. Perhaps one of the most important of these changes is observed in social development. Adolescents who previously follow the advice of their parents, now prioritize the views of their peers (Bee & Boyd, 2009; Santrock, 2011). Attachment is the foundation of peer relations. Although the primary figure of attachment is the mother, it could even be a sibling (Ainsworth, 1969; Davies, 2002; Dunn, 2002). Furthermore, sibling relations are effective in the acquisition of the initial social skills, new roles and problem-solving skills. In this period, future sibling and peer relations are rehearsed in childhood (Abramowitch, Corter, & Peppler, 1980; Bandura, 1978; Noel, Francis, & Tilley, 2018; Ponzetti & James, 1997). Thus, it could be suggested that the quality of sibling relations predicts attachment in adolescence. The present qualitative findings determined in the present study conducted to determine the predictive power of the sibling relation sub-dimensions were consistent with the quantitative findings. The quantitative findings revealed that the positive relations, jealousy, and maternal discrimination affected attachment in varying levels in that order. While maternal discrimination and jealousy were negative significant predictors of peer attachment, positive relations attribute was a positive predictor of peer attachment. The interviews conducted with adolescents for in-depth analysis of the above-mentioned findings revealed similar sub-dimensions. These included "my mother confuses me, endless fights, thanks God for my sibling, I accepted everything, and I am jealous." In the responses to the interview questions on attachment, the participants mentioned jealousy, positive relations, and the impact of these factors on their relations with others. Most participants emphasized maternal discrimination and their desire for fairness. Thus, it could be argued that the qualitative study findings were consistent with and elaborated the quantitative study findings.

The study findings demonstrated that the quality of sibling relations was a significant predictor of loneliness in adolescence. In other words, the quality of sibling relations affects the feeling of loneliness in adolescence. Based on the findings, the relative order of the impact of the quality on loneliness was as follows: positive relations, jealousy and the difference in paternal attitudes. Among these variables, jealousy was a significant positive predictor of loneliness, and the positive relations was a significant negative predictor of loneliness. Soysal (2016) reported that there was a correlation between sibling relations and loneliness in a study conducted with adolescents. Yeh and Lempers (2004) determined that the quality of sibling relations affected loneliness and the quality of peer relations in adolescence. Qualitative interview findings were consistent with these reports. The determined themes included "it is because of my father, and thanks God for my sibling despite everything." A theme on other qualities was not determined. About loneliness, adolescents tend to perceive the positive aspects of sibling relations. Furthermore, it was determined that they mostly perceived their fathers as fairer than their mothers and the interaction and communication between the father and other siblings and the mother directly affected the intimacy between the siblings and indirectly the anxiety and fear of loneliness.

The last finding about adolescence was that the properties of sibling relations were a significant predictor of subjective well-being. The study findings demonstrated that positive relations significantly predicted subjective well-being, while jealousy significantly predicted subjective well-being negatively. Sibling relations affect the adolescent throughout her or his life. The acquisition of several social skills are

associated with sibling relations. Siblings are the initial objects of comparison; and thus, they develop an idea about self-well-being (Campione-Barr, Greer, & Kruse, 2013). Therefore, sibling relations that are dominant in an adolescent's life, could be effective on subjective well-being based on the individual's self-comparison. In adolescence, the identity of an individual develops. Identity development and new experiences are first tested with siblings (Santrock, 2011). The first object of comparison in adolescence is the siblings (Bandura, 1978). Thus, the quality of sibling relations is expected to predict the well-being of the adolescent. Furthermore, the results of the qualitative interviews conducted to determine the presence and the extent of the predictive power of the attributes were consistent with the quantitative findings. In the qualitative analyzes, the interviews revealed that the themes on subjective well-being included "an advisor, a friend and more, we are like that, because…, and annoying situations. The first theme was the positive relations. Adolescent participants stated that their siblings generally affected their subjective well-being positively and the presence of a sibling was important. However, it was observed seen that sibling relations were not always supportive. The next theme, annoying situations revealed the conflicts between siblings, and the participants generally stated that their siblings affected them negatively due to continuous conflicts. Adolescents attributed the positive or negative consequences of sibling relations to their fathers, siblings, arguments and friends. Although a jealousy theme was not determined in this category, the participants mentioned jealousy in sibling relations that were associated with peer relations and discussions with siblings.

The study findings demonstrated that the quality of sibling relations was a significant predictor of anxious attachment, loneliness and subjective well-being in young adulthood. The quality of sibling relations significantly predicted anxious attachment during young adulthood. Robertson, Shephard, and Goedeke (2014) reported no significant correlation between sibling relations and attachment in a study conducted with young adults. The introduction of a romantic partner into the life of the individual during young adulthood could lead to the increasing insignificance of sibling relations. Thus, the quality of sibling relations explained only a portion of attachment in young adulthood or were not even a significant predictor of it. Young adulthood is a period of romantic relations and adult responsibilities. During this period, family ties as well as the ties with siblings weaken due to relocation to another city for college and the introduction of different social settings and roles to the life of the young adult (Onur, 2011). However, despite the gradual weakening of sibling relations, the strength and quality of the bond that was established in childhood remains effective. Thus, the quality of sibling relations affects attachment in young adulthood. Based on the analyzes, the relative order of anxious attachment attributes was as follows: maternal discrimination, jealousy, and the positive relations. Among these attributes, the maternal discrimination and jealousy were positive and significant predictors of anxious attachment in young adulthood. Based on the results of the qualitative analysis conducted to determine the predictive power of sibling relationss on attachment, the following themes were determined: my mom is proud of me, a stormy relationship, I am jealous, and I feel guilty because of my mom. These themes were consistent with the quantitative findings. In their responses to the questions on attachment, the participants generally described sibling relations based on the dimensions of support and friendship, emphasizing acceptance. However, the participants started to emphasize jealousy. The individual, whose physical and social environments change after young adulthood, starts to perceive sibling relations differently (Arnett, 2000; Cicirelli, 1995). The activities shared with siblings and expectations from the siblings in adolescence and expectations and needs in young adulthood are different (Cicirelli, 1995; Dunn, 1995). Thus, more young adults emphasized negative elements such as jealousy in sibling relations. Furthermore, participant responses reflected a guiding and effective relationships and communications with the mother in this age group. The search for fairness continued in young adulthood.

It was also determined in the study that the quality of sibling relations was a predictor of loneliness in young adulthood. Sherman, Lansford, and Volling (2006) reported that siblings were considered as the closest friends during young adulthood, and sibling relations were a predictor of both subjective well-being and loneliness in young adults. The present study findings were consistent with that report, and it was determined that sibling relations were a predictor of loneliness both in this period and adolescence. However, the variance explained in young adulthood was lower when compared to adolescence. This could be due to the presence of romantic relationships. Young adulthood often includes college life; thus, the individual could leave high school friends and sometimes the family behind (Arnett, 2000). Sometimes, young adults experience loneliness in this period for the first time (Eryılmaz & Ercan; 2011). Thus, during the initial periods of loneliness, siblings are the source of social support. However, the shared activities change in that age when compared to adolescence (Dunn, 1995). Therefore, the quality of sibling relations could be expected to predict loneliness in young adulthood. The analysis results revealed that the relative order of the impact of sibling relations on loneliness were as follows: positive relations, jealousy, and acceptance. Among these

dimensions, jealousy was a significant positive predictor of loneliness, and the positive relations were a significant negative predictor of loneliness. The qualitative study findings were consistent with these results. The themes determined with the qualitative analysis were "It is good to have someone I can talk to, what it would be like to be an only child, and their existence is enough." Participants stated that the existence of their siblings prevented fear of loneliness. They stated that they talk to their siblings before they talk to their partners or spouses, and even the existence of their siblings makes them feel safe and well. However, besides the good and positive statements, they also mentioned jealousy due to maternal bias in the interviews. The existence of a sibling was not always sufficient to prevent loneliness. Certain participants imagined what it would be like to be an only child.

In the study, it was also determined that the quality of sibling relations was a positive predictor of subjective well-being in young adulthood. Sherman, Lansford, and Volling (2006) argued that siblings are best friends during young adulthood. They also reported that sibling relations were a predictor of both subjective well-being and loneliness in young adults. Milevsky (2019) similarly determined that there was a significant correlation between the quality of sibling relations and subjective well-being. The present study findings were similar. In other words, sibling relations were a predictor of well-being in this age group, similar to adolescence. However, the predictive power was lower when compared to adolescence. This could be due to romantic relationships, professional concerns, etc. In young adulthood, the individual takes on new responsibilities and learns how to become an adult. In this period, siblings are expected to support each other and sometimes guide them towards new responsibilities (Santrock, 2011). In other words, the sibling is an element of support in the young adult's struggles with problems and negative experiences in this period. Although new sources of support such as new friends, partners or spouses could be available, the siblings do not completely become obsolete (Cicirelli, 1992). The qualitative study findings were similar. The associated themes were determined as follows: expectations-expectations, we are like that, because…, and I feel valuable. Participants stated that their siblings made them feel valuable, and they also supported them financially and morally, which made them feel good. The changes in expectations about sibling relations with age could lead to conflicts and jealousy (Lee, Mancini, & Maxwell, 1990). The participants stated that they had to assume parental responsibilities in sibling relations. This reprehension was also due to sibling relations. Participants generally preferred not to meet with their siblings since these new expectations negatively affected their well-being.

Cicirelli (1992) stated that the differences between the quality of sibling relations could be due to the above-mentioned expectations. Finally, the participants stated that the reason for the positive or negative interactions was their families, in other words, the support of the parents, various parental attitudes or spousal reactions.

It was also determined in the study that the quality of sibling relations was a significant predictor of attachment and loneliness in mid-adulthood. The quality of sibling relations was a positive and significant predictor of anxious and avoidant attachment in mid-adulthood. This could be due to the increasing significance of sibling relations in that period due to the new responsibilities. Siblings become intimate again in mid-adulthood since they experience similar problems such as the loss of their parents (Cicirelli, 1995; Cicirelli, 1980; Stocker, Lanthier, & Furman, 1997). The qualitative study findings were consistent with these results. The interviews conducted with middle adults revealed the following themes in the dimension of attachment: we cannot go along, my mother takes sides, my sibling is my confidant, I confront all for my sibling, and I am jealous. The quantitative study findings on the related attributes were as follows in order of relative significance: positive relations, acceptance and jealousy. Jealousy was a significant predictor of anxious and avoidant attachment. Qualitative themes also were consistent with these attributes. Participants in middle adulthood described their siblings as friends and confidants. Possessive sibling relations and protective attitudes were also significant. The theme that clearly reflected acceptance in sibling relations was the "I will confront all for my sibling" theme. This could be due to the fact that siblings get more intimate when solving problems such as the decline in social circles, loss of a spouse, or coping with the loss of a parent during mid-adulthood.

The quality of sibling relations was a positive and significant predictor of loneliness in mid-adulthood. Anderson (1984) determined that sibling relations were a strong predictor of loneliness in middle and late adulthood. O'Bryant (1988) concluded that there was a significant correlation between the quality of sibling relations and loneliness in middle and late adulthood. The study findings were consistent with these reports. Thus, it could be suggested that sibling relations reduced the feeling of loneliness in mid-adulthood. Cicirelli (1992) also reported that the sibling relations have an effect on lifelong attachment and intimacy patterns. He determined that the bond established in childhood with the siblings becomes important again in middle and

late adulthood. With the initiation of romantic relationships in young adulthood, sibling relations are neglected; however, sibling relations become importance when the individuals start coping with adulthood problems such as loss of a spouse, and sometimes the decrease in physical strength (Cicirelli, 1996; McGhee, 1985; Moyer, 1992). In mid-adulthood, loneliness anxiety could be observed in unmarried individuals due to death anxiety or loss of siblings. Even when a sibling is married or has children, the quality of sibling relations could have an impact on loneliness (Lu, 2007; Bedford & Avioli, 1996). The qualitative study findings were consistent with these reports. The quantitative study findings revealed that mid-adulthood loneliness attributes could be listed as follows in the order of relative significance: differences in paternal attitudes, conflict and jealousy. The differences in paternal attitudes were a significant predictor of loneliness in this period. The themes determined with the qualitative analysis were as follows: despite everything, I would want them with me, I am jealous, and they would understand me even when no one would. Participants in this group emphasized the positive aspects of sibling relations and stated that they still communicated with their siblings. Furthermore, jealousy between the siblings determined the communications and assistance between particular siblings in case of loneliness. However, the sibling conflicts and the differences in parental attitudes manifested in quantitative findings, were not among the qualitative themes or codes. This could be explained by the fact that all nine middle adult participants did not live in the same are with their siblings, and all but one was married. Also, the lack of differences in paternal attitudes could be explained by two reasons: Almost all participants stated that their fathers treated them fairly and equally when compared to their mothers. Thus, there were no differences in paternal attitudes. Second, the patriarchal Turkish society could limit and define the interaction between father and child (Bradburn, 1963; Huerta et al., 2013). In other words, it could be suggested that the limited impact of the fathers in on lives of the participants could have been a factor.

The quality of sibling relations was not a predictor of subjective well-being in mid-adulthood. Bedford (1998) reported that although the quality of sibling relations affected subjective well-being in young adulthood, the quality of sibling relations was not associated with subjective well-being in middle and late adulthood. Although close sibling ties predicted subjective well-being in adolescence and young adulthood, close ties could sometimes be a source of problems in mid-adulthood (Antonucci, 1994). Siblings could leave competitive relations behind in mid-adulthood. Thus, the quality of sibling relations was not a predictor of subjective well-being. The qualitative themes confirmed this finding. The first theme determined in this dimension was "it has no-effect but that is okay." Although the participants stated that they still talk to their siblings on the phone, they also stated that their siblings did not have any impact on their lives due to their mothers, spouses, the distance or disagreements between the siblings. Although they considered the existence of a sibling as a good thing, certain variables such as spouses, children and other responsibilities were more prevalent. Thus, sibling relations were not a predictor of subjective well-being in mid-adulthood.

In conclusion, although participant descriptions about sibling relations varied based on the age group, the existence and significance of sibling relations remained meaningful.

The limitations of this research are as follows; the universe of the research is limited to the students who continue to state and private Anatolian high schools in Battalgazi district of Malatya province in the 2019-2020 academic year and to the students who continue to Inonu University in the 2019-2020 academic year. The research is limited to the features measured by the scales used and the variables included in the Personal Information Form used in the research.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made; good sibling relations would positively affect the loneliness of the individual, other relationships, and the subjective well-being of the individual. Since siblings would experience lower levels of conflict in happy families, the significance of a happy family and how to develop a happy family environment could be emphasized in courses for parents and prospective parents. The present study was conducted with adolescents, young and middle adults. Future studies could investigate the same topics in late adulthood. The present research is a cross-sectional study. Sibling relations could be scrutinized in more comprehensive and longitudinal studies based on different variables (gender, education level, marital status, residence, parenthood, social and income levels, etc.).

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Ulakbilge
Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi

# ERGENLERİN GENÇ YETİŞKİNLERİN VE ORTA YETİŞKİNLERİN KARDEŞ İLİŞKİLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

**Ezgi Sumbas**

**ÖZET**

Bu çalışmanın amacı, ergenlik, genç yetişkinlik ve orta yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerin kardeş ilişkilerini çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelemek ve kardeş ilişkileri üzerine derinlemesine bir araştırma yapmaktır. Bu nedenle araştırmada hem nitel hem de nicel modeller kullanılmış ve karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın deseni Asenkron Karma Modeldir. Araştırmanın örneklemi ortaokul ve liseye devam eden 12-18 yaş arası ergenlik çağındaki öğrenciler; 19-35 yaş arası üniversite öğrencileri ve genç yetişkinlik için lise ve ortaokul öğrencilerinin velileri; Orta yetişkinlik için 36-60 yaş arası ebeveynler arasından lise, ortaokul ve üniversiteye devam eden gönüllülerden oluşmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, katılımcıların kardeş ilişkilerine ilişkin açıklamaları yaş grubuna göre değişmekle birlikte kardeş ilişkilerinin varlığı ve önemi anlamlı kalmıştır. Daha sonraki çalışmalarda ergenlik, genç ve orta yetişkinlik dönemlerinin yanı sıra farklı yaş grupları ile de çalışılabilir. Bu, boylamsal ve daha kapsamlı bir çalışma olan kesitsel bir çalışmadır ve kardeş ilişkileri ele alınabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**: Kardeş ilişkileri, bağlanma, iyi oluş, yalnızlık