

A STUDY OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIP AND ADOLESCENCE IN
NUCLEAR FAMILIES IN RUIRU DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY,
KENYA



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between siblings at the adolescence stage in nuclear families. The objectives were to (i) establish the relationship between gender and how siblings relate; (ii) find out if there is any relationship between age spacing and sibling relationship and (iii) assess if intervention measures put in place relate to sibling relationship. The focus was on the relationship between siblings from the perspective of gender and age spacing. The independent variables were gender and age spacing; intervening variable was the adolescence stage and dependent variables were sibling rivalry and sibling harmony. An understanding of sibling relationship is important because it has a lot of influence on family relations. Furthermore, the sibling relationship is the longest an individual can have in a life-span. Findings of research on this significant relationship in an individual's life are inconsistent, particularly on the relationship between sibling rivalry, gender and age spacing. The findings of this research will add onto the understanding of one of the most important relationships in an individual's life. Further, parents seeking to enhance the sibling bond of their children can gain immensely from this research by understanding some of the underlying factors involved in the development of sibling relationships. The findings will also be significant to counselors doing adolescent and family counseling. The research employed Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory (1978). Bowen's Theory focuses on the patterns that develop in families in order to diffuse anxiety. Anxiety in families is created by perception of either too much closeness or too great a distance in a relationship. Capacity for family members to deal with dilemmas determines the health of their relationships. This was a correlation study. The study was done through a survey. It determined the relationship between siblings at the adolescence stage and if this is related to gender and age spacing. The target population was adolescents within Ruiru Municipality. The sample consisted of 30 adolescents (to increase validity) randomly picked from nuclear families within the municipality. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained using a questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The data collected was presented in tables. Data was analyzed by computing coefficients of correlation, which was in turn tested for significance. Relationships were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The data was paired to compute coefficients of correlation. Results showed that how siblings relate with each other is not related to their gender. However, sibling relationship is related to the age gap as well as parental intervention. Further research should be carried out to determine how age gap and parental intervention influence sibling relationships.