

A Qualitative Study: Exploring Dilemmas of Late Adolescent Single Child

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Abstract - The study attempted to explore the dilemmas of late adolescent single child in light of Adler birth order theory. Semi-structured open-ended interviews are used to collect data and thematic analysis is used to analysing the collected data. The study is a relevant one in the present society because single-child families are increasingly common and only children lack siblings, immediate availability of others to interact, and so on and also, they experience lot of difficulties and dilemmas during their developmental period.

Key Words: Late Adolescent, Dilemma, Experience, Single child.

I - INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the most unique and important phase of life, as a person transits from one phase of growth to another (childhood and adulthood) with specific health and developmental needs and rights. Even, it's the time to acquire knowledge and skills, learn to identify and manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities which will be important to get the experience of adolescent years and assuming adult roles (Csikszentmihalyi, 2019) [1]

The level of thinking of adolescents is at the higher level compared to children, as Adolescents move beyond the limits and can think in terms of what might be true, rather than just what they see is true. They are able to use their abstract cognitive process, test hypotheses and see infinite possibilities. Yet adolescents still often display egocentric behaviors and attitudes (Hopkin,2014) [2]

Sometimes they may be compensated for being alone by developing a stronger relationship with themselves or forming an active fantasy life contains imaginary friends. The most common stereotype about an only child is they will be more selfish and less likely to share with their peers, as they grow up without siblings and that influences their behavior and personality traits, (Newmann and Newmann, 2012) [4].

A) operational definitions

Dilemma: - A situation where a person finds difficult to choose between two different things.

Adolescence: - It is one of the developmental stages of human life span, where a person moves from childhood to adulthood with significant physical and psychological changes.

Single child: - A single child is the one who does not have siblings either a biological or an adopted.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Adriean Mancillas (2011) [5] conducted a research based on the topic ‘challenging the stereotypes about only children: A review of the literature and implications for practice’. The negative stereotype of only children is pervasive despite a growing trend toward single child families and evidence of the child’s strengths. People maintain definite beliefs about the characteristics of each ordinal position in a family; typically viewing only children is lonely, spoiled, and maladjusted. The author reviewed the literature to provide an accurate understanding of the stereotypes of only children, their assets and the challenges they face. Cross cultural findings and implications for clinical practice with only children and their parents are discussed.

Zeng-yin-chen and Ruth X liu (2014) [6] conducted a qualitative research based on the topic “Comparing Adolescent only children with those who have siblings on academic related outcomes and psychosocial adjustment”. This study uses a large and representative sample of adolescents to the theoretically informed hypothesis comparing adolescent singletons with those who have siblings. The result found that, for academic related outcomes, there are no differences between singletons and firstborns who have any number of younger siblings. Singletons are also not different from later born from two-child families. In contrast, singletons are more advantageous compared to later born who have two or more siblings. For psychosocial outcomes (psychosocial distress, susceptibility to negative peer pressure, and problems behaviour), singletons are not

different from both firstborns and later born with any number of siblings. The findings suggest that singletons are not at any disadvantage compared to their peers who have siblings and they enjoy some advantages over later born from medium to large families on academic related outcomes.

III. METHOD

Statement of the Problem

To explore the dilemmas of adolescent single child.

Objectives of the Study

To study the psychological changes and emotional control over adolescent children.

To study children's social interaction, school performance and interaction between peers.

To study the common behavior among adolescent single children.

Significance of the Study

The study is a relevant one in the present society because single children are unique in birth order in that they are the first -and last-born children in their families. As they lack siblings, they lose the immediate availability of others near their own age to interact socially, they learn to be children on their own. The single child has been seen as having distinct personality traits. Although environment is not only the influence of personality development, single children develop a unique social setting. Therefore, perhaps their environment exerts enough influence in their development to accentuate personality traits and force a struggle against natural tendencies.

Through this study we can understand the psychological and emotional changes and the dilemmas may a single child encounters during their development in adolescence. The adolescent period is the crucial age period of development, both mentally and physically. This study is useful for the clinical and school counselors to understand the dilemmas of adolescent single child encounter during their development.

Theoretical Perspective

Alder developed the birth order theory, best known his theories regarding striving for superiority, we also concerned with the effects of birth order on personality. Alder's theory stressed the social aspect of personality development and therefore proposed the possibility of birth order and its significance in the interpersonal relationships of family life. He felt that each position in the order, whether first or last, had distinct characteristics. For example, he hypothesized that first born are problem children and that only children are likely to be spoiled due to parental over indulgence. Many parents are amazed that, despite having similar genetics and growing up in the same environment, their children can be vastly different. According to philosopher and psychiatrist Alfred Adler, birth order may be playing the biggest role in your child's development and personality. During the early 1900's, Adler established several theories about how environment influences a child's personality. His birth order theory describes specific characteristics of each child, depending on whether he's the youngest, oldest or somewhere in the middle.

Research Design

Phenomenological research design

Sample

The study is conducted with 5 samples from the adolescent single children. The participants were aware about the aim of the study. The participants were informed that the data will be anonymous and confidential, and they have the freedom and right to leave from the study any time. The data was recorded and translated.

Method of Data Collection

Semi structured open-ended interview

Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to experiences of adolescence.

Limitation of the Study

The study is conducted in a small population not in a large population.

IV. FINDINGS

The Study was taken up with an aim to explore the dilemmas of late adolescent single child encounter during their adolescent period.

Data analysis

After the completion of semi-structured interview, the researcher first transcribed the collected data in to the hand written records. Thematic analysis is used for analysing the transcribed data. The nonverbal communication and gestures and behavioural responses are not reflected in transcription.

Data Analysis and Coding

Three levels of coding are used after transcription. Primary coding involves interpreting the experience of the participant and identifying the major themes briefing it proving a tattle. In second level many of the themes were grouped in super ordinate themes based on connection between the themes. Third level is triangulation in this level what is said in the interview is reflected in the label. The researcher corded and recorded the initial raw data and examined how new labels might affect the data analysis. The main themes involve

Feeling of loneliness or isolation

Participants during their late adolescents are vulnerable to feel lonely. Adolescent loneliness affects their social and developmental changes. They feel frustrated, bored and irritated throughout their development.

The participant said,

“It is terribly boring at times. When father and mother are not at home, I think of having sibling. Because when alone, it is unbearable.”

The other participant said,

“Being single is terribly boring. It is a great wish for someone to be together. It does not matter anyone. This is a lonely situation at home.”

Feeling of jealousy

This study has found, the feeling of jealousy. The society where they live, they will experience the situations where they see the other children with their siblings, who talks about them. These instances make to develop feeling of jealousy.

The participant said,

“Feeling angry, sad, and jealous. When my friends talk about their sisters or brothers, I feel jealous and cannot bear it.”

The other participant said that,

“There is a lot of jealousy and sadness. Because when friends say they wear sisters dress or they come with their brother i get very excited. I often thought of as being like them.”

Absence of intimate companion or siblings.

The study found that the late adolescents are affected with not having intimate companion or siblings. They are facing challenges in the society and as well in the family where they can't express things with their parents or friends.

The participant said,

“I share my affairs with my friends and family. I want a brother or sister to share my personal things that I cannot share with my parents and friends. Let that situation not happen to anyone.”

The other participant said,

“When there is a problem between the father and the mother, it is very much the desire of a sibling to share and solve it. It is very difficult to get out of it.”

Restriction due to over protection from parents

From the collected data I came across the fact that most of the adolescent single child experience restriction due to overprotection of parents. They are not able to fulfil their wishes as they want to. This may lead to dependence.

The participant said,

“I often wonder if my wishes can be fulfilled. Because I want to do MBA abroad after graduation. But parents are not allowed to study abroad. I always want to look up.”

The other participant said that,

“I could learn as my parents say. Expect that they don't seem to agree to leave them.”

V. DISCUSSION

As the aim of the present study was to explore the dilemmas of adolescent single child encounter during their developmental period. The data collection was done by open ended semi structured interviews. Data was transcribed word by word. The setting is informal i.e., their family. Information about the sample was collected by visiting their respective homes. Participants were interviewed through direct interview. Data analysis was done using interpretative APA form has been followed throughout the research.

The adolescent period is a crucial age period of development both mentally and physically. The adolescent single child experiences a lot of dilemmas during their developmental period. The 5 samples which are selected for research are of the age group 18-20. Most of them are aware of this positive and negative impact of being an only child.

Research question

RQ1) what dilemmas may an only child encounter during their development in adolescence?

Summary

The study was aimed to understand the psychological and emotional changes and the dilemmas may an only child encounter during their development in adolescence. Additionally, the findings can also help to develop specific data based on the topic.

Data collection was done by in depth semi structured interview. From these following themes were identified, i.e. Most of the participants during their adolescents felt a lots of loneliness. They are vulnerable to feel lonely. Adolescent loneliness has affected their social and developmental changes. Along with this they felt bored, frustrated, and irritated throughout their development. Some of the participant in this study has experienced the feeling of jealousy. The society where they live, they have experienced the situations where they see the other children with their siblings, who talks about them. These instances develop feeling of jealousy.

Late adolescents are affected with not having intimate companion or siblings. They are facing challenges in the society and as well in the family where they cannot express things with their parents or friends. Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood but over the course of a lifetime. From the collected data I came across the fact that most of the adolescent single child experience restriction due to overprotection of parents. The most of the adolescent single child experience restriction due to overprotection of parents. They are not able to fulfil their wishes as they want to. This may lead to dependence.

Conclusion

The only child has been seen as having distinct personality traits. Through the study about the dilemmas experienced by adolescent single child can understand the psychological changes and emotional control over them. They encounter the feeling of loneliness, feeling of jealousy, absence of intimate companion or sibling and restriction due to overprotection from parents. The parents should aware of this condition and choose more than one child.

Recommendation and Implications

Awareness should be given for parents and families to observe/notice the condition and take necessary measures to help their child, if in case negative and provide motivation classes for single child to manage themselves during the crisis.

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