Relationship of number of siblings, family type and index of self-esteem in UNL students

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Abstract

Data from 534 university undergraduate students from UNL was collected by self-report surveys. This research examined the relationship of number of times moved as a child and one's rating of how serious their most current relationship was across the number of siblings, whether one grew up in a two parent family type, and individual's self-esteem (low, medium or high). Factorial analysis revealed a significant three-way interaction between the number of siblings, family type, and self-esteem with relation to one's rating of how serious their most current relationship was and an interaction between the number of times moved as a child.

Introduction

Interactions of families including how many siblings one has as well as the type of family one is a part of can have a large effect on many outcomes later on in life. Self-esteem is another aspect of a person that can both be affected by family relationships and can have an impact on many different parts of one's life. The relationship between these three variables and the impact that they can have on how serious one would rate a current relationship is an extremely interesting research question. Another very interesting research question is how these factors could possibly effect how many times one had moved as a child. These relationships are what this studies delves into.

Research has shown a relationship between sibling relationships and romantic relationships later on in life. According to one study, sibling relationship has a unique influences on romantic relationship experiences (Doughty, Lam, Stanik, & McHale, 2015). This could show that having more or less of these sibling relationships could have a bigger impact on romantic relationships. If one has more sibling relationships, their influence could have a greater effect on relationships than those individuals with less sibling relationships.

Empirical studies have also shown that for those who had married parents had higher levels of relationship adjustment and dedication when compared to those with divorced parents and never married parents (Rhoades, Stanley, Markman & Ragan, 2012). This shows a great possibility that family type could have an effect on how serious one would rate their most current relationships. If one has married parents and therefore have higher levels of relationship adjustment as well as relationship dedication, this could translate into more serious ratings of relationships.

Additionally, an interaction between self-esteem, need for approval and relationship satisfaction has been found such that the relationship between self-esteem and relationship satisfaction was positive and significant for those with a high need for approval but it was negative and not significant for those with a low need for approval (Cramer, 2003). This could indicate that self-esteem could have an influence on romantic relationships as well.

Empirical studies have also been done on the relationship between a family's migration and family type. One study found that respondents that came from two-parent families moved significantly less times than children from other family types (Astone & Mclanahan, 1994). Research has also found that children who move more often have more losses of social capital which can result in negative effects for the child. This study also found that having two involved parents can help protect them from these social losses (Hagan, MacMillan, & Wheaton, 1996). Therefore, these two studies show evidence that could lend itself to the argument that both family type and self-esteem have an effect on how often one moves as a child.

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship of the number of times moved as a child and one's rating of how serious their most current relationship was across the number of siblings, whether one grew up in a two parent family type, and individual's self-esteem (low, medium or high). It was hypothesized that those in two parent families, higher number of siblings, and higher ratings on the Index of self-esteem would rate the seriousness of their relationship higher. It was also hypothesized that those in two parent families, higher number of siblings, and higher ratings on the Index of self-esteem would have moved less as a child. This study wants to better understand the relationship between family relationships and self-esteem and how that can affect romantic relationships later on. It also wants to understand these variables in relationship to how many times the participants moved as a child.

Method

Participants

534 university undergraduate students from UNL (traditional and nontraditional) who were enrolled in an introductory stats course took a survey as well as gave surveys to their friends and associates such as other students in classes, dorm, frat/sorority house, apartment, etc. 222 (41.6 %) of these participants identified as male while 312 (58.4%) identified as female. The participants had a mean age of 21.0112 with a range from 17 to 34. 34 (6.4%) of these participants identified as African American, 5(.9%) identified as Asian American, 458 (82%) identified as European American, 11 (2.1%) identified as Hispanic American, 2 (.4%) identified as Native American and 42 (7.9%) of participants identified as Other.

Materials

Students in this introductory stats course completed a self-report questionnaire in a natural setting. This survey included demographic questions such as age, gender, race, etc. Participants completed a set of surveys but only some were included in the analyses. The survey that was used in this analysis was the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) which is a 25-item scale that is designed to measure the degree, severity or magnitude of a problem with self-esteem. Higher scores mean higher self-esteem.

Procedure

Investigators first completed one survey themselves and then asked other undergraduate students whether traditional or nontraditional to complete 5 surveys for each researcher. Researchers then scored and collated the surveys that were then put into a larger database that

had data from multiple sections. From this data, researchers formulated hypotheses and completed their analyses.

Results

Two three-factor Between Groups ANOVA with EMMEANS follow-ups were conducted for these analyses. For the first analysis, the dependent variable looked at was the rate of seriousness of current or most current relationship compared to number of siblings, ISE (self-esteem index) and family type. For the second analysis, the dependent variable looked at was the number of times moved as a child compared to number of siblings, ISE, and family type.

For the first analysis, there was significant three-way interaction, $F(2, 507)=3.088$, Mse=4.001, p=.046, which can be seen in Table 1. For individuals with a two siblings or less and a two parent family type, there was an increase in the rating of the seriousness of a relationship when comparing low self-esteem to medium self-esteem. However, for individuals with two siblings or less and a two parent family type, there was no difference in the rating of seriousness of the relationship at when comparing low to high self-esteem or medium to high self-esteem. Also, for individuals with the other family type and two siblings or less, there was no difference in the rating of the seriousness of a relationship for any comparisons of self-esteem levels. For individuals with 3 siblings or more, there was no difference in the ratings of the seriousness of relationships when compared with family type and low to medium self-esteem, low to high self-esteem or medium to high self-esteem.

For the number of siblings and self-esteem two way, there was not a significant interaction, $F(2, 507)=.799$, p=.450. For the number of siblings and family type two way, there was also not a significant interaction, $F(1,507)=.003$, Mse=4.001, p=.953. For the self-esteem

and family type comparison, there was not a significant interaction, $F(2, 507)=.247$, Mse=4.001, p=.781. There was no significant interaction for the main effect of number of siblings, family type, or self-esteem.

For the second analysis, there was a significant three-way interaction, $F(2, 515)=5.067$, Mse=7.343, p=.007, as can be seen in Table 2. For individuals with two siblings or less and had a two parent family type, there was no difference in the number of times moved as a child when compared with low to medium self-esteem, low to high self-esteem, or medium to high self-esteem. However, for individuals with two siblings or less and had the other family type, for low self-esteem compared to medium self-esteem and low self-esteem compared to high self-esteem there was a decrease in the number of times moved as a child. Individuals with med self-esteem compared to high self-esteem in this group had no difference in the number of times moved. For individuals with 3 siblings or more, there was no difference in the number of times moved as a child when compared with family type and low self-esteem compared to medium self-esteem, low self-esteem to high self-esteem, and medium self-esteem to high self-esteem.

For the sibling number and self-esteem comparison there was a significant interaction, $F(2, 515)=3.882$, Mse=7.343, p=.021, as can be seen in Graph 1. This effect was descriptive for individuals with two siblings or less who had low to medium self-esteem as well as low compared to high self-esteem as it found that the number of times moved as a child increased. However, this effect was misleading for all individuals with 3 or more siblings and individuals with medium to high self-esteem who had two siblings as there was no difference in the number of times moved as a child for the sibling number and different levels of self-esteem.

For the number of siblings and family type comparison there was a significant interaction, $F(1,515)= 4.252$, p=.040, as can be seen in Graph 2. This effect was descriptive for

all levels of sibling number and family type such that the number of times moved as a child increased for higher number of siblings and identifying the other family type.

There was no significant main effect for either sibling number or self-esteem however there was a significant main effect for family type F (1,515)=58.737, Mse=7.343, p=.000. The main effect showed a relationship between an individual identifying as having the other family type and having higher rates of moving as a child.

Discussion

This study aimed to discover if there was a relationship between family type, self-esteem, number of siblings and how serious individuals would rate there current or most current relationship and how many times an individual moved as a child. This study did find significant three way interactions for both the relationship between family type, self-esteem, number of siblings and seriousness of most current or current relationship and the number of times moved as a child with these three variables.

For the first hypothesis, there was partial support. In support of the research hypothesis, individuals with two siblings or less, two parent family type, and low to medium self-esteem had an increase their rating of their current or most current relationship seriousness. However, contrary to the research hypothesis there was no difference in the rating of seriousness of a relationship for individuals with two siblings or less, two parent family type, and low to high self-esteem as well as medium to high self-esteem. Also contrary to the hypothesis there was no difference in the rating of seriousness of a relationship for individuals with three siblings or more, the other family type, and all levels of self-esteem.

For the second hypothesis, there was partial support for the research hypothesis. In partial support of the research hypothesis, those with two siblings or less and the other family type moved more as children when compared with low to high self-esteem and medium to high self-esteem. Contrary to the research hypothesis, people who have two parent family types and two sibling or less had no difference in the number of times they moved as a child when compared to all levels of self-esteem and for individuals with two siblings or less and the other family type they had no difference in the number of times moved when compared to medium self-esteem to high self-esteem. Also contrary to the research hypothesis, individuals who had 3 siblings or more had no difference in the number of times they moved as a child when compared to both family types and the levels of self-esteem.

In accordance to previous research, there was a main effect for family type found when looking at the dependent variable of number of times moved as a child. Astone and Mclanahan found that children from two-parent families moved significantly less than those children from other families which is what this study found as well. However, contrary to research done on the effects of family type and self-esteem, neither of these had significant effects on the rating of seriousness of an individual's current or most current relationship.

For future studies, researchers could look more in depth into sibling relationships. While there were no significant effects found in this study, the effect of sibling relationships has found to have a unique effect on relationships. One way to do this is to study more on how number of sibling's effects variables. Research before this has focused on sibling relationships but not necessarily the number that one has. This could be applicable to both dependent variables as further research into the number of sibling relationships could have a relationship to both the

individuals rating of the seriousness of their current or most current relationship as well as the
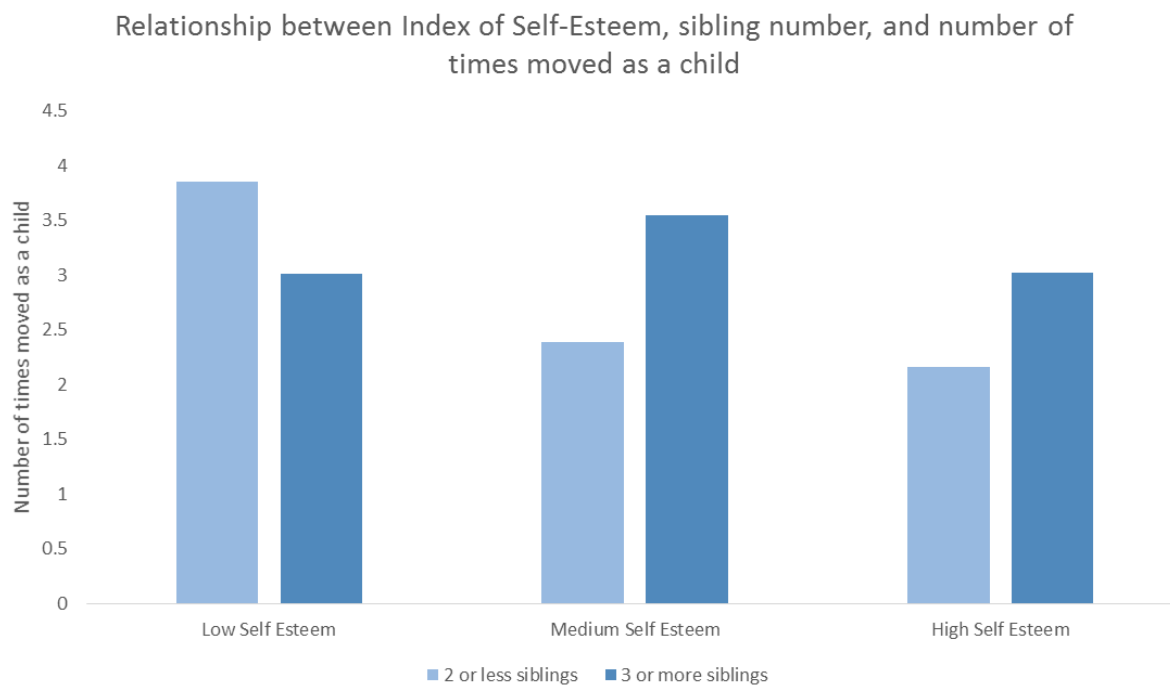
number of times one moves as a child.

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Table 1. *Mean seriousness of current or most current relationship three-way interaction*
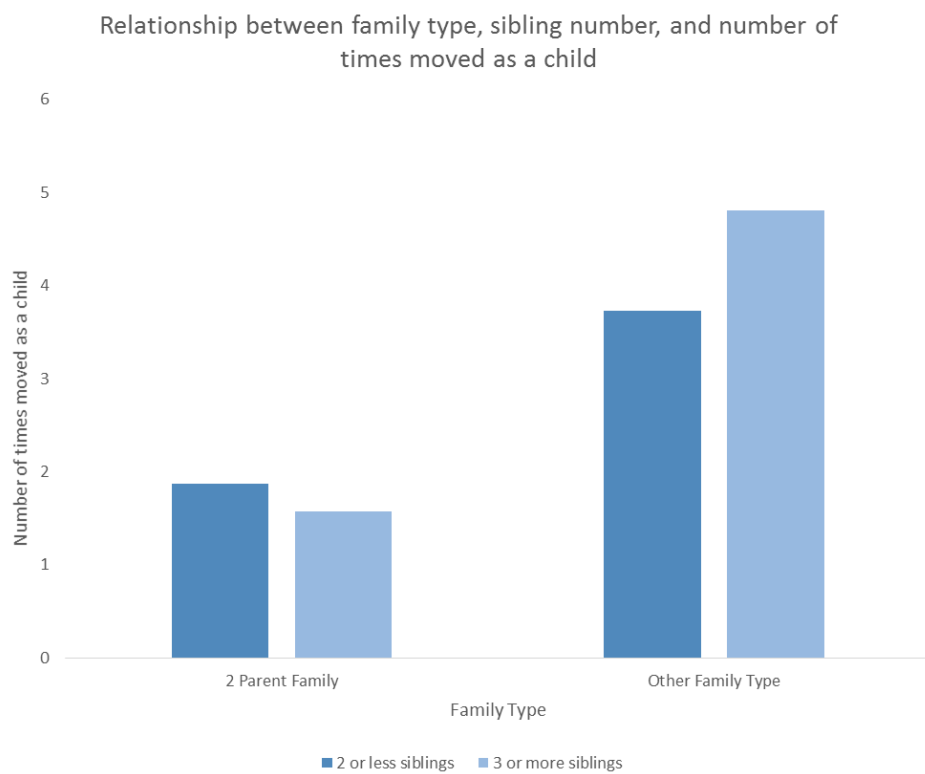
		Low Self Esteem	Medium Self Esteem	High Self Esteem
2 or less siblings				
	Two Parent Family	4.348	4.944	4.580
	Other Family Type	4.323	4.267	5.320
3 siblings or more				
	Two Parent Family	4.324	4.837	5.141
	Other Family Type	4.800	5.286	4.167

Table 2. *Mean number of times moved as child three-way interaction*

		Low Self Esteem	Medium Self Esteem	High Self Esteem
2 or less siblings				
	Two Parent Family	1.891	1.716	2.000
	Other Family Type	5.806	3.067	2.320
3 siblings or more				
	Two Parent Family	1.757	1.512	1.455
	Other Family Type	4.267	5.571	4.583

Graph 1.

Graph 2.