

National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT:

BEING A MULTIPLE

RESEARCHER:

NOMOTC

DATE:

March 1996 - September 1996

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to examine how multiples view their relationship with each other.

METHOD: A questionnaire was printed in *MOTC's Notebook* and a National Mailing. This survey was to be completed by multiple birth children who were eight years of age or older.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This survey was completed by 194 multiple birth children. The ages of the multiples were: 8-11 years (44%); 12-15 years (19%); 16-19 years (4%); 20-25 years (10%); 26-39 years (18%); and 40 and older (5%). The types of multiples were: identical twins (42%) fraternal twins (52%); identical triplets (1%); and fraternal triplets (.5%). 59% were females, and 41% were males. 22% had no other siblings other than their multiple(s); 39% had an older sibling; 23% had a younger sibling; and 16% had both an older and a younger sibling.

RESULTS:

1. 57% of the multiples said that they liked their multiple sibling; 5% said they didn't; and 38% said they liked them sometimes.
2. When asked how they felt about being a multiple, 28% said that they were proud most of the time, 25% were happy most of the time; 22% said it didn't make any difference; 19% said it depended on the situation; 1% were embarrassed (preferred that no one knew); and 2% were unhappy about being a multiple.
3. 87% of the multiples said that they had dressed alike at some point. The decision to dress the multiples alike was made by their parents (58%); the multiples (24%); and only one of the multiples (9%). 2% of the multiples still dressed alike regularly and 45% dressed alike on occasion.
4. 94% of their mothers could always tell them apart from one another; 90% of fathers could; 84% of grandparents could; 97% of siblings could; 77% of other relatives could; 87% of friends could; 64% of teachers could; and 78% of co-workers could.
5. 59% of the multiples felt that they were treated just like everyone else; 22% felt that because they were multiples they were sometimes given privileges and sometimes denied privileges; and 15% felt that they were given special privileges occasionally. The multiples felt that they were treated differently by teachers (36%); friends (32%); supervisors (21%); parents (16%); and co-workers (4%). 7% said that teachers always compared their ability in the classroom to their co-multiple; 33% said they sometimes compared; 20% said they rarely compared; and 54% said they weren't compared by teachers.
6. 89% of the multiples said that their mother participated in a Mothers of Twins Club. 96% said that they enjoyed the MOTC family activities.

7. 19% of the multiples said that they were always in the same class at school, while 13% said that they had never been in the same class. Of those who were in the same class, 48% felt that it worked well for them. In high school, 29% of the multiples chose the same elective subjects.
8. 41% of the multiples said that they shared some friends and also had some different friends; 36% had mostly the same friends; 22% had separate friends from each other; and only 1% had very few friends outside of the multiple relationship.
9. 13% of the multiples felt that they were often left out of invitations because of pressure to invite both/all of the multiples; 51% said that all multiples were usually invited; and 21% said they were not left out and often were invited alone. 26% said they wanted to be invited together; 13% wanted to be invited separately; and 60% said that it didn't matter.
10. 96% of the multiples celebrated their birthday together, and 42% said they usually had separate cakes or other special foods. 52% of families had separate celebrations for family and friends. 42% of the multiples said that they usually received similar gifts. Of those who received similar gifts, 32% said they would prefer to receive something different.
11. 69% of the multiples said that they were sometimes able to answer for their twin/multiple as if they could "read their mind."
12. 66% said they felt special because they were multiples, and 94% said they enjoyed feeling special.
13. 33% said that if their multiple sibling was hurt physically, they felt the pain in some way.
14. Of the identical multiples, 44% had pretended to be their co-multiple and had attended class for them. 66% of the identicals said they liked looking the same. 43% of the identicals had altered their appearance so they didn't look exactly alike anymore.
15. 71% of the multiples shared clothes.
16. Of the fraternal multiples who looked alike, 29% had pretended to be their co-multiple.
17. When younger, 72% had the same hairstyle, but currently only 36% had the same hairstyle.
18. 58% said that they did the same things as their co-multiple (such as music, sports, clubs), and 24% felt that they must try to do the same things.
19. 39% said that friends or relatives sometimes called them "the twins" or "the triplets" instead of using individual names; 6% said they always did this; and 32% said they never did this. 44% said they didn't like being called "the twins" or "the triplets." 43% said they didn't like being called by the wrong name (their co-multiple's name). 16% said that friends called them by their last name to get their attention so they wouldn't risk calling them the "wrong" name. 12% felt that friends and family didn't know who they were for sure.

CONCLUSION:

1. The majority of the multiples liked their sibling multiple(s) and enjoyed feeling "special" by virtue of being a multiple.
2. Most multiples felt that they were treated the same as everyone else. When they were treated differently, teachers and friends were the most likely people to do this. Almost half of the multiples said their ability in the classroom was compared to their multiple sibling(s) by teachers.
3. Most multiples wore similar clothes and hairstyles as young children, but few continued doing this. Most often, the parents chose for them to dress alike.
4. Most multiples had been both in the same classroom and in different classrooms in school. Of those who were in the same classroom, about half felt that it worked well for them.

5. About two-thirds of the multiples said they could answer for their twin/multiple as if they could "read their mind," and one-third felt pain in some way if their multiple sibling was physically hurt.
6. Many friends and relatives called them "the twins" or "the triplets" instead of using their individual names, and about half of the multiples said that they did not like this.

NOTE: THE COMPANION SURVEY, "BEING A SIBLING TO MULTIPLES," IS SUMMARIZED IN RESEARCH REPORT #51.