

Symphony of Filial Piety: Sibling Interaction and Support Choice in Families with Many Children

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ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasingly severe aging population and the undeniable importance of family care-giving, studying the cooperation and strategic interactions among siblings in the process of eldercare is of great significance. This paper utilizes data from the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLS) from 2013 to 2020 to construct a family fixed effects model to explore how the size and gender structure of siblings influence the levels and mechanisms of both formal and informal care provided by children to their elderly parents. The study finds that both competitive and shirking effects coexist in the fulfillment of care-giving obligations among siblings. In the realm of economic support, an increase in the number of brothers raises the amount of financial and material support sons provide to their parents, with little effect on daughters; in the domain of emotional support, the presence of sisters strengthens the emotional bond between sons and parents; in daily care, an increase in the number of sisters leads both sons and daughters to shirk the responsibility of attending to parents' daily needs. Further, the paper elucidates these phenomena through the channels of expected inheritance, inter-generational care, and opportunity cost motivations. Multiple perspectives, including the caregiving needs of elderly parents and the caregiving capacity of adult children, are employed to confirm the existence of the aforementioned logical chain.

Keywords: Family Caregiving, Sibling Size, Children's Gender Structure

How to Cite

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