

Effects of Birth Order on Personality

Hamna Riaz^{1*}, Warda Tahir¹, Tayyaba Waris¹ and Hira Riaz²

1. Department of Applied psychology, Government College University Faisalabad
2. Department of Education, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author: itshamnariar03493@gamil.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to put an insightful view on the effect of birth order on personality of children. Birth order effect is one of the major contributions of Alfred Adler. It affects the personality of siblings. Arrival of second child is threat to the elder one, so adjustment issues create, and this is the time when parents have to provide attention to first child. A minor difference on the basis of intelligence shows that first child is more intelligent than later ones. Second and last child obtain more scores on extraversion scale with respect to the scores of first child. First born is the leader for later ones and it is blessing to be the last child among siblings. Many studies are conducted that show birth order have negligible effects on personality of individuals.

Keywords: Birth order, Effect, Personality, Extraversion, Intelligence

Introduction

Birth order refers to your position among your siblings [1]. Birth order affects the personality traits of individual in a significant way. Personality is the unique combination of traits, and these traits can be affected by your position among siblings. Alfred Adler was the first who introduce the concept of Birth order. He interpreted the effect of birth order on an individual's life [2]. He introduced four birth orders i.e., eldest child, middle-born, youngest child and the only child. He clarified the importance of childhood in a person's life. According to him, parents look on each child with respect to actions that make children different from one another. In this article we will understand the effects of birth order on siblings in the upcoming sections, birth order and personality, birth order and adjustment, birth order and extroversion, birth order and intelligence, and conclusion.

Birth order and Personality

Personality is explained as the unique characteristics of an individual. It is clarified that the birth order theory of Alfred Adler is closely associated with the Five Factor Model of Personality given by Ramon Cattell. This model points out the Five Personality traits included Neuroticism, conscientiousness, Openness, Extroversion, and Agreeableness [3]. These terms are also abbreviated as OCEAN. Research shows that the first child is on high risk of neuroticism personality trait because the arrival of second child has been occur and it appears as threat to the first child because now, he/she is no longer center of attention. At this point the first child requires support from parents and environment [4].

Birth order and Adjustment

Adjustment is a biological concept deeply associated with Darwin's Evolution Theory, 1859. Adjustment in humans refers to maintaining equilibrium among your needs and environmental stressors to achieve satisfactory relations in your life. Humans always try to become superior and empowered in their dealings [5]. So, they adopt such actions that make them satisfied in their relationships. When a newborn comes to family the first born develop adjustment issues and this is the situation when first born intensively need support from parents [6]. Furthermore, it is noted that first born have to bear more restrictions than younger, as parents are more concern about first child. More specifically, if the first born is female than she has to bear little more restrictions. Moreover, gender has no influence on personality. Roher's et al put forward Family Niche Theory of Birth Order effect [7]. This theory proposed that siblings of a family acquire multiple personality traits like extroversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, in order to lessen competition and to increase cooperation among them.

A multinational study held by Roher, Egloff and Schmukle concluded that birth order has no observable effect on four personality traits (neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness) but little effect on openness, intelligence [8]. Study clarify that the elder sibling has more intelligence than younger one with difference of 0.4, but this is too less to consider. So, it is noted that birth order has no effect on personality traits. Jung explained extroversion as a quote, "Our energy moves toward the outer world of people, places and things; the world outside of us."

All the persons based on this world's categories on their birth order. However, research gave the idea that independent personality differences rely on birth order also multiple elements is essential for person personality growth, for instance family environment, socio economic values, and biopsychosocial model, etc.

Birth order and Extraversion

Studies show the connection between personality trait and 2 dimensions of birth order extroversion and introversion [9]. The result of this whole process is that the first child is not so much an extroversion as contrast to second and last child [10]. Because the latter ones are more interested in making social relationships and have a quite strong bond with peers and friends.

Birth order and Intelligence

Damian and Roberts, illustrate how birth order effect intelligence. According to them, the first child has a small portion of more intelligence than the middle and last child [11]. It consists of only 0.6 IQ point. So, there is no significant different in first child and last child. Also, the relationship of birth order on mental health, self-esteem and, resilience and happiness on Japanese little children was seen [12]. Middle children are little bit happier, and they are closer to their friend rather than parent. The first born is a role model of younger sibling and also acts as a second mother. That's why these consequences develop sibling jealousy, emotional disturbance, lower self-esteem, and behavior problems [13]. Older children are influenced when parents treat both children differently. It is not necessarily for older child to play a role model for younger child.

Conclusion

Birth order theory explains the role of siblings. Last born among siblings is no less than a blessing, as he or she has to face less mental illness. Also, it is elaborated that the first born is high on neuroticism rate. Adjustment issues with first born also started because now the second born is center of attention for parents. Intelligence level of first born is more than the lateral but difference is minor. Furthermore, it is concluded that Second child is more extrovert than the first born. While talking about the middle child has been seen he or she is less happy among siblings and have strong bond with friends rather than parents. Overall conclusion elaborated that birth order has no significant effect on personality, but in some cases the little bit effect is noticed.

References

- [1] Shulman BH, Mosak HH. Birth order and ordinal position: Two Adlerian views. *Journal of Individual Psychology*. 1977 May 1;33(1):114-21.
- [2] Shah MD, Jadav M. To what extent does birth order affect our personality. *International Journal of Social Impact*. 2016 Sep 25;1(3):85-95.
- [3] Damian RI, Roberts BW. Settling the debate on birth order and personality. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 2015 Nov 17;112(46):14119-20.
- [4] Hailey Sorensen. "A Look At The Affects Of Birth Order On Personality, Mental Health, Intelligence, SelfEsteem, Happiness, And Resilience" (2024). *Psychology Student Publications*. 36. <https://commons.und.edu/psych-stu/36>
- [5] Kaemra T, Singh S. Influence of birth order on personality and adjustment in young adults. *International journal of Indian psychology*. 2021;9(2):11-9.
- [6] McFadyen A. *Special care babies and their developing relationships*. Routledge; 2019 Oct 25.
- [7] Black SE, Grönqvist E, Öckert B. Born to lead? The effect of birth order on noncognitive abilities. *Review of Economics and Statistics*. 2018 May 1;100(2):274-86.
- [8] Saher N, Khan RM, Saleem M. Relationship between birth order and personality trait (extroversion). *Canadian Journal of Educational and Social Studies*. 2022 Jan 1;2(1):1-5.
- [9] Jehanzeb M, Khan MR, Saleem M, Malik N. The Effect of Birth Order on Personality Trait (Extroversion). *Pakistan Review of Social Sciences (PRSS)*. 2024 Feb 18;5(1):14-20.
- [10] Saher N, Khan RM, Saleem M. Relationship between birth order and personality trait (extroversion). *Canadian Journal of Educational and Social Studies*. 2022 Jan 1;2(1):1-5.
- [11] Damian RI, Roberts BW. The associations of birth order with personality and intelligence in a representative sample of US high school students. *Journal of Research in Personality*. 2015 Oct 1;58:96-105.
- [12] Fukuya Y, Fujiwara T, Isumi A, Ochi M. Association of birth order with mental health problems, self-esteem, resilience, and happiness among children: results from a-child study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 2021 Apr 14;12:638088.
- [13] Black SE, Grönqvist E, Öckert B. Born to lead? The effect of birth order on noncognitive abilities. *Review of Economics and Statistics*. 2018 May 1;100(2):274-86.