

Birth Order and Personality

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ABSTRACT

The present study is exploring the personality trait of different birth orders. Sample of the study consisted 60 college students of different birth order (20 first born, middle born, last born). Their age ranged between 17- 26 years. Their education was at least graduation and above. Selected subjects were tested by questionnaire method their psychological dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness to assess personality traits NEO-FFI questionnaire was used. Collected data was analyzed by using ANOVA. Finding reveals that there was significant difference between different birth orders on personality traits.

Keywords: *Birth Order, Firstborn, Middle Born, Lastborn, Personality Traits, Big Five Factor of Personality, Neuroticism, Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Extraversion.*

Personality is the combination of characteristics or quality that forms an individual's distinctive character. Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behavior and thought (Allport, 1961). According to Eysenck (1964) personality is more or less stable and enduring organization of a person character, temperament, intellect, and physique that determine his unique adjustment to the environment. Personality is shaped as a result of family influences, socio- cultural factors, education, early life experiences, environmental exposure, gender, birth order, and several factor others. (Sangeeta Rath and Stuti Das, 2015). Psychologist has described many theories of personality that differentiate one person from another. State theory of personality emphasis the role of nurture and environmental influences. Biological theories emphasis the internal physiological and genetics factors that influence personality. Trait theories of personality imply personality is biologically based. There are many trait theories , such as Eysenck's personality theory , Allport trait theory (Saul Meleod, 2014) , but in resent year researchers have identified five fundamental traits that are especially relevant and are commonly known as the 'Big Five ' personality traits(Sangeeta Rath and Stuti Das, 2015). Personality is described in the term of five broad traits, often labeled as

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neuroticism, *Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extraversion* (Costa and McCrae, 1992).

Neuroticism, people who have high on neuroticism worry frequently and easily slip into anxiety and depression, and who low on neuroticism tend to be emotionally stable. **Extraversion**, the more of an extrovert someone is, the more of a socially butterfly they are. Extroverts are chatty, sociable and draw energy from crowds. **Openness**; people who are high on openness enjoy adventure. They are curious and appreciate art, imagination and new things. People low on openness is just the opposite: they prefer to stick to their habits, avoid new experiences. **Agreeableness** measure the extent of a person's warmth and kindness. The more agreeable someone is the more likely they are to be trusting, helpful, and compassionate. Disagreeable people are cold and suspicious of others, and they are less likely to cooperate. **Conscientiousness**, people who are conscientious are organized and have a strong sense go duty. They are dependable, disciplined and achievement focused. People low on conscientiousness is more spontaneous and freewheeling. They may tend toward carelessness (Staphanie Pappas, 2013).

Psychodynamic theory of personality explain human behavior in term of the interaction of various components of personality, such as Sigmund Freud theory, Erik Erikson theory of psychosocial development and Alfred Adler theory (Inferiority and birth order) (Sarah Mae Sincero,2012). Adler developed theories of personality that focused o therapist's need to understand on individual within the context of social environment .according to Adler, character traits and behaviors derive primarily from developmental issues , including birth order (Ellen Swanson Topnes, 2014)

Firstborns

Characteristics: perfectionist, reliable, conscientious, list-makers, well-organized, critical, serious, scholarly; achiever, self-sacrificing, people-pleaser, conservative, supporter of law and order, believer in authority and ritual, legalistic, loyal, and self-reliant (Graham .J, 1914).

Middle-Born

The general characteristics of the middle-born child are the most varied and contradictory of all the birth positions. Characteristics may include being a mediator or one who avoids conflict, being independent and extremely loyal to a peer group, and frequently being the child in the family who gets "lost." This child may be shy and quiet or friendly and outgoing, impatient and easily frustrated or laid back, taking life in stride. A middle-born may be very competitive or very easygoing, the family "black sheep" or the peacemaker. (Graham .J, 1914)

Last-Born

Youngest children in the family are typically the outgoing charmers, the personable manipulators. They are also affectionate, uncomplicated, and sometimes a little absent-minded. Their "space cadet" approach to life gets laughs, smiles and shakes of the head. A

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typical characteristic of the last-born is that he is more carefree and vivacious — a real “people person” who is usually popular in spite of (because of?) his clowning (Graham .J, 1914).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Klein,S (1984) reveals that Firstborns are less extraverted than middle born and lastborns. Jefferson tyrone, Jefferson Herbs &McCrae (1998) found that Last born scored higher on extraversion than firstborn. Firstborns scored higher on C, Laterborns scored higher on A and O Sulloway (1999).

Paulhus, Trapnell &Chen (1999) reveals that last born scored higher on extraversion than firstborn. Firstborns scored higher on C, Later borns scored higher on A and O. Michalski & Shackelford (2002) reveals that Firstborns scored significantly lower on A than later borns. Firstborns scored significantly higher than second borns on C Healey & Ellis (2007). Firstborns rated higher on C and second borns were rated higher on O. Healey, M.(2008). Badger & Reddy (2009) found in his study Firstborns scored significantly higher on C than later borns. Emily Merin Cole(2013)found that Firstborn scored significantly higher on C than last born, Middle born scored lower than both first and lastborn in N, Oldest and younger born scored significantly higher than middle born on E & O. Grace wong & Chew ying (2016) reveals that Middle born scored higher on A & O than first and last born.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

- To find out the differences of personality traits(neuroticism, Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extraversion) on first born , middle born , and last born.

Hypothesis

H1- Firstborn would significantly higher on C

H2- Last born would significantly higher A & O than middle born and firstborn.

H3- Middle born would significantly higher on E and lower on N than firstborn and lastborn.

Sample

A total sample of 77 adolescence and early adults of different birth order were selected randomly from various colleges of Bhiwani (Haryana) .There education is above 12th standard. The sample selected was in the age range of 17-26.

Parameter	Variable	N
Education qualification	U.G & P.G.	77
Age group	17-19	22
	20-22	25
	23-26	30
Birth order	First born	26

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Parameter	Variable	N
	Middle born	32
	Lastborn	19

Research Design

Multi group design was used in the current study.

Tool

1. NEO-FFI questionnaire [McCrae and Costa, 1992] was used as a tool of data collection. This is self – administered questionnaire in which the participant bases their responses on their personality. The 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) was developed to provide a concise measure of the five basic personality factors (Costa & McCrae, 1989). For each scale, 12 items were selected from the pool of 180 NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) items, chiefly on the basis of their correlations with validimax factor scores (McCrae & Costa, 1989). The instrument uses a five-point Likert response format. Two-week retest reliability is uniformly high, ranging from 0.86 to 0.90 for the five scales (Robins, Fraley, Roberts, & Trzesniewski, 2001), and internal consistency ranges from 0.68 to 0.86 (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The NEO-FFI has been translated into several different languages and shown validity and utility in a number of different contexts; it is one of the most widely used measures of the Five-Factor Model (Pytlik Zillig, Hemenover, & Dienstbier, 2002).

Table no.10 shows description of NEO- five factor inventory (FFI)

S.NO.	Factors	Item numbers
A	Neuroticism	12
B	Extraversion	12
C	Openness	12
D	Agreeableness	12
E	Conscientiousness	12

Procedure

For the present study the Researcher individually contacted students during their college hours by prior appointment from the teachers of concerned college authorities. The objectives of the study were clearly explained to the participants. After establishing sufficient rapport with them, the tools for study were administered. After making clear about the study they filled the bio-data sheet. The students were requested to read the structured instructions carefully provided for answering each scale before giving their response. They were assured that the response would be kept confidential and used for study for Research purpose only. They were given the NEO- Five factor inventory. The researcher administrated the questionnaire to 77 college students. After obtaining the response of the subjects, scoring was done accordingly to the guidelines specified in the test manuals.

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Ethical consideration

The aim of the study was clearly defined to the participants and the participation was fully voluntary. Consequently, participants fully agreed to take part in the study. In addition, participants were told that they can withdraw at any time if they feel to do so. During the data collection process, privacy was maintained and confidentiality of information was assured.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS 20 was used to test the hypothesis of the present investigation.

RESULT

Summary table of Mean, S.D, and one way ANOVA.

		N	MEAN	S.D	F	Sig.
N	F	26	23.11	4.60	5.696	.004
	M	19	21.26	6.56		
	L	32	22.88	5.70		
E	F	26	27.00	4.77	.525	.594
	M	19	28.37	5.39		
	L	32	27.03	4.96		
O	F	26	25.30	4.83	.197	.822
	M	19	25.00	5.37		
	L	32	24.59	2.96		
A	F	26	26.56	3.94	.196	.822
	M	19	27.37	4.55		
	L	32	27.09	5.02		
C	F	26	29.63	4.58	.681	.509
	M	19	30.79	4.74		
	L	32	29.13	5.33		

Note: - N = Neuroticism, O = Openness, A = Agreeableness, E = Extraversion, C = Conscientiousness

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to find out the correlation between birth order and personality traits. For this purpose ANOVA was used. A total of 77 adolescent and early adults of three groups (firstborn, middle born, last born) were evaluated on the NEO-FFI. Our hypothesis is partially accepted here, that there would be a significant difference between birth order and personality. The present study found that firstborn is higher on the dimension of neuroticism than others. This finding is accord some previous research. In one study Emily Merin Cole (2013) found that Middle born scored lower than both first and lastborn in N. We found in this study that significant correlation between birth order and personality present only one dimension. On the other dimensions there are no correlation found. This finding is also accord some previous research. In one study Buunk (1997) evaluated 200 Dutch adults and reported no correlation between birth order and personality. Jefferson Herbs & McCrae (1998) evaluated 9664 US adults and reported no correlation between birth order and personality. Phillips (1998) also found no correlation between birth order and personality. It is, because

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personality is shaped not by birth order only, but family influence, gender, location, early experiences, socio- economic factors, education, and environmental exposures also have.

Practical Implications of the Study

1. The finding of the present study can be useful to researchers working on similar topics.
2. This research can be used by parents for parenting of different birth orders.

Suggestions for Parenting of Different Birth Orders (Natlae Lorenzi, 2017)

1. Firstborn's parenting – while you are doing extra responsibilities to your oldest, grant some privileges, too, like a later bed time.
2. Middle child's parenting – respect his need for peers. Create opportunities for him to meet new friends at the park or playmates.
3. Lastborn child's parenting – last born often feel they are not taken seriously. Let them make some family decisions. And give the youngest child some responsibilities.

Limitations

1. The data has been collected from only bhiwani city, thus the results could not be generalized.
2. There are possible demographic predictors that were not included in this study, and thus, prevent discovering some important data. This support further analysis and replication with this kind of prediction.

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