

Responsibility Attitude between First Borns and Later Borns

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Abstract: The current study was to study the significant difference between the responsibility attitude of first born and second born children. For the purpose of this study sample of 40 participants (20 first born and 20 second born children) were selected within the age range of 19-45 years. The sample was administered to the Responsibility Attitude Scale (RAS) by Salkovskis (2000). For statistical analysis independent sample t-test were used which drew out the results stated there is an insignificant difference between the responsibility attitude of first born and second born children, that provide evidence to reject the hypothesis mentioned in the study.

Keywords: Birth order, first born, later borns, parental concerns.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 MEANING

Birth order refers to the order in which a child is born in his/her family; examples are first-born and second-borns. It is often believed that the birth order has a profound and lasting impact on psychological development. It is believed that the birth order influences many aspects of one's personality.

1.2 THEORY

Alfred Adler was one of the first to theorise about the differences that birth order could make in the field of psychology. The first to discuss the influence of birth order on personality development was Adler, the founder of Individual Psychology. While he identified common features and patterns for specific positions in the birth order, he emphasized how each individual has a self-perceived place in his or her family. This perceived position may or may not be the person's chronological place of the individual in the family. Alfred Adler thought that there was a direct association between birth order and personality characteristics.

- First-borns are believed to be more conservative. They are perceived as leaders who respect laws. They submit themselves to authority. They are also more competitive and often more conforming than other birth order roles. Adler suggested that first-borns appeared to be more inspired than later-borns to succeed. Typically, they are excellent at pleasing adults and acting in ways that are socially acceptable. Usually, they stick to laws and demand the same from others.
- Middle-borns are known to be more insurgent and more likely to challenge authority. They also have a tougher time in the family finding their place of impotence. They are also the peacemakers in the family, because of their middle position, and become negotiating experts. They grow to be competitive because, when trying to stay ahead of younger siblings, they have to keep up with their older siblings. The middle child was especially at risk of being discouraged, Adler claimed. The second child must find a way to calculate the firstborn's achievements or find a place of importance through other means. For example, if the firstborn finds significance through academic achievement and happiness, the second can compete with the older sibling or find significance through another field such as sports, music, or the ability to establish good social relationships.

Adler described youngest siblings are often regarded as pampered, dependent, immature, and irresponsible. They seem to be more sociable and get the most attention generally. Others do things for them sometimes. To their benefit, they learn to use this and also use charm and manipulation to get people to do things for them. Adler described only children as being often the center of attention and seeking more than peers for attention from adults. Only children, especially in groups of their peers, are often leaders and have a more difficult time going along with others. They generally hold emotions of entitlement. The carefulness that comes from the intense amount of attention they get growing up is a common trait of an only child. Independence, sociability, responsibility, and thoughtfulness are believed to be traits associated with the only child role.

1.3 PARENTAL CONCERNS

- First-borns- Firstborns often feel pressure, either from parents or from their own internal drives, to achieve or perform well. Since they are responsible, they are also called on to take care of younger siblings or do chores. Firstborns also feel pressure on their siblings to be good examples. Some first-borns can display aggressive or dominant behaviour when put in leadership or mentoring roles with their younger siblings. They can boss or lord it over their brothers or sisters around them. Such activities can also be transferred to the school setting, rendering these children uncooperative towards their colleagues. To ensure that these kids learn to lead with compassion while respecting the feelings of other people, parents should track leadership behaviour.
- Second Borns and Middle borns- Secondborns and intermediate children often feel invisible. Parents ought to make a special effort in family conversations to seek out their views. It helps them feel like they matter and are as relevant as firstborns or lastborns to find out what unique talents or interests these kids have and support them through classes or events.
- Last borns- Youngest children are typically not really responsible because the opportunity has not been offered to them. By giving even the youngest child some responsibility, such as setting the table or placing clean clothes in their dresser drawers, parents will promote responsibility and self-reliance.
- Only children- Parents need to help their only children socialize with other children. By accepting it itself, they also need to help them recognise imperfection in themselves and others. Parents need to help these children cultivate empathy and comprehension of distinctions in others in order to avoid only children from being rescuers.

1.4 EXCEPTIONS TO THIS STRUCTURE

- Blended Family- Blended families that result from divorce and remarriage. The child would have to share their parents with step-siblings or half-siblings in this situation, throwing off their sense of equilibrium. Firstborn children may be forced away from their places by an older stepchild, or a newborn may have to share time with the youngest.
- Families within Families- Families within families include cases like twins, in which there is no clear birth order for either child. Twins often act as a family, whether born first, in the middle or as the youngest. This is why twins, generally referred to as such rather than by their names, are typically considered a single entity. They do not fit into the birth order, choosing a special place of their own.
- Gap Children- These children, repeating the birth order pattern, are born at least five to six years apart. For example, a five-year-old middle child with a twelve-year-old and one-year-old sibling, for instance, is more likely than a middle-born to inherit the personality of a firstborn.
- Adopted Child- Adoption is equivalent to the absence of children. When taken in by a family of two older children, say, if the adopted child is really young, then they will immediately become the family's infant, regardless of their actual birth order. But if, when adopted into a family of older children, the infant is over six years old, they will maintain the characteristics of their original birth order.

1.5 BIRTH ORDER AND SIBLING COMPETITION

In the natural world, sibling rivalry is widespread, and often finishes in siblicide. The results of such contests are influenced by the order of birth among siblings, since it is a proxy for differences in age, size, power, and opportunity. In our own species, the order of birth combines with the extended duration of dependency on parents during childhood to foster variations in parental investment. Furthermore, in rivalry with each other, siblings frequently occupy various niches within the family and employ various tactics. These diverse experiences affect personality, sentiments about the family, motivational habits, and attitudes more broadly. Historically, in many social customs, including occupational choices, reproductive opportunities, inheritance practices, and royal succession, the birth order has long been significant. In promoting and resisting progressive social and scientific movements, the birth order has also been implicated. While numerous studies have well documented the persistence of birth order effects in adulthood, the degree and magnitude of these effects remains controversial. Systematic sibling variations are typically less pronounced compared with their well-documented manifestations within the family when presented in non-family contexts. Moreover, such birth order effects also involve elicitation in order to manifest themselves in extrafamilial contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Alan E Stewart (2012) conducted studies using actual birth order (ABO) and psychological birth order (PBO), which is one's perceived birth order. In terms of observed effect sizes, the author contrasted the use of ABO and PBO in researching irrational relationship values, perfectionism and personality. In the PBO relationship, this had a greater influence than in the ABO relationship.

Richard L Zweigenhaft et al (2000) in their study, predicted that those who were imprisoned would have a higher proportion of later births than a group of their peers who had not engaged in civil disobedience. The researchers discovered a correlation between the number of times the students were arrested and their birth order.

W. Scott Terry (1989) obtained birth order information on 79 prominent figures in the history of Psychology. The first born or only child made up nearly 52% of all subjects. The same proportion of first and later borns is found when criteria such as APA presidency or election to the National Academy of Sciences were used. According to the results, firstborns are more likely to complete college and graduate education, helping them to pursue careers where they can reach eminence.

Emma Beck et al. (2006) made 96 undergraduate and graduate students complete a 12- item extraversion scale based on the NEO Five Factor Inventory to score themselves and their siblings. Firstborns ranked higher on the facet of supremacy, whereas secondborns ranked higher on the facet of sociability, according to t-tests.

Julia M Rohrer et al. (2015) in their study, the predicted hypothesis of a birth order impact on intelligence was verified. There were no major variations in mental maturity, agreeableness, conscientiousness, or ingenuity dependent on birth order. Outside of the academic sphere, birth order was found to have no enduring impact on diverse personality traits.

Frank J. Sulloway (1995) conducted a meta-analytic analysis of the birth order relationship. He compiled a number of studies on the subject and conducted that the effects of birth order on personality and IQ are greatly exaggerated.

3. METHOD:

3.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the present study is to identify the significant difference between the responsibility attitude of first born and second born children.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

To study the difference between the responsibility attitude of first born and second born children.

3.3 HYPOTHESIS

The main hypothesis for the study is-
First borns have more responsibility than second borns.

3.4 SAMPLING TOOLS

RAS: Responsibility Attitude Scale-

This questionnaire was given by Salkovskis (2000). This questionnaire lists different attitudes or beliefs which people sometimes hold. Such attitudes should reflect the more generalized tendency to assume responsibility in a given situation, particularly situations involving intrusions and doubts. The RAS has 26 items with 7 options each, starting from 'Totally Disagree' to 'Totally Agree'.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The sample consisting of 40 adults who meet the criteria were included in the study where 20 participants were first borns and 20 were second borns.

The population to be studied consisted of subjects who have siblings. Sample was randomly selected and the questionnaire was distributed through Google forms.

3.6 INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Adults aged 19-45

- Adults who had siblings.
- Adults who are able to read, speak and understand English.

3.7 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Participants who are single children.

3.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Independent sample t-test

4. RESULT:

Results in table 1 reveal that there is insignificant difference in the responsibility attitude of first-borns and second-borns. The results indicate that the score is higher for first-borns than the score of second-borns. The mean difference between participants of both groups is insignificant at 0.05 level, “t”= 2.02, (P>0.05). The mean and SD of first-borns is 131.25 and 303.9 respectively and the mean and SD of second-borns is 123.55 and 331.3 respectively.

Results in the table reveal that there is a significant difference in the responsibility attitude of males and females. The result indicates that the score is higher for females than the score of males. The mean difference between participants of both groups is significant at 0.05 level, “t=2.024”, (P<0.05). The mean and SD of males is 129.3 and 261.06 respectively and the mean and SD of females is 140.65 and 282.87 respectively.

5. DISCUSSIONS :

Results of the study reveal minimum differences between the responsibility attitude of first borns and second borns. The results of the existing study are similar to studies conducted by Ernst and Angst (1983) who reported that many birth order studies are both confounding and poorly executed. Other studies conducted on the same variables (Julia M Rohrer et al. 2015) concluded that birth order does not have a lasting effect on broad personality traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeability and openness to change. Studies conducted by Frank Sulloway (1995) concluded that birth order influences on personality and IQ have been widely overrated.

However, some studies do show that there are significant differences in personality traits like dominance and sociability between first borns and second borns (Emma Beck et al. 2006). Similarly, studies by Richard et al. (2000) revealed that there is a significant relationship between the number of times first-borns and second borns have been arrested.

The possible explanation to insignificant differences between the responsibility attitude of first borns and second borns may be the changing role of siblings in the society. In earlier times, the males of the family had to go out for work and the females were usually busy in the household chores. So the responsibility of taking care of the younger siblings was usually on the older one. Now the times have evolved and we have day care services, creches, nanny services to take care of young children. Moreover, the older children have their own duties such as going to their own schools. Another possible explanation to this is reduced family sizes. Earlier when people used to have five or six children commonly, the responsibility of all the siblings came to the eldest one. Now, with efficient family planning mindsets, couples have one or two offsprings, so the responsibility is not as high as it was earlier.

TABLE NO.1- FIRST BORN AND SECOND BORN

	MEAN	SD	t test
First-borns	131.25	303.9	2.02
Second-borns	123.55	331.3	

TABLE NO.2- MALES AND FEMALES

	MEAN	SD	t-test
Males	129.3	261.06	2.024
Females	140.65	282.87	

6. CONCLUSION:

There is no study available that has studied the responsibility attitude between first borns and later borns. However, there are many past studies available in which the researchers have tried to find differences between various personality traits of first and later borns. The present study was conducted to find differences between the responsibility

attitude of first and later borns. Findings revealed that the differences between the responsibility attitude of the two are insignificant. The findings of the present study were in line with many similarly conducted studies (Sulloway, 1995; Rohrer, 2015; Stewart, 1998).

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