

# STUDY OF PERSONALITY IN RELATION TO BIRTH ORDER AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*Education is conceived as a powerful agency which is instrumental in bringing about the desired changes in an individual's life. Education helps in developing all the aspects of individuality namely physical, mental, moral, emotional, social and spiritual. Much of the transformation in the Personality is experienced at the age of adolescence. Various determinants of personality lead to development of a unique personality. Among the various factors affecting personality the most talked about factor is the birth order of an individual in his family. Through this study an attempt was made to ascertain the influence of order of birth on the various dimensions of personality. A descriptive survey research method was adopted to conduct this study. For this a random sample of 150 senior secondary schools was taken from the district Ludhiana. On the basis of their birth order students were classified into first born and second born. Differential Personality Inventory by Bhargava (2006) was used as a primary assessment tool. Results of the study clearly depict significant differences among the first born and second born on various dimensions of personality except Activity-Passivity and Suspicious-Trust dimensions.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Personality, Determinants, Birth order

It is commonly accepted that personality is affected by a combination of environmental and genetic influences (Jang, Livesley and Vernon, 1996; Beer & Horn, 2000). It is this combination of variables that makes siblings within the same family different from one another (Plomin and Daniels, 1987). The difference in sibling position and the impact it has on an individual's personality remains a topic of debate and results in empirical research are varied. Adler (1956) was one of the first theorists to use birth order positions in his conceptualization of clients. The order an individual is born within the family has a profound and long-lasting influence upon the formation of his/her personality and behavior.

"Birth order is the single most obvious factor that makes the shared family environment different for each sibling" (Sulloway, 1995). Birth order is a composite variable that incorporates siblings' differences in terms of age, power, and privilege (Sulloway, 1996). Thus, birth order represents a comprehensive and realistic means to better understand individuals.

Research has shown that oldest children are

more likely to be natural leaders, perfectionists, and hard working. Middle children are more likely to be secretive about feelings, independent, and diplomatic. Youngest children are more likely to be rebellious, outgoing, and spoiled.

While many studies have found no evidence of birth order effects (Schooler, 1972; Ernst and Angst, 1983; Plomin and Daniels, 1987; Bouchard and McGue, 1990; Beer and Horn, 2000; Michalski and Shackelford, 2001) others have found differences in both intelligence (Zajonc, 2001) and personality (Sulloway, 1996; Paulhus, Chen and Trapnell, 1988; Beck, Burnet and Vosper, 2006; Dixon, Reyes, Leppert and Pappas, 2008).

## Emergence of the Problem

The broader aim of education is preparing the learners for harmonious Living. There are a number of factors like Physique, Physical attractiveness, order of birth, Culture, Home, School and Social factors that have been found important in the personality development of adolescent learners.

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Some of these are important in childhood and continue to be important in adolescence. Among these the birth order is gaining prominence in recent years. As it is now believed that not only the physical, psychological and social environment that surrounds an adolescent but also the order in which he gets a place in his family may have lasting influence on his personality. Many research attempts have been made in this direction but no clear cut picture has been emerged so far. (Pickhardt, 2009; Wilson, 2009; Blair, 2011; Damian and Roberts, 2015, Gilmore, 2016). While many studies have found no evidence of birth order effects (Schooler, 1972; Ernst & Angst, 1983; Plomin and Daniels, 1987; Bouchard and McGue, 1990; Beer and Horn, 2000; Michalski & Shackelford, 2002) others have found differences in both intelligence (Zajonc, 2001) and personality (Sulloway, 1996; Paulhus, Chen and Trapnell, 1999; Beck, Burnet and Vosper, 2006; Dixon, Reyes, Leppert and Pappas, 2008). So the present study is undertaken which will certainly give a new perspective to the researchers on personality and also help the educationists to have a broader outlook of personality and its determinants.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study personality of the adolescents
2. To study birth order of the adolescents
3. To find the difference in the mean scores of adolescents on various dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.

### Hypotheses of the Study

1. There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Activity-Passivity dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
2. There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Enthusiastic-non-enthusiastic dimensions of personality with respect to birth order
3. There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Assertive Submissive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
4. There will be a significant difference in the

mean scores of adolescents on Suspicious-trusting dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.

5. There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Depressive-non depressive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
6. There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Emotional instability-emotional stability dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.

### Design of the Study

The aim of the present study was to study personality in relation to birth order among adolescents and to seek the difference among adolescents on various personality dimensions on the basis of birth order.

To meet the above objectives of the study, descriptive survey method of research was used for collection of data and various descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for the analysis and interpretation of data. t-ratio was worked out to test the significance of difference between mean scores with respect to birth order (first born and second born).

### Sample

For the present study a sample of 150 adolescents were selected randomly according to the birth order (first and second born) from senior secondary schools of Ludhiana district.

### Tool Used

Differential Personality Inventory by Bhargava (2006)

### Results and Discussions

To investigate the significance of difference between the means, if any, of Personality of Secondary School students on the basis of type of birth order (First birth order and second birth order), the variables were assessed in terms of their scores in the test and t-test was employed.

**Table 1: Significance of The Difference Between**

**Mean Scores of Personality (Activity-Passivity Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.69	2.89	0.424	1.62 (N.S)
Second Order	75	13	2.31		

(N.S) – Non Significant

Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Activity-Passivity Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.69 and 13 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.89 and 2.31 respectively. The t-ratio is 1.62, which is not significant. This revealed that no significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Activity-Passivity Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the hypothesis **1(a)** stating that ‘There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Activity-Passivity dimensions of personality with respect to birth order’ stands rejected.

**Table 2: Significance of The Difference Between Mean Scores of Personality (Enthusiastic- Non-enthusiastic Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.54	2.85	0.424	2.66**
Second Order	75	12.41	2.45		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 2 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Enthusiastic- Non-enthusiastic Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.54 and 12.41 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.85 and 2.45 respectively. The t-ratio is 2.66, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Enthusiastic- Non-enthusiastic Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the hypothesis **1(b)** stating that ‘There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Enthusiastic –non –enthusiastic dimensions of personality with respect to birth order’

stands accepted.

**Table 3: Significance of The Difference Between Mean Scores of Personality (Assertive-Submissive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.68	2.54	0.412	2.59**
Second Order	75	12.61	2.68		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 3 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Assertive-Submissive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.68 and 12.61 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.54 and 2.68 respectively. The t-ratio is 2.59, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Assertive-Submissive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the hypothesis **1(c)** stating that ‘There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Assertive-Submissive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order’ stands accepted.

**Table 4: Significance of The Difference Between Mean Scores of Personality (Suspicious-Trusting Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.66	2.86	0.479	1.27 (N.S)
Second Order	75	13.05	3.15		

(N.S) – Non Significant

Table 4 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Suspicious-Trusting Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.66 and 13.05 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.86 and 3.15 respectively. The t-ratio is 1.27, which is not significant. This revealed that no significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Suspicious-Trusting Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the hypothesis **1(d)** stating that ‘There will be a significant difference in the mean scores

of adolescents on Suspicious-trusting dimensions of personality with respect to birth order' stands rejected.

**Table 5: Significance of The Difference Between Mean Scores of Personality (Depressive-Non-depressive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.4	2.97	0.458	3.01**
Second Order	75	12.02	2.84		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 5 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Depressive-Non-depressive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.40 and 12.02 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.97 and 2.84 respectively. The t-ratio is 3.01, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Depressive-Non-depressive Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the hypothesis 1(e) stating that 'There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Depressive-non depressive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order' stands accepted.

**Table 6: Significance of The Difference Between Mean Scores of Personality (Emotional Instability - Emotional Stability Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order (N=150)**

Birth Order	N	M	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio
First order	75	13.54	2.68	0.435	3.90**
Second Order	75	11.84	2.85		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 6 revealed that the mean scores of Personality (Emotional Instability -Emotional Stability Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order are 13.54 and 11.84 for first and second birth order respectively and their standard deviations are 2.68 and 2.85 respectively. The t-ratio is 3.90, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of Personality (Emotional Instability -Emotional Stability Dimensions) of secondary school students on basis of birth order. Therefore the

hypothesis 1(f) stating that 'There will be a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Emotional instability-emotional stability dimensions of personality with respect to birth order' stands accepted.

## Conclusions

- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Activity-Passivity dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
- There is a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Enthusiastic –non –enthusiastic dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
- There is a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Assertive-Submissive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Suspicious-trusting dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
- There is a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Depressive-non depressive dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.
- There is a significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents on Emotional instability-emotional stability dimensions of personality with respect to birth order.

## Educational Implications

A research study in education without its implications in practical teaching learning situation can never be a study of excellence. After drawing conclusions of the present study, the researcher was in position to discuss implications of the findings of the present study.

The objectives of the study in hand were to ascertain whether birth order affect the personality of the adolescents differently. From the present investigation it is quite clear that adolescents differ from each other in expression of certain personality traits with respect to birth order. In certain dimensions namely Enthusiastic – Non –enthusiastic, Assertive – Submissive, Suspicious – Trusting,

Depressive – Non-depressive and Emotional Instability – emotional stability, first born have higher mean score as compare to second born adolescents.

It clearly indicates that first born are more enthusiastic, assertive, more prone to depressive symptoms and are higher in emotional instability as compare to second born. The reason may be that the first born assumes the responsibility of leadership due to their status in the family and they become more assertive but they are also low in emotional stability and more prone to depressive symptoms. It can be due to the dominance tendency in them which sometimes can make them emotionally unstable and depressive, when their dominance is not accepted. So the study demands that first born should be trained well in their emotional expression and they should be advised to see the life in a positive way in case of failure. It is the foremost responsibility of the parents as well as school and society to overcome problems faced by the first born.

As well as second born are concerned, they are lower in enthusiasm and assertiveness. This may be due to their ordinal position. So findings reveal the need to be provide training in assertiveness. Without assertiveness they cannot have access to their rights and the parents can play an important role in this learning. It was also found out that second born are not much enthusiastic as compare to first born. It may be due to their dependence on their elder ones in the family. So a need arises to develop a feeling of enthusiasm and positivity among the second born so that they can spend their life in healthy way.

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