



IMPACT OF BIRTH ORDER ON STRESS

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ABSTRACT Birth order has great impact on Stress of the children. The present study was conducted with the aim to impact of birth order on stress among first born and last born. Hindu and Muslim 12th class students of Ranchi. A total number of 400 students of class 11th and 12th studying in different schools were included in the sample. Sinha Anxiety Scale (Developed and standardized by Prof. Durganand Sinha 1976) was used in to assess the measuring Stress. The t-test revealed that there was significant difference in stress of first born and last born children.

KEYWORDS : Stress, Birth order, School students.

Introduction:

Modern life with its quick pace, occupational achievements, personal ambitions, social process, and our orientations to sedentary mental work presents almost all of us with constantly stressful situations. Now days the word stress is used very frequently. Term like Tension, Anxiety, Frustration, Distress are used as synonyms of stress. The role of students in cannot be neglected in building nation. The role of students in developing a country is huge. We cannot expect a country to develop if it doesn't have literate people. These students who are studying would be working tomorrow. Advancement and current problem in educational setup of our country. The present study will help to explore the level of anxiety burdening the school going children.

Stress is a term in psychology, borrowed from physics and engineering. It was first used in the biological context in the 1930s, which has in more recent decades become commonly used in popular parlance. It refers to the consequence of the failure of an organism-human or other animal- to respond adequately to mental, emotional, or physical demands, whether actual or imagined.

Stress is a consequences of or a general response to an action or situation that places special physical psychological demands, or both on a person. As such, stress involves an interaction of the person and the environment that causes stress is called stressors. Stressors can take various forms, but all stressors have one thing in common, in both situations it depends on the individual perception level.

Review of literature

Stress can be external and related to the environment, but may also be created by internal perceptions that cause an individual to have anxiety or other negative emotions surrounding a situation, such as pressure, discomfort, etc, which they deem stressful. Humans experience stress, or perceive thing as threatening, when they do not believe that their resources for coping with obstacles (stimuli, people, situations, etc.) are enough for what the circumstances demand. when we think the demands being placed on us exceed our ability to cope, we perceive stress.

Neuropsychological studies have attempted to correlate the birth of a younger brother, described as a particularly traumatic experience for first born children, aged two to three years, with the status of the older child's immune system function. Decrease in effectiveness of immune function such as expression of T3 and T4 lymphocytes and phagocytises, beginning in the period preceding the birth of the younger sibling was documented (Rosaschino et al., 1991-92). Although this was a preliminary investigation with a very small sample size, these findings may demonstrate a potential physiological repercussion (Lederman, 1996) of the anxiety a first born may experience when faced with the prospect of dethronement.

Sibling rivalry has been well documented and is integral to the possible effects of birth order on personality development. If findings such as these are replicated, it may prompt greater emphasis on promotion of positive parenting styles which have been shown to attenuate a great deal of the potentially detrimental effects of sibling rivalry (Bischoff & Tingstrom, 1991).

Some researchers frustrated with the conflicting information obtained from birth order studies have turned to analyzing family size, a variable deemed more stable, with greater possibility of replication (Zajonc et al., 1979). It also controls for some differences in economic environment. Children in small families are more likely to be raised in similar periods of parents' life cycle (Travis & Kohli, 1995).

Some researchers have abandoned birth order as an independent explanatory variable and delegated it to the status of an important marker variable (Elliott, 1992). In isolation it is not seen as exerting a powerful influence, however when combined with other factors affecting the family, some differences may emerge (Elliott, 1992).

Abandoning ordinal birth order analysis for investigation of psychological birth order is another approach gaining acceptance, since it has been found to be a stronger predictor of lifestyle factors in accordance with Adlerian theory (White, Campbell & Stewart, 1995).

Eisenman (1992) concluded that first born are more fearful, and that some first born show more anxiety. Schachter (1959) concluded that first born and only children become more anxious in anxiety-including situation than later born, and when anxious, are also more likely to seek company than later born. Bloom, Anderson and Hazaleus (1984) found that neither age spacing or gender had an effect on anxiety. Anantharman (1981) found no difference in the anxiety level of first born and later born. Gates, Limeberger, Crockett and Hubbard (1988) reported first born as having less trait anxiety with girls exhibiting more anxiety than did boys overall. Howarth (1981) replicated these findings. Shnbhag (1990), however found that first born were more anxious than both middle and last born.

The traditional nuclear family, in which the birth order archetypes are based, may no longer be representative of the general population (Bischoff & Tingstrom, 1991). In a nuclear family, birth order is stable, however in blended families, where both parents bring children from previous relationships to the union, there is a disruption in the hierarchy of birth order. Children may lose their sense of stability and may feel that they have lost their place in the family (Buckley, 1998). This disruption in home life may be a substantial source of distress. Assisting children faced with these situations in realizing that their identity is not determined by their place in their previous or present family, and that this does not affect their sense of self, may be helpful (Buckley, 1998).

Associations between other birth order positions and mental health problems have also been suggested. Among a sample of adult women identified as chemically dependent, a psychological profile traditionally attributed to a third ordinal birth position was over represented. It was suggested that a contributing factor to the substance abuse was a need to establish a unique place in the family constellation (Utay & Utay, 1996).

Birth order does contribute a lot to personality development and through the years, researchers have examined whether birth order has influenced anxiety level. Being born into a certain birth order may predispose a person into having higher levels of anxiety. Anxiety is describes as an emotional state in which people usually experience anxiety about events they cannot control or predict, or events that seem

threatening or dangerous. Anxiety may also be a way to handle the stressful situations. Research suggests that when the second child is born, the first born may feel that is other status is threatened and may react with anxiety and fear (morals, 1994). In one study, first born and only children were similar in their desire to affiliate, but only children were found to be less anxious. (Rosenburg \$ Sutton-smith, 1970) first born are more likely to act in an anxious way when they are in a stressful situation.

There have been many studies which have supported the theory that first born, experience more anxiety than do later born and that birth order does play an important role in the development of personality. One such study was conducted by Zucker, Manosevitz, and Lnyon (1968). This study sought to view the relationship between birth order, anxiety, and affiliation during a crisis. During a power failure in Newyork city, the researches administered a questionnaire to sixty five men and thirty five women. The study found that first born become more anxious when confronted with a high anxiety situation.

The theories that first born experience more anxiety than do later born was also supported by a study conducted by McDonald and Carrol (1981). Another study which reacts the theory of the effect of birth order an anxiety was conducted by Jacoby (1968). The result of the study showed that first born and later born exhibited the same level of anxiety. Research has started that it is also important to keep in mind that other factors such as age spacing between children, sex of the children, peer influences, hereditary, temperament, parenting style, Socio-cultural factors etc can also impact personality (Santrock, 2002, Schachter) found that when placed in high anxiety situations, first born children (Weller,1962). When welter replicated Schechter's study, he found that there were no differences in the anxiety level between first born and later born.

Methodology

Objectives

These are the following objectives of the proposed research:

1. To study the effect of birth order on stress.
2. To examine the impact of birth order on stress among first born and last born.

Hypothesis:

The following hypothesis have been formulated for the proposed research:

- 1) There will be significant impact of birth on stress.
- 2) There will be on difference on the impact of birth order on stress between male and female students.

Sample

The sample for the present study has been selected at two stages at the first stage the special personal data questionnaire was distributed to a large number of students studying in class 12th and at the second stage only those student were selected who had two or more than two brothers and sisters. only eldest or youngest brothers and sisters were included in the sample.

The sample of the study consisted of 200 Hindu and 200 muslim students studying in std.12th. The purposive stratified random technique was used to select the students for final study. The students were selected from the schools of Ranchi. The stratification was based on the birth order (first born/ last born), religion (Hindu/ Muslim), and gender (male/female).

Table-1

| Hindu | | | | Muslim | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Male | | female | | male | | female | |
| First born | Last born | First born | Last born | First born | Last born | First born | Last born |
| 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| 200 | | | | 200 | | | |

Tools

1. personal data questionnaire
2. Sinha Anxiety Scale.

Plan of analysis

appropriate statistical measures will be used for analyzing the collected data, such as mean, standard deviation, correlation, etc.

Results

Table-2 Mean difference between first born male-female Hindu and Muslim students and last born male female Hindu and Muslim students on stress.

| Group | N | Mean | SD | T |
|---|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| First born male female Hindu and Muslim | 200 | 27.25 | 13.50 | 2.43* |
| Last born male female Hindu and Muslim | 200 | 30.50 | 13.41 | |

*significant at 0.05 level.

The comparison has been made between first born and last born male and female, Hindu and Muslim students on stress. The mean score of the first born Hindu and Muslim male and female students was 27.25 whereas the score of last born Hindu and Muslim male and female students was 30.50. The level of significance of mean difference on the basis of t values was (2.43) which is significant as 0.05 level.

Table-2 Mean difference between first born male-female Hindu students and last born male female Hindu students on stress.

| Group | N | Mean | SD | t |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| First born male female Hindu | 100 | 26.00 | 15.25 | 1.08 |
| Last born male female Muslim | 100 | 28.50 | 14.28 | (NS) |

NS: Not Significant

This table shows the relationship of stress on first born and last born Hindu male and female students. The difference on stress between the two groups is found insignificant. The stress score of first born Hindu male and female was (M-26.00). which is comparatively lower than. The stress score of last born Hindu male and female, (M-28.50). t=1.08.

Table-4 Mean difference between first born male-female Muslim students and last born male-female Muslim students on stress.

| Group | N | Mean | SD | T |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| First born male-female Muslim | 100 | 28.50 | 11.44 | 2.27* |
| Last born male-female Muslim | 100 | 32.50 | 12.24 | |

*significant at 0.05 level.

The comparison has found that first born and last born Muslim male and female students significantly differ on stress. last born male and female Muslim students have high level of stress (M-32.50) than first born male and female Muslim students (M-28.50) t=2.27 significant at 0.05 level.

Conclusion:

Last born school students experienced lots of stress as compared to first born school students. This may attributed to high parental pressure, parents expectation from their children, and competition with their classmates. students of Hindu and Muslim both the groups (first born and last born) differed significantly in their experience of stress. Students belonging to Last born experienced more stress and having problems in their daily hassles.

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