



The Relationship between Birth Order, Socioeconomic Status, and Personality

Discussion

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Abstract

Much research regarding the relationship between birth order and personality has been conducted and produced conflicting results, but few additional moderating variables have been considered. Socioeconomic status has been shown to impact life-span development and overall well-being. This study aimed to investigate the relationship among these three variables. Participants completed an online survey composed of demographic questions and the Mini-IPIP personality test. The results revealed that while birth order did not impact overall personality scores, socioeconomic status did significantly impact overall personality scores. Results indicated that there was a main effect of birth order and socioeconomic status on personality, but no interactions were found. Thus, personality scores do not change in birth order based on various socioeconomic status.

Introduction

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between birth order and personality. Researchers have found conflicting results in this area. Understanding the potential influence of birth order and socioeconomic status on personality variables would better equip individuals for important life choices such as educational and career path.

Birth Order and Personality- Past research regarding the relationship between birth order and personality has produced contrasting results.

- Beaver and Boccio (2019) used the Five Factor Model of Personality (Goldberg, 1999) to assess birth order and personality, relationship findings were insignificant.

- Bleske-Rechek and Kelley (2014) studied the same relationship within full biological families and additionally found no significant effects.

- In contrast, Howarth (1980) found significant results for the relationship between birth order and personality variables.

Socioeconomic Status- Socioeconomic status has been found to impact personality variables and other life outcomes.

- Freese and colleagues (1999) found that demographics such as gender, race, and social class impacted social attitudes more than birth order.

- Jonassaint and colleagues (2009) assessed the link between low socioeconomic status, using parental education and personality. They found that mothers and fathers education had significant main effects on personality.

Variables

Hypotheses

- H1: Birth order will impact personality variables
- H2: Socioeconomic status will impact personality variables.
- H3: Birth order and socioeconomic status will interact to impact personality variables.

Method

Participants: 118 participants (94 women, 24 men) ranging in age from 19-76 years old ($M=37$) were recruited via Facebook by convenience sampling.

Materials

- Demographic questions (gender, age, race)
- Birth order questions (4 birth order options)
- Socioeconomic status (5 SES options)
- 20- item Mini-IPIP Personality test (Donnellan, 2006)

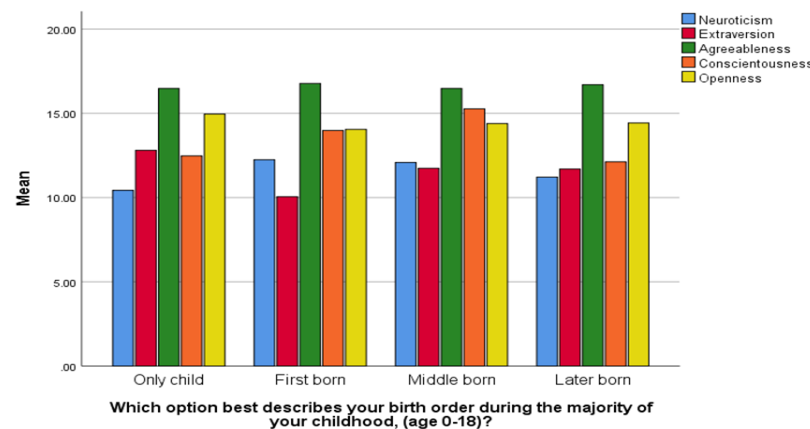
Procedure: 27-item survey consisting of the questions listed above accessed by participants through Qualtrics link via Facebook.

Results

H1 was not supported, results showed no significant impact of birth order on overall personality scores, $F(3, 113)=.92, p > .05$. Conscientiousness was the only personality factor significantly influenced by birth order $F(3, 115)=3.6, p= .015$, being that middle-born children had higher rates of conscientiousness than later-born ($M=12.1, SD=3.6$), $p= .018$.

H2 was supported, socioeconomic status did impact overall personality scores, $F(4, 111)=4.5, p= .002$.

H3 was not supported, no interaction of SES and birth order on personality was found, $F(9, 107)= 1.1, p= .36$.



Though no significant results were found for birth order impacting overall personality scores, it was found to impact individual measures of conscientiousness. Multiple research studies including the work of Pollet and Dijkstra (2010), Beaver and Boccio (2019), and Rohrer, Egloff, and Schmukle (2015) found no impact of birth order on overall personality scores. However, they did find significant results for impact of birth order on individual personality measures. These previous findings in addition to the current findings support that it is possible for birth order to impact individual personality measures without significantly impacting overall scores.

Results of the current study show that socioeconomic status significantly impacted personality. Hsieh and Huang (2014) found that personality and socioeconomic status were positively related to career decision self-efficacy. Grinberg (2015) found that first-born children are significantly more likely to be a manager than later-born children. Jokela and Keltikangas-Jarvinen (2011) found that low income was rated to high levels of depression, specifically for individuals rating high in neuroticism. Reiss and colleagues (2019) found that the combination of low socioeconomic status, low parental education, and parental unemployment correlated with children having higher rates of mental health problems. These studies demonstrate that socioeconomic status and birth order can significantly influence personality to impact long-term life choices, such as career choices, as well as mental health.

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