

## The study on personality traits among youngsters based on birth order

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** “personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behavior and thought” (Allport, 1961, P.28). It embraces moods, attitudes and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. Birth order is the order in which a child is born. The study aimed to investigate the personality traits among youngsters based on birth order. **Material and Methods:** A study was conducted around 100 sample comprising youngsters of different gender of age 18-35 from different parts of Kerala via online platform. Big Five Personality Inventory (Goldberg, 1992) and purposive sampling method were used to collect data. **Results:** There is no significant difference in the personality traits among youngsters based on their birth order (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientious, openness and neuroticism)

**Keywords:** *Personality, Birth Order, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientious, Openness, Neuroticism*

The word personality refers to the characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and behaving that evolve from biological and environment factors. The study of personality focuses on two broad areas; one is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics and other is understanding how the various parts of a person come together as a whole. This helps us to identify leisure activities that align with personality, to identify personality types that influence behavior, and to monitor changes in personality type.

Birth order refers to the order a child is born in their family. Birth order is often believed to have a profound and lasting effect on psychological development. A position of a child within a family is assumed to create stable difference in the personality traits.

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The effect of birth order on personality have been studied for several decades with controversial results. After reviewing more than 1000 studies on this topic published before 1981 Ernst and Angst concluded that “birth order does not appear to be a very strong influence in molding personality in a definable way” (p.187). However, new theoretical and methodological advances increased the interest for this research topic.

Using a standard personality test like Big Five personality inventory, the results are found that the third order children are more extrovert and agreeable, first order children are more conscientious and opened, and second order children are more neurotic. But the results of the study show that birth order exerted no significant effect on the personality traits and are relatively small.

### *Definition of the key terms:*

- **Personality:** “The characteristics or blend of characteristics that make a person unique” (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).
- **Birth order:** Birth order is the order in which a child is born.
- **Extroversion:** Extroversion is also known as extraversion, it is a board personality trait that encompasses a number of more specific characteristics such as sociability, assertiveness, high activity level, positive emotions, and impulsivity (Lucas, R. E., & Diener, E. (2001)
- **Agreeableness:** The tendency to act in a cooperative, unselfish manner, construed as one end of a dimension of individual differences in the Big Five Personality model (APA, 2000).
- **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness is a personality construct that is a core determinant of health, positive aging, and human capital (APA, 2012).
- **Openness:** Openness to experience refers to a tendency towards intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity, liberal values, and emotional differentiation (McCrae, 1987).
- **Neuroticism:** Neuroticism is the trait disposition to experience negative effects, including anger, anxiety, self- consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and depression (APA, 2017).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Freese, J., Powell, B. & Steelman, L. (1999) conducted a study in between family and within-family approaches. They used 24 measures of social attitudes such as “support for existing authority” and “opposition to liberal social movements” – which broadly fall under the Big-5 category “Openness to Experience” from the General Social Survey (GSS) (n = 1945). They ran various regression analyses (four different models) employing controls for age, size, race and parent’s education among others. They conceded that there existed a call within the literature for birth-order studies to employ within-family data.

Saroglou, V., & Fiasse, L. (2003). conducted a study on Birth order, personality, and religion: A study among young adults from a three-sibling family. Their study used a standard Big-5 measure of personality via self-reports and included a report of the respondent’s personality from their mothers. Strong positive correlations between self-reports and mother reports were found for all Big-5 measures (r = .48 for Neuroticism to r = .66 for Conscientiousness). No controls were implemented in their statistical tests. This issue is only addressed in relation to sample selection where they note all participants were of

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middle socioeconomic status, lived in urban areas, and the majority had some form of higher (post-secondary school) education.

Paulhus , D.L. , Trapnell , P.D. , & Chen ,D. conducted a study on birth order effects on personality and achievement in four studies (N = 1,022 families) including both student and adult samples. Control over a wide range of variables was effected by collecting within-family data: Participants compared their siblings (and themselves) on a variety of personality and achievement dimensions. Across four diverse data sets, first-borns were nominated as most achieving and most conscientious. Later- borns were nominated as most rebellious, liberal, and agreeable. The same results obtained whether or not birth order was made salient (to activate stereotypes) during the personality ratings.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Problem***

Is there any significant difference in personality traits among youngsters based on birth order?

#### ***Objective***

The objective of the assessment is to study the personality traits among youngsters based on birth order.

#### ***Variables***

**Independent variable:** Birth order (first born, second born and third born)

**Dependent variable:** Personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientious, openness and neuroticism)

#### ***Hypotheses***

On the basis of above objectives, the following hypotheses are formulated and are to be tested on a sample of 100 people.

- There will be no significant difference in extroversion among youngsters based on birth order.
- There will be no significant difference in conscientiousness among youngsters based on birth order.
- There will be no significant difference in agreeableness among youngsters based on birth order.
- There will be no significant difference in neuroticism among youngsters based on birth order.
- There will be no significant difference in openness and among youngsters based on birth order.

#### ***Research design***

The research study was quantitative in nature and between group research design was used to determine the personality traits among youngsters based on birth order.

#### ***Research sample***

Purposive sampling method was used for this study. The study sample was comprised of 100 people at different age range from different parts of Kerala, out of which 56 first order, 30 second order and 14 third order children. The sample belongs to different gender, religious family type, area of residence.

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### *Sampling criteria*

#### **Inclusion criteria**

- Those who have given consent for the participation.
- Youngsters those who belong to the age category of 18-35.

#### **Exclusion criteria**

- Those who haven't given consent for the participation.
- Those who have mental retardation or mental disability.

### *Tools*

The following tools were administered to each participant in order to collect the required information.

1. Socio-demographic data
2. Big five personality inventory (Goldberg, 1992)

### *Procedure*

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants via online and their willingness to participate in the study ascertained. The first step being that a rapport was established by participants and the researcher through social media, after this each participant were individually educated about the purpose of the study as well as they were informed about the confidentiality of their response. Finally, big five personality inventory with 50 questionnaires were given to sample through online with proper instructions one after the other using a scale of 1-5. The scoring of the assessment was done and interpreted according to the manual. The participants were not asked to disclose any of this personal information.

### *Analysis of data*

The collected data was analyzed using following statistical test:

- Mean, Standard deviation
- Kruskal Wallis Test

### *Ethical issues*

1. Informed consent of each and every participant was acquired.
2. Confidentiality of the response were maintained.
3. The data collected will be solely used for research purpose.

## **RESULTS**

### *Data analysis and interpretation*

The aim of the study was to find personality traits among youngsters based on birth order and the study consisted of 100 youngsters comprising around the age group of 18-35. For the purpose of study, the investigator formulated five hypothesis and results are shown.

**Table 1: Kruskal Wallis test on personality traits among youngsters based on birth order.**

Personality traits	Birth order	N	Mean value	Sig
Extroversions	First	56	51.67	0.772
	Second	30	47.35	
	Third	14	52.52	
	Total	100		
Conscientiousness	First	56	52.20	0.667
	Second	30	50.18	

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Personality traits	Birth order	N	Mean value	Sig
	Third	14	44.39	
	Total	100		
Agreeableness	First	56	50.92	0.924
	Second	30	48.88	
	Third	14	52.29	
	Total	100		
Neuroticism	First	56	48.51	0.661
	Second	30	54.45	
	Third	14	50.00	
	Total	100		
Openness	First	56	52.46	0.736
	Second	30	47.45	
	Third	14	49.21	
	Total	100		

Table 1 shows the types of personality traits among youngsters of Kerala based on their birth order that were analyzed through Kruskal Wallis test. From the table the above hypotheses were got true.

Those who are considered as first born have a mean value of 51.67 on extroversion, Second born have a mean value of 47.37 and the third born have a mean value of 52.52. So, the third born are more extrovert compared to other counter parts. The significant value of extroversion is 0.772 which is not significant at the level of significance 0.5 thus the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in extroversion among youngsters based on birth order.

Those who are considered as first born have a mean value of 52.20 on conscientiousness, Second born have a mean value of 50.18 and the third born have a mean value of 44.37. So, the first born are more conscientiousness compared to other counter parts. The significant value of conscientiousness is 0.667 which is not significant at the level of significance 0.5 thus the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in conscientiousness among youngsters based on birth order.

Those who are considered as first born have a mean value of 50.29 on agreeableness, Second born have a mean value of 48.88 and the third born have a mean value of 52.29. So, the third born are more agreeable compared to other counter parts. The significant value of agreeableness is 0.924 which is not significant at the level of significance 0.5 thus the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in agreeableness among youngsters based on birth order.

Those who are considered as first born have a mean value of 48.29 on neuroticism, Second born have a mean value of 54.45 and the third born have a mean value of 50.00. So, the second born are more neurotic compared to other counter parts. The significant value of neuroticism is 0.661 which is not significant at the level of significance 0.5 thus the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in neuroticism among youngsters based on birth order.

Those who are considered as first born have a mean value of 52.46 on openness, Second born have a mean value of 47.45 and the third born have a mean value of 49.21. So, the first

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born are more opened compared to other counter parts. The significant value of openness is 0.736 which is not significant at the level of significance 0.5 thus the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in openness and among youngsters based on birth order.

### *Major findings*

- There is no significant difference in extroversion among youngsters based on birth order.
- There is no significant difference in conscientiousness among youngsters based on birth order.
- There is no significant difference in agreeableness among youngsters based on birth order.
- There is no significant difference in neuroticism among youngsters based on birth order.
- There is no significant difference in openness and among youngsters based on birth order.
- The level of extroversion and agreeableness are higher among third born children.
- The level of conscientiousness and openness are higher among first born children.
- The level of neuroticism is higher among second born children.

### *Limitations*

The research was done on a fairly small amount of sample size.

### *Scope for further study*

Future study can be done in a larger population covering more geographical areas and comprising of people related to different categories.

## **CONCLUSION**

The term personality means the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems his characteristic's behavior and thought. The objective of the assessment is to study the personality traits which include extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness on birth order. The report is analyzed by Big five personality inventory. The collected data was analyzed using following statistical methods like mean, standard deviations and Kruskal-Wallis test. The research study was quantitative in nature and between group design was used to determine the personality traits among youngsters based on birth order. The result of the study shows that there is no significant difference in personality traits among youngsters based on birth order.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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