

Effect of Birth Order and Gender on Self-Esteem among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem among college students. A sample of 160 student with its range 18 to 25 of different birth order from Bhiwani district Haryana, have been selected with the help of random sampling. Out of these 80 were males (40 first born males and 40 later born males) and 80 females (40 first born females and 40 later born females) was selected. Birth order is important aspect of a person's core personality. There are two types of birth order: actual birth order and psychological birth order. Gender is considered as characteristics of boys and girls, men and women which are socially constructed. On the bases of social construct gender to be different from culture to culture and society to society. When an individual has active self-esteem, it can have an impact on his/her overall psychological and mental make-up. But when the level of self-esteem becomes very high or low, then it creates problems in persons. So, an optimal level of self-esteem is needed for good well-being. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1995) was used to collect data. The descriptive statistics and ANOVA was used to verify the hypothesis. The result of the study shows that there was no significance gender differences between first born and later born students.

Keywords: Birth order, Gender, Self-esteem

Birth Order A person lives in the society and born in a family. So, his first interaction with society through the family. Birth order is important aspect of a person's core personality. Over a century ago birth order study started by Sir Francis Galton (1874). It is controversial aspect of social science. Many debates performed in this concept. Alder's patient's personal struggle with seeking power and a sense of competence within family made him identify the psychological significance of birth order.

First Born

The study describes that first born children are well organized and more conservative. They are viewed as over pressured and leader who follow rules and regulations. Alder explains that first born respect the authority and tend to be motivated to achieve goals of life as compare to latter born.

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Received: August 14, 2023; Revision Received: September 15, 2023; Accepted: September 19, 2023

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Later Born

A later born child defined as the youngest child and last in order of birth. Their relationships with peers better than first born. These children are frequently viewed as spoiled child of the family. These children depend on their parents. Parents give extra love and care to later born child.

Gender

The concept of gender developed from the sex role. The concept of gender as a term of sex role used for a long time and appeared in 1970. Gender is considered as characteristics of boys and girls, men and women which are socially constructed. On the bases of social construct gender to be different from culture to culture and society to society. Over the time it can be changed (WHO). Every society has some norms, roles and behaviors for men and women. Basically it is a biological characteristics based on male and female categories. When an individual is facing stressful events in life, here gender is prominent feature which influences an individual how they manage these events. Men are often considered to be less emotional than women. Fung (2003) aimed to measure birth order and gender effect on self-esteem. The study showed that significant gender difference was found on self-esteem with male's scores slightly lower than females.

Self- Esteem

In psychological term self-esteem is overall assessment of self-worth. It is a very important trait of personality. Rosenberg (1965) "self-esteem refers to an individual overall positive evaluation to the self". Every individual have negative and positive emotions, feelings about themselves. In other words, self-esteem is a feeling about oneself where a collection of belief or feelings one has for oneself. It is important to them how well they do things. On the basis of daily experiences most peoples thinking and feelings have fluctuated about themselves. Many aspects of life events have a temporary impact on how we feel about ourselves like ups and downs in life, grade on exam and relationship. "self-esteem is a large part of an individual's self-understanding and is likely to be a fluctuating and dynamic construct, vulnerable to external and internal influences."

Maslow's (1943), theories explain that self-esteem is human basic need of his hierarchy of human needs. The word self-esteem has two different meanings. "Esteem" the need of respect from other as form of success, recognition, and admiration and "Self" the need of self-respect, the need of self-love, self-confidence. When a parent's self-esteem need not fulfill unable to grow self-actualization. Most of people achieve self-actualization because of fulfillment of self-esteem. Parenting style also influences self-esteem, mainly with permissive and authoritative style children having high self-esteem.

Objectives

On the basis of the problem undertaken for the present study the following objectives have been made:

- To assess and compare the self-esteem of first born and later born college students.
- To assess and compare the self-esteem of male and female college students.
- To determine the interaction effect of birth order (first born and later born) and gender (male and female) on self-esteem.

Hypotheses

By looking at the above objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

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1. There would be no significant difference between first born and later born on self-esteem.
2. There would be significant gender difference on self-esteem.
3. There would be no significant interaction effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken with an objective to evaluate the “effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem among college students.” For that purpose, a 2 x 2 factorial design was adopted and the following methodology was employed.

This chapter is divided into following sections:

1. Design
2. Sample
3. Tools/Measures
4. Procedure

Design

A 2 X 2 factorial design was used with the following pattern:

Male		Female	
First born	Later born	First born	Later born
40	40	40	40
80 male		80 female	

Sample

A purposive sample of 160 students with 80 males (40 first born males and 40 later born males) and 80 females (40 first born females and 40 later born females) was selected from Bhiwani District. The sample was in the age range of 18-25 years college students studying in graduate and post graduate classes.

Inclusion criteria

- a. Age range i.e., 18-25 years.
- b. Both rural and urban areas students.
- c. College students.
- d. Both male and female students.

Exclusion criteria

- Only born children excluded from the study.
- Students with major physical and psychological illness.
- Drop out students.

Tools Used

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) (RSE)

This scale was proposed by Rosenberg (1965). It is a self-report instrument which is used for evaluating self-esteem of an individual. This scale has 10 items for measuring global self-worth. Both positive and negative feelings about the self are measured by this scale. This is also uni-dimensional scale. It has four point likert scale, all answered given with the use of 4 point scale. For “strongly disagree” give 1 point, for “disagree” give 2 point, for “agree” give 3 point and for “strongly agree” give 4 point. High score on this scale indicates higher self-esteem. Test retest reliability of this scale was found to be between (.85 to .88).

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Procedure

Participants were informed about the study protocols in detail and their consent was obtained in written. The questionnaires were distributed in college classes, library, and coffee shop. Participants were informed about the procedure and then some verbal and written instructions were given:

“You will be provided with two questionnaires to assess your behavioral patterns. For both the questionnaires, kindly tick mark the response you think describes your answer the best. Responses for the first questionnaire range from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Strongly Disagree’ and that for second questionnaire range from ‘Not at all true’ to ‘Completely true’. Please answer all the questions. Information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential.” They were seated comfortably and external disturbances were avoided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

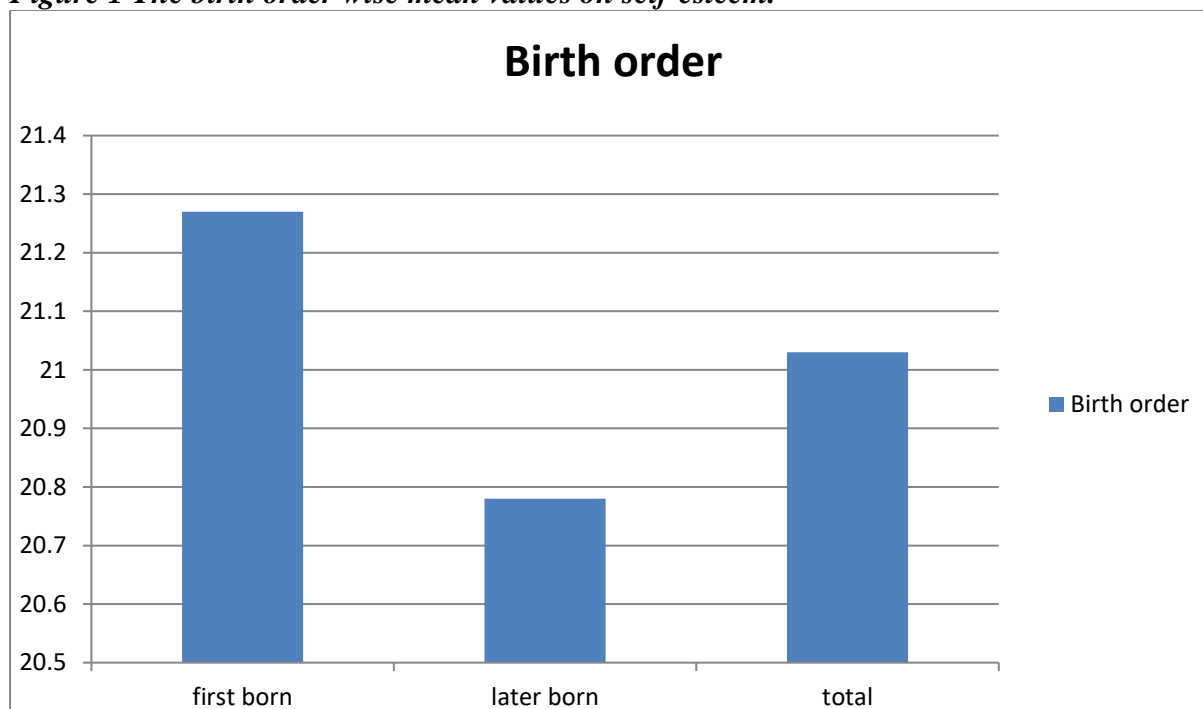
The said investigation was designed to assess the “effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem among college students.” For this purpose, a sample of 160 students (80 males and 80 females) was administered “Rosenberg self-esteem scale”. The results were evaluated and used 2x2 ANOVA and were thus interpreted accordingly.

In order to achieve the first two objectives i.e. “To assess and compare the self-esteem of first born and later born college students and to assess and compare the self-esteem of male and female college students.” The mean and S.D values were calculated for birth order and gender on self-esteem (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1 The total Mean and Standard deviation for birth order on self-esteem.

Birth order	N	Mean	SD
First born	80	21.27	4.67
Later born	80	20.78	4.74
Total	160	21.03	4.70

Figure 1 The birth order wise mean values on self-esteem.

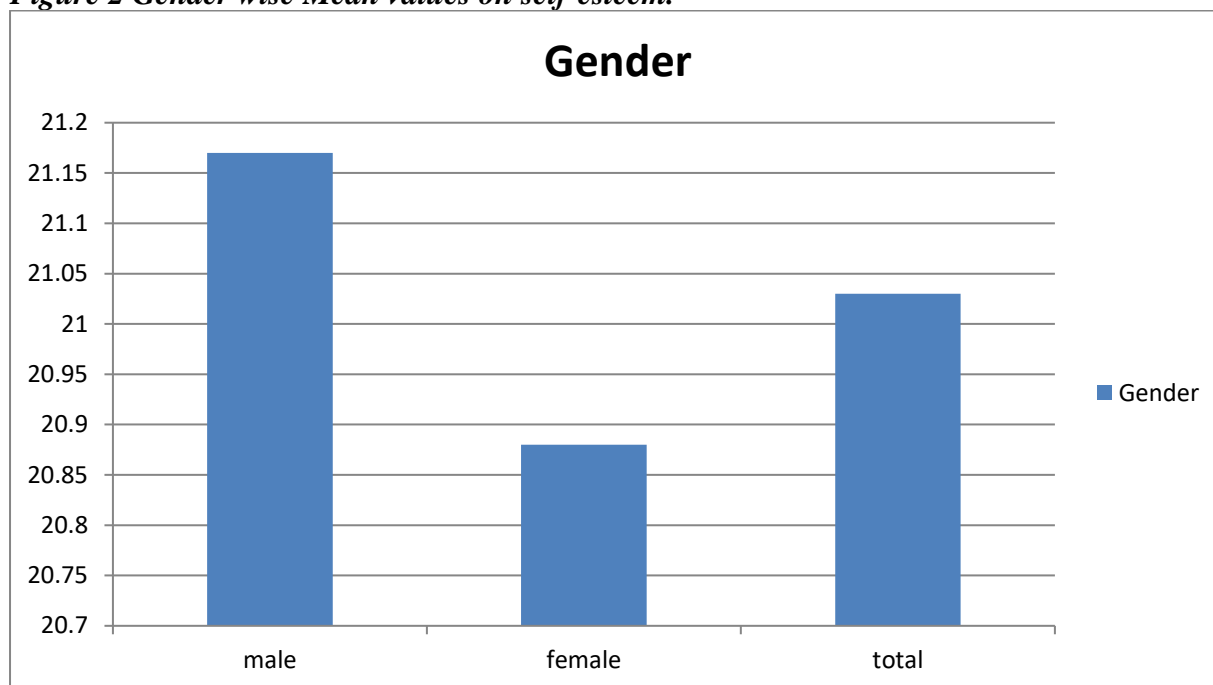


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Table 2 The total Mean and Standard deviation for gender on self-esteem

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	80	21.17	4.86
Female	80	20.88	4.55
Total	160	21.03	4.70

Figure 2 Gender wise Mean values on self-esteem.



It was evident from Table 1 and figure 1 that mean scores of first born were a bit higher than the later born on self-esteem indicating that the participants who were first born among the siblings had better self-esteem than the participants who were later born. Similarly, it was also evident from Table 2 and figure 2 that the mean scores of male participants were a bit higher than the female participants on self-esteem indicating that males had higher self-esteem than their counterparts.

On the basis of mean differences, it cannot be implied that the differences are significant. Therefore, in order to find out the significant mean differences on birth order and gender on self-esteem it is desirable to apply 2 x 2 ANOVA.

In order to achieve the 3rd objective i.e. “To determine the interaction effect of birth order (first born and later born) and gender (male and female) on self-esteem” ANOVA was applied.

Table 3 Summary Table of self-esteem with regard to birth order and gender.

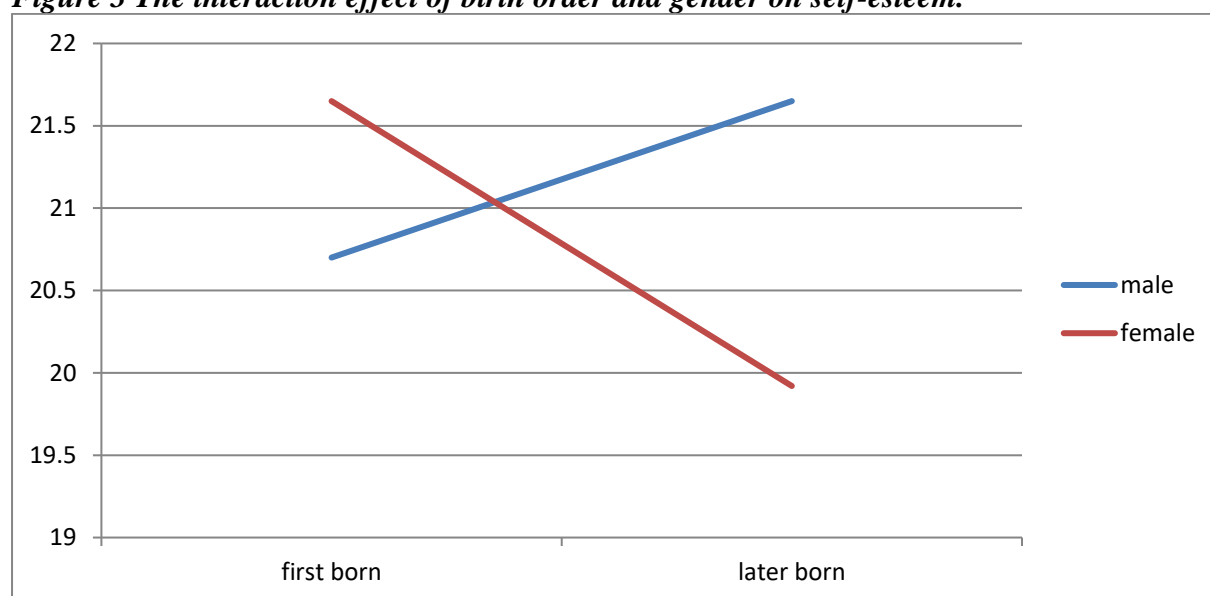
Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. of level
A) Birth order	9.506	1	9.506	.433	.511
B) Gender	3.306	1	3.306	.151	.698
(A X B)	82.65	1	82.65	3.769	.054
Error	3421.375	156	21.932		
Total	3516.844	159			

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A two way ANOVA is computed to see the effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem. F Table 3 “summary of ANOVA” represents the main effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem and the interaction effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem.

Table of ANOVA indicated that there is no significant difference on birth order (F value = .43) on self-esteem which indicated that first born participants and later born do not differ on self-esteem. Moreover, there existed no significant gender difference on self-esteem (F = .15). However, the interaction effect of birth order and gender was found to be significant (F = 3.76) at .05 level indicated that birth order and gender while combining do play role on self-esteem. This has been depicted graphically in figure (3).

Figure 3 The interaction effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem.



Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that “there would be no significant difference between first born and later born on self-esteem” was verified. In the study Dani and Dutta (2008) found that there is no significant birth order effect on self-esteem. Rosenberg in 1965 also indicated non-significant difference among the first-born participants and later born participants. These studies supported this hypothesis. Similarly, second hypothesis which stated that “there would be significant gender difference on self-esteem” was not verified. But some contrasted studies revealed significant gender differences like Kohli (2018) showed that boys had high self-esteem than girls.

In order to achieve the 3rd objective which stated that “To determine the interaction effect of birth order (first born and later born) and gender (male and female) on self-esteem” interaction effect was calculated. The present study further found that there is an interaction effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem. This means that birth order and gender individual doesn't affect a person's self-esteem. But their interaction effects significantly affect person's self-esteem. Thus, the third hypothesis which is stated that “there would be no interaction effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem” was not verified. A study of Rauf (2015) found that gender and birth order have interaction effect on emotional intelligence. So, it can be said that self-esteem affected by birth order and gender.

But many contradicted studies revealed that males tend to have higher self-esteem as compared to females. At the starting phase of life boys are expected to develop self-

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confidence and stronger than girls. Also teen aged girls tend to have lower level of self-esteem. They tend to have more negative evaluation about their physical appearance. But today scenario is totally changed with time. Parenting style also changed with time. Parents give their children equal education and enhance girl's academic achievement. Even today girls are given more freedom in every walk of life where this independence leads them to a higher level of self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

The present investigation thus indicates that the college students whether first born or later born do not differ significantly either on self-esteem. Similarly, male college students do not differ significantly from female college students either on self-esteem or resilience. But the interaction of birth order (first born and later born) and gender (male and female) do play important role on self-esteem.

Implications

The present study helps in understanding the college student's Self-Esteem. It also led us to take broader view of these variables as these are important aspects in students' lives and can have impact on their behavior and actions. Future research is needed by using some aids to enhance the self-esteem of students which can help in enhancing success in students.

Limitations & Suggestions

There were a number of limitations and suggestions affiliated with the study.

- The current study focused on first born and later born; only born and second born excluded from the study.
- For the controlling of confounding variables researchers should select within family design for the study of birth order.
- Student's social economic status was not controlled.
- It is a limited study with purposive sample so it could not be generalized.
- Number of siblings of didn't ask to the participants.
- To validate the results more successfully research method should be used quantitative as well as qualitative.
- The representative sample of the study restricts the generalization of findings because sample size is small. Thus, the sample size should be large.
- To examine the effect of birth order and gender on self-esteem and resilience using with different criterion instrument.
- Future research aiming to develop intervention for building high self-esteem and resilience.
- It is also suggested that to raise resilience status of male students appropriate intervention programmers should be put in the place.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Kiran (2023). Effect of Birth Order and Gender on Self-Esteem among College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 3640-3647. DIP:18.01.341.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.341