

# The Effect of Birth Order on Emotional Intelligence among Indian Adolescents

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of birth order on emotional intelligence of the adolescents. The sample consisted of 240 students each from Only Child, First Born, and Middle Born and Last Born category. Purposive random sampling technique was used to collect the data. The sample was administered with Emotional Intelligence Scale by Mangal and Shubhra Mangal. The descriptive statistics and ANOVA was used to verify the hypotheses. The findings reveal that there were significant differences in Emotional Intelligence between the adolescents born at different the Birth Order. The results show that the only children have high mean scores in Intra-Personal Management and Inter-Personal Management. The first born have less mean scores on Intra-personal and Inter-personal management, the first born have difficulty to manage their emotions and other people emotions too. The Middle born have high score on the component Inter-personal awareness, the middle born are well aware of other people emotions. The last born have least mean score on the component on Intra-personal management.

**Keywords:** Birth Order, Emotional Intelligence, Adolescents

The stage of adolescence is the most critical phase of one's life. This is a period that embarks on major changes concerning physiological, psychological, and behavioral shifting patterns of social interactions and relationships among their family members and peers.

It is also an age of vulnerability, seeking approval from others, external validation to feel good about themselves. Adolescents are usually extremely prone to be influenced by their peer groups and media that might either positively or negatively impact their perception, decision-making skills that may have lifelong consequences. Thus, a psychologist is always curious to investigate individual factors that impact on one's intellectual capacity, personality, behaviour.

The debate of whether a person's ordinal position within the family structure has been suggested as a contributing factor in shaping human personalities. Despite sharing similar genes and environments, siblings do not display identical personalities. But where do the supposed individual differences emit from? Personality theorists have tried to find out the effect of ordinal position on individual differences.

Hence, the concept of birth order has been widely researched upon in relation to different variables such as personality dimensions and academic achievement. The current paper will attempt to explore the interaction of birth order and gender with emotional intelligence.

Birth order means the ordinal position of birth the child holds in the family. Adler (1927) was the first who explored the concept of birth order in his theory of personality in order to assess the lifestyle of the individual. Birth order has been defined by Shulman and Mosak (1977) as ordinal position which refers to the actual birth order of the siblings; as well as the psychological positions, which refers to the role child adopts in his or her interaction with other members of the family. From the viewpoint of cognitive development, two siblings may have different physical and mental abilities during early childhood and the perception of these differences can also affect their psychological roles (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006).

First born groups have received the most attention in birth order research. The first born is defined as first child born in a family with subsequent siblings. Wilson (2009) reported older children as more mature, independent and good leaders. Falbo and Pilot (1986) concluded that second born as more dominant in their peer group, which is a measure of interpersonal skill. Herrera, et al., (2003) discovered the middle born as most envious and least bold and talkative.

Buckley (1998) reported that youngest children are good at social skills due to constant peer interaction that is why they feel secure but at the same time dependent due to many caretakers, and also experience feelings of inferiority (Richardson & Richardson, 1990) due to stronger and competent presence of older ones (Ernst & Angst, 1983).

## Emotional Intelligence:

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. There are 5 components of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 2004), which has been discussed below.

- **Self-awareness:** It is all about understanding one's own self. This involves a lot of self-analysis and understanding themselves and knowing how one's own reaction at different situations.
- **Self-Regulation:** This involves controlling the behavior of one's own self. It also focuses on how a person should keep a

tab on his or her emotions in public.

- **Motivation:** Motivation is the driving force that makes a person behave in a certain manner.
- **Empathy:** It is an ability to understand the emotions and feeling of others.
- **Social Skills:** It is an ability to socialize and interact with others in the society

Erikson (1968) reported that adolescents who have successfully understood the dynamics of their own identity is likely to experience a sense of wellbeing. Moreover, it has been supported by Tung and Sandhu (2005) that adolescents who have resolved their identity issues after exploration experience wellbeing whereas, lack of knowledge about one's identity makes them vulnerable to maladaptive life.

Oldest literature since 1945, states that the family functioning of the only child puts him at the risk of life long unhappiness whereas, recent literature offers a more optimistic outlook (Ernst & Angst, 1983). Literature on well-being and positive mood is sufficient for the adolescent framework but seems scanty for the birth order framework.

### **Methodology Objectives of the Study**

To examine the effect of birth order on Emotional Intelligence among adolescents.

### **Hypothesis**

There is a significant difference in the emotional intelligence across birth order among adolescents.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 240 high school and college students belonging from Bangalore Urban

District. Purposive random sampling technique was used to collect the data. The participant's age range was between 13-19 years.

### **Variables**

Independent variable: Birth Order Dependent variable: Emotional Intelligence

### **Measures**

#### **1. Emotional Intelligence Scale:**

In the present investigation, for measuring emotional intelligence of participants, Inventory for emotional intelligence by Mangal and Shubhra Mangal was used. It consists of 100 items. It consists four components each having 25 items. This inventory measuring emotional intelligence on 4 areas namely:

- Intra-personal awareness
- Inter-personal awareness
- Intra-personal management
- Interpersonal management

There are hundred items in this tool and for each statement there are two possible responses either yes or no, and the respondent has to mark on either of these two. A score of one mark is provided for the response indicating the presence of emotional intelligence and zero for the absence of emotional intelligence.

Table 1: Shows the Mean, SD and ANOVA for Emotional Intelligence across Birth Order among adolescents (N=60 each).

Components	Birth Order	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value
<b>Intra-personal Awareness</b>	Only Child	16.13	4.6	62.01**
	First born	16.86	3.88	
	Middle born	15.90	3.08	
	Last born	8.75	2.03	
<b>Inter-personal Awareness</b>	Only Child	15.55	4.28	82.98**
	First born	8.38	1.34	
	Middle born	15.83	4.78	
	Last born	9.21	1.75	
<b>Intra-personal management</b>	Only Child	16.16	3.78	29.39**
	First born	11.93	3.21	
	Middle born	15.85	3.34	
	Last born	12.48	1.99	
<b>Inter-personal Management</b>	Only Child	21.45	2.52	128.09**
	First born	12.30	2.42	
	Middle born	16.73	3.94	
	Last born	12.83	2.36	

The primary objective of the present study was to examine the effect of birth order on emotional intelligence. To fulfill the objective and to verify the hypothesis, the data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0, Mean SD and ANOVA were calculated. Table 1 shows the mean and 'F' value for the Emotional Intelligence across the Birth Order.

The obtained F value reveals that there is a significant difference in all the components of Emotional Intelligence namely Intra-personal awareness, Inter-personal awareness, Intra-personal management, Interpersonal management. Thus the hypothesis stating, there is a significant difference in the emotional intelligence across birth order among adolescents has been accepted. The findings of the study are in accordance with research findings by Vijay and Joslyn (2014) that significant differences exist in emotional intelligence with regard to birth order.

With reference to the above scores it shows that the only child have high mean scores on the components Intra-Personal Management and Inter-Personal Management thus the only child are not only able to manage their emotions but also are able to manage other emotions too. The first born have high mean score on the component on Intra-Personal awareness, the adolescent are able to aware of their emotions very well, however the first born have less mean scores on Intra-personal and Inter-personal management, the first born have difficulty to manage their emotions and other people emotions too. The middle born have high score on the component Inter-personal awareness, the middle born are well aware of other people emotions. The last born have least score on the component on Intra-personal awareness, thus the last born are not aware or reflective of their emotions.

### Conclusions

The hypothesis proposed for this study is been accepted since there found to be significant differences in the emotional intelligence across the birth order.

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