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BIRTH ORDER INFLUENCE ON PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Abstract: The present study examines the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction. A total of 174 participants aged between 20 to 39 years completed the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). The participants were recruited via Snowball sampling from India, South Korea, Canada, UAE, and Japan. The results were assessed using t-test analyses, which found no significant difference between first-born and later-born individuals in terms of prosocialness and life satisfaction. Therefore, birth order does not have a significant influence on an individual's prosocial behaviour and satisfaction with their lives. These findings suggest that there may be other determinants that play a more significant role in shaping an individual's personality, behaviour, and satisfaction with life.

***Index Terms*: Birth order, Prosocial behaviour, Life satisfaction, First-born, Later-born.**

I.INTRODUCTION

Birth order is a significant factor that affects an individual's personality, behaviour, and relationships with others. The classification of individuals into different categories based on their birth order can provide insights into their experiences and outcomes. Understanding birth order is important in psychology as it sheds light on how family dynamics and parenting practices influence children's development. Birth order affects the way parents interact with their children and how siblings interact with one another. The effects of birth order on personality and behaviour are mediated by several factors, including parental attention, sibling competition, and family dynamics.

Studying birth order is important in psychology for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into personality development. Secondly, it helps explain family dynamics. Thirdly, it impacts academic and career success. Fourthly, it influences social skills. Lastly, it shapes parenting styles. By studying birth order, researchers can design interventions to support children who may be at a disadvantage due to their birth order and help parents be more aware of their biases and adjust their parenting to support each child's unique needs. Empirical evidence suggests that birth order has a modest effect on personality and is dependent on various contextual and individual factors. While psychologists agree that birth order has an impact on personality, the magnitude of this effect varies based on specific circumstances and context (Salmon, Figueredo & Cuthbertson, 2016).

However, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour as well as life satisfaction (Shao, Yao, Huang & Li, 2013). Despite numerous studies on the connection between birth order and personality traits, research is limited in explaining the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction.

Consequently, the relationship between birth order, prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction is still unclear, with some studies suggesting a positive association between being a first-born child and higher levels of life satisfaction, while others find no significant relationship. Some research suggests that parental attention and differential treatment based on birth order may play a role in shaping prosocial behaviour (Owens, 2019; Sabolova, 2020). However, these findings are largely based on studies conducted in Western cultures, and more cross-cultural studies are needed to better understand the relationship. Further research is necessary to clarify these relationships and could have implications for parenting, education, and related domains. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction

II.Review of Literature

In a study conducted by Salmon, Cuthbertson, and Figueredo (2016), it was found that birth order had a moderate effect on prosocial behaviour. The study involved 234 participants from a university in the south-eastern United States. Later-born siblings showed greater prosociality, with the greatest increase seen between first and second-borns.

In 2021, Volling et.al. conducted a review article on the effects of birth order and gender on sibling relationships in childhood and adolescence, including prosocial behaviour. The authors reviewed several studies and found mixed evidence for the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour. Some studies suggested a positive effect of later birth order on prosocial behaviour, while others found no effect or even a negative effect.

Mahony (2012) conducted a research to investigate the relationship between birth order and prosocial tendencies among 414 university students in South Africa. The results showed that later-born children were significantly more prosocial than first-born children.

Shao et al. (2013) carried out a study to examine the relationship between birth order, personality, and life satisfaction, and how China's national policy influenced this relationship. The study involved 1468 participants aged 18 to 25 years old and measured their personality traits and life satisfaction. The results revealed that later-born individuals exhibited higher levels of agreeableness and extraversion, and lower levels of neuroticism, compared to first-born individuals. However, the birth order effect on personality was only significant for those born after the implementation of China's one-child policy. The study found no significant effect of birth order on life satisfaction.

Black et al. (2016) conducted a study using nationally representative data from Norway to investigate the correlation between birth order and adult health. The results showed that first-borns were less likely to smoke daily than fifth-borns and were more likely to report good physical and mental health. Later-borns, particularly fifth-borns, scored lower on well-being and were less likely to report happiness compared to first-borns.

Nagilla et al. (2021) investigated the impact of birth order and locus of control on life satisfaction. The study was conducted on 30 families with three siblings based on Adler's birth order theory. The results indicated that there was no significant interaction effect of birth order and locus of control on life satisfaction for both males and females. Additionally, there was no significant difference in life satisfaction between different birth order categories.

III.Methodology

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between birth order and prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction. Given the inconclusive findings on this relationship, particularly in non-Western populations, the study attempted to clarify the relationship and its potential implications for parenting, education, and related domains.

The study included 174 adults aged between 20 to 39 years, out of which 91 were first borns and 83 were later borns, all having completed 12 years of education. The participants were recruited through Snowball sampling from India, South Korea, Canada, UAE, and Japan. The study used the Prosocialness Scale for Adults, a 16-item self-report questionnaire, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale, a short 5-item instrument to measure cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. A t-test was used to assess the statistical difference between the variables for the two hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 suggested that first-born individuals report higher levels of prosocial behaviour than later-borns, while Hypothesis 2 suggested that first-born individuals report higher levels of life satisfaction compared to later-borns.

IV.Result and Discussion

The statistical analysis conducted on the two variables, "sumPB" (Prosocial Behaviour) and "sumLS" (Life Satisfaction), using a t-test for equality of means, aimed to determine if there was a significant difference between the means of these variables for first borns and later borns.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables Prosocial Behaviour and Life Satisfaction

Birth Order		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sumPB	1	93	61.0108	12.66328	1.31312
	2	81	61.5309	10.39481	1.15498
sumLS	1	93	19.7097	7.10722	.73698
	2	81	19.2099	7.39884	.82209

Note: Table 1 displays the statistics for “sumPB” i.e. variable Prosocial Behaviour and for “sumLS” i.e. variable Life Satisfaction. The number “1” stands for “first born individuals” and “2” stands for “later born individuals”

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the variable "sumPB," which represents mean prosocial behaviour, based on participants' birth order. The table shows that the sample size for first-born participants is 93, with a mean score of 61.01 and a standard deviation of 12.66. For later-born participants, the sample size is 81, with a slightly higher mean score of 61.53 and a lower standard deviation of 10.39. These findings suggest that there is no significant difference in mean prosocial behaviour between first-born and later-born participants in contrast to Mahony's (2012) study, which found that later-born children were more prosocial than first-born children.

As for the variable "sumLS" (life satisfaction), Table 1 findings suggest based on birth order (1 for first-born, 2 for later-born). The sample size for first-born participants is 93, with a mean score of 19.71 and a standard deviation of 7.11. The sample size for later-born participants is 81, with a slightly lower mean score of 19.21 and a slightly higher standard deviation of 7.40. The results suggest that there is no significant difference in mean life satisfaction between first-born and later-born participants. This is consistent with the findings of Shao et al. (2013) who found no significant association between birth order and life satisfaction.

The study investigated the relationship between birth order, prosocial behaviour, and life satisfaction among young adults. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction between first-born and later-born individuals. However, further research is recommended with larger sample sizes, different age groups, and control variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship. Additionally, cultural diversity, ethnic and racial identities should be taken into account to explore potential cultural-specific factors.

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