

Impact of Birth Order on Emotional Maturity and General Well-being of Adolescents

Dr. Molly Joy^[1]
Ms. Asha Mathew^[2]

Abstract:

The objective of the research was to study the impact of birth order on emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescent's .Adolescence is the period of transition from child hood to adulthood, where there are various changes in all the aspects of life, which may have impact on their life. Correlational Within group design is used to study 300 higher secondary students aged 15-18 years. Result of this study showed that there is a significant difference between the emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents belongs to different birth orders such as first born, last born and single child as well as there is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents.

Key words.: Emotional Maturity, General Well-Being, Birth Order, Only Born, First Born, Last Born, Adolescence, Adolescents.

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I.INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a major period in the life with major changes takes place like biological, cognitive, social and emotional because of the transitions from the childhood to adulthood. This study focusses on the impact of birth order on emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. Emotional maturity and general well-being, both are important variables which should be discussed in adolescence. Emotional maturity is the ability of adolescents to stabilize emotions which include their capability for emotional progression, independence, social adjustment, emotional stability, personality integration, etc. General well-being is the subjective well-being and related to the physical condition, but not dependent on the physical or physiological system of an individual.

Emotional maturity is a state of having reached an adult level of emotional development which implies emotional control in social situation. Walter D. Smitson (1974) states that "emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both inter and intra personally" (Shimsiya & Parambat, 2016). Emotional maturity is considered as one of the major determinant in shaping an individual's personality, behavior and attitudes and it helps in enhancing the relationship with others and to enhance the self-worth of the person and emotional stability is considered as one of the major component in mental health (Anand, Kunwar, & Kumar, 2014). According to Menninger (1999), "Emotional maturity can be defined as a process in which the personality always determined for better sense of emotional well-being" (Rajeshwari & S, 2015). If a person is emotionally maturing he or she may have the capacity to make effective adjustment with himself, family members, his peers, society and culture and his or her environment itself. He has the capacity to enjoy his adjustment fully. According to Cole (1954), the most outstanding mark of emotional maturity is the ability to bear tension and it will enable a person to tolerate the frustration

they undergo (kumar & Smriti, 2014). Hence it is considered as an individual's ability to control himself or herself (Rajeshwari & S, 2015). Boys and girls are said to have achieved emotional maturity if, by the end of adolescence, they do not "blow up" emotionally when others are present, but wait for a convenient time and place to let off emotional steam in a socially acceptable manner (Hurlock E. , 1981).

According to Verma & Verma (1989) "General wellbeing is considered as the subjective feeling which is of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and of one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc. These things are difficult to evaluate objectively, hence the emphasis on the term "subjective" well-being. It may well be maintained in adverse circumstances and conversely, may be lost in favorable situation. It is related to but not depends upon the physical or physiological conditions" (Verma & Verma, 1989).

Birth order is the individuals rank in their sibling constellation. Adler,(1928) classified the birth orders into 4 categories, the first born, middle born, last born or only born or twins. It is considered as the science of understanding of an individual's place in a family. The order in which an individual born into a family has greater impact on his entire life (Leman, 2009). Adler, argued that birth order leaves an indelible impression on the individual's style of life. He used that principle to explain an individual's uniqueness in life. He also believed that the child's chronological place in their family plays a major role in shaping their personality itself. That is because the parents treat children of different birth order differently. The studies found out that the child's especially of first born personality traits in aspects such as, extraversion, maturity and intellect can be affected or determined by the family environment of the child. "Last-born children are believed to be the most creative, emotional,

^[1] Head ,Department of Psychology and Research center, Email: dr.molly@kristujayanti.com / dr.mjoy14@gmail.com

^[2] M.Sc Psychology, K. Narayanapura, Kothannur P o. Bangalore 77

extraverted, disobedient, irresponsible and talkative” (Herrera, 2003). Compared with later born, firstborns also appear to be more neurotic in the sense of being temperamental and anxious about their status.

With age, sibling relationships undergo developmental transformations and become more egalitarian and more symmetrical (Buhrmeester & Furman, 1990). It has been found that the early adolescents reported that they are having comparatively less companionship as well as less conflict with their siblings when compare to the younger children (Cole & Kerns, 2001), and their relationships became less intensive (Buhrmeester & Furman, 1990). Twelfth graders reported feeling more distant from and spending less time with their siblings and less affection, intimacy, and caring by siblings than 3rd, 6th, and 9th graders (Buhrmeester & Furman, 1990). The decreased intensity was also reflected in less quarreling, antagonism, and competition and issues of power and status became less relevant (Buhrmeester & Furman, 1990, p. 1396). However, more recent findings suggest that, despite the growing distance and decrease in joint activities, the emotional attachment between siblings remains moderately strong throughout adolescence (Cole & Kerns, 2001). Adolescent siblings can act as emotional supports, rivals, communication partners (Pomery, Gibson, Gerrard, & Cleveland, 2006). Thus, the relationship with the sibling influences the adolescents’ life itself.

While considering the researches exists on birth order and only children and its effect on an individual’s personality and behavior is a conflicting topic. Few researchers have a strong belief that the birth order has a meaningful impact on attitudes and behaviors (Sulloway, 1995). Compared with later born, firstborns also appear to be more neurotic in the sense of being temperamental and anxious about their status. Research evidence showed that emotionally immature persons tend to prefer inefficient coping methods than that of useful methods and the more mature people prefer more wise and useful methods. (Wagde & Ganaie 2013). The impact of emotional maturity on stress and self-confidence of adolescents found that adolescents with high emotional maturity have high stress and self-confidence. (Pастey & Aminbhavi 2006).

Birth order is a strong predictor of adolescent behavior. The relationship between child and parents, during adolescence, there will be a distance in the relationship between the adolescent and their siblings itself (Laursen, 1996). In an adoptee study, it has been found that regardless of biological birth order, first reared children, was more conscientious than the later-reared children (Beer & Horn, 2000). First born children and only child shows more anxiety when compared to children belongs to other birth orders.

Even though the child gets a similar parental approach towards them, the experience which will be getting for the first born, last born or even single born will be different (Zanden & W., 2000). It is considered as a child belong to a family, but do psychologists believe that for each child there will be a unique macro environment within the family itself. These unique experiences they obtain from family are much more powerful in molding the personality of each child. The first-born child is considered a adult oriented, helpful, conforming, anxious and self-controlled and less aggressive

than their siblings. High achievement can be reason for more guilt, anxiety, difficult in coping with stressful situations and higher admissions to guidance clinics. The last born enjoys better relations with peers than first born. They are described as “baby” in the family even after they have outgrown infancy, run the risk of becoming overly dependent. There are misconceptions about the only child; they are described as “spoiled brat”. They are possessing characteristics of dependency, and self-centered behavior. They are often achievement oriented and display a desirable personality, especially in comparison to later born and children from large families (Thomas, Coffman, & Kipp, 1993). The personality of individual is believed to be differently shaped because of the birth order. So, the emotional maturity may be also differing in different birth orders.

II. FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

Adolescence is known as period of stress and storm and they undergo huge level of stress and conflicts during this period, if an adolescent is emotionally mature, he or she can deal with the stress they undergo very effectively, and they will lead to the state of well-being. This research aim to study the emotional maturity and general wellbeing between only born, first born, and last-born adolescents and to study the impact of birth order on emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents as well as to study whether there is any relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being among adolescents. Thus there is need to correlate emotional maturity and general well-being among adolescents as variables. So, this study will be a basement for the further studies and researches on the area.

III. METHOD

Objectives of the study

- To assess emotional maturity and general wellbeing of adolescents
- To study the relationship between emotional maturity and general wellbeing among adolescents
- To Analyse emotional maturity and general wellbeing between only born, first born, and last-born adolescents

Correlational within group design with quantitative approach is adapted to study and compare emotional maturity and general well-being of first born, last born and single born adolescents. Self-report questionnaires are administered to the participants for data collection and used to test the proposed Hypotheses.

Variables

Emotional Maturity: state in which an individual attains the emotional development as similar as an adult. In which, individual can manage the emotions and handle it in accordance with the social situations as well as critically analyze a situation before responding to it. They will be having a stable emotion and would not swing between two emotions.

General wellbeing: It is a subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life’s experiences and of one’s

role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc. (Verma & Verma, 1989).

Birth order and status of siblinghood: Only born, first born, last born

First born child: first in the order of birth or can be described as the eldest. They are considered as adult oriented, helpful, conforming, anxious and self-controlled and less aggressive than their siblings. According to Adler, the ‘first born begins his life as the exclusive focus of his parents. But, as soon as the next sibling is born, the first born is abruptly dethroned.

The last born: can be defined as the last in order of birth or the youngest child. They enjoy better relations with peers than first born. They are described as “baby” in the family even after they have outgrown infancy, run the risk of becoming overly dependent.

Only child: a child who has no brothers or sisters. They are possessing characteristics of dependency, and self-centered behavior. They are often achievement oriented and display a desirable personality, especially in comparison to later born and children from large families

Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that involves biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Hurlock E. , 1981). Adolescence begins from 10 to 13 years and ends between the ages ranges of 18-20 years. This study has considered adolescents between the age group of 15 to 20 years.

Sample

The sample between the age group of 15 to 18 years is selected from various higher secondary CBSC students from one of the district in Kerala state, India. Purposive sampling method was used to identify 300 adolescent higher secondary school students. 100 samples were drawn from each birth orders namely - only born, first born and last born.

Tools for the study

Emotional maturity scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava

Measures 5 factors of emotional maturity such as emotional instability, emotional progression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, lack of independence and an overall emotional Maturity. This scale has a total of 48 items. EMS is a self-reporting 5-point scale. The 5 options mentioned are , very much, much, undecided, probably and never. With Test-retest Reliability 0.75. (N = 150) and Validity coefficient is 0.64 (N = 46).

PGI General Well-being Measure by S.K Verma and Anita Verma.

The P.G.I General Well-being Scale appears to be reliable and valid tool to measure positive mental health of Indian subjects. While measuring with K.R. 20 formula and was found to be .98 (p < .01) and the Test-retest reliability of English version is .91 (p < .01). The test showed high correlation with Bradburn Well-being scale (p<.01) (Amity Verma, Mahajan & S.K. Verma ,1989) and correlated with learned helplessness scale, PGI Health Questionnaire N-2, PGI Quality of Life scale, etc.

Method of data collection

The informed consent from institutions and parents were obtained and the purpose of the study was made clear to them. Then, they were provided with both the Questionnaires and requested to give honest responses and were assured that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purpose of research work. The students filled the questionnaires within 20-30 minutes and a scoring was done for further analysis.

Statistical Analysis: To test the hypotheses Pearson product moment correlation, ANOVA and Multiple Regression were used .Where correlation was used to find out the relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. ANOVA was used to find out whether there is a significant difference between emotional maturity and general well-being of first born, last born and single born adolescents. For ANOVA, Emotional maturity and general well-being are considered as dependent variables and birth order is considered as independent variable. Multiple regressions predicted whether the birth order has any effect on emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. To assess emotional maturity and general wellbeing of adolescents and between only born, first born, and last-born adolescents

Table 1: Showing Descriptive statistics of the variables - emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents, 1st born, last born and single child.

Variables	N	Mean			Std.Deviation
		Statistic	Interpretation	Std. Error	Statistic
Emotional Maturity	300	124.05	Extremely Unstable	1.793	31.062
General Well-being	300	5.69	Below Average	.228	3.943
Emotional Maturity of 1st born	100	109.46	Extremely Unstable	2.540	25.529
General Well-being of 1st born	100	6.46	Below Average	.412	4.123
Emotional Maturity of last born	100	114.45	Extremely Unstable	2.617	26.167
General Well-being of last born	100	6.26	Below Average	.420	4.196
Emotional Maturity of single child	100	147.16	Extremely Unstable	2.966	29.661
General Well-being of single child	100	4.36	Below Average	.310	3.103
Valid N (listwise)	100				

*Primary Source

The table shows that emotional maturity of adolescents has a mean score of 124.05 which is interpreted as extremely unstable. The standard error score of 1.793 and standard deviation of 31.062. The mean score of emotional maturity of first born adolescents is 109.46 and was interpreted as

extremely unstable and has a mean standard error score of 2.540 and a standard deviation of 25.529. The mean emotional maturity score of last born adolescents is 114.45 which is interpreted as having extremely unstable emotional maturity and has a standard error mean of 2.617 as well as SD of 26.167. The mean score of emotional maturity of single child is 147.16, which is interpreted as extremely unstable and a standard error mean of 2.966 as well as SD of 29.661.

The table shows that the general well-being of 300 adolescents which includes first born, last born and single born has a mean score of 5.69, which is interpreted as below average and as a standard error mean of .228. the standard deviation of adolescents on general well-being is 3.943. the mean score of general well-being of first born adolescents is 6.46 which have been interpreted as below average well-being. The standard error mean is .412 and the SD is 4.123. last born adolescents has a mean score of 6.29, which is below average and the standard error mean is .420 and SD is 4.196. for single born adolescents the mean score is 4.36, which is a below average well-being and they possess a standard deviation score of 3.103.

According to Crow and Crow, a person of any age group can be emotionally matured who has the capability to overcome the stress by neglecting certain emotion stimulators that have a direct bearing on the behavior and attitude of the individual. As because adolescence is known to be major period of development, the emotional maturity will have a definite impact on general well-being of adolescents. Adolescents are found to be having below average well-being and they are having extremely unstable emotional maturity. As described by Hurlock, the lesser emotional maturity and poor well-being of adolescents may be because of the transition of adolescents from child hood to adulthood where there will be a greater change in areas of biological, cognitive and socio-emotional areas and may be those changes negatively influencing the adolescents (Hurlock E. , 1981).

In studies conducted by Rajeshwari and John Mano Raj in 2015, they found out that Mental well-being of an individual is highly affected by emotional maturity they possess, and emotional mature person can manage stress more effectively than others (Rajeshwari & S, 2015). Adolescence is known as period of stress and storm. The adolescents will undergo huge level of stress and conflicts during this period, if an adolescent is emotionally mature, he or she can deal with the stress they undergo very effectively, and they will lead to the state of well-being.

2. To assess the relationship between emotional maturity and general wellbeing among adolescents.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being among adolescents.

Table 2: Showing the correlation between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents.

Correlations			
Variables		Emotional Maturity	General Well-being
Emotional Maturity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
General Well-being	Pearson Correlation	-.522**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To find out the relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents Pearson correlation is used and has found that there exists a negative correlation between the variables such as emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. At 0.01 level, the adolescents obtained -.522** correlation, which is a negative correlation. As the score increases on emotional maturity indicates instability and the decreases in well-being scores indicates low level of well-being or poor well-being.

The sample rejected the null hypothesis. Thereby, the alternative hypotheses is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. The relationship obtained is that as the emotional immaturity increases the general well-being of adolescents' decreases.

3. To analyses the difference between emotional maturity and general wellbeing of only born, first born, and last-born adolescents.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA table showing the difference between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents who belong to three groups such as first born, last born and single child

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional Maturity	Between Groups	80848.207	2	40424.103	57.735	.000**
	Within Groups	207950.940	297	700.172		
	Total	288799.147	299			
General Well-being	Between Groups	268.667	2	134.333	9.111	.000**
	Within Groups	4379.120	297	14.745		
	Total	4647.787	299			

**Significant at 0.01 level

The ANOVA table shows that the sum of squares of emotional maturity between group is 80848.207 with a df of 2 and a mean square of 40424.103. The df is obtained by subtracting 1 from the number of groups, which is 3. The F value of 57.735 indicates that the level of significance is .000. While considering emotional maturity within groups, the sum of squares is 207950.90 and has a df of 297 and mean square of 700.172. .000 significance level indicates that there is significant difference between emotional maturities of adolescents belong to different groups. Thus, it states that single child, first born child, as well as the last-born child has difference between their emotional maturities. The sum of squares of general well-being between group is 268.667 and for within group is 4379.120 with a df of 2 and 297 respectively. The mean square values are 134.333 and 14.745 respectively with a F value of 9.111 which indicates the level of significance is .000, which indicates that there is significant difference between first born, last born and single born adolescents in their general well-being.

Another study by Shimsiya T.S and Abdul Khader Parambath, has been found out that there exist various levels in emotional maturity of adolescents related to their birth order (Shimsiya & Parambat, Emotional Maturity of Higher Secondary School Student's in Relation to Birth Order and Selected Stream of Study, 2016). Thus, the studies reveal that

there exists difference in emotional maturity of adolescents with respect to the birth order they have.

4. To assess the effect of birth order on emotional maturity and general wellbeing among adolescents.

Table 4: Multiple regression showing the effect of birth order on emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Emotional Maturity	80682.647 ^a	2	40341.323	57.656	.000**
	General Well-being	268.667 ^b	2	134.333	9.111	.000
Intercept	Emotional Maturity	4616272.653	1	4616272.653	6597.636	.000
	General Well-being	9724.213	1	9724.213	659.514	.000
Order	Emotional Maturity	80682.647	2	40341.323	57.656	.000**
	General Well-being	268.667	2	134.333	9.111	.000
Error	Emotional Maturity	207806.700	297	699.686		
	General Well-being	4379.120	297	14.745		
Total	Emotional Maturity	4904762.000	300			
	General Well-being	14372.000	300			
Corrected Total	Emotional Maturity	288489.347	299			
Total	General Well-being	4647.787	299			

a. R Squared = .280 (Adjusted R Squared = .275)
 b. R Squared = .058 (Adjusted R Squared = .051)

Multiple regressions was used to check how much variation happened between the birth order As birth order as independent variable, the sum of squares of emotional maturity is 80682.647 and for general well-being, it is 268.667..The mean square is 40341.323 and 134.333 respectively. The F value of 57.656 for emotional maturity and F value of 9.111 for general well-being indicating both are having significance of .000. The R Squared value of .280 indicates that the birth order has 28% effect on emotional maturity of adolescents and the R Squared value of .058 indicates that there is 5 % of influence of birth order on general well-being of adolescents. It means that the birth order has 28% influences on emotional maturity and birth order has 5% effect on the general wellbeing of adolescents. Thus, it indicates that there are 72% of other factors which influence the emotional maturity of adolescents and there are 95% of other factors or variables which can influence the general well-being of adolescents.

Also, in another study by Anand and Kumar (2014), a research on adolescents of coeducational school in Kanpur, India, found out that 53.6 % of boys and 37.3% of girls developed their emotional maturity based on birth order. Thus, birth order is a significant factor which affects emotional maturity of adolescents (Anand, N, & Kumar, 2014).

V CONCLUSION

- There is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents
- There is a significant difference between emotional maturity and general well-being among single born, first born and last-born adolescents
- Other factors also contribute in determining emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The results obtained through this study can be used in understanding on the emotional maturity and general well-being between only born, first born, and last-born adolescents and helps to understand whether the general well-being and emotional maturity are correlated It helps in finding out ways to train adolescents in a way that they can prepare themselves for having wellness or to stay with very good level of general well-being. It helps in understanding the significance of being a single child, first born and last born on the emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. It also guides to find out the adolescents with emotional instability and poor well-being and to provide proper guidance from educational sector to empower them and to achieve a state of having a stable emotional maturity. This research also aims to developing curriculum of the school going adolescents in such a way that it facilitates well-being and mold them to have a sound emotional maturity and wellness in life. It can also help to give information's and guidance on the upbringing of adolescents.

Adolescents will grow up in to a person who preoccupies different professions and sometimes most of them may turn into powerful authorities. Without emotional maturity and general well-being, it's difficult to succeed in their life goals. To lead a healthy social and individual life, adolescent should need to be emotionally mature and state of well-being should also achieve. Emotional maturity helps the adolescent to lead a socially appropriate way of life and it helps them to guide themselves on what to do's and what not do's. This study helps to focus on people with unstable emotional maturity and poor general well-being to modify the way of their living.

This study will help to provide training for the parents of adolescents belong to different birth order and it will help in enhancing relationship and social aspects of adolescents. Parents of adolescents of different birth order can be trained accordingly and can emphasis on the need and necessity of having siblings or more than one child in a family.

According to researchers, school plays a major role in development of a child. Which may include the changes in cognitive, social and emotional aspects of the child? Programs and interventions in school can positively affect these changes (Maria, Cipriano, Fastino, & JN, 2014). Based on the findings, proper counseling's and guidance can be provided to adolescents and training programmers can be conducted in schools by school counselors. The results suggest that adolescents are having extremely unstable emotional maturity and below average well-being, therefore there is a need of school psychologist or a counselor in a school. They can train the adolescents in maintaining wellness and train them on various areas of emotional maturity. Individual counseling will help them in changing their emotional instability and to find the ways to cope up and manage the changes during adolescence very effectively.

There is a gap found in the studies by correlating these variables on the specific group of adolescents based on the birth order and on the only born. Hence forth, this study will fill those gaps and helps in facilitating further studies on this area.

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