

Agression and Anxiety among Adolescents:A study

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Abstract

The purpose of the research was to explore the impact of birth order on aggression and anxiety among adolescence. The dimensions under investigation are – aggression and anxiety. Instruments used for data collection are "Buss and Perry Questionnaire" by Arnold H. Buss and Mark Perry in 1992, "Beck Anxiety Inventory" (BAI) developed by Aron T. Beck (1996). First born (n=10); Middle born (n=10); last born (n=10) adolescents of ages (14-19) formed the sample. Analysis of Quantitative data used ANOVA and Qualitative data used graphical representation on the basis of content analysis. It was found in the result that there is a statistically insignificant difference found between first and second born and last born regarding their level of aggression and anxiety. The trends of main showed that the level of aggression in the middle born adolescence was higher as compared to first and last born adolescence. Level of anxiety in the firstborn adolescence was higher than the middle born and last born adolescence.

Introduction- Adolescence is a transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. During this period of transition biological changes are occurring and relationships are changing. New experiences must be integrated into sudden change in personality, feelings and emotions being explored. This stage is also known as "onset of puberty".

In this stage 5 leading characteristics of adolescence are biological growth and development, undefined status, increased decision-making, increased pressure, and the search for self. Specific hormones are released during this period that is why this period is known as a risky stage. In this stage the chances of aggression, anger, anxiety, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency etc are increased if proper parental care and support were not given to the adolescent. Anger anxiety and aggression are commonly found in adolescence. Anger is a strong emotion that may do more harm than any other emotions frequently results in aggression and violence. Adolescents have been increasingly identified as perpetrators of violence (**Kazdin, 1987**).

Adolescents are often not able to cope up with the drastic change taking place in their physical and psychological health. The psychological problems in this period occur due to disturb relationships with parents, teachers, seniors and peers, scholastic backwardness compared to high expectation sexual experimentation or substance abuse, All these are often directly or indirectly associated with aggression. The term aggression comes from the Latin word 'aggression' which means attack. Baron and Richardson (1994) define aggression as any act that harms another individual who is motivated to avoid such harm. Evolutionary theory and psychoanalytic theory believes that aggression is innate but the contrast Albert Bandura and his social learning theory describe that aggression is the result of a number of variables which are responsible for aggressive activities. Adolescents frequently involved in aggressive activities are a common phenomenon nowadays; sometimes involvement in aggressive activities may be fatal for the victim as well as the doer.

Anger can be the result of hurt pride, of unreasonable expectations, or of repeated hostile fantasies. Besides getting our way, we may unconsciously use anger to blame others for our own shortcomings, to justify oppressing others, to boost our own sagging egos, to conceal other feelings, and to handle other emotions. Any situation that frustrates us, especially when we think someone else is to blame for our loss, is a potential trigger for anger and aggression and

finding no way out. Anger is feeling mad in response to frustration or injury. Aggression is action, i.e. attacking someone or a group. It is intended to harm someone. It can be a verbal attack--insults, threats, sarcasm, or attributing nasty motives to them or a physical punishment or restriction. Aggression must be distinguished from assertiveness which is tactfully and rationally standing up for one's own rights; indeed, assertiveness is designed not to hurt others. In this context another reason behind aggression in adolescents is parents- teenager conflicts, this conflict usually starts during the 12 to 16-year-old period. Friends become more important than parents. Parent-teenager fights range in intensity from quiet withdrawal to raging arguments on every issue.

Conflicts may begin with the teenager stopping doing certain things that please their parents. The parents may respond just as strongly to the teenager's new behavior. When the agreeable kid starts to argue about everything, it is baffling to the parents. On the other hand anxiety often plays an important role in one's life and it also seems that anxiety in adolescents increases day by day due to various types of competition in peer groups, in academic areas or in between siblings also.

Anxiety is an emotion that predates the evolution of men, children, adolescents and adults experience anxiety in different forms ; while this is visible in some , It can be inferred in others from their physiological and psychological responses. There is much to be anxious about. Our health, social relationships, examination, careers and conditions of the environment are few sources of possible concerns. It is normal and even adaptive, to be somewhat anxious about these aspects of life. Anxiety serves us when it prompts us to seek regular medical checkups or motivates us to study for tests. Anxiety is an appropriate response to threats, but it can be normal when its level is out of proportion to a threat. In Extreme forms, anxiety can impair our daily functioning.

Anxiety during adolescence typically centres on change in the way the adolescence body looks and feels, social acceptance and conflicts about independence. Anxiety relates with birth order every birth position causes a certain amount of anxiety which is directly related to their responsibilities they have according to their birth position. Birth order is believed to influence many aspects of one's personality anxiety and aggression is one of them. According to Halam (1992) anxiety is a word used in everyday conversation and refers to a complex relationship between a person and his situation. Anxiety is often a diffuse, unpleasant and uncomfortable feeling of apprehension, accompanied by one or more bodily sensations that characteristically recur in the same manner in the person. It is an alerting signal that warns an individual of imminent danger and enables him to take measures to deal with it. Anxiety and fear may exist simultaneously or follow each other. Anxiety or fear-arousing stimulus may be internal or external, immediate or future, definite or vague, and conflictual or non-conflictual in nature. One can, however, differentiate anxiety from fear, in that in fear no conflict is involved and the threat is known.

Birth order plays a very important role in our personality. It is believed that the level of anger, aggression, and anxiety or other aspect of personality may vary in person to person according to their birth order.

Birth order is believed to influence many aspects of one's personality. Alfred Adler was one of the first in the field of psychology to theorize about the differences birth order could make. Adler, the founder of Individual Psychology, was the first to discuss the influence of birth order on personality development. While he identified common characteristics and patterns for particular birth order positions, he emphasized how every person has a self-perceived place in his or her family. This perceived position may or may not be the person's chronological place in the family. Alfred Adler believed that birth order had a direct association with personality characteristics. It is believed that each birth order position has its own unique set of personality traits.

Firstborns are believed to be more conservative. They are viewed as leaders who follow rules. They submit to authority. Middle born are considered more rebellious and more likely to challenge authority. They often have a more difficult time finding their place of significance in the family. Because of their middle position they are often

the peacemakers in the family and become experts at negotiation. Youngest siblings are often viewed as pampered, dependent, immature, and irresponsible. They tend to be more sociable and usually get the most attention. Others often do things for them. They learn to use this to their advantage and often use charm and manipulation to get people to do things for them.

Literature review-

Asiya Jamal, Dr. Punita Govil, Dr. Swati Gupta in 2018 conducted a study in Aligarh, U.P to find out some demographic variables like religion, educational qualification of father and educational qualification mother, occupation of father and occupation of mother, do not make any difference in the attitude of learners towards aggression.

Sabina Sultana & Laila Latif 2010 They conducted a study and found that males are more aggressive than females and the last born children are more aggressive than the first born children.

Tarah R.Pearson, Dr.Roberta Dihoff 2008-09 They conducted a study on anxiety and birth order and their findings suggest that no significance of the interaction results were found in any of the groups.

Amanda Callaway 2018 Conducted a study this study examined the relationship between birth order and anxiety regarding the transition from high school to becoming a university student and results of this study explains the phenomenon by the type of perfectionism fostered by being in a particular birth order.

Rationale of the study

A report published by WHO in April 2017, the percentage of adolescents who reported being in psychological issues were approximately 48%. It has been found the construct of anxiety and aggression among siblings (3 brother or sister) are highly correlated with each other but are difficult to find in a single adolescent.

According to a study conducted by Asiya Jamal in Aligarh indicated that various demographic variables (like gender, place of living, economic status) have a significant effect on the attitude of the adolescent towards aggression. It was even supported by Rita Rani Talukdar (at Guwahati and Sarthebari) that found a significant difference of aggression between male and female adolescents and even adolescents varying in demographic areas.

Another important consideration about the relation between anxiety and aggression can be given in terms of birth order. A study by Sabina Sultana & Laila Latif 2010 showed that males are more aggressive than females and the last born children are more aggressive than the first born children. And a study on anxiety and birth order suggest that there is no significant difference (Tarah R.Pearson, Dr.Roberta Dihoff 2008-09).

According to the best of my knowledge, none of the previous studies are done taking these variables simultaneously in terms of birth order among adolescents in India. Therefore I thought of conducting this study in which comparison of these variables are carried among adolescents in terms of birth order.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose:

- To explore the level of aggression and anxiety among adolescents with respect to birth order.
- To study the differences in level of aggression and anxiety among adolescents with respect to birth order.

Research Questions-

- Is birth order effect the level of aggression and anxiety among adolescents.
- How the characteristics of each birth position changes the level of aggression and anxiety in adolescents
- What are the causes behind increased level of aggression and anxiety in adolescents nowadays.

Variables:**Independent Variable**

- Birth Order

Dependant Variable-

1. Anxiety
2. Aggression

Hypotheses:

- There will be significant differences found in the level of aggression between first born, second born and last born.
- Middle born child will be more aggressive than the first and last born child.
- There will be significant differences found in the level of anxiety between first born, second born and last born.
- First born child would have higher level of anxiety.

Design: Exploratory orientation and Ex-Post Facto.

Sample -

The sample of present study consists of 10 first born, 10 second born and 10 last born. The age of the sample belongs to a specific age group of 14 to 19 years of school.

Inclusion criteria- First born, second born and last born adolescents are included specifically of 14 to 19 years of age.

Exclusion criteria- Adolescents above 14years and below 19 years are excluded. And only child are also excluded.

Method of sampling: Convenient purposive sampling technique is used to draw the sample of the present study.

Tool used: Data for the present study will be collected using Buss and Perry questionnaire developed by ** (1992) this scale has four factors 1) Physical aggression 2) Verbal aggression 3) Anger aggression 4) Hostility aggression. There are 29 questions in this questionnaire and 5- point Likert scale is used for scoring.

For assessing anxiety level Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) developed by Aron Beck (1988). This scale is a self-report measure of anxiety comprising 21 items. Interview Schedule prepared for the qualitative data

Procedures- Research on the topic of 'impact of birth order on aggression and anxiety among adolescents' were studied. Significant variable aggression and anxiety which is common in adolescents nowadays was chosen. A sample of 10 first born, 10 middle born and 10 last born adolescents was selected applying purposively convenient sampling techniques. Buss and Perry Questionnaire by ** Beck anxiety inventory by Aron Beck and semi-structured interview schedule were selected and applied to the sample.

Analysis - One way analysis of variance was used for the scores obtained on Buss and Perry Questionnaire and BAI to determine the differences between first born, middle born and last born regarding the level of aggression and anxiety. Further graphical representation used on the basis of content analysis for the qualitative data collected from the interview.

Results -

Table-1 Table-1: The summary of one-way- analysis of variance (ANOVA) for aggression with respect to birth order among adolescents.

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS= SS/DF
Between group	210.867	3-1=2	105.4335
Within group	5466	3 (10-1) = 27	202.4444

F ratio- 0.6208

$p > 0.01 : p > 0.05$

Degree of freedom (df) = 2,27

Value at 0.05 level= 3.35

Value at 0.01 level= 5.49

Hence, obtained F ratio is smaller than this that means F-ratio is not significant at the level of 0.05 and 0.01.

Table-2: The summary of one-way- analysis of variance (ANOVA) for anxiety with respect to birth order among adolescents.

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS= SS/DF
Between group	150.0667	3-1= 2	75.03335
Within group	11,056.9033	3(10-1) = 27	409.51493

F ratio- 0.1832

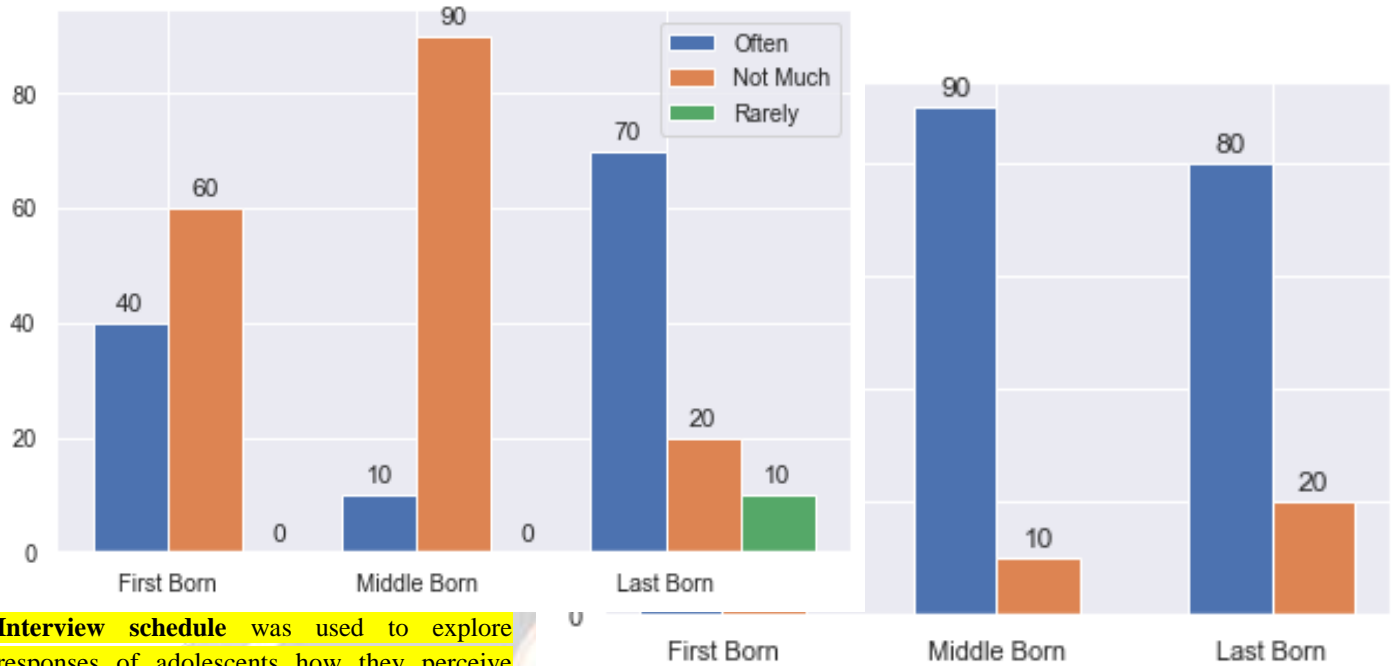
$p > 0.01 : p > 0.05$

Degree of freedom (df)= 2,27

Value at 0.05 level= 3.35

Value at 0.01 level= 5.49

Hence, obtained F ratio is smaller than this that means F-ratio is not significant at the level of 0.05 and 0.01.

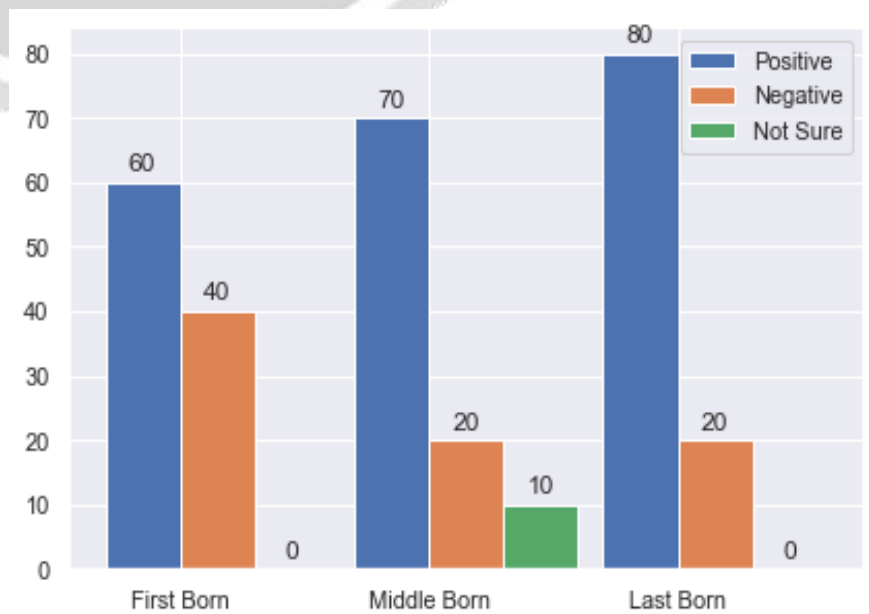


Interview schedule was used to explore responses of adolescents how they perceive their birth order.

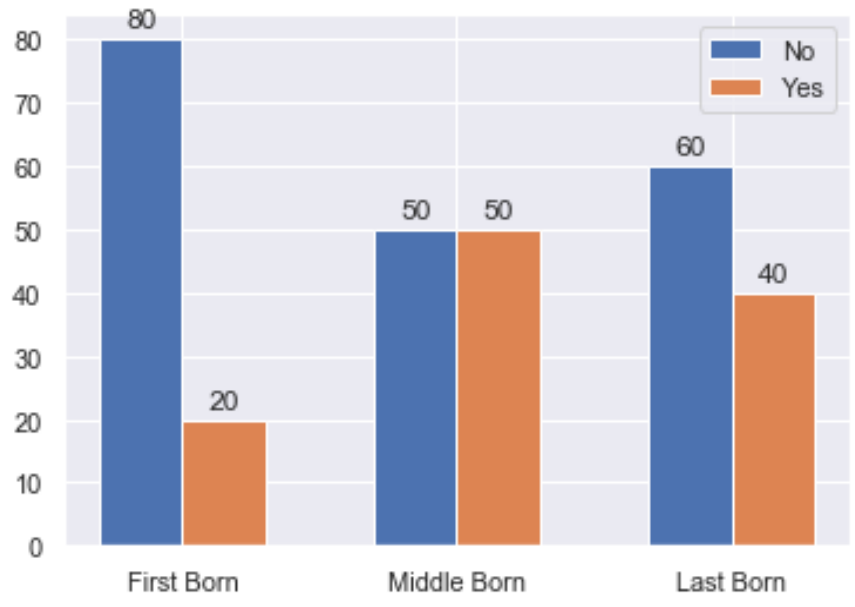
1) How has your birth order affected the level of your self confidence and achievement drive (positive and negative way)?

2) Have you ever wished to change your birth order?

3) How often do you communicate with your siblings?



4) Do your parents compare you with your siblings?



5) Can you rely on your siblings?

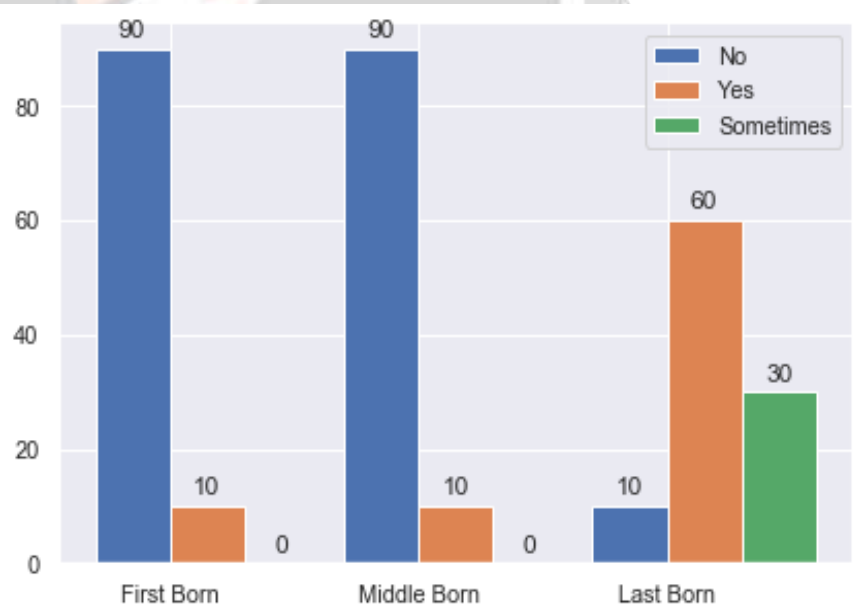
DISCUSSION

In this section, possible explanation and potential reasons for obtained results are forwarded, also the results are compared with previous research findings. The major focus of the present study was to explore the impact of birth order on aggression and anxiety among adolescents or to study the differences in level of aggression and anxiety among adolescents with respect to their birth order.

Aggression is defined as "a behavior directed towards the goal of harming another living being" by Baron and Byrne

(1997) to the definition the age range of 13-29 (teenage) period of transition causes aggression in adolescents due to various changes in the body or in the environment.

As can be indicated in the results section of this study there is a statistically insignificant difference found between first born, second born and last born adolescent. Thus the first hypothesis "There will be significant differences found in the level of aggression between first born, second born and last born" was rejected. There were several



reasons behind insignificant results like small sample, social desirability of the respondent, age spacing, and physical health of the respondent. Although individual differences play a major role.

The trends of the mean for the 3 groups the level of aggression in middle born adolescents was high as compared to the first and last born adolescents. The mean score of the first born was 88.80, middle born was 94.70 and the last born was 89.40. Mean score of the middle born respondents was significantly higher than the first born and the last born respondents, the mean scores clearly shows that the middle born adolescents are more aggressive than the first and the last born adolescents. There were studies conducted using these variables that gave contrast results. Study conducted by Ardabili. E.F & Golshani.F in (2016) in their findings birth order of the children is an important factor in the formation of aggression. Consistent with the result found the study conducted by Sultana & Latif (2010) in their study findings suggest that last born children are more aggressive than the first born children although in their study the group of middle born children was excluded.

In explaining these findings of birth order effects on aggressive behaviour it can be said here that adolescents who perceive themselves as being neglected and non favoured may experience feelings of inferiority, anger, depression and incompetence. Zervas and Sherman (1994). Parents are more attentive to fulfill the needs of their first born than the middle born child and the last born are often viewed as pampered, dependent, immature and irresponsible. They tend to be more sociable and usually get the most attention and middle born are considered more rebellious and more likely to challenge authority as a result the middle born children perceive themselves as the non favoured children and become frustrated. Thus, the higher aggressive behaviors of the middle born child occur. Hence, middle born children exhibit more aggressiveness than the first born and last born mainly due to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority resulting from parental negligence Hurlock (1968).

There can be a lot of other reasons or factors such as family size, age spacing, physical health of the child etc is related to birth order and play part in determining behavioural problems in the adolescents Begum (1998). Some other empirical studies were conducted on the similar sample. In line of the study conducted by Jamal.A, Govil.P, Gupta.S in (2018) in their findings suggest that various demographic variables like gender, place of living, economic status have a significant effect on the attitude of adolescents towards aggression. The other variable which was chosen i.e Anxiety according to Hallam (1992) anxiety is a word used in everyday conversation and refers to a complex relationship between a person and his situation.

As can be depicted in the result section of the present study a statistically insignificant difference was found between first, second born and last born. They did not support the hypothesis that "There will be significant differences between levels of anxiety in adolescence with respect to their birth order" has been rejected, although individual differences play a major role. It was also hypothesized that first born adolescence would have a higher level of anxiety than the middle and last born adolescent.

There were some interesting trends in data that showed the level of anxiety in the first born adolescents was high as compared to the middle born and last born adolescents. The mean scores of the first born was 20.80, middle born was 18.90 and the last born was 15.40, so the mean scores of the first born respondent group was significantly higher than the middle born and the last born respondent group. Although the tests that were run did not yield

significant results, because of sample size which is why this study was replicated. Also self report measures were used for assessing level of anxiety, which can introduce bias derived from social desirability. Results were not significant. The trends seen in the data lean towards supporting past research in the area of birth order effects on personality. Similar results found in the line with these present findings, study conducted by Amanda Callaway (2018). In their findings insignificant results were observed but results trended towards middle born children scoring lowest on anxiety, youngest children scoring highest on anxiety and the first born and only children scoring similarly. Consistent with the result found the study conducted by Pearson & Dihoff (2008-09) found that there is no significant interaction found between level of anxiety and birth order.

In explaining these findings of birth order effects on the level of anxiety. Although results were not statistically significant there can be a lot of reasons behind it such as small sample, family size, age spacing, physical health, social desirability etc. Adler's (1929) theory that middle born are to be more relaxed and easy going and the last born are very pampered dependent children this is the reason that middle born and last born are less anxious than the first born. First born shows high levels of anxiety due to parents who seem to have higher expectations on their first born and tend to perceive them as more intelligent, strong and often give them more control over their environment and they live with the tag of Mr. or Miss perfectionist and responsible.

Interview schedule was also prepared to take responses of adolescents as to know how they perceive their birth order in their life. Interview data analysis revealed that most of the adolescence wanted to change their birth position because of the role they play according to their birth order in their family. for example firstborn adolescence said that "being the oldest child we need to act as a role model sometime the pressure make me irritated" this participant highlights experience regarding the role which the first born child have to play as he or she have to be a role model of their younger siblings. 70% of the firstborn adolescents shared that they want to live freely and carelessly without any tension which they can't do because of the responsibilities regarding their birth order in this context personality theorist Alfred Adler who believe that the birth order had a direct association with personality characteristics. He believe that each birth order position has its unique set of personality traits for example:- first born are believed to be more conservative, they are viewed as leader who follow rules, they submit to authorities these traits are the reason behind the maximum first born wanted to change their birth order on the other hand they were satisfied with their achievement level because firstborns are often more ambitious than other birth order position and also more confirming. Adler suggested that first born be more motivated to achieve than other birth order positions.

While talking about first born, middle born and last born adolescence were also not satisfied with their birth position responses from the middle born group were like "yes I want to change my birth order", "yes if I was first born than I could achieve more", "being a middle born I always have to do compromise", "my family members always compare me with my elder sibling etc. These responses clear that middle born finding their place of significance in the family, they think that if they are first born then they get more attention in their family, they are often the peacemaker in the family and expert at negotiation, they learn to be competitive because they have to keep up with their older sibling while trying to stay ahead of younger siblings. Responses from the last born group were like "I wish I should have a first child", "I want to be the older one". But most of the participants in the last one

adolescence group were satisfied with their birth order. Their responses are- "I am happy with my birth order, I feel free", "I am satisfied with my birth order because i am the loving one in my family". These statements clarify that last borns are the youngest child of the family are often viewed as pampered, dependent, immature and irresponsible. They tend to be more sociable and usually get the most attention. 'Others often do things for them'. These are the reasons why they did not want to change their birth order. The youngest child can be seen as the most agreeable due to their goals of avoiding threatening confrontation with older sibling Beck, Burnet & Vosper (2006).

Conclusion:- To explore the impact of birth order on aggression and anxiety among adolescents the findings of this research suggests that there are "not significant" differences were found in aggression and anxiety among first born, middle born and lastborn adolescence group. On the other hand trends of the mean showed that the middle born group reported higher levels of aggression and the first born group reported higher levels of anxiety. Their perception about their birth order interview schedule was prepared in which first born and middle born groups were not fully satisfied with their birth order on the other hand lastborn adolescence group reported that they were satisfied with their birth order.

Birth orders have been widely examined and discussed. At first glance, birth order effects are solely dependent on whether the child was the first born middle born or last born; in reality there are so many others variable that play into personality differences seen with respect to birth order Healey & Ellis (2007) examples include age, socioeconomic status of the parents and education of parents, family size and gender.

Limitations and Suggestions-

- The present study was conducted with a very small sample size and from a homogeneous sample (only 30 school going adolescents were taken).
- Sample size can be increased.
- The research was confined to urban middle socioeconomic status only. Therefore, it can also include rural areas and different socioeconomic statuses.
- A large sample size allow for more first, middle and last born adolescents participants to be exposed, yielding more conclusive results. Hence the results obtained cannot be generalized on all adolescents.
- The age limit was 14-18 years only. Hence, age range can be increased and comparative analysis can be done.
- This research can also be used in comparing literate and illiterate community type and also between different family types.
- This research was only confined to birth order. Therefore, other gender can also be included.
- Although the tests that were run did not yield significant results, future studies with a larger sample size may produce significant data,

Implications-

- This research may show the effect of Psychological birth order on personality of young female adults which can help in creating awareness campaign for individuals to know their personality dimensions.
- With this research we may be able to get a clear picture of what role, in general, each position takes on.
- It can help in improving an individual's self-esteem and self-confidence. As when individuals will get to know their psychological birth order, they will be able to reduce the difference between their roles, what is assigned

and what role they are doing in their lives, thus, it will help them in knowing their self-worth and exact roles which will result in higher self-esteem and self-confidence.

- It can also help siblings to learn about the differences between biological birth order and psychological birth order which can further help in assessing their expected roles in family and what role they are actually performing.
- In this research self report measures were used for assessing levels of anxiety, which can introduce bias derived from social desirability. Future research could use other assessment procedures.
- By understanding what needs children will have based on their birth order, practitioners can become better suited to address their specific issue concerning their anxiety and aggression.
- Future research may be carried out in different cultures and on a wider sample.

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