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## ADJUSTMENT LEVELS AMONG ALONE BORN AND FIRST BORN CHILDREN



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**Abstract:** The present study was aimed to investigate the reasons for inconsistent findings concerning birth-order effects on adjustment levels among alone born and first born children. A total of 100 under graduate students were taken as study sample from Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, of which 50 were alone born and 50 were first born constituting two groups. Bell adjustment inventory prepared by Raj Kumar Ojha was administered to measure their adjustment levels consisting the dimensions of home, social, emotional and health. The mean scores of alone born and first born in respective dimensions were worked out. Student t-test was applied to study the statistical significant difference among the mean scores of both the groups. Results indicated that there exists a significantly higher adjustment levels in the dimensions of home, social, emotional and health in alone born in comparison to first born children. However the first born children were having higher health adjustment scores. On the basis of these findings it may be concluded that first born were highly adjusted when compared to alone born and proves it that birth order has definite effects on adjustment capacities of the children.

**Keywords:** First Born, Alone Born, Birth order, Adjustment

### INTRODUCTION

Every person is unique in this world. He differs from other person in behavior, attitudes, perception etc., but still if we observe his general behavior from morning till evening, we come to know that most of his behavior represent attempts to fulfill his own needs. It may be physical, social or psychological and for the satisfaction of his needs he adopts various ways. This process of need arousal and their satisfaction is known as "adjustment".

Adjustment is a process which makes men to learn how to deal effectively with environmental demands and strains to get satisfaction of internal needs and urges (Rozario et al, 1991). Adjustment is considered to be the ways and means to help individual to meet the demands of changed conditions by adopting or modifying his previous ways of doing or facing things. Jitendra and Avtar (1986) have stated that "It is a continuous process of maintaining harmony among the attributes of individual and the environmental condition which surround him." In this sense, adjustment implies a smooth relationship between the individual and environment. Thus we can say that a well adjusted individual interacts in a harmonious way with the world of his work, domestic and social environment to satisfy his needs.

Adjustment is also an ability to get along with others. There is no problem of adjustment when one's needs were gratified in society without resistance. But life is not simple. Modern society is plagued with number of problems in all walks of life. Obstacles and barriers come in the way of fulfillment of needs. Maladjusted people cannot deal with

problems and adopts mal-adaptive patterns causing frustration, stress, depression, and other mental-abnormalities. So, well adaptive adjustment is more important in our daily activities in order to lead a healthy, happy and contented life (Mayo, 2003).

Birth order is an extensively controversial and researched concept in the social science literature. The study of birth order and its behavioral correlates has been one of the early interests in psychology. Alfred Adler, founder of the School of Individual Psychology, was one of the first theorists to incorporate the concept of birth order into his work, using it with other information as a means to assess lifestyle (Ansbacher, 1992). The theoretical discussion of the meaning and effects of birth order have been traced back to Adler (1937) who suggested that middle born children are more ambitious. He brought out the fact that children born in same family grew up in different situations as they perceive the same environment in different manners. Further more, he says that "Ordinal position of the child among the siblings plays a significant role in the development of personality and character." We all know that life is continuous adjustment process and in this process every person adopts various ways. It is a known fact that no two children of same family adopt same adjustment levels. Forer (1976) says "Your place in the family strongly influence how you cope with people and the world." Also Sulloway (2001) says "Effect of birth order is due to psychological position in the family rather than ordinal position."

Keeping these points in view present study was conducted to know whether birth order had an impact on

adjustment levels and also to find out adjustment levels between alone born and first born children, who vary in sibling relations, parental pressure, child's role and parental protection.

**HYPOTHESIS**

In the process of study following null research hypotheses were formulated:

- a) There will be no significant difference in home adjustment among alone born and first born.
- b) There will be no significant difference in health adjustment among alone born and first born.
- c) There will be no significant difference in a social adjustment among alone born and first born.
- d) There will be no significant difference in emotional adjustment among alone born and first born.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample:** The samples were under-graduate students of either gender from Dev Sanskriti Vishwa vidyalaya, Haridwar. For the purpose of testing null hypothesis, two groups were taken in such a way that one group constituted with both boys and girls, who are alone born and the other group constituted with both boys and girls, who were first born.

**Tools:** Bell adjustment inventory (BAI) which was prepared by Raj Kumar Ojha was administered on both the groups. BAI consists of 4 dimensions i.e., home, health, social and emotion, with 35 items in each dimension. Total 140 items were present. Each item consists of 2 responses yes or no. "01" mark was awarded for yes response and "0" mark was awarded for no response. The lower the score in each dimension indicates higher the adjustment levels.

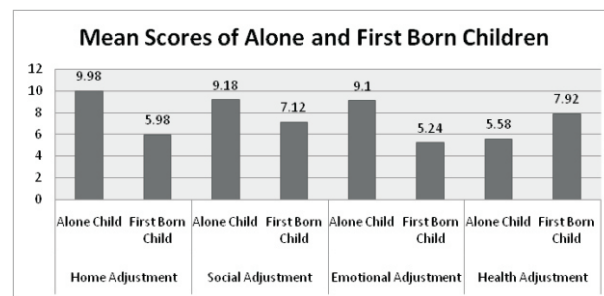
**Procedure:** 50 subjects were selected on random basis for each group and after administering the BAI in both the groups, mean score was worked out. The obtained data was statistically analyzed by using student t-test to obtain level of significance in the differences of mean values among various dimensions of both the groups. Level of significance was taken at  $p = 0.01$ .

**RESULTS**

**Table - 1: Showing the mean values of different components of adjustments in two groups of alone born and first born.**

S.No.	Area of Adjustment	Birth Order	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
1	Home Adjustment	Alone Child	9.98	4.25	0.767	5.214*
		First Born Child	5.98	3.371		
2	Social Adjustment	Alone Child	9.18	3.921	0.705	2.921*
		First Born Child	7.12	3.081		
3	Emotional Adjustment	Alone Child	9.1	4.773	0.856	4.511*
		First Born Child	5.24	3.717		
4	Health Adjustment	Alone Child	5.58	3.834	0.781	2.997*
		First Born Child	7.92	3.974		

\*significance  $p = 0.01$



As evident from the results the mean values of home, social, emotional and health components of adjustment were significantly higher in alone born children in comparison to first born children showing that alone child bears higher adjustment capacity in regard to home, society and emotional circumstances. Contrary to that first born child bears higher health adjustment capacity. The findings indicate that although alone child is strong enough to make balance in different circumstances at home, in the society and during emotional stimuli in comparison to first born child yet the first born child is more capable in making adjustment in health adversaries. On the basis of results all the four null hypotheses, formulated at the onset study, were rejected.

**DISCUSSION**

The statistical analysis of the data yielded clear findings on different variables of birth order and adjustment. It was observed that there is significant difference in the adjustment levels of alone and first born. First born scored consistently higher in the dimension of home, social and emotional. Alone born scored higher in the dimension of health. Thus proving that first born is more adjusted compared to alone born.

Home adjustment of first born was high and the difference is significant. This finding was supported by the

findings of Sulloway (2001), who has stated that "first born for example, were bought up while others grew up". This is true because parents spend much of the time with first born and they bring up the first born according to their fulfillments. Parents give a lot of love and affection to first born. Although, he is the victim of parental demands and expectations, yet first born always try to gain parental approval by adopting good behavior.

Results further showed that there exists a significant difference in health adjustment as far as alone born and first born were concerned. Health adjustment of alone born was high and the difference is significant. The result supported the findings of Falbo and Polit (1986), who hypothesized that "only children are psychologically well adjusted from other types of families". Parents provide that type of environment where individual is intellectually developed. As he being only child parents take care and provide with all essential things.

Our findings also indicated that there exists a significant difference in social adjustment as far as alone born and first born were concerned. Social adjustment for first born was high and difference is significant. These observation supported the findings of Daniel et al (2010), who stated that "First born and delinquents from smaller families were better socialized or had better socialization resources than last born and those from large families." Generally in small families the parent child relation is usually warm and whole-some, thus contributing a healthy home climate. And a democratic control usually prevails permitting each family member to develop his own interests and talents thus encouraging creativity and individuality.

Rodgers et al. (2000) says that parental expectations motivate children to put forth effort to learn and to behave in socially acceptable way. As children grow older, for example, they learn to overcome aggressiveness and different patterns of unsocial behavior if they want to win parental approval. So, we can say that first born to win parental expectations and approvals adopt good behavior and they are also motivated by their parents. First-borns also select such type of career which is socially oriented. Campbell et al (1977) say that "first born scores on the occupational interest inventory indicating a preference for socially oriented career requiring good interpersonal skills."

There exists a significant difference in emotional adjustment in between alone born and first born children. Emotional adjustment for first born was high and the difference was also significant. This finding supported the opinion of Jefferson et al. (1998) who stated that small families provide better adjustment and also psychological development to child. It was observed by the authors that parent-child relationship that exists in small family enables for all round development of an individual. In small families usually there is warm relationship which contributes to healthy home climate. This influences much to a first born.

Thus it may be inferred from the results that first born is more adjusted when compared to alone born. This study laid emphasis on birth order and adjustment. Hurlock (2002) stated that the place in the family establishes a specific role for the child to be played with in the family group. It influences him to develop either types of attitudes

towards himself and others. Kalia et al. (2001) has said that first born plays a parent surrogate role relative to later born siblings, a role that also may be thought of as a kind of "foreman" role. Such a role would appear to be excellent one for serving as model for later born." First born is the dream child of parents. He always tries to adopt well behavior for the fulfillment of parental desires. So he posses' high adjustment level when compared to alone born or any other siblings. This further supports our findings.

If the child is first born and have other siblings they tend to become jealous at first but only for few days. Gradually the first born will take silent responsibility of the second sibling for a while. They protect them and have knowledge of what a parent expects from them. First born always tries for the attention of parents. For this he adopts good behavior and acquires name and fame. Finally he becomes a guide for his brothers and sisters. Badger (2007) says "oldest children are more dutiful and responsible". Sometimes even they are asked to help around the house or take care of siblings. Thus he incorporates the ideas of individualization democratic cooperation and led a well adjusted life.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The study attempted to compare the adjustment levels between firstborn and alone born children. It may be concluded that birth order has an impact on adjustment levels of both types of children and supported the following findings

- a) First born has high adjustment levels when compared to other siblings more particularly to alone born.
- b) Children bought up in small family are more adjusted when compared to lone family.
- c) Sibling relation also show its influence on adjustment levels of the child and brought forward the fact that alone children has less adjustment capacity.

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*Adjustment Levels Among Alone Born And First Born Children*

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