

The Role of Protective Parenting and Birth Order for “Big Five Factors of Personality” among Adolescents

Dr. Anshu Agarwal
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology,
C.C.S. University, Meerut
Email: anshuagarwal2107@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this research paper was to find out the effect of protective parenting and birth order on the big five factors of Personality among adolescents. In this investigation, two independent variables, first protective Parenting, second birth order, and the dependent variable big five factors of personality were studied. For collecting the data “the parent-child relationship scale (PCRS) constructed by Dr. Nalini Rao and the Big Five Factors of Personality Inventory” (BFPI) constructed by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Ashok Kumar were used. A total sample of 160 adolescents (80 related to first birth order and 80 related to second birth order) were selected from different schools in the Baraut area. A 2x2 factorial design was used for analyzing the data. Results show that protecting parenting is an influencing factor for the big five personality factors. Birth order is not such an influencing factor for the big five factors of personality.

Keywords

Parenting, birth order, adolescents, and personality

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Dr. Anshu Agarwal

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Introduction

The term ‘personality’ comes from the Latin word ‘persona’, which means ‘mask’. Greek actors used masks to hide their identities on stage. This dramatic technique was later adopted by the Romans to whom persona was denoted “as an appearance to others” not as one is.

There are many definitions of the term “personality”, most of which have been modeled along the lines of Allport’s definition because it is one of the most inclusive. “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of that psychophysical system that determines his characteristic behavior and thought” (Allport, 1938). “Personality is the individual’s total behavior” (Woodworth and Marquis, 1947). Personality is made up of different psychophysical systems that make up individuals personality are interrelated, with one influencing the others. The two major components of the personality pattern are the core– the “Concept of Self” and the spokes of the wheel “Traits” which are held together and influenced by the core.

The newborn infant is not aware of himself as a person and does not differentiate himself from the environment. At first, the most significant people in children’s lives are family members. As a result, their influence on the developing self-concept is dominant. The role of the hereditary endowment in the development of the self-concept comes from the way, children interpret the treatment they receive from others. Traits are a product of learning, though they are based on a hereditary foundation. They are molded mainly by child training in the home and school and by imitating a person with whom the child identifies.

Personality traits have been described and defined in many ways though most of the descriptions are similar in that they include certain common salient points. A trait has been described as an aspect or dimension of personality that consists of a group of related and consistent reactions characteristic of a person’s typical adjustment. Five-dimensional theories are the research of McCrae and Costa (1999). They believe that the study of the entire personality is possible only by five fundamental dimensions and it is considered as the fundamental unit of personality. It has been called the ‘Big Punch Insurance’. According to this principle, the question of what, why, and how to respond to the actions of the person is done in the form of only five dimensions, which Goldberg (1981) has called the “Big Five”. This model includes the following dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Five-factor model of personality is based on the contribution of Eysenk and Cattell (McCrae, 2000). Eysenk (1990) argued that three traits (neuroticism extraversion and psychoticism) could account for most aspects of personality

functioning. Other side cattle (1990) told about 16 traits of personality. McCrae (2000) said that the first two dimensions are the same as those proposed by Eysenk and agreeableness and conscientiousness are two aspects of Eysenk's psychoticism factor. Disagreeable people are interpersonally cold and people with low conscientiousness disregard social conventions. Openness to experience refers to a dimension that extends from imaginative creativeness to construct construction.

Traits are the determinants of the strength. Are these strengths innate or learned through a process of socialization? Plomin & Caspi (1999) said that a 50% variance in extraversion and neuroticism and a 40% variance in agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience may be due to genetic factors. Other side some studies present that the environment plays an important role in the positive adjustment and development of personality traits in the five-factor model (Cassidy and Shaver, 1999). Reti et.al., (2002) found that parental behavior as perceived by the child influences the child's personality. Parents who blend warmth with a moderate level of control in bringing up their children, promote positive adjustment on these factors also (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Rathunde (1996, 2001) found that family support and challenges show the highest level of flow, undivided interest, and goal-directedness in tasks.

Birth order refers to the order a child is born in their family, first-born and second-born are examples. Birth order is often believed to have a profound and lasting effect on psychological development. Klein, S. (1984) reveals that firstborn children are less extroverted than middle-born children and last-born children. Graham, J. (1914) said the characteristics of the firstborn child are perfectionist, reliable conscientious, list makers, well organized, critical, serious, scholarly, achiever, self-sacrificing, people-pleaser, conservative, supporter of law and order, a believer in authority and ritual, legalistic loyal and self-reliant and middle born may be very competitive or very easy going. Jefferson et.al. (1998), and Paulhus, Trapnell & Chen (1999) found that the lastborn scored higher on extraversion than the firstborn. Healey and Ellis (2007) said that the firstborn scored significantly higher than the secondborn on conscientiousness.

Moore and Healy (2008) First was related higher to conscientiousness and second was related higher to openness to experience. Michalski & Shackelford, (2002) reveal that the firstborn scored significantly lower on agreeableness than the laterborn.

Methodology

Objectives:

1. To study the effect of protective parenting on the Big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) among adolescents.

2. To study the effect of birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) among adolescents.
3. To study the interaction effect between protective parenting and birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) among adolescents.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant effect of protective parenting on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) among adolescents.
2. There will be no significant effect of birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and conscientiousness) among adolescents.
3. There will be no significant interaction effect between protective parenting and birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) among adolescents.

Experimental Design:

A 2x2 factorial design has been used in this study. There are two independent variables in this study. The first independent variable protective parenting, varied at two levels, high protective parenting and Low protective parenting. The second independent variable birth order has also been varied at two levels Ist birth order and IInd birth order. The dependent variable was the big five factors of personality.

Sample:

160 subjects were selected from different schools of Baraut as Growell School, Vivekananda Vidya Peeth, D.A.V. Public School, etc. Data was collected from 160 adolescents aged range 15-17 years. There was an equal number of Ist birth order and IInd birth order adolescents. On the basis of scores on protective parenting, the median was calculated and two groups were divided i.e. high protective parenting and low protective parenting groups.

Tools:

1. Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS): Parent parent-child relationship scale was constructed by Dr. Nalini Rao, and contains 100 items categorized into ten dimensions namely, rejecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward, and neglecting. The test-retest reliability coefficient ranged from .770 to .871 for boys and .772 to .873 for

the girls sample over the ten sub-scales have been found. All the coefficients of correlations are statistically significant at a level of confidence greater than .01. Face validity and construct validity of the scale were attempted by correlating the PCR scales with the Bronfenbrenner parent behavior Questionnaire. Correlation coefficients ranged from .289 to .578 and were found to be significant at a .05 level or above.

2. Big Five Factor Personality Inventory (BFPI): BFPI constructed by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Ashok Kumar were used. Initially, 210 items were properly edited in the light of suggestions of 15 experts who were college teachers of psychology and sociology. For item analysis, Kelley's technique was followed. A sample of 370 adults was taken in this sample students, servicemen, and professionals were included. The mean age of the sample was 28.45 years. The actual age range was 22 years to 38 years. Finally 180 items, 36 items related to each dimension (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) were selected.

Results and discussion:

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of protective parenting and birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, conscientiousness), among adolescents. In the present study the first independent variable was protective parenting varied at two levels i.e. high protective parenting and low protective parenting. The second independent variable birth order has also been varied at two levels first birth order and second birth order. The dependent variable was the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness). A 2x2 factorial design was used in the present study. Mean and ANOVA have been calculated to analyze the data for each factor of personality. Separate results for each factor have been presented below:

Table No.1: Summary table of ANOVA for Neuroticism

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Protective Parenting	235.22	1	235.22	8.15**
Birth Order	160	1	160	5.54*
Interaction (Protective Parenting X Birth Order)	9.03	1	9.03	.31
Within group	4497.66	156	28.83	
Total	4901.82	159		

**Denotes Significant at .01 level of Confidence.* Denotes Significant at .05 level of confidence..

Table No.2: Summary table of ANOVA for Extraversion

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Protective Parenting	94.5	1	94.5	3.67
Birth Order	49.5	1	49.5	1.92
Interaction (Protective Parenting X Birth Order)	6.87	1	6.87	0.26
Within group	4013.87	156	25.72	
Total	4164.75	159		

Table No.3: Summary table of ANOVA for Openness to Experience

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Protective Parenting	342.22	1	342.22	72.58**
Birth Order	6.4	1	6.4	1.35
Interaction (Protective Parenting X Birth Order)	7.22	1	7.22	1.53
Within group	735.65	156	4.715	
Total	1091.5	159		

**Denotes Significant at .01 level of Confidence.

Table No.4: Summary table of ANOVA for Agreeableness

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Protective Parenting	103.93	1	103.93	3.13
Birth Order	14.93	1	14.93	.45
Interaction (Protective Parenting X Birth Order)	26.56	1	26.56	.80
Within group	5174	156	33.16	
Total	5319.43	159		

Table No.5: Summary table of ANOVA for Conscientiousness

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Protective Parenting	178.5	1	178.5	5.82*
Birth Order	0.5	1	.5	0.01
Interaction (Protective Parenting X Birth Order)	1.125	1	1.125	0.03
Within group	4784.25	156	3.66	
Total	4964.37	159		

**Denotes Significant at .01 level of Confidence.

Table No.6: Showing Mean related to Protective parenting and birth order for the big five factors of personality

Five Factors of Personality	High Protective parenting	Low Protective parenting	First Birth Order	Second Birth Order
Neuroticism	54.06	56.49	56.27	54.27
Extraversion	60.09	58.55	59.87	58.76
Openness to Experience	60.83	57.91	59.57	59.17
Agreeableness	60.53	58.92	60.03	59.42
Conscientiousness	61.27	59.16	60.16	60.27

Parents are the most important people in the lives of young children. From birth, children learn and rely on mothers and fathers, as well as other caregivers acting in the parenting role. Birth order is also a factor that also affects the development of a child. Birth order refers to the order a child is born in their family, first-born and second-born are examples. Birth order is often believed to have a profound and lasting effect on psychological development. Personality is the unique combination of patterns that influence behavior, thought, motivation, and emotion in a human being. Despite much research, the origins of personality are still a mystery, though there are many theories that attempt to explain them. Some researchers propose that children learn personality from their parents. Others believe personality is fixed from birth. In this investigation, an attempt has been made to investigate the relationship between parenting, birth order, and personality. The interpretation of the results has been presented below. Two main effects and one interaction effect for each factor related to the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness conscientiousness) have been computed.

Main Effects:

Effect of Protective Parenting on big five factors of personality:

Results related to neuroticism reveal (Table 1) that the F value for protective parenting is 8.15 which is significant at a .01 level of confidence, showing that protective parenting is an influencing factor for neuroticism. Mean scores are also presented in table no.6 which indicates that subjects who have low protective parenting show more neurotic tendency in comparison to those subjects who have high protective parenting. Rathunde (1996) said that positive family communication is related to optimal experiences. Parental behavior which is also perceived by the child also influences the child's personality (Reti et.al. 2002).

Table no.2 related to the effect of protective parenting on extraversion reveals that the F value is 3.67 which is not significant at any level of confidence. The insignificant value shows that protective parenting is not an influencing factor for extraversion. Mean scores are also presented in Table 6. The mean table shows, that subjects related to high protective parenting show a high score on extraversion compared to subjects who show low protective parenting. Parental support significantly affects the behavior and attitude of the child (Rathunde,1996, 2001).

The f value for protective parenting related to openness to experience is 72.581 (Table 3), which is significant at a .01 level of confidence. So, proactive parenting is an influencing factor for openness to experience. The mean score (Table 6) indicates that subjects related to high protective parenting have higher scores on openness to experience than low protective parenting. Hofferth et.al., (2007) said that children perceive all the behavior of parents and recognize their attitudes. It may be the possible reason that the subject shows high openness to experience and has high protective parenting. Table 4 presents that protective parenting is not an influencing factor for agreeableness ($F=3.133$, $p>.05$). The Mean score also indicates that the difference is very minor.

Results related to the effect of protective parenting on conscientiousness are presented in the table.5 reveals that the F value is 5.82 which is significant at a .05 level of confidence. Thus, protective parenting is an influencing factor for conscientiousness. Mean scores are also presented in Table 6 which indicates that subjects related to high protective parenting scored high on conscientiousness. Children, who spend most of their first years at home, in a family context that may generate and promote the optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Rathunde (1996, 2001) found that family support and challenges show the highest level of flow, undivided interest, and goal-directedness in tasks. Rathunde (1996, 2001) reveals that when adolescents feel that their parents support them and that significant persons meet their psychological needs, adolescents can face their conflicts and challenges in a more active, flexible, and positive way, while when interactions are coercive and teenagers are ignored within their family. Children's perceive hostility from their parents develop depression and anxiety (Hofferth et.al.2007). Dailey (2008) found that some challenging behaviors prompted by parents may be either positive or negative for adolescent development. The above findings present the role of protective parenting as very important for the development of personality traits like goal-directedness, flexibility, optimistic attitude, etc. In this investigation, it is reported that protective parenting positively affects the level of extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness while negatively related to neuroticism.

Effect of Birth Order on big five factors of personality:

In the present investigation, the second independent variable birth order also varied at two levels, first birth order and second birth order. Table.1 reveals F value is 5.4, $p < .05$. It shows, birth order is an influencing factor for neuroticism. Table 6 related to the mean score indicates that subjects related to first birth order scored higher on neuroticism. Results related to the effect of birth order on extraversion (Table 2) reveal that the F value for birth order is 1.92, $p > .05$. Insignificant F value shows that birth order is not an influencing factor for extraversion. Mean scores (Table 6) present that first birth order scored more on extraversion but it has not been found significant.

Table 3 effect of birth order on openness to experience also reveals that ($F=1.357, p > .05$) birth order is not an influencing factor for openness to experience. The mean score also presents (Table 6) a very minor difference. The effect of birth order on agreeableness (Table 4) reveals that birth order does not have an influence on agreeableness. Summary Table 5 of ANOVA related to the effect of birth order on conscientiousness reveals that the F value is 0.0163 which is insignificant. The mean score indicates that the difference is very minor.

Findings present that birth order significantly affects the level of neuroticism only, among the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and conscientiousness). Mean table.6 shows that First birth order scored more on every factor of personality i.e. neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Jefferson, et.al. (1998), and Paulhus, Trapnell & Chen (1999) said that the lastborn scored higher on extraversion than the firstborn. The Firstborn scored significantly higher than the secondborn on conscientiousness (Healey & Ellis, 2007). Moore & Healy (2008) also found that the firstborn scored higher on conscientiousness and the secondborn scored higher on openness to experience. Michalski & Shackelford, (2002) reveal that the firstborn scored significantly lower on agreeableness than the laterborn. Different findings are noted by different investigators about the relationship between birth orders and the big five factors related to personality.

Interaction effect:

The interaction effect of protective parenting & birth order on the big five factors of personality (Neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness conscientiousness) has been calculated. Which has been found insignificant for the big five factors of personality. Thus the hypothesis that "there will be no significant interaction effect of factor protective parenting & birth order on big five factors of personality" is accepted.

Conclusion

The above findings present that protective parenting is an influencing factor for the big five factors of personality. Protective parenting has a positive relationship with extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness while negatively related to neuroticism. So, it may be concluded that family environment and parental support play an important role in the development of personality. Outcomes related to birth order present that birth order is not an influencing factor for the big five factors of personality. Mean scores related to birth order It has been found that first birth order scored more on every factor of personality, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

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