

Running head: Birth Order Study

Birth Order

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#### Abstract

Although many believed for many years that birth order affects personality, the evidence has been contradictory. Most individuals have a dominant birth order personality that matches their birth position however, that personality is influenced by variables such as temperament, gender and other family circumstances. Thus, if birth order does systematically affect personality, firstborns, middle child or lastborns would definitely have personalities that is easy to predict and peculiar to that birth order. We all know or have seen where birth order has no effect on an individual's personality. Sometimes birth order roles are reversed or nonexistent depending on the family as well as the society in which the person grows up in.

## Parental Styles

In order to understand birth order and its relationship to parental styles, one must understand what each style entails. Based on research by Diana Baumrind, best known for her theories on parenting styles, there are four styles based upon two categories of parenting styles. The two categories are control and warmth, the first being control refers to how a parent manages their children's behavior ranging from controlling to having a few rules and demands. Warmth, which entails the degree to which parents accept and responded to their children's behaviors opposed to being unresponsive and rejecting. The four parental patterns that were formed from these two categories are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful.

Authoritative parents encourage their children to be more independent but they maintain a balance with limits and control on their children's actions. They tend to be more open to hearing the child's view point as well as teaching the child how to negotiate and engage in discussions. They tend to discipline by talking, discussing or explaining what is expected of them. These types of parents only punish at appropriate times but harsh punishment is not considered. In addition to this they also use a reward and praise system, which in turn produces a child that may be more self-controlled.

The Authoritarian parent shows little emotion and tends to be highly controlling. These parents also tend to be strict disciplinarians that do not engage their children in discussions. Also, these parents have the "because I said so" mentality which makes it more of a dictatorship. In addition to all of this parents who fall into this category expect their children to follow the rules closely and at all times. Their form of discipline may cause the child to conform but the children tend to be resentful.

The next style is permissive, in which are parents who are not demanding and they tend to give in to the child's wants as if the child is in charge. Permissive parents want to be liked by their children; their form of discipline generally has no limits or boundaries, basically the child makes their own decisions. Lastly there is the neglectful parental style which consists of a parent who is completely not concerned. They seemed to be more into themselves than the child. There is no discipline that can be noted, the children tend to be the one who raises themselves.

All parents fall into one of these four categories, whether it be authoritative, authoritarian, permissive or neglectful. All parents fall into one of these or they might have a mixture of one or all four of them.

#### Results from Interviews

Nine of the ten people that were interviewed fell under authoritative parenting styles the last remaining interviewee have a permissive parenting style. We believe the reason for her falling under this style was due to her upbringing; her parent's style was authoritarian. Three of the subjects in our study who have authoritative parenting styles had authoritarian parents. Two of the authoritative parents had neglectful parents and three had permissive parents. The majority of parents, in this study, are authoritative due to on how their parents treated them. They all seemed to want their children to have both better communications with them as well as better decision making skills. Birth order in this study did not seem to have an effect on parenting style. Our results seem to show more of a pattern with parents that did not have authoritative parents. Out of ten subjects four were first born. All four are authoritative parents. Three of the subjects were in the middle born birth order and only two of those three are authoritative. One of them is permissive and her parents were authoritarian. The two subjects that were born last both have

authoritative parenting styles. One of them has an authoritative parent and the other and authoritarian parent. This is the only parent who has an authoritative parent and is also an authoritative parent.

### Spread Sheet Results

See attachment.

## Works Cited

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