

The impact of birth order on the soft skills of children

■ Poonam Rani and Bimla Dhanda

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations →

Poonam Rani
Department of Human
Development and Family Studies,
I.C. College of Home Science,
C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural
University, Hisar (Haryana) India
Email : poonam.saharan3@
gmail.com

■ **ABSTRACT** : Soft skills are applied skills as opposed to basic knowledge skills because these are the abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behaviour. The order in which a person is born into their family plays a substantial role in the individual's development of soft skills. The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. Two areas were selected purposively *i.e.*, rural and urban, from urban area Hisar city and from rural area two villages namely Balsmand and Kharia were taken for collection of data. A total of 200 children in three age groups, namely, 3, 4 and 5 years were selected for the study. Birth order was independent variable and soft skills were taken as dependent variable. Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale of Social Maturity (Sparrow *et al.*, 1935) was used to determine soft skills of children. Result revealed that soft skills were not significant related to birth order of child in rural ($\chi^2=1.24$) and urban ($\chi^2=0.07$) areas.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Impact of birth, Soft skills, Children

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The order in which a person is born into their family plays a substantial role in the individual's development of personality and soft skills (Stewart *et al.*, 2011). The familial atmosphere is the first group experience a child has and the child's role in their family influences the development of the child's individual personality traits. In families, children learn what is valuable and meaningful to their parents and siblings and they compete with their siblings for various roles before they find their personal niche in the family (Stewart *et al.*, 2011).

Children are the future of the nation; they have to learn certain fundamentals such as security, association, belonging, dignity, hope, power, enjoyment and competence in the preschool classroom. These fundamentals are called "soft skills". When we focus

on changes in respect to parents – rather than siblings or other persons in the household – as parents are first and foremost those capable of assisting their children to acquire non-cognitive skills (Cunha *et al.*, 2006).

Soft skills encompass a range of interpersonal skills such as courtesy, respect for other, self-discipline, self-confidence, conformity to norms, language proficiency, and behaviour and communication skills. Failure to teach children vital life skills such as communication and self control is widening the gap between rich and poor. Soft skills are applied skills as opposed to basic knowledge skills because these are the abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behaviour.

Soft skills encompass a range of interpersonal, communication, representational, conflict resolution, adaptive skills and self management and organizational

skills (Dubrin, 2004). Soft skills including effective communication, social, professional ethics, problem solving, decision-making, and organizational skills are needed in adventure education to enhance the learning of children (Priest and Gass, 1997).

If the family social environment is indeed different for children of different birth orders, birth order should have some consistent effects on the development of social skills or social competence. Patterns of family social communication could differ for first-born, middle-born, and later children in consistent patterns and could presumably lead to differential development of basic social communication skills.

Objectives:

- To assess the birth order and soft skills of children
- To find out the influence of birth order on the soft skills of the children

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. Two areas were selected purposively *i.e.*, rural and urban, from urban area Hisar city and from rural area two villages namely Balsmand and Kharia were taken for collection of data. A total of 200 children in three age groups, namely, 3, 4 and 5 years were selected for the study. Birth order was independent variable and soft skills were taken as dependent variable. Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale of Social Maturity (Sparrow *et al.*, 1935) was used to determine soft skills of children.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 revealed that birth order near half (53%) of children having first birth order whereas in urban majority of children (73.00 %) were having first birth order. A total of 47 per cent of children were having second birth order in rural areas and 27 per cent of children were having second birth order in urban areas.

Association of soft skills with birth order of child:

Table 2 presented the association of soft skills was not significant related to birth order of child in rural ($\chi^2=1.24$) and urban ($\chi^2=0.07$) areas.

Conclusion:

It was concluded that soft skills was not significant related to birth order of child in rural and urban areas. First-born children are highly motivated and often perfectionists, which affects academic achievement. First-borns are seen as brighter than their siblings and work very diligently for their achievements. Last-born children are believed to be the most creative, emotional, extraverted, disobedient, irresponsible and talkative (Herrera *et al.*, 2003). First born children have a unique advantage over their siblings because they have first choice of finding their particular niche in the family. Overwhelmingly, the oldest child defines their role as attempting to please their parents in a traditional way by succeeding in school and responsible behavior. These children are perceived as more conscientious and achieving (Paulhus *et al.*, 2009).

Sr. No.	Variables	Rural (100)	Urban (100)	Total (200)
1.	Birth order			
	First	53 (53.00)	73 (73.00)	126 (63.00)
	Second and above	47 (47.00)	27 (27.00)	74 (37.00)

Father occupation	Rural			X ² value	Urban			X ² value
	First	Second	Total		First	Second	Total	
Soft skills								
Low	16 (16.00)	13 (13.00)	29 (29.00)	7.37*	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.09
Medium	23 (23.00)	38 (38.00)	51 (51.00)		8 (8.00)	20 (20.00)	28 (28.00)	
High	11(11.00)	9 (9.00)	20 (20.00)		24 (24.00)	48 (48.00)	72 (72.00)	
Total	50 (50.00)	50 (50.00)	100 (100.00)		32 (32.00)	68 (68.00)	100 (100.00)	

*indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Authors' affiliations:

Bimla Dhanda, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, I.C. College of Home Science, C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar (Haryana) India

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