Birth Order and Humor Styles

K. C. Pugh
Cedarville University, kcpugh@cedarville.edu

Milton E. Becknell
Cedarville University, becknell@cedarville.edu

Di Wu
Cedarville University, dwu@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/research_scholarship_symposium

Part of the Personality and Social Contexts Commons

http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/research_scholarship_symposium/2015/poster_presentations/49
BIRTH ORDER AND HUMOR STYLES

KC Pugh

Sponsor: Dr. Milt Becknell
Previous Research - Humor

• Rod Martin (2003) proposed that there are four humor styles
  • Affiliative – group humor
  • Self-enhancing – “amusement by incongruities”
  • Aggressive – used at the expense of another
  • Self-Deprecating – used at the expense of the self
• These humor styles are measured using the Humor Styles Questionnaire
Previous Research – Birth Order

• Originally studied by Alfred Adler
• Daniel Eckstein (2012)
  • Eldest children – likely to be well-adjusted
  • Middle children – deemed the “peacemakers”
  • Youngest children – crave attention
Previous Research

• Birth order and Big 5 personality traits (Eckstein, 2012)
  • Eldest: likely to be highest in neuroticism, but also are known to be self-sufficient
  • Middle: high levels of extraversion
  • Youngest: not necessarily neurotic, but are not as well adjusted. Likely to “rebel.”

• Big 5 personality traits and humor styles (Vernon, 2008).
  • Self-enhancing: low levels of neuroticism
  • Affiliative: high levels of agreeableness and extraversion
  • Self-deprecating: high levels of neuroticism
Current Research

- Research Question: Does birth order have an effect on one’s individual style of humor?
- Predictions:
  - Birth order has an effect on one’s individual style of humor.
    - The eldest child will show higher levels of self-enhancing humor
    - The middle child will show higher levels of affiliative humor
    - The youngest child will show higher levels of self-deprecating humor
Method

• A survey was sent out to the student body to collect data
  • “Family Structure” to measure birth order
  • Humor Styles Questionnaire
  • Five-Factor Personality Test
  • Survey sent via email, with a gift card consolation
Method

- Participants
  - Cedarville University students
  - 761 responses
  - 161 “eligible for analysis” based on certain criteria
- Completion of survey
- Number of siblings
- Age between siblings
- Extenuating circumstances
Analysis Plans

• Participants were grouped into three groups based on birth order
  • Eldest (n = 64)
  • Middle (n= 60)
  • Youngest (n= 37)
• Each group will be analyzed separately to observe similarities in humor style
  • Correlation analyses will be conducted within each group to examine the relations between humor style and personality traits
  • The pattern of humor style will be compared between the groups.
Discussion

• We predicted that birth order groups will show different humor styles

• Limitations
  • Not all families function similarly
  • Self-report
  • Humor development is not well understood

• Further Study
  • A qualitative study would be useful to understand family dynamics
References

