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## Effect of birth order on adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relationship among families of four different social classes

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### Abstract

The current study was designed to examine birth order differences in adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relationship among Families of G.B.P.U.A.&T., Pantnagar across four different social class. The present study examine birth order differences in adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relationship from four different social classes (Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV) of G.B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand. Forty adolescents were randomly selected as respondents from each social class of families making a total of 160 respondents for the analyzing birth order differences in adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relationship among families of G.B.P.U.A. &T., pantnagar. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that adolescent having first born or second born or third born showed high significant difference in protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic and object reward domains of relationship with both mother's and father's among class I and class II as compared to class III and IV. Whereas, rejecting, object punishment, indifferent and neglecting among birth order of class III and class IV have high level of significant difference.

**Keywords:** Birth order, parent-adolescent relationship, protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic, object reward, rejecting, object punishment, indifferent and neglecting

### Introduction

Adolescence can be a potentially difficult age for both parents and adolescents as the needs for these period are unique developmental stages. Due to this difficulty of adolescent's age, it is critical to have specific relationship with their parents to meet these distinctive needs (Sawyer, Proimos, & Towns, 2010) [26]. Not only a physical body changing but also puberty as well as in cognitive function of teenagers is also changing (Casey, Jones & Hare, 2008) [7]. Adolescence marks time of increased responsibility and challenging of earlier established freedoms. The strength of the parent-adolescent relationship can upset regarding the adolescent's choices in terms of learning, and a wide range of other health related behavior (Chaplin *et al.*, 2012) [8]. A strong relationship between parent and adolescent can encourage positive decision making for the adolescent and protects them from grief as well stress, in the depths of despair and aggressive behavior thoughts and violence (Toombs, 2014) [28].

The parent's provide the child with a safe, secure, nurturing, loving, and supportive environment, one that allows the children to have a happy and strong relationship with their children; this experience allows the adolescence to develop the thought and knowledge regarding like morals, manner, and behaviors necessary to become an adolescent building a productive contribution to self, family, area, and society (Lerner *et. al.*, 1995) [18]. Although, parent – adolescent relationships undertake transformation during this phase, the adjustment of adolescents depends on the quality of their relationships with their parents as well as with care taker. Attachment with parents and caretaker remains highly important during this phase which encourages their children for quality of life and reducing their unwanted behavior. Adolescents come into view to need the security provided by supportive parents in arrange to become more independent and autonomous individuals (Kobak *et. al.*, 1993; Kenny & Rice, 1995) [16, 15]. Secure attachment with parents maintain with their adolescents is a vital factor in the growth and development of those children.

Parents influence their children in each feature of their lives particularly in adolescence period; in the type of parenting move toward they adopt to rear their children. Adolescence is the developmental stage later childhood and preceding adulthood (Kreip, 1985) [17].

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(Kreip, 1985) <sup>[17]</sup>. A serious developmental task of adolescence is to attain autonomy, the capacity to make decisions independently and administer tasks without being too dependent on significant senior. Birth order has a great impact upon adolescent thoughts, relation with parent, actions and maturity. The quality of the parent-adolescent relationship is influenced by the birth order of children in the family. According to researcher first born children have better disciplinary role with their parents. At any age more physical punishment is likely to be managed to a first born than to a later born child. In contrast, parents are more consistent and comfortable in disciplinary role with later born children, maybe as a result of self confidence gained from practice in child surroundings (Lasko, 1954).

Birth order refers to the categorize a child is born with, for example first born, second born and so on. Birth order has a powerful impact upon for children emotions, behavior, personality development and better parent – adolescent relationship. Birth orders an important factor in certain relation with parents and with their caretaker. Within the family, the role of birth order appears to be considerable in the expression of personality, parent-adolescent relationship and family thoughts.

Birth order is defined as the position of a child among his siblings (Conley, 2004) <sup>[6]</sup>, and it is considered to be a factor that affects the role of a child among his sibling in terms of behavior and care which in turn is reflected on his activities. According to the difference in birth order and the difference between parents in terms of raising and treating their children, child can develop dissimilar behavioral traits, so, the birth order (oldest, middle, last, or lonely) will definitely create an impact on the child's relation with parents, personality, and academic performance and so on.

Rohrer (2015) <sup>[23]</sup> reported that some differences among the same family can be attributed to birth order; the first child receives more guidance and direction, which makes him more disciplined, worried, scared of failure, study leaning, and tends to be a quitter more than his siblings do. Younger children tend to have better academic performance and they can get high grades in IQ tests (Pirritano, 2003) <sup>[22]</sup>.

Above discussion clearly reflects that effects of birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with parent in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A& T., Pantnagar. However, the main interest in present study is to explore the effects of birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with parent in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A& T., Pantnagar among families of G.B.P.U.A. &T., pantnagar.

Thus, the present study has been taken up with following objectives:

- To explore the birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with mother in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A& T., Pantnagar.
- To investigate the birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with father in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A& T., Pantnagar.

## Methodology

### Locale

The study was conducted exclusively in G.B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. The sample for the

present study was selected randomly from the five Schools running in the university, of G.B.P.U.A& T., Pantnagar. Name of the five schools, viz; Campus School, Government Girls Inter College (GGIC), Pantnagar Inter College (PIC), Balnilyam Junior School, and Saraswati Shishu Mandir.

### Sample

The research study was carried out exclusively in the schools of G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology Pantnagar. The respondents for the study were the adolescents studying in class VII to IX of the variety of schools situated in Pantnagar. Out of the total eight schools, only five schools purposively included in the study since only these schools provided education up to the intermediate level. All the adolescents studying in class VII to IX of the chosen five schools were taken up as respondents for the present study and classified into four categories on the basis of their parents' employment class (Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV) in the university. Out of four categories of class, 40 students were randomly selected from each class as respondents for the present study. The total sample for the present study comprised of 160 adolescents.

### Research tools

The self-designed socio-demographic questionnaire was used to study the socio-demographic characteristics of class VII to IX students of the preferred schools. Parent-adolescent relationship is analyzed using the "Parent Child Relationship Scale". The scale is considered to examine interpersonal relationships- strength and extent of mother –daughter /son relationship; strength and extent of father –daughter /son relationship; nature of discipline; amount of permissiveness and warmth in parent child interaction and so on. The scale was standardized for boys and girls in the age group of 13 to 16 years. The tool includes 100 items categorized into ten dimension relations namely: Protective (PR), Symbolic punishment (SP), Rejecting (REJ), Object punishment (OP), Demanding (DEM), Indifferent (IND) Symbolic reward (SR), Loving (LOV) Objects reward (OR), Neglecting (NEG). Respondents were asked to rate their own perception of relationship with either mother or father on five point scale choice from always to rarely using 5,4,3,2 and1 scoring points, respectively. The scale is scored separately for each of the parent, thus, every respondent gets ten score for mother or father form on the ten dimensions of the scale. Scoring was done with the help of assessment manuals.

### Data collection

The respondents were approached in a group of 4 to 5 in the school itself during their free period. Firstly, the purpose of the study was made clear to them. Then, they were asked for to give honest answers and were influenced that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purpose of research work. English version scale was used with Campus School respondents as this school is an English medium school where as Hindi version of the scales was granted to respondents from PIC, GGIC Balnilyam Junior School, and Saraswati Shishu Mandir because all these schools are Hindi medium schools. Each sampled respondent was given questionnaires independently and was asked to fill the questionnaires there and then only under strict supervision of the researcher. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires within the given time and then collected the questionnaires from the students immediately.

## Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 depicts significant difference among all ten domains of adolescents' relationship with their mother across birth order from different social classes. The association of relationship with mother aspects in families from different social classes are represented which depicts significant difference in all the domains of mother-adolescent relationship in the families except in loving. It is observed that adolescent of 1<sup>st</sup> born child, showed high significant difference in domains protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic reward and object reward among class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV. Simultaneously, adolescent of 2<sup>nd</sup> born showed high significant difference in domains protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic reward and object reward of relationship among class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV. Similarly, the adolescents of 3<sup>rd</sup> born child were having higher significant difference in class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV. Probable reason for this could be that the first and Second born child gets more care and attention as compared to the third and latter born.

The observations recorded in Table 2 depict significant difference among all ten domains of adolescents' relationship with father across birth order from different social classes. The association of relationship with mother's aspect in families from different social classes are represented which depicts significant difference in all the domains of mother-adolescent relationship in the families except in loving. It is observed that adolescent of first born, showed high significant difference in domains protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic reward and object reward among class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV. Whereas the domain that is rejecting, indifferent, object punishment and neglecting among first born child of class III and class IV have high level of significant difference. Adolescent of second born child showed highly significant differences in domains protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic reward and object reward of relationship among class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV.

Similarly it was observed that adolescents of third born have higher significant difference in class I and class II as compared to class III and class IV. This could be possibly due to negative domains of mother-adolescent relationship which resulted in creation of problematic parenting behaviors, negative outcomes in adolescent development personality in third and fourth class. This finding is in accordance with that of Aleksandra (1983) <sup>[1]</sup> carried out a study on "Parental behaviors as perceived by parents and their children". Results revealed that young adolescents overrated the degree of their parental control, guidance and the frequency of punishment than the older adolescents. Two parallel version of questionnaire of parental authority scale was administered on 55 families, which included parents and their children with age ranging between 13 and 18 years. The study carried out by Peek *et al.* (1985) <sup>[21]</sup> on teenage violence towards parents: A neglected dimensions of family violence", indicated that older adolescents in their senior class perceived their parents as more punitive, strict and violent towards them than the younger adolescent. It also revealed that older adolescent's violence was more directed towards father than mother. They had administered two main dimensions of family power, mainly power style and power differentiation on 1545 high school children studying in junior and senior classes, their age ranged from 13-19 years.

## Conclusion

It is evident from the present study that respondents having significant difference among all ten domains of adolescents' relationship with both mother and father across birth order from different social classes. Adolescent having first born or second born or third born showed high significant difference in protecting, symbolic punishment, demanding, symbolic and object reward domains of relationship with mother's and father's among class I and class II as compared to class III and IV. Whereas, rejecting, object punishment, indifferent and neglecting among birth order of class III and class IV have high level of significant difference.

**Table 1:** Birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with mother in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A&T., Pantnagar

mother- adolescent relationship	Social Class I (n1=40)			F Cal. (C.D)	Social Class II (n2=40)			F Cal. (C.D)	Social Class III (n3=40)				Social Class IV (n4=40)			
	1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=23)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=11)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=6)		1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=4)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=21)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=15)		1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=6)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=14)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=20)	F Cal. (C.D)	1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=12)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=27)	F Cal. (C.D)
Protecting	42.35 <sup>a</sup>	41.99 <sup>a</sup>	40.60 <sup>a</sup>	24.93** (4.89)	42.00 <sup>a</sup>	41.73 <sup>a</sup>	40.00 <sup>a</sup>	24.77** (4.50)	30.58 <sup>b</sup>	30.18 <sup>b</sup>	29.90 <sup>b</sup>	15.87** (3.45)	25.59 <sup>c</sup>	24.81 <sup>c</sup>	23.11 <sup>c</sup>	5.89* (1.45)
Symbolic Punishment	33.50 <sup>a</sup>	34.63 <sup>a</sup>	34.69 <sup>a</sup>	16.96** (3.99)	33.56 <sup>a</sup>	34.50 <sup>a</sup>	34.90 <sup>a</sup>	16.07** (3.10)	25.59 <sup>b</sup>	29.18 <sup>b</sup>	29.00 <sup>b</sup>	10.67** (2.03)	14.61 <sup>c</sup>	12.90 <sup>c</sup>	11.22 <sup>c</sup>	4.67* (1.03)
Symbolic Reward	39.72 <sup>a</sup>	37.00 <sup>a</sup>	36.60 <sup>a</sup>	43.67** (9.68)	39.48 <sup>a</sup>	37.33 <sup>a</sup>	36.10 <sup>a</sup>	33.51** (9.50)	27.00 <sup>b</sup>	27.37 <sup>b</sup>	26.30 <sup>b</sup>	19.26** (4.20)	18.23 <sup>c</sup>	17.99 <sup>c</sup>	16.11 <sup>c</sup>	9.26* (2.20)
Loving	39.95	39.72	38.40	3.06 (3.94)	39.56	38.86	38.10	2.41 (3.10)	39.03	38.62	37.60	1.92 (3.3)	38.58	38.54	37.00	1.02 (3.3)
Object Reward	37.90 <sup>a</sup>	36.98 <sup>a</sup>	35.20 <sup>a</sup>	34.69** (9.46)	37.85 <sup>a</sup>	36.33 <sup>a</sup>	35.00 <sup>a</sup>	33.94** (8.30)	33.58 <sup>b</sup>	32.25 <sup>b</sup>	24.40 <sup>b</sup>	10.54** (4.64)	20.17 <sup>c</sup>	19.27 <sup>c</sup>	17.33 <sup>c</sup>	6.54* (1.64)
<b>Negative domains</b>																
Rejecting	17.04 <sup>a</sup>	17.09 <sup>a</sup>	18.00 <sup>a</sup>	5.52* (2.40)	17.17 <sup>a</sup>	17.60 <sup>a</sup>	18.20 <sup>a</sup>	5.91* (3.40)	21.50 <sup>b</sup>	22.75 <sup>b</sup>	24.00 <sup>b</sup>	16.08** (5.29)	28.67 <sup>c</sup>	29.18 <sup>c</sup>	31.22 <sup>c</sup>	26.08** (7.29)
Object Punishment	10.80 <sup>a</sup>	11.36 <sup>a</sup>	13.40 <sup>a</sup>	5.76* (1.95)	10.98 <sup>a</sup>	11.80 <sup>a</sup>	13.50 <sup>a</sup>	6.49* (2.20)	22.67 <sup>b</sup>	23.75 <sup>b</sup>	25.00 <sup>b</sup>	27.35** (4.90)	38.26 <sup>c</sup>	39.54 <sup>c</sup>	40.55 <sup>c</sup>	37.35** (6.92)
Demanding	43.12 <sup>a</sup>	42.36 <sup>a</sup>	40.80 <sup>a</sup>	27.11** (7.36)	43.07 <sup>a</sup>	42.00 <sup>a</sup>	40.00 <sup>a</sup>	26.92* (5.70)	27.5 <sup>b</sup>	23.93 <sup>b</sup>	27.70 <sup>b</sup>	9.01* (2.06)	22.89 <sup>c</sup>	21.36 <sup>c</sup>	15.66 <sup>c</sup>	4.01* (1.06)
Indifferent	22.76 <sup>a</sup>	21.90 <sup>a</sup>	20.44 <sup>a</sup>	4.71* (2.84)	28.33 <sup>a</sup>	27.75 <sup>a</sup>	23.30 <sup>a</sup>	5.77* (2.59)	43.08 <sup>b</sup>	42.03 <sup>b</sup>	40.50 <sup>b</sup>	14.71** (4.14)	43.12 <sup>c</sup>	42.16 <sup>c</sup>	40.90 <sup>c</sup>	34.71** (6.14)
Neglecting	16.17 <sup>a</sup>	17.63 <sup>a</sup>	17.60 <sup>a</sup>	4.99* (1.84)	16.20 <sup>a</sup>	17.66 <sup>a</sup>	23.50 <sup>a</sup>	5.97* (1.90)	22.83 <sup>b</sup>	23.31 <sup>b</sup>	27.20 <sup>b</sup>	24.99** (5.04)	38.10 <sup>c</sup>	39.63 <sup>c</sup>	40.77 <sup>c</sup>	34.99* (6.04)

**Note:** 1. Higher the mean score on positive domains of mother - adolescent relationship, better the mother- adolescent relationship and higher the mean score on negative domains of mother - adolescent relation, poorer the mother- adolescent relationship. 2. Means with different superscripts show significant differences. 3.\* Significant at 0.05 level of significance \*\* Significant at .01 level of significance

**Table 2:** Birth order differences in adolescents' perception of their relationship with father in families from different social classes of G.B.P.U.A&T. Pantnagar

father- adolescent relationship	Social Class I (n <sub>1</sub> =40)			F Cal. (C.D)	Social Class II (n <sub>2</sub> =40)			F Cal. (C.D)	Social Class III (n <sub>3</sub> =40)			F Cal. (C.D)	Social Class IV (n <sub>4</sub> =40)			
	1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=23)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=11)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=6)		1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=4)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=21)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=15)		1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=6)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=14)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=20)		1 <sup>st</sup> Born (n=1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born (n=12)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born & above (n=27)	F Cal. (C.D)
Protecting	44.54 <sup>a</sup>	43.53 <sup>a</sup>	39.50 <sup>a</sup>	16.99** (4.30)	44.06 <sup>a</sup>	43.26 <sup>a</sup>	39.00 <sup>a</sup>	16.96** (4.06)	33.00 <sup>b</sup>	32.20 <sup>b</sup>	30.20 <sup>b</sup>	14.89** (2.9)	23.15 <sup>c</sup>	22.54 <sup>c</sup>	18.56 <sup>c</sup>	4.89* (1.9)
Symbolic Punishment	34.93 <sup>a</sup>	35.60 <sup>a</sup>	37.60 <sup>a</sup>	24.03** (7.26)	34.86 <sup>a</sup>	35.46 <sup>a</sup>	37.46 <sup>a</sup>	23.87** (6.02)	28.00 <sup>b</sup>	28.87 <sup>b</sup>	29.87 <sup>b</sup>	14.92** (4.76)	18.40 <sup>c</sup>	21.54 <sup>c</sup>	23.54 <sup>c</sup>	4.92* (1.76)
Symbolic Reward	49.30 <sup>a</sup>	45.36 <sup>a</sup>	40.73 <sup>a</sup>	21.13** (6.40)	49.07 <sup>a</sup>	45.26 <sup>a</sup>	40.50 <sup>a</sup>	20.31** (6.36)	33.56 <sup>b</sup>	31.33 <sup>b</sup>	30.90 <sup>b</sup>	11.13** (3.49)	17.35 <sup>c</sup>	14.00 <sup>c</sup>	12.44 <sup>c</sup>	7.13* (3.49)
Loving	40.93	38.48	35.67	1.66 (2.91)	40.02	38.46	35.70	1.44 (3.9)	39.81	38.07	35.30	1.09 (2.20)	39.30	37.72	36.78	1.09 (2.20)
Object Reward	39.93 <sup>a</sup>	39.54 <sup>a</sup>	38.50 <sup>a</sup>	34.26** (8.01)	39.56 <sup>a</sup>	39.13 <sup>a</sup>	38.00 <sup>a</sup>	27.40** (8.78)	29.18 <sup>b</sup>	27.73 <sup>b</sup>	26.30 <sup>b</sup>	13.34** (4.90)	14.40 <sup>c</sup>	14.36 <sup>c</sup>	12.22 <sup>c</sup>	3.34* (1.90)
<b>Negative domains</b>																
Rejecting	18.73 <sup>a</sup>	19.00 <sup>a</sup>	19.50 <sup>a</sup>	6.98* (1.43)	18.78 <sup>a</sup>	19.96 <sup>a</sup>	19.90 <sup>a</sup>	7.18** (1.77)	21.50 <sup>b</sup>	22.75 <sup>b</sup>	29.50 <sup>b</sup>	20.35** (3.66)	31.80 <sup>c</sup>	34.90 <sup>c</sup>	35.89 <sup>c</sup>	30.35** (5.66)
Object Punishment	17.06 <sup>a</sup>	19.18 <sup>a</sup>	20.00 <sup>a</sup>	4.98* (1.23)	17.16 <sup>a</sup>	19.93 <sup>a</sup>	20.90 <sup>a</sup>	6.38* (2.03)	22.67 <sup>b</sup>	23.75 <sup>b</sup>	30.40 <sup>b</sup>	10.98** (3.03)	36.30 <sup>c</sup>	38.54 <sup>c</sup>	40.78 <sup>c</sup>	32.98** (6.03)
Demanding	45.49 <sup>a</sup>	43.54 <sup>a</sup>	30.67 <sup>a</sup>	25.48** (5.38)	45.47 <sup>a</sup>	43.40 <sup>a</sup>	30.50 <sup>a</sup>	25.28** (5.08)	27.5 <sup>b</sup>	23.93 <sup>b</sup>	23.50 <sup>b</sup>	10.19** (2.40)	19.10 <sup>c</sup>	17.90 <sup>c</sup>	12.44 <sup>c</sup>	8.19* (1.40)
Indifferent	15.65 <sup>a</sup>	14.90 <sup>a</sup>	13.33 <sup>a</sup>	6.80* (1.25)	28.56 <sup>a</sup>	28.00 <sup>a</sup>	29.60 <sup>a</sup>	6.90* (1.35)	43.08 <sup>b</sup>	42.03 <sup>b</sup>	36.20 <sup>b</sup>	13.40** (2.25)	43.95 <sup>c</sup>	41.27 <sup>c</sup>	36.33 <sup>c</sup>	33.40** (5.25)
Neglecting	11.02 <sup>a</sup>	13.27 <sup>a</sup>	19.00 <sup>a</sup>	5.29* (1.60)	11.69 <sup>a</sup>	13.37 <sup>a</sup>	19.09 <sup>a</sup>	5.96* (1.89)	22.83 <sup>b</sup>	23.31 <sup>b</sup>	29.60 <sup>b</sup>	10.88** (3.10)	33.40 <sup>c</sup>	36.18 <sup>c</sup>	40.78 <sup>c</sup>	39.88** (7.10)

**Note:** 1. Higher the mean score on positive domains of mother - adolescent relationship, better the mother- adolescent relationship and higher the mean score on negative domains of mother - adolescent relation, poorer the mother- adolescent relationship. 2. Means with different superscripts show significant differences. 3.\* Significant at 0.05 level of significance \*\* Significant at .01 level of significance



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