



**Quantifying the Influence of Birth Order and Family Affluence on Patterns of
Misconduct Among University Students**

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between family affluence, birth order, and patterns of misconduct among university students. The objective was to explore whether family wealth and birth order influence the likelihood of misconduct among students. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing Pearson correlation analysis to examine the connections between family affluence, birth order, and misconduct. The study found a significant negative correlation between family affluence and misconduct, indicating that as family wealth increases, instances of misconduct among students decrease. Conversely, a positive correlation was observed between birth order and misconduct, with later-born siblings displaying higher

levels of misconduct compared to firstborns. These findings align with Adlerian theory, emphasizing the influence of family dynamics and birth order on individual behavior. The implications of the study underscore the importance of considering socioeconomic factors and birth order in understanding and addressing misconduct among university students. Addressing socioeconomic disparities and providing support to students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may help mitigate instances of misconduct.

Keywords: *Family Affluence, Birth Order, Misconduct, University Students, Socioeconomic Factors*

INTRODUCTION

The investigation into the correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and misconduct among university students has been the subject of growing interest in recent years, primarily because of its potential impact on academic achievement, personal growth, and overall societal welfare (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Sirin, 2005). Obtaining a thorough comprehension of the correlation between family affluence and birth order in regards to the prevalence of misconduct among university students is of utmost importance. The understanding of this knowledge is crucial for the advancement of targeted interventions and support systems that can efficiently tackle and alleviate these behaviours.

The current research aims to examine the influence of family affluence and birth order on the prevalence of misconduct among individuals enrolled in higher education institutions. The present study endeavours to fill a conspicuous void in the current body of literature by investigating the interplay between these two variables. The occurrence of misconduct among university students is marked by a wide range of behaviours, including but not limited to academic dishonesty, substance abuse, interpersonal conflicts, and disruptive conduct (Kibler,

1994; McCabe et al., 2001; Wechsler et al., 2002). The behaviours that have been observed exhibit a negative influence on the academic integrity of educational institutions. Additionally, these behaviours have adverse effects on the mental well-being and future prospects of students. Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain the multitude of factors that are associated with occurrences of misconduct in order to proficiently develop tactics for prevention and establish robust support systems.

Previous studies have suggested that there is a complex connection between socioeconomic factors and occurrences of misconduct among university students. Multiple studies have been conducted to investigate the correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and misconduct. Previous research has found evidence of a negative correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and engagement in misconduct. Specifically, studies conducted by Sampson and Laub (1993) and Weatherburn and Lind (1998) have indicated that individuals with lower SES are more prone to engaging in misconduct. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that various investigations have presented conflicting or inconclusive results concerning this matter (Krohn et al., 2009; Leiber et al., 2009). The presence of conflicting results suggests that the association between socioeconomic status (SES) and misconduct is intricate and potentially impacted by multiple factors, necessitating additional research to gain a deeper understanding. On the other hand, the potential influence of birth order on deviant behaviour remains largely unexplored, with a limited amount of empirical evidence available to enhance our understanding of this phenomenon (Paulhus et al., 1999; Eckstein & Kaufman, 2012).

The primary objective of this study is to deepen our understanding of the socioenvironmental factors that impact student behaviour, particularly in regards to misconduct, by examining both family affluence and birth order. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, we aim to shed light on the complex interplay between these variables

and their influence on student conduct. The central research question that forms the basis of this investigation is as follows: The present study aims to investigate the potential influence of family affluence and birth order on the manifestation of misconduct among individuals enrolled in higher education institutions. By examining the extent to which these factors exert an influence, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms that contribute to misconduct in this specific population. Through a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature and the implementation of rigorous research methods, we aim to provide valuable insights into the relationship between family affluence, birth order, and misconduct among higher education students. To explore this inquiry, the investigation will analyse the hypothesized relationships between familial wealth, birth order, and deviant behaviour, drawing upon relevant theories and empirical studies in the field.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Academic research continues to exhibit disparities in gender, as it tends to unfairly emphasize male experiences and viewpoints, sometimes neglecting the intricate realities of their female counterparts. Aligned with this current trend, the proposed study aims to fill a significant need in the existing research by investigating the impact of birth order and family wealth on the occurrence of misconduct among adult males who are attending university. The study intends to provide insights into the distinct problems, vulnerabilities, and behavioral patterns that young men aged 18-26 face as they move from adolescence to adulthood in the higher education setting.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim is to measure the impact of family affluence and birth order on patterns of misconduct among college students, as well as the ways in which these variables interact and contribute to behavioral disparities across students.

Research Objective

- a) To examine the association between birth order and the prevalence of misconduct among university students.
- b) To assess the impact of family affluence on patterns and types of misconduct exhibited by university students.

Hypotheses

- Higher family income negatively correlates with student misconduct.
- Affluent students show lower misconduct compared to less affluent peers.
- Birth order significantly impacts misconduct, with firstborns showing lower misconduct.

Population and Sample

The study sampled 109 men. Participants were selected by convenience sampling. Participants had to be 18–25 and university students. Also, only men can complete the questionnaire. The study excluded participants who identified as non-male, did not meet age limits, and were not enrolled in a university.

Research Design

The study is a quantitative research conducted using three scales: the Family Affluence Scale (FAS), the Birth Order Questionnaire, and the Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS). The data was collected using convenience sampling. Following an inquiry with exclusively male respondents regarding their age range of 18-25, they were provided with a questionnaire. The participants were informed about the study and the survey was conducted after establishing rapport and obtaining consent. Participants were provided with explicit instructions and reassured about the confidentiality of their data. The study sample consisted of 110 male adult participants.

After gathering the data, conduction of scoring was carried out and then analysed and interpreted the results using SPSS.

Measures

The below section elaborates three scales which were used for this study, namely: Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS), Birth Order Questionnaire, Family Affluence scale (FAS).

- ***Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS)***

The participants' engagement in delinquent behaviours was assessed by administering a modified version of the SRDS. The scale is composed of 36 items that investigate a range of delinquent acts, including but not limited to vandalism, theft, substance abuse, and violent behaviour. The participants in the study were instructed to provide ratings indicating the frequency of their engagement in various behaviours. This was done using a Likert scale that ranged from 1, representing "never," to 5, representing "frequently." The SRDS (Self-Report Delinquency Scale) is a measure used to assess the extent of delinquent behaviour in

individuals. The total score obtained on the SRDS serves as an indicator of the overall level of delinquency exhibited by the individual. Higher scores on the SRDS are indicative of a greater involvement in delinquent activities.

- ***Family Affluence Scale (FAS)***

The Family Affluence Scale (FAS) was utilized as a means of evaluating the family socioeconomic status of the participants. The scale comprises of four to six items and a set of items that pertain to various aspects of family possessions, housing conditions, as well as parental education and occupation. The participants were requested to furnish details regarding their family's material wealth and educational background using a standardized questionnaire. A composite score was derived by aggregating participants' responses, which served as an indicator of their family's affluence level.

- ***Birth Order Questionnaire***

The administration of a birth order questionnaire was conducted in order to collect data regarding the ordinal position of participants among their siblings. The participants were requested to disclose their birth order, such as being a firstborn, middle child, or youngest child, and were also instructed to provide supplementary information regarding their family composition. The survey consisted of a series of questions that focused on various aspects of parental attention, sibling relationships, and the perceived impact of birth order on personality and behaviour. The participants' responses were utilized in order to classify them into distinct birth order groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1.1

Descriptive Statics

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Birth Order	109	1.75	.696
Misconduct	109	26.2110	25.19666
Family Affluence	109	6.8624	3.65013

Table 4.1.1 examines three key variables: Birth Order, Misconduct, and Family Affluence. Descriptive statistics pertaining to these variables are reported in the table. For the purpose of this study, a sample size of 109 was utilized to gather data. The means and standard deviations were calculated for each variable in order to provide a comprehensive analysis. More precisely, the data reveals that the Birth Order variable has a mean value of 1.75, with a standard deviation of 0.696. This indicates that, on average, the participants in the study were the second-born child. The data reveals that the mean score for misconduct is 26.2110, with a standard deviation of 25.19666. This suggests that there is a significant amount of variability in the levels of misconduct observed within the sample. Finally, it should be noted that the variable "Family Affluence" exhibits a mean value of 6.8624, with a standard deviation of 3.65013. This particular variable serves as an indicator of the average socioeconomic status or affluence level within the families of the participants. The descriptive statistics presented in this study serve as the fundamental basis for conducting further analyses that seek to investigate the connections between birth order, misconduct, and family affluence. Additionally, these statistics also allow for the exploration of potential moderating or mediating factors that may influence these relationships.

Table 4.1.2*Correlation between misconduct, birth order, family affluence*

	Misconduct	Birth order	Family affluence
Misconduct	1.000	0.419**	-0.714**
Birth order	0.419**	1.000	0.000
Family affluence	-0.714**	0.000	1.000

Table 4.1.2 indicates that statistics has shown that there exists a correlation of 0.419 between misconduct and birth order. This correlation can be classified as moderate and positive, indicating a potential relationship between these two variables. These findings indicate a positive correlation between birth order and misconduct, suggesting that as the birth order increases (i.e., later born children), there is a tendency for misconduct to also increase. Analysis suggests that there is a correlation between birth order and levels of misconduct in children. Specifically, children who are born later in the birth order tend to exhibit higher levels of misconduct compared to their earlier born siblings.

Results from the study indicate a significant negative correlation of ($r = -0.714$) between misconduct and family affluence. This suggests that as family affluence increases, the likelihood of misconduct decreases. The strength of this correlation is considered strong, indicating a robust relationship between these variables. These findings suggest a negative correlation between family affluence and misconduct, indicating that as family affluence increases, the likelihood of engaging in misconduct tends to decrease. Results from studies suggest that there is a negative correlation between the socioeconomic status of families and the likelihood of children engaging in misconduct. Specifically, children from more affluent

families exhibit lower rates of misconduct compared to their counterparts from less affluent families.

Birth order and family affluence were examined in this study to determine if there is a correlation between the two variables. The results indicate that the correlation coefficient between birth order and family affluence is 0.000. This value suggests that there is no significant linear relationship between birth order and family affluence. Based on the analysis of this data set, it can be concluded that birth order and family affluence are not correlated with each other. The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between birth order and family affluence in this data set.

According to the definition, the diagonal elements of the correlation matrix, denoted as (1.000), indicate the correlation of each variable with itself. This correlation is always equal to 1. The analysis of the correlation matrix reveals that there exists a moderate positive correlation between misconduct and birth order, indicating that as birth order increases, the likelihood of misconduct also tends to increase. Furthermore, a strong negative correlation is observed between misconduct and family affluence, suggesting that as family affluence decreases, the incidence of misconduct tends to increase. Contrary to common belief, there is no significant correlation between birth order and family affluence. Extensive research has shown that the position in which a person is born within their family does not have a direct influence on the level of affluence experienced by the family. This finding challenges the notion that individuals from higher birth orders are more likely to come from affluent families, or vice versa. It is important to consider other factors such as parental education, occupation, and socioeconomic status when examining the relationship between birth order and family affluence.

DISCUSSION

The findings derived from this comprehensive inquiry offer robust empirical evidence in favour of the hypothesized connections between fluctuations in familial wealth, birth order among siblings, and the diverse degrees of misconduct prevalence observed within the selected cohort of university students. The findings from the quantitative analyses indicate the presence of correlations that exhibit a high level of statistical significance, suggesting that they should not be easily dismissed.

First and foremost, it is crucial to acknowledge that the Pearson correlation coefficient of ($r = -0.714$) ($p < 0.01$) suggests a strong negative association between family affluence levels and reported rates of student misconduct behaviours. According to previous studies conducted by Sampson and Laub (1994) and Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2000), it has been observed that there exists an inverse relationship between the level of household economic resources and the likelihood of students engaging in delinquent or disruptive behaviours. This implies that as the level of household economic resources increases, the probability of students engaging in such behaviours decreases. Conversely, it has been observed that students hailing from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds exhibit a discernibly higher propensity for engaging in inappropriate behaviour.

Moreover, the analysis uncovered a statistically significant moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.419$, $p < 0.01$) between the ordinal position of individuals' birth and the frequency of misconduct occurrences. Upon conducting an examination of the data patterns, it becomes evident that there exists a correlation between birth order and the prevalence of misbehaviour among children. More specifically, it can be observed that individuals who occupy middle or youngest positions in the birth order tend to exhibit noticeably higher rates of misbehaviour in comparison to their firstborn counterparts within the familial context. The

empirical trend observed in this study aligns with the theoretical propositions presented by Alfred Adler in his influential research on the impacts of birth order (Adler, 1928; Eckstein & Kaufman, 2012).

The observations made in this study are in close accordance with the core principles of Adlerian psychology's conceptual framework. The framework under consideration places considerable emphasis on the influential role of family dynamics and environmental contexts in shaping an individual's personality development, behavioural patterns, and overall life trajectories (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Previous research conducted in various fields such as psychology, criminology, and sociology has consistently discovered evidence supporting the existence of connections and causal links between socioeconomic inequalities and an elevated probability of involvement in delinquent behaviour, antisocial conduct, and criminal tendencies (Sampson & Laub, 1994; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). The findings hold significant relevance for individuals in the adolescent and young adult age group, as they are currently undergoing crucial developmental phases in their lives.

The analysis of the socioeconomic landscape of present-day India, as extensively recorded by esteemed government bodies like the NITI Aayog and internationally recognized institutions such as the World Bank, presents substantial evidence of the pervasive and entrenched economic inequalities that persist across different segments of the country's population (NITI Aayog, 2021; World Bank, 2022). According to Akresh et al. (2012), the persistence of these enduring gaps in fairness has the potential to result in disparities in the availability of essential resources, educational prospects, and supportive surroundings that foster comprehensive growth. Consequently, it is plausible to argue that students hailing from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds may exhibit a higher propensity to partake in

misconduct as a means of manifesting their perceived disadvantage or deprivation (Agnew, 1992; Merton, 1938).

Adler's theory on birth order proposes that the arrangement of siblings within a family can influence their individual personality traits, coping mechanisms, and behavioural tendencies (Adler, 1928). This theory is considered ground-breaking and highlights the potential significance of birth order in shaping an individual's development. Based on the theoretical framework proposed by Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956), it is posited that the psychological patterns exhibited by individuals may be subject to influence from various factors such as the levels of parental attention, expectations, and role assignments that they encounter, which are determined by their birth order. Previous research has consistently shown that younger siblings often engage in attention-seeking, risk-taking, or defiant behaviours in order to establish their own identity and role within the family (Eckstein & Kaufman, 2012; Sulloway, 1996).

This empirical evidence, along with anecdotal reports, supports the notion that younger siblings use these behaviours as a means of adaptive adjustment within the family context. The statement provided aligns with the notion of the "family niche" as postulated by Adlerian theory. Based on the theory proposed by Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956), it is suggested that individuals intentionally adopt specific attitudes and behaviours with the aim of establishing a unique position and role within their respective family units.

One plausible counter-perspective, however, posits that the study's research design, characterized as cross-sectional and correlational, imposes inherent limitations on the establishment of definitive causal relationships between the variables under investigation (family affluence and birth order) and tendencies towards student misconduct (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). The associations identified in the study, while demonstrating statistical

significance, may be subject to potential influence from unmeasured confounding factors or extraneous variables. Various factors that may contribute to the phenomenon under investigation encompass peer group dynamics, underlying mental health conditions, academic pressures, and performance anxieties (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Roeser et al., 2000).

While it is imperative to comprehend the constraints of correlational studies, as previously mentioned, it is vital to recognize the substantial concurrence between the observed empirical patterns and the well-established psychological and sociological theories that have undergone rigorous scrutiny in research over an extended period of time. The plausibility of the proposed explanatory mechanisms is enhanced by the robustness of the observed associations across various analytical dimensions and their congruence with a substantial body of previous research that supports the significant effects of family-related factors (Conley, 2004; Featherman & Hauser, 1978). This comprehensive empirical investigation offers a substantial contribution to the current body of knowledge by elucidating the intricate association between family economic status, sibling birth order dynamics, and the various patterns of student behaviour observed within the realm of higher education. The findings of this investigation establish a comprehensive basis for the formulation of targeted, context-specific strategies to proactively address potential risk factors, provide tailored support systems, and cultivate a conducive atmosphere that facilitates the holistic well-being and positive progress of students from diverse backgrounds and unique circumstances.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this research attempt was to quantitatively assess the influence exerted by familial affluence and birth order on the prevalence of misconduct within the population of university students in India. The results of this study provide robust empirical

evidence that substantiates the hypothesised correlations between the aforementioned factors. Our study revealed a significant inverse correlation between the socioeconomic status of families and the self-reported incidence of unethical behaviour. The findings of this study indicate a significant correlation between higher levels of family wealth and a decrease in misconduct. Conversely, lower family wealth appears to be associated with an increase in levels of misconduct. The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that aligns with well-established theoretical frameworks, such as Adlerian theory. These frameworks emphasise the crucial role played by environmental factors and family dynamics in shaping an individual's behaviour. Furthermore, it is in line with a substantial body of research that has consistently demonstrated the impact of socioeconomic status on delinquency and antisocial behaviour, particularly among individuals in their youth.

Moreover, a significant and positive correlation was observed between birth order and levels of misconduct. According to our findings, there is evidence to suggest that siblings who were born later, specifically middle and youngest children, exhibit higher levels of misconduct when compared to their older siblings who were born first. The obtained result is consistent with Adler's theory of birth order, which posits that the unique family dynamics and varying levels of parental attention experienced by individuals of different birth orders have an influence on their personality development and behavioural tendencies. Empirical evidence and numerous real-world instances consistently illustrate the phenomenon whereby younger siblings often display elevated levels of risk-taking or attention-seeking behaviours. The present study aims to provide a valuable contribution to the existing literature by examining the influence of family wealth and birth order on the manifestation of misconduct among university students in India. By quantitatively measuring the impact of these factors, this research seeks to enhance our understanding of the underlying dynamics that contribute to patterns of misconduct in this specific population. The implications of these findings extend

beyond theoretical frameworks, encompassing the realm of understanding and addressing delinquent behaviour in young individuals. By recognising risk factors such as individuals belonging to a lower socioeconomic position and being born later in the birth order, it becomes feasible to implement targeted interventions and establish support systems to address these concerns. The implementation of these measures has the potential to mitigate instances of misconduct and promote positive academic outcomes among students hailing from diverse familial backgrounds.

The present study emphasises the importance of considering family dynamics and socioeconomic factors in the analysis and intervention of misconduct among university students. The knowledge obtained through this research serves as a foundation for further exploration and the development of more effective strategies to foster a conducive educational environment and enhance the holistic development of students.

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