

**BIRTH ORDER AND PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND ON PUPILS'  
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA**

**BY**

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***ABSTRACT***

*The study assessed the influence of birth order and parental educational background on pupils' personality development Ghana. The population of this study consisted of all primary school teachers who are also parents in Ghana. The study adopted a survey research design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The instrument for data collection which tagged "Home Environment and Personality Development Questionnaire (HEPDQ)" was administered to the respondents and used for the study. The instrument was vetted by the researcher's supervisor who is an expert in the field before the reliability test was conducted which produced the reliability coefficient of 0.84 proving the instrument to be reliable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that there is significant influence of birth order on the speech development of pupils. There is significant influence of parental educational background on emotional development of pupils. It was therefore recommended adequate support should be provided to children with differing educational backgrounds such as access to books and school related input. This will improve their academic performance.*

**Keywords: Birth order, parental educational background, personality development**

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**Introduction**

Building social and educational lives of the pupils is a complex process or activity: Most of the time, pupils are hard to control, it is significant to note that careful combination of two or more leadership styles will bring the best out of the children socially, morally, cognitively and emotionally by the proprietors and may add sustainable values in them. According to the U.S. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2010), the developmental definition of early childhood education spans the human life from birth to age eight. However, typically early childhood education covers the period from birth to when a child starts school and this can be as early as five years of age

Ojala (1978) maintained that early childhood education is also a practice. Early childhood education is an activity that takes place before the school age. In this case, preschool is a part of early childhood education. The aim of early childhood education is a versatile development of child's personality. Besides education and teaching, early childhood education also includes a basic care. Early childhood education should help a child to be ready and mature for a smooth transfer to school. Ojala (1978) underlines that in education the theory should serve the practice

and practice should serve the theory. Many scholars believe that a good early-childhood education is vital for the health of civilization. For example, Aristotle believed that children should be taught virtue by the use of repetitive exercises. In that way, he said, we can cultivate a child's habits, nature and reason. Aristotle thought that instilling virtues in children was central to creating adult citizens who are a benefit to their society.

The aspects of the existence of an individual are numerous, most of which are genetically determined and in the majority of cases, environment has a critical role in the completion of what nature has started. Personality and its changes over life span are a good example on such phenomenon. To the laymen, the term personality may refer to the physical appearance and to some extent a person's popularity and his ability to express himself well. However, personality is more complex than that, and everybody has a personality.

The home influence on the total development of a child is controvertible. The child inherits some behavioural traits from the parents. During his formative years, the child learns his values, receives moral training and socially acceptable morals or traditions from parent who are the child's first teachers. How well a child is nourished or how poorly a child's is fed depends on the status of the parents. The provision of basic needs or the deprivation impacts on the personal, psychological and social development of the child (Ekeruo, 1998). If a child is brought up by ambivalent parents who did not show love to him, he will not appreciate love in his life and will show it to nobody. If a child is over protected, he will possess a dependent personality. If a child grows up in a good home, he will likely develop a congruent personality and healthy adjustment. A broken home is likely to produce a delinquent and maladjusted child.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most children have poor personality because something is missing in their lives. What is missing may be love, or attention or simple things like food and clothing. They may be angry, sad, scared or jealous. They might steal as a way to deal with the situation. Still, some children lack self-control. They might see something and want to take it. They don't stop to think first about what might happen. They might not think to buy the object or ask to borrow it. Some children are easily influenced by peers. They develop bad behaviour because their friends or family member do it or because they might have been dared. They believe their friends will like them more if they behave the same way.

Other children have personal problems that lead them to having a bad character. They may feel jealous of what other have. They may feel unloved and neglected, or they may be upset that their parents are arguing or getting divorced. In this case, they try to make up for something that is missing. The problem of this study is therefore how such home environmental factors as birth order and parental educational background individually exert influence on such components of pupil's personality development as social development, moral development, speech development, emotional development and physical development in public primary schools in Ghana.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study was primarily designed to establish the influence of birth order and parental educational background on pupils' personality development in Ghana. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i) Determine the influence of birth order on the speech development of pupils in public primary schools in Ghana
- ii) Determine the influence of parental educational background on the emotional development of pupils in public primary schools in Ghana

### **Research Questions**

In order to provide a guide to achieving the purpose of this study, the following research questions were posed.

- i) Is there any influence of birth order on pupils speech development?
- ii) Is there any significant influence of parental educational background on pupils emotional development?

### **Research Hypothesis**

For investigation of the research questions, the under-listed null hypothesis was formulated:

- i) There is no significant influence of birth order pupils speech development.
- ii) There is no significant influence of parental educational background on pupils emotional development.

## **Literature Review**

### **Birth Order and Speech Development**

Birth order has been studied for many years as a factor that play part in an individual's speech development. First born and children born later have many circumstances, with the family unit, that affects the development of strengths and weaknesses and ultimately influence their personality traits. Parents are often overly anxious about their child and may be more restrictive with them than with later children (Elsenman, 1992). Birth order theory holds that children develop their behavioural pattern largely as a result of their position within their family (morales 1994). Intellectually, first – born have large receptive vocabularies than later born children; but that later born may have better conversational skills than firstborns (Coates and Messer, 1996). Since the 1970s, one of the most influential theories to explain why firstborns frequently score higher on intelligence and achievement tests than other children in the confluence model of Robert Zayonc. This models states that because first-born mainly have adult influences around them in their early years, they will spend their initial years of life interacting in a highly intellectual family environment. This effect may also be observed in siblings who, although later born, have a sibling at least five years senior with no siblings in between. These children are considered to be functional first-born. The theory further suggests that first – born cognitive capacities change. In addition, children enter that world of peer groups and their behaviour is increasingly influence by their peers. The child's competence in communication increases as physical, cognitive and social development increase. Social interactions experienced by later born children are characterized by less supportive and more directional communication

than first-born. These less supportive interactions may result in later born children having smaller vocabularies (Coates and Messer, 1995).

Where a child is placed in the birth order can have an effect on how he sees himself. This is sometimes referred to as ordinal position, this shows that first born children are more likely to go to college than children in any other position in the family. These apply to “typical families” and probably do not apply to “dysfunction families” and may vary across various cultures. Parents should attempt to help each child to see themselves as unique individuals and avoid comparisons with siblings or others. The birth order refers to the child’s position in the family. The middle child often seems to have the most negative impressions of his lot in life. One approach to help middle children reframe things is to point out that in a sense they have the best of both worlds. They are the youngest to the older sibling and the oldest to the younger sibling. Therefore they are both a big brother/sister and a little brother/sister. Younger children always want to be able to do the things older siblings are allowed to do. In addition, older siblings may feel that the younger siblings get away with things they were not able to when they were the same age.

Leoma (1982) discovered that on relationship of birth order and creativity, first borns and configurations of oldest and only children are significantly more creative on verbal test of creativity than later borns. Nwafor and Ango (1988) observed that there was more significantly outstanding academic performance amongst first birth children. Tenibiaje (2002) observed that there was a significant difference in intelligence capacity between the first borns and later borns. Spears (1982) in his study, investigated that birth order effect on intelligence with later borns children, revealed that later children were less capable than earlier siblings, when birth order effects were controlled, family size was found to be negatively related to intelligence.

### **Parental Educational Background and Emotional Development**

According to Neil (1994), emotions play a major and a very important role in the personality development of a child. For most children, interior of the home and its immediate surroundings are the first environments they experience throughout their early years. Young children spend majority of their time with their parents at home and this has been shown to be a major factor that influence the overall development of children. Within the home, children have early interactions with parents and the quality of interaction largely determine the state of a child’s emotional development.

In a study exploring the interrelations among attachment, home stimulation and language development in 58 pupils, 6-years of age, results indicated that mothers who had established secure relationships and provided stimulating home environments had children with the highest number of playmates (Murray and Yingling 2000).

Parental educational level is known as a factor positively related to children's academic achievement (Williamson, 1994). The family is the main factor influencing the lives and outcomes of pupils (Okantey, 2008). The educational level of parent is a powerful factor influencing children's academic success. It has been established that generally, the educational level of parents is greatly connected to the educational attainment of their children (Sarigiani, 1990).

Parents play an immense and significant role in the academic performance of their children. Educated parents would have increased emphasis on educational excellence. Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent-student-school-community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children and so they make the partnership a priority (Okantey, 2008).

Douglas (1964) concluded in his research that the attitudes of children given encouragement via their parents, particularly the educated ones are better. Similarly, Musgrave (1983) established that parents who visit the school often and wish their children to enjoy diversity and protected education in general, give an enhancement to their children's educational programme and it is particularly the educated parents who could confidently visit their children's schools without feeling intimidated or timid. It is worthy of note, however, that there is an exception to everything, so to all the point raised previously, there is bound to be an exception in terms of individual learner. Ezewu (1987) found that one of the reasons for poor performance in 1985 by secondary school pupils in Nigeria was "poor learner characteristics" which he identified in terms of attitudes, enthusiasm, self concept as well as study habit.

### **Research Method**

#### **Research Design**

The research design of the study was survey. Survey design was used in order to use a part to define a whole.

#### **Research Area**

The study was carried out in Ghana.

#### **Population of the study**

The population of the study comprised of all primary school teachers who were also parents in Ghana. There are 41 teachers in Ghana as at the time of this study (SUBEB, 2011).

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size was two hundred and thirty seven (237) primary school teachers. The simple random sampling technique was used. The method of selection made it possible for the researcher to arrive at selection three local governments out of nine local governments from the study area. Seventeen respondents were selected from fourteen different schools.

#### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The major instrument for data collection was the questionnaire called "Home Environment and Personality Development Questionnaire (HEPDQ)". The questionnaire was administered to teachers. The questionnaire had two sections; A and B

#### **Method for Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using the independent T-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) method.

**Data Analysis and Results**

**Research Question one**

The research question sought to find out the influence of birth order on pupils speech development. To answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see table 1)

**Table 1**

Descriptive analysis of the influence of birth order on pupils’ speech development.

Variables	N	X	Mean	Remarks Difference
Middle/last birth order	165	17.71**		
			3.83***	<b>***Remarkable Difference</b>
First birth order	72	13.88*		

\*\* The highest mean score

\* The least mean score

**Source: Field Survey**

The result of the above table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the influence of birth order on pupils’ speech development. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the level of speech development of the pupils who were in middle/last birth order (17.71) was remarkably higher than that of their counterparts who were in first birth order (13.88) with remarkable mean difference of (3.38). The result therefore means that there is remarkable influence of birth order on pupils’ speech development.

**Research Question Two**

The research question sought to find out the influence of parental educational background on pupils’ emotional development. To answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see table 2)

**Table 2**

Descriptive analysis of the influence of parental educational background on pupils' emotional development.

Variables	N	X	Mean Difference	Remarks
High (A)	73	17.88**	2.07(A&B)***	***remarkable Difference
Average (B)	91	15.81	2.93(B&C)***	***Remarkable Difference
Low (c)	73	12.88*	5(A&C)***	***Remarkable Difference

\*\* The highest mean score

\* The least mean score

**Source: Field Survey**

The result of the above table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of influence of parental educational background on pupils' emotional development. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the level of emotional development of the pupils whose parent were highly educated (17.88) was the highest. It was seconded by that of their counterparts whose parent were averagely educated (15.81) while the lowest from those whose parent were lowly educated (12.88).

Besides the there was remarkable mean difference between high and average (2.07); between average and low (2.93) and between high and low (5). These imply that there is remarkable influence of parental educational background on pupils' emotional development.

**Testing of hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of birth order on pupils speech development. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Birth order as the independent variable
2. Pupils speech development as the dependent variable.

Independent t-test analysis was then used to determine the influence of birth order on pupils' speech development (see table 3).

**Table 3**

**Independent t-test analysis of the influence of Birth order on the social development of pupils.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t
Meddle/last birth order	165	17.71	1.86	
First birth order	72	13.88	1.70	4.96*

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df=235; N = 237; Critical t value =1.96**

Table 3 presents the obtained t –value (4.96). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t value (1.96) at 0.05 levels with 235 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (4.96) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that birth order has significant influence on the pupils’ speech development, meaning that the level of speech development of the pupils who were in middle/last birth order (17.71) was significantly higher than that of their counterparts who were in first birth order (13.88).

**Hypothesis Two**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of parental educational background on pupils emotional development. One-way analysis was used in order to produce F-value (see table 4).



**Table 4**

One-way analysis of variance of the influence on parental educational background on pupils' emotional development.

<b>Parental social-economic</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>
High		73	17.88	1.05
Average		91	15.81	1.84
Low		73	12.88	1.69
<b>Total</b>		<b>237</b>	<b>15.54</b>	<b>2.53</b>
<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>
Between group	923.18	2	461.59	183.19*
Within group	589.61	234	2.52	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1512.79</b>	<b>236</b>	

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; N= 236; df = 2 & 234; critical = 2.99**

Table 4 shows the calculated F-value as (183.19). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical F- value (2.99) at 0.05 levels with 2 & 234 degree of freedom. The calculated F-value (183.19) was greater than the critical F-value (2.99). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that parental educational background has significant influence on pupils' emotional development.

Post Hoc test was also performed in order to reveal the independent groups between which the significant difference lied. From the analysis it was observed that the significant difference lied among all the groups with the least significant difference lying between average and low parental educational background (2.06).

### **Discussion of the Finding**

The result of the data analysis in table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (14.94) was greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 level with 235 degree of freedom. This implies that there is significant influence between birth orders on pupils' speech development. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Elsenman (1992) who stated that first born and children born later have many circumstances, Parents are often overly anxious about their child and may be more restrictive with them than with later children. The finding also agreed with the opinion of Coates and Messer (1995) who opined that the child's competence in

communication increases as physical, cognitive and social development increase. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in table 4 was significant due to the fact that the obtained F-value (183.19) was greater than the critical f-value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 234 degree of freedom. This implies that there is significance influence between parental educational backgrounds on pupils' emotional development. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Okantey (2008) who opined that Parents play an immense and significant role in the academic performance of their children. Educated parents would have increased emphasis on educational excellence. Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent-student-school-community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children and so they make the partnership a priority.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is significant influence of birth order on the speech development of pupils in public primary schools in Ghana. There is significant influence of parental educational background on pupils' emotional development.

### **Recommendation**

It was recommended that:

1. Adequate support should be provided to children with differing socioeconomic backgrounds such as access to books and school related input. This will improve their academic performance.
2. Parent should give adequate attention to their children regardless of their birth order by encouraging them in their academics to study hard.

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