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Birth Order and Humor Styles

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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

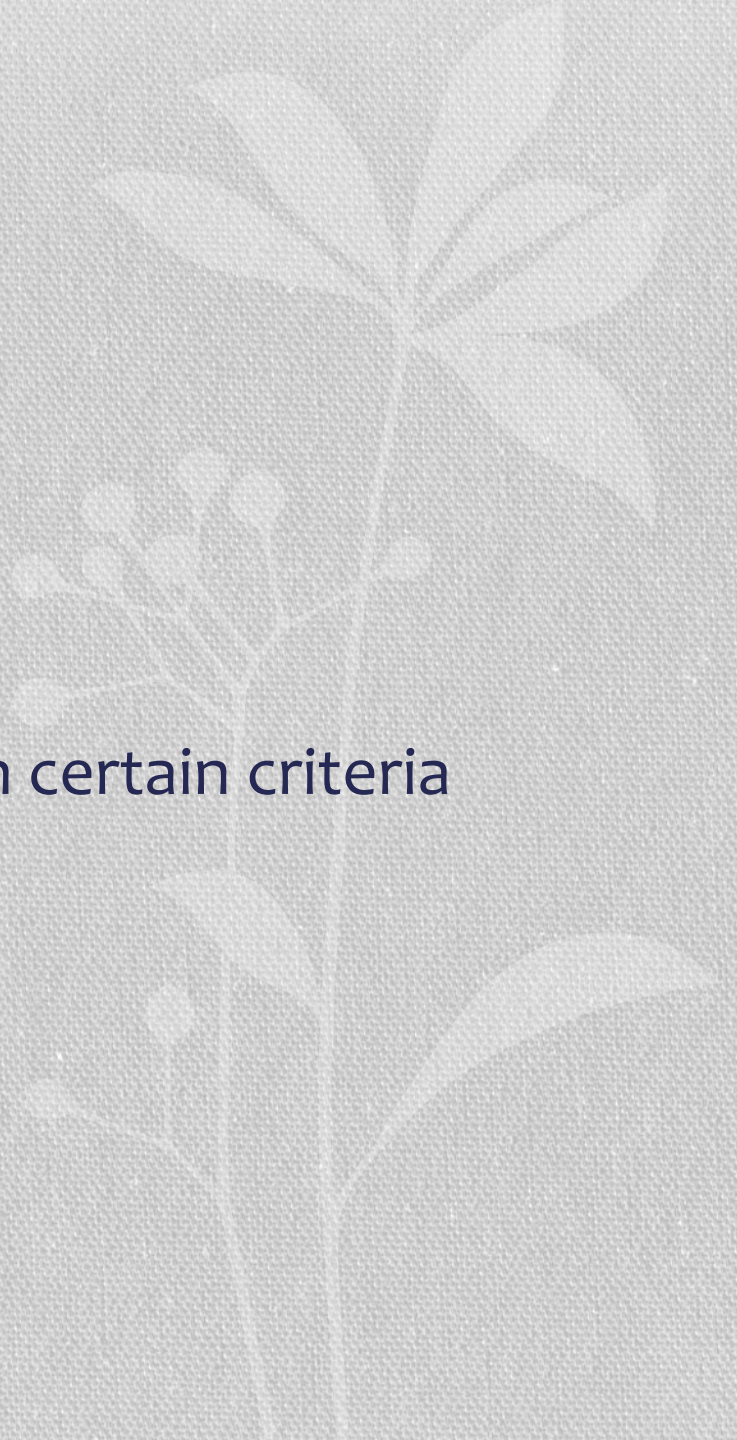
- Research Question: Does birth order have an effect on one's individual style of humor?
- Predictions:
 - Birth order has an effect on one's individual style of humor.
 - The eldest child will show higher levels of self-enhancing humor
 - The middle child will show higher levels of affiliative humor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

- Eckstein, D., & Kaufman, J. A. (2012). The role of birth order in personality: An enduring intellectual legacy of Alfred Adler. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 68*(1) 60-74.
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- Vernon, P. A., Martin, R. A., Schermer, J. A., & Mackie, A. (2008). A behavioral genetic investigation of humor styles and their correlations with the Big-5 personality dimensions. *Personality and Individual Differences, 44*(5), 1116-1125.