

# BIRTH ORDER AND CONDUCT DISORDER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAKURU MUNICIPALITY, NAKURU COUNTY-KENYA

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The aim of the study was to establish the relationship of birth order and conduct disorders among secondary school students in Nakuru county, Nakuru municipality, Kenya. This study was conducted for both male and female students. A total of 317 students participated. The study had 51.7% males and 48.3% females. Further, 21.5% were first borns, 58% middle and 20.5% were last borns. Study tools included the questionnaire. The study established a statistically significant relationship between birth order and conduct disorders ( $p = .000$ ) at the  $df = 2$ . Birth order and conduct disorder was found to be probably the most important aspects of life. Birth order, specifically being a last born renders one to be more susceptible to conduct disorders compared to being the first born or middle born. Self-awareness program dealing with conduct disorder symptom and health seeking behavior should be promoted in schools.

**Keywords:** Birth order, conduct disorder, health seeking behavior, secondary school students

## Introduction

Conduct disorders of secondary school students has been a source of worry for schools, parents and other stakeholders concerned with the education and the life of young people. As Ali, Dada, Isiaka, and Salmon (2014) posit, conduct disorder is a multifaceted phenomenon regarding its displays and causes as well as its meanings and functions in the social, psychosocial and pedagogical fields. Madziyire (cited in Gutuza & Mapoliza, 2015) suggests that effective discipline among secondary schools students is needed for good academic achievement because it can facilitate both learning and achieving.

Conduct disorder as described by the Diagnostic Statistics Manual (DSM-IV), involves a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate social norms or rules are violated. Estimated lifetime prevalence of conduct disorder in the United States is 6.8–9.5% (Merikangas et al., 2010). In addition, a study conducted on birth order of siblings in an American Indian reservation population of Alaska shows that the prevalence of Conduct disorder is highly dependent on the sibling position of birth in Canada while behavioral disorders among sec-

ondary school students are reported twice as common in Siberia as in Great Britain (Goodman, Slobodskaya, & Knyazev, 2005).

The preference of conduct disorders has been attributed to birth order which is said to be the science of understanding a person's place in their family. Birth order is defined as your sibling constellation: first-born, middle born, lastborn (Cane, 2007). The order in which a person lands in their family can affect their life (Leman, 2009). There are three basic positions of a child: oldest, middle and youngest. Each position has personality traits and other dynamics of conduct disorders that reflect how their position is carried out in a person's childhood (Kalkan, 2008). Aslam (2015) established that students conduct disorders and birth order is well documented though with mixed findings.

Secondary school students in Nakuru County like any other county in Kenya, have a range of issues and challenges related to health; mainly teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, school drop outs, drug and substance abuse and sexual violence (KSPA, cited in Ontiri, 2015).

In Nakuru municipality, the D. E. O. reported that 65% of students' cases are related to conduct disorder (Nyaga, 2014). Based on these findings, the



researcher's assumptions is that, to effectively manage the adolescent conduct disorders in secondary schools, their birth order need to be studied and established. It seems clear that studies have been done related to secondary school students conduct disorders.

However, there is almost none relating birth order and conduct disorder among secondary school students in Nakuru municipality, Kenya. Hopefully, through the research findings, there will be a deeper understanding of conduct disorder based on their birth orders. It is the desire to address this gap that has created interest to the researcher to undertake this study in secondary schools in Nakuru municipality Kenya.

Nakuru municipality is one of the eight divisions. It is situated within Nakuru town, the headquarters of Rift Valley province of Kenya. Nakuru municipality is approximately 12 square kilometers. People who were displaced by the land clashes and post-election violence are living in the Nakuru town below poverty line.

The study confines itself to both male and female students though it has been reported that male students have higher manifestation preference to conduct disorders such as the use of alcohol and cigarettes than girls in many past studies (NACADA, 2004; National Survey on Alcohol Use and Health (NSAUH), 2005). This study was conducted within a period of 7 months beginning August 2015 to March 2016.

The present study was predominantly urban. It targeted three birth order ranking groups; first, middle and last born in five secondary schools out of 13 public secondary schools in Nakuru municipality. The study was limited to birth order and conduct disorders in public secondary schools within Nakuru Municipality, Nakuru county-Kenya. Hence, the findings of this study may only be generalized to other parts of the country with caution. This is because conditions in other areas not covered by the study may be different from those of the setting to be covered.

### General Objective of the Study

To establish the relationship among birth order, conduct disorder and health seeking behavior of secondary school students in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya.

### Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested in the

study:

2

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between birth order and conduct disorder among secondary school students in Nakuru Municipality, Nakuru County, Kenya.

### Significance of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to establish the relationship among birth orders and conduct disorders among students in selected secondary schools in Nakuru municipality, Kenya.

**Ministry of Education:** the study may help the ministry of education to develop appropriate education programs for secondary school students at various levels of such conducts.

**NGOs and Ministry of Special Programs:** the study may help the ministry of Special education and NGO's to prepare and offer special programs which might target secondary school students in high risk situations concerning the choices they make.

**Universities and Colleges of Education:** This study may also be useful to universities and colleges of education administration boards to develop curriculums which may include student conducts education as a vital component in tertiary institutions' curricula.

**Parents,** This study may also help the parents to understand birth order personalities of their siblings and design a better way of nurturing them to help them how to notice various disorders and advise them appropriately.

**Government:** The study may also help in predicting the influence of the government policies in assisting the issues of conduct disorder such as violence, alcohol abuse and school dropout among other behaviors for future prosperity of the her people.

### Theoretical Framework

The study used Adlerian theory due to its description of personalities among birth order of siblings whom other theories seemed not to capture. Adler argues that birth order often can leave an indelible impression on the individual's style of life, which is a habitual way of dealing with the tasks of friendship, love, and work. According to the theory, firstborn children are typically believed to be serious, aggressive, rule-conscious, exacting, conservative, organized, responsible, jealous, fearful, high achieving, competitive, high in self-esteem, and anxious.

The middle children often have the sense of

not belonging. This in turn will affect their relationships throughout their whole life. In some cases the middle child will see life from a hopeless standpoint and will often become depressed or even lonely. The youngest child is often babied or "pampered" more than the other siblings. This "pampering," according to Adler, is one of the worst behaviors a parent can bestow on a child. "Pampering" can lead to dependence, and selfishness as well as irresponsibility when the youngest enters adulthood.

## Conceptual Framework

Research shows that birth order of secondary school students has an influence on the severity of the mental health condition (Katz et al., 2013). The assumption is that, birth order of secondary school students may have an influence on the way in which secondary school students behave, as explained and shown by the conceptual framework below.

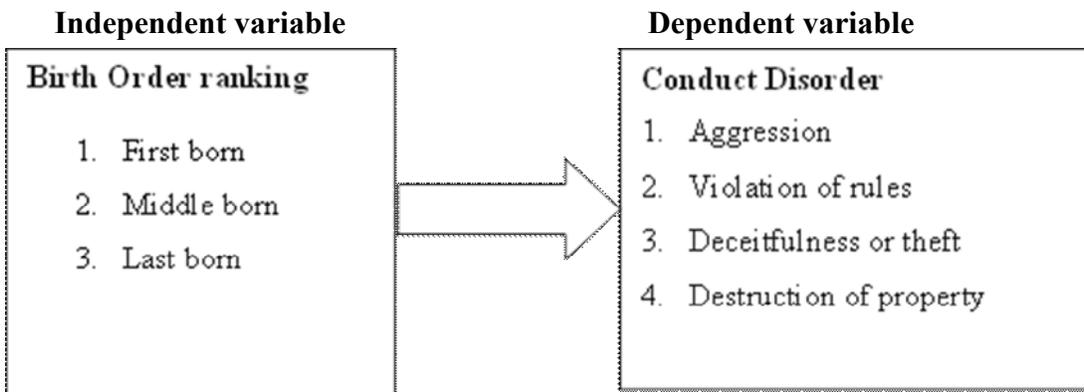


Figure 1: Conceptual framework.

## Operational Definition of Terms

To understand the research content, some terms used might need clarification. The following are the definitions of the terms used in this study.

**Birth Order;** in the present study birth order referred to the chronological order of sibling births in a family to which one is born. It was measured on a nominal scale of 1= first born, 2= middle born, 3= last born

**First Born;** in the present study, first born referred to neither last nor middle in ordinal order of birth, especially first born in the family. It was measured on a nominal scale of 1= first born, 2= middle born, 3= last born

**Middle Born Child;** In the present study, middle born referred to neither first nor last in ordinal order of birth, especially second in a family of three children. It was measured on a nominal scale of 1= first born, 2= middle born, 3= last born

**Last Born;** In the present study, referred to a child who is born last in order of birth in the family or the youngest child. It was measured on a nominal scale of 1= first born, 2= middle born, 3= last born

**Conduct Disorder:** In this study, conduct disorder referred to frequent, repetitive and persistent pattern of manifested delinquent behaviors in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms

or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past 6 months (DSM-IV)

## Review of Literature

### Birth Order

The specific birth order positions are classified as either first-born middle-born (positions including second and third born), youngest-born, and only child. While birth order positions start with first-born and end with youngest-born, positions start over with the first born position and subsequent to the following positions in families that have over four siblings (Carlson & Englar-Carlson, cited in Nash, 2009).

First-borns tend to be meticulous, conscientious, driven, ambitious, and experience more jealousy and envy (Carlson & Englar-Carlson, cited in Nash, 2009). Middle-born children are said to be more likely to possess diplomatic and negotiating skills. Children born in this position are friendly, resilient, rebellious, unconventional, creative, passive, and supportive (Kramer & Conoley, 2007). The youngest sibling is oftentimes charming, playful, lighthearted, spoiled, pampered, indulgent, and a good companion (Glass, Horwitz, Firestone, & Grinker, 2007).



The second-born typically becomes the scapegoat, and tends to exhibit unhealthy and undesirable behaviors as a result of his rebellious and unconventional nature. The third born is labeled as the lost sibling. Glass further indicates that juvenile offenders were slightly more likely to be born as third or more in family when compared with non-offenders, but this result was not further discussed. The percentage of offenders being third in the birth order was 15.5% compared with 13.5% of third born non-offenders and 12.9% of fourth borns compared with 10.6% of non-offenders being fourth borns. The last-born is labeled as the Mascot. Mascots typically function as a source of entertainment, laughter and pleasure for everyone in the family as a result of his charming, playful, and slightly manipulative disposition (Wegscheider, cited in Nash, 2009).

### **Conduct Disorder**

Conduct disorders is a cluster of disorders defined by the persistent presence of negative, defiant or rule-breaking behaviors which are disruptive to the secondary school students social, academic, familial or personal functioning. A diagnosis of conduct disorder is available when patterns of behavior do not fit the criteria for healthy living in the group or individual, yet present significant disruption and impairment in functioning, and thus require intervention (Zonnevylle-Bender, Matthys, van de Wiel, & Lochman, 2007).

### **Aggressiveness**

Given the level of current and future impairment associated with conduct disorders, Aggressive behavior and violence among secondary school students have been shown to co-occur with others, such as being in a fight, alcohol and marijuana use, skipping school, and having multiple sex partners.

Secondary school students with conduct disorders are likely to experience factors that lead to a more severe and impairing pattern of rebellion than is typical. Such factors could include association with a deviant peer group, poor supervision by parents, a lack of bond to pro-social institutions, or personality traits characterized by a rejection of traditional status hierarchies (McGorry, 2005). Cases to do with secondary school students self-harm are involved strongly where drug misuse involves the regular and dependent use of drugs. Crimes involving theft have been found to

be a common offence among students (Scoliers et al., 2009).

### **Serious Violations of Rules**

Conduct disorders, such as substance misuse, using illegal drugs, careless driving, eating disorders, unprotected sexual behavior, delinquency and suicidal behaviors in New York. These conducts are described as risky, as they are usually dangerous and a threat to the person's physical and psychological health, and their outcomes are uncertain. Students are said to be more responsive to the rewards of risk such as peer approval which may be less sensitive to feeling the ill effects of substance use such as hangovers, and are still developing the capacities for judgment and self-control (Institute of Medicine (IOM) & National Research Council (NRC), 2011).

The sense of danger is also dependent on contextual cues, and can vary based on associations and memories that are triggered by a given situation. If the context does not prompt one to think of their principles and values, for example, the person may not necessarily apply them to decisions (IOM & NRC, 2011).

Willoughby et al. (2007) argue that the level of risk taking benefits students developmentally. According to Brown, certain tasks of students exploring and establishing identity, social standing, and romantic relationships require students to take risks (IOM & NRC, 2011). He seems to differ with Brookmeyer and Henrich (cited in IOM & NRC, 2011), when suggesting that, some disorders can lead to real benefits, such as a secure sense of self, true friendships, and love. In addition, risk might also help secondary school students to become more resilient to face challenges, learn to call on their own strengths and mobilize the resources available for them (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

### **Deceitfulness or Theft**

Deceitful means having a tendency or disposition to deceive while theft is the act of stealing. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defines theft as the felonious taking and removing of personal property with intent to deprive the rightful owner of it. There cannot be a case of theft without an act of deceit; the two acts are strongly related. Deceitfulness or theft is a common anti-social behavior in secondary school students. Different factors such as discontentment, greed, poverty, lack of education, weak moral standard, bad



models, peer influence, ineffective laws, weak security and psychological problems make up for an increase in the act of deceitfulness/theft. Reasons for student’s deceitfulness/theft include: the desire to belong, to avoid harassment, to avoid punishment, avoid doing a chores and so forth (Adeusi, 2013),

**Destruction of Property**

Destruction of property is often used interchangeably with vandalism. Vandalism is an act of hostility directed at a victim. Destruction of property takes on many forms; it can include slashing someone’s tires, salting lawns, cutting trees without permission, egg throwing, spray painting on the side of commercial trucks or buses, as well as spraying graffiti on the walls or signs on a freeway. It can include smashing mail boxes, placing glue into locks, ransacking a property, flooding a house by clogging a sink and leaving the water running and breaking somebody’s car windows or throwing blocks through the windows of someone’s residence (Ngcana, 2006).

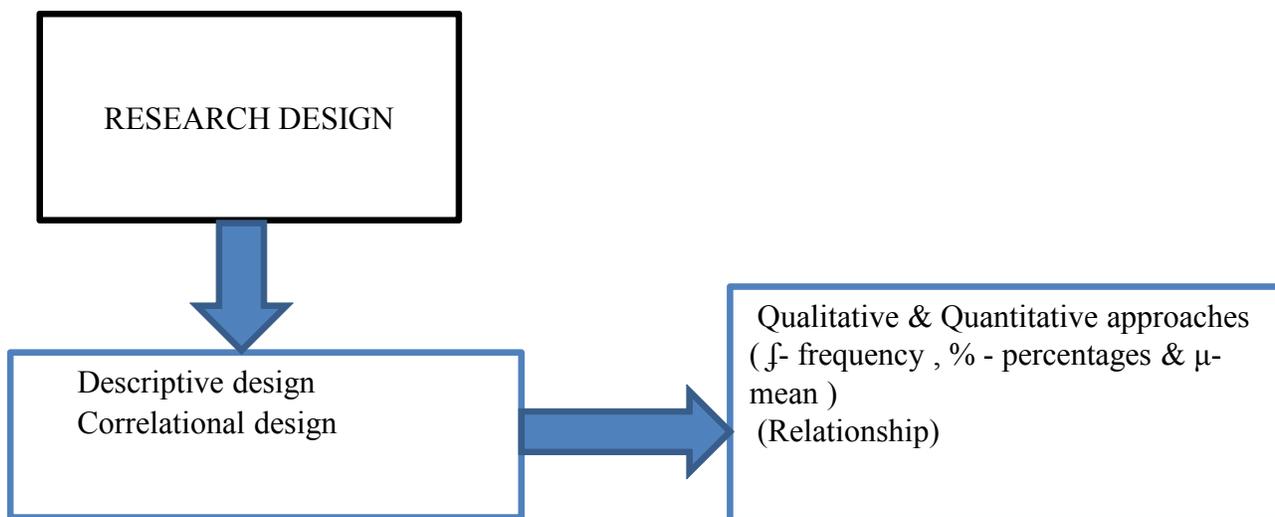
The research findings revealed that secondary school student’s behavior such as staying with friends until very late at night and coming to school carrying a knife and bullying other children in class; deceitfulness or theft which manifested in the form of stealing from other student’s schoolbags, stealing food and pens, and lying; s bunking school, and not coming to school regularly, conflict with parents, educators and others which manifests in the form of always being in trouble for beating up other learners in class, especially those that are younger, and being rebellious at home (Ngcana, 2006).

**Summary of Identified Gaps**

Birth order has not been emphasized in Nakuru municipality secondary schools and is not well known whether it can influence students conduct disorder that are frequently manifested by students. Students may be victims of conduct disorders that are related to their birth order, a case which needs a deeper investigation in Nakuru Municipality Division.

**Methodology**

**Study Design**



**Population, Target and Sample Size**

The population of study was 12,105 students from 13 public secondary schools both boarding and day schools from form 1 to form 4. Target was five schools with population of 7868. This was 65% of students with conduct disorder (DEO-Nakuru, 2012).

The research used Krejcie and Morgan (1970), sample size population determination formula. The proportionate allocation sampling formula by Kothari

(2004) was used in order to obtain the correct sample size of students in each cluster (school) in collaboration with the sample size of the target population derived by Morgan. Purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling to select a sample reliable for generalization of the findings

$$n_i = \frac{n \times n_j}{N}$$



Where;  $n_i$  = Sample size of the cluster (school)  
 $n$  = Sample size of target population derived  
 Morgan  
 $n_j$  = Population of each cluster (school)  
 $N$  = Target population

**Research Instruments**

An interview guide was constructed and administered in form of self-administering questionnaires adapted from Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health (AeJAMH), Volume 4, Issue 3 (Supplement) (2005) which was administered to the teachers and parents to give response on students' conduct disorders. In the structured questionnaires, the question items helped the researcher to get information from the respondents. Each questionnaire type had three sections (A, B, and C).

**Validity of the research instruments.** The validity of the instrument was measured using the Content Table 4

*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.710	34

**Data Analysis**

After data collection, the questionnaire were collected by the researcher only to ensure confidentiality. Data was coded into the computer (SPSS) for analysis based on the order of collection. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation, and one-way ANOVA. The hypothesis testing analysis was based on a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

**Results and Discussion**

Validity Index (CVI) and this was aided by the help of research experts and supervisors i.e.

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Total Number of Relevant Item}}{\text{Total Number of Items}}$$

$$= \frac{30 \text{ number of relevant items}}{34 \text{ number of item}}$$

$$= 0.88$$

According to Amin (2005), a minimum content validity index (CVI) of 0.7 and above ensures that the research instrument is valid.

Reliability (internal consistency and stability) of the instruments was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The researcher did a pre-test for consistency to ensure that there is reliability of respondents' answers to all items in measure.

A pre - test of 22 questionnaires was done at Rohi high school. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was found to be .710, which revealed that the questionnaire is reliable.

**Socio-demographic Characteristics**

**Characteristics of respondents as per dominance.** Gender: Male 164 (51.7%), female 153(48.3%), Age: 76% (15-17),20.8% (18-20) and 3.2% (12-14), Birth order: 21.5% 1st born, 58% middle 20.5% last born and Religion: Christian, 82.6%, 15.1% Muslim, and 2.2% were Hindus.

**The Influence of Birth Order on Conduct Disorder**

Table 8

**Influence of Birth Order on Conduct Disorders**

Birth order		N	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig
First born		68	33.35	9.593	2		
Middle born	Conduct disorders	184	37.43	11.654	2	14.932	.000
Last born		65	44.17	13.139	2		
Total		317	37.94	12.074			

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is statistically significant influence of birth orders on conduct disorders ( $p = .000$ ) at the  $df = 2$ . The null hypothesis was rejected since the  $p$  value is less than 0.05 level of significance. Considering the means specifically being a last born renders one to be more susceptible to conduct disorders compared to being the first born or middle born. The results agree with Aslam (2015), Odgers et al. (2007); Odgers et al., (2008).

It was therefore concluded that birth order indeed statistically has an influence on the level of conduct disorders amongst last born, middle and first born respectively therefore, the result indicated that, being a last born renders one to be more susceptible to conduct disorders compared to being the first born or middle born.

**Summary**

In summary, more males 164 (51.7%) compared to females 153(48.3%) were purposively sampled for conduct disorders. The results suggest that in Nakuru Municipality, boys are affected by conduct disorders as compared to girls and that, majority of the study respondents were aged between 15 and 17 years, while the least number of respondents were between 12 and 14 years. The result indicate that 241(76%) were of age category of 15-17 while 66 (20.8%) were within the age bracket of 18-20 years and the least were 10 (3.2%) who were aged 12-14. Considering birth order, the majority respondents were middle born children in their families 184 (58%) while the least number of respondents 65 (20.5%) reported to be last born children within their families.

It was revealed from one-way ANOVA that, statistically, there is a significant relationship between birth order and conduct disorder in secondary schools students in Nakuru Municipality. The results indicated that birth order statistically significantly had an influence on conduct disorders ( $p = .000$ ) at the  $df = 2$ . Further, based on the means (First born=33.3529, middle born= 37.4293, and last born= 44.1692), it was concluded that birth order, specifically being a last born renders one to be more susceptible to conduct disorders compared to being the first born or middle born.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Birth order and conduct disorder been found to be the most important aspects of life. The birth orders presented include first born, middle born, and last born. It was ascertained that birth order statistically had significant influence on conduct disorders. It was concluded that birth order, specifically being a last born renders one to be more susceptible to conduct disorders compared to being the first born or middle born.

**Recommendations**

Programs should be developed by the Government and the ministry of Education to address symptoms of conduct disorders in schools broad-based with priorities. Programs should include parents, students and peers for effective work together deal, to create awareness over conduct disorders.

Parents and teachers should come up with Self-



awareness enhancement program dealing with conduct disorder, vulnerability to help students overcome such conducts that may be destructive.

The government should enforce social-media campaign against common symptoms of conduct disorders such as drug use and the dangers involved especially with secondary school students in order to build a future generation of leaders.

The researcher recommends to the county government together with the District and Division education officers to take measures on counseling teachers and their service-provision models especially with students manifesting conduct disorders.

### Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher recommends for a study on ascertaining the perceptions of secondary school teachers on students with conduct disorders

The researcher recommends a longitudinal study on the influence of students with conduct disorders and those without in relation to health seeking behavior.

A cohort of respondents may be followed over a period of time to determine how the selected factors interact and change.

A further study is recommended to establish the peer's contribution to conduct disorders and health seeking behavior among the respondent.

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