Application Paper #1:

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Psychology 423

September 11th, 2018

Alfred Adler was the second born child of seven siblings. During the first couple years of life he was weak and sick child. Adler believed that there was a likelihood that certain styles of life develop as a function of order of birth, combined with early social interactions with siblings. Adler believes that birth order does not make up a child’s personality development but that it plays into a child’s particular style of life. Adler breaks up his theory on birth order into four general hypotheses. The first hypothesis is the “firstborn child”, the second hypothesis is the “second born child”, the third hypothesis is the “youngest child”, and the last hypothesis is the “only child”.

This application will be focusing on the third hypothesis the “youngest child”. According to Adler, the youngest child is “often the most pampered”, and runs the risk of being a problem child. The youngest child also is likely to possess feelings of inferiority, and is dependent on others. However, they also are highly motivated to exceed their older siblings, and become high achievers. The youngest child in the family also develops remarkably fast compared to their siblings, and becomes realistically ambitious.

Within my family constellation, I am the youngest of four children. The age separation between my oldest sister and I is five years, and the age separation between the third child and myself is only two years. The differences that are seen between my siblings and I can be justified by Adler’s theory on Birth Order. Myself being the youngest child I had a few intentions of trying to be like my siblings. However, I also wanted to be completely individual in whatever activities I would pick up. All of my siblings choose to participate in sports, and later made their sports apart of their college career. The unique thing about my siblings all following along in the athletic realm was that they did not pick the same sport. Each one of my siblings had their own likes and dislikes with their sports. My oldest sister wanted nothing to do with a sport that included a ball. My second oldest sister wanted to be competitive, feisty on a field and the sport must have a ball. As the youngest child, I saw myself wanting to be like my siblings in certain areas, but once I got older I realized that there were things out there better suited for me. I also realized that I wanted to do more and be more when comparing myself to my siblings. Perhaps, that explains Adler’s view on the youngest child being highly motivated to exceed older siblings.

My siblings and I are very similar in nature, each one of us is extremely passionate, caring and friendly yet, we all show those traits in different ways. This could be something that is deeper into our personality and our identity.

In conclusion, Adler’s theory of Birth Order can be applied to my family very well, and most likely many other families as well. In my analysis based of Adler’s theory, I feel as though Adler being the second child of seven played an important role in his discovery of this theory. Perhaps he felt these traits as a second child and watched his older and younger siblings interact with one another giving him the basis for his birth order theory. Overall, Adler created a theory that has led to more and more research on the concept of Birth Order.