Are First Babies Actually Natural-Born Leaders?

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We often hear that individuals who are born first in their families, are natural-born leaders but is this truly the case or are there other factors that come into play to make this happen? In order to better understand this question, we must first start with a simpler one: what is a leader or what makes someone a good leader? Qualities that we seek out in leadership include integrity, courage, empathy, determination, communication, and confidence among many others. Are firstborns more inclined to be born with these qualities than their siblings or is this something that they learn based on the role they play in their family?

The fact is that there are many prominent leadership figures who are the first born in their respective families. “Some of the world’s highest-profile business leaders who are known, sometimes infamously, for their unshakeable confidence are first-born children [such as] Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson” (Constantino, 2022). It is easy to see this data and lean with the majority of people in that yes, firstborns are natural-born leaders. Surveys have also been used to further support this stance. “In a 2007 a survey of 1,582 chief executives, 43% reported that they are the first born” (Greenwood, 2019). As we have learned in books such as *Everybody Lies,* surveys aren’t always the most accurate way to get data. So, what of Bill Gates who is also a leader in communication and co-founder of Microsoft (one of the biggest companies of our time), he is a middle child. How do we explain this? Is he a one-off or is there a bigger factor than order of birth that determines leadership capabilities?

In order to determine and actually answer the age-old question of whether or not firstborns are natural-born leaders according to the CRISP-DM methodology, we will first need to access the situation and determine project requirements and project plan. For this specific study, we can have one person gathering the data since we do want the data set to be big enough to get a good analysis, but we don’t want it to be overwhelming. The plan is to ask 2,000 known leaders (such as CEOs and politicians), first their order of birth within their family and then, what their environment and upbringing looked like (i.e., parents worked all the time and they had to care for siblings, death of a parent(s), grew up in “rough” neighborhoods, family struggled to make ends meet, etc.).

Once we have the data, we will need to ensure we understand it. What does the individual’s upbringing have to do with their leadership qualities? As a firstborn, you are plagued with responsibilities. You have to lead by example. You oftentimes have to take care of your siblings while your parents are away as my case. If a parent passes away unexpectedly, you as the eldest might have to step into a parental role. If money is tight, firstborns might need to go out and find a job to help out. These are all situations that might ignite the birth of leadership qualities within an individual. Likewise, the other siblings might have had to be the ones to step into these roles should the oldest sibling be incapable of doing so (disabilities can hinder individuals from going out and finding a job to take care of the family or care for the siblings at home, or older sisters may not have been “allowed” to work outside of the home). Understanding what all this data collected means will help us when making a conclusion.

There are many factors that we need to consider when deciding whether or not firstborns are natural-born leaders. It is important that we explore all possible scenarios before making assumptions on this subject so that we can accurately make a determination.

References:

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