First-borns have been found to have a stronger sense of moral responsibility than later-borns (1) and to be more susceptible to attitude change (2). From this, one may hypothesize—in view of the increasingly active campaign by environmentalists—that first-born girls would like to have fewer children than later-born girls. The present study intended to test this hypothesis.

Answers from 138 female college students in introductory psychology classes in the fall of 1971 were obtained on the questions: (a) "When you get married, how many children would you like you and your spouse to have?" (b) "How many boys?" (c) "How many girls?"

The results presented in Table 1 show that first-born female college students wanted 1.90 children, compared to 2.49 children desired by later-borns, which is significant at the .05 level. There is a greater desire for boys than for girls in general, with the later-borns wanting more of either sex, although the difference was significant (at the .05 level) only in the case of girls.

First-born female college students desiring fewer children than later-borns might be interpreted as supporting our hypothesis that first-borns are more susceptible to attitude change (considering the desire for small families a recently changed attitude), and that they have a stronger sense of moral responsibility (fewer children being understood as contributing to the general good).

**References**


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