

Lived Experiences of an Only Child

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Abstract

Birth ranking has been used to describe the personality of the eldest, middle and the youngest child, and how they act the way they do because of the birth order that they were born into. This is not the case for an *only child*. An *only child's* personality is said to be more complicated compared to those with siblings. Hence, this phenomenological study aimed to understand the self-perception, lived experiences, issues, and challenges of an *only child*. Eight participants (five males and three females) ranging from 15-21 years old were chosen through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. One-on-one interviews were conducted utilizing a set of semi-structured self-made interview questions, and then the data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through thematic analysis. Six themes emerged for an *only child's* lived experiences, namely: academically contented, positive interpersonal relationship, emotionally satisfied, inclined to sports, lack of spiritual convictions, and feels compensated through friends; three themes for an *only child's* self-perception such as: the priority, lack of companionship, and emotionally weak; three themes emerged for the issues and problems that an *only child* faces, specifically: no issues in general, sibling issues, and distant relationship with the parents; lastly, two themes emerged for their challenges, particularly, being alone in supporting parents and lack of freedom. This study can be an informative tool to help practitioners in dealing with individuals who are an *only child*. It is recommended that a deeper study on an *only child's* performance during adulthood in terms of career and family be done.

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