## Middle-seat kid far from windows but closer to success

May 3 2015, by Nancy Owano


## Credit: SKODA

Reports have been coming in about a growing-up study to explain what types of people enjoy success in adult life. The study shows that being a middle-seat child may contribute to success in later years.

A study of over 1,000 British people with two or more siblings revealed that 90 percent of people at director-level in their jobs had the middle seat position when they were kids; so did 72 percent of business owners.

The study found that 62 percent of senior managers likewise sat between their brothers and sisters when traveling. This is new research conducted for ŠKODA Octavia. The study found that 80 percent of middle-seat kids attributed their work-life success to the childhood car position.

Personality traits mentioned in the study included patience, levelheadedness, and being adaptable. The breakdown: 44 per cent of them were now described as easy-going, "while reasonable ( 28 per cent), patient ( 25 per cent), level-headed ( 21 per cent) and adaptable ( 21 per cent) also score highly."

One can easily picture a scenario, even in these snapshots of children putting up with and thriving from life in the middle seat: What, No Window? No Way. Complaints may have been followed by having no other choice than to put up with the seating arrangement and eventually getting its plus sides.

As for study findings, although avoiding the least popular seating position was the source of arguments for 43 per cent of families, over two-thirds ( 66 per cent) of middle seat children actually enjoyed their lot.

According to the ŠKODA news release, one in ten respondents remained in their allocated position to this day during family road trips. Alasdair Stewart, head of brand at ŠKODA UK, said the company was "keen to shine a spotlight on the millions of family interactions that happen in the ŠKODA Octavia every day across the UK. It's been fascinating to see how in-car dynamics such as seating positions can impact on us as people."

Consultant child psychologist Laverne Antrobus similarly said that "cars are a unique environment and a lot can be revealed when everyone is sitting together in a confined space."

In the bigger picture, seating dynamics has been a topic of interest for psychologists and the car study would not be the first to examine implications of seating and personality. Back in 2012, industrial psychologist Bernardo Tirado discussed success in terms of where people sit, in Psychology Today. Interestingly, his discussion focused on "power seats" and how where you sit tells the other people taking their seats something about you. He said the power seat was the one we unconsciously designate as the one with the most authority. Someone who sits at either end of the table sends out some unspoken messages that the person is in control, is the leader, and is there to intimidate. Those who sit in the middle send "a whole other set of messages," such as they are there to collaborate and are approachable.

Sending out the latter kind of message may have its potential career rewards. On Friday in The Independent, Antrobus, in comments about the SKODA findings, said: "Of course, there's an argument that successful business people need to be self-centered, driven and unwavering in the pursuit of achieving their goals. But we've all worked with people who possessed these traits, yet were unable to get the best out of the people that worked beneath them. True success is about choosing a destination and taking your colleagues with you on the journey to get there."

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