

Perceived Parenting Style and Sibling Relationship among Young Adults

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Abstract

Family plays a pivotal role in contributing to an adult's emotional and psychological growth. Parents convey care and emotional support to their offspring, which aids in fostering secure attachment bonds, especially with their siblings. The current study fills the gap in previous studies by exploring how perceived parenting styles affect their view of sibling relationships among young Indian adults. The current study aims to explore the impact of perceived parenting styles, i.e., authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting on sibling relationships. 250 participants were recruited using purposive sampling. The results found that there is a moderate positive relationship between authoritative parenting and sibling relationships, and it significantly predicts a favorable view of sibling relationships. There is a weak negative relationship between authoritarian parenting and sibling relationships. There exists no association between a permissive parenting style and sibling relationships. The study implies the benefits of authoritative parenting, emphasizing the need for a supportive and communicative family environment, which ultimately fosters secure relationships and empowers young minds to develop emotional resilience and strong interpersonal skills.

Keywords: Parenting Styles; Authoritative Parenting Style; Sibling Relationships; Young Adults

1. Introduction

The family is widely recognized as the primary agent of socialization, playing a pivotal role in shaping individual personality and behavioral development (Krejčová et al., 2023). Within the family unit, parents serve as key contributors to their children's psychological and emotional growth (Idrees, 2021). Parenting style plays an optimal role in a child's development (Cherry, 2011). Developmental research underscores the importance of an optimal parenting style, which is characterized by warmth, affection, and responsiveness. Such parenting practices have been linked to the development of effective emotional regulation and psychosocial adjustment in children and adolescents. Parenting style can be conceptualized as a structured yet flexible approach through which parents convey love, care, and emotional support to their offspring, fostering secure attachment bonds that serve as the foundation for healthy relational dynamics.

Since the seminal work of Baumrind (1966, 1967), four parenting styles have been identified: *authoritative*, *authoritarian*, *permissive*, and *neglectful*. Authoritative parents balance high expectations with warmth, responsiveness, and effective communication. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and controlling but show little affection or communication. Permissive parents are affectionate and responsive but make few demands and exercise little control (Walker, 2008). Neglectful or uninvolved parents lack both demands and responsiveness, offering minimal affection and communication. Research consistently shows that children of authoritative parents fare best in various areas, including emotional adjustment, secure attachment (Karavasilis et al., 2003), resilience (Kritzas & Grobler, 2005), academic achievement, and social competence (Boon, 2007; Alegre, 2010). Parenting styles are defined by two key dimensions: *responsiveness* and *demandingness* (Baumrind, 1995; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Responsiveness involves

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warmth, nurturance, and support, fostering positive outcomes like better self-regulation, self-esteem, and psychological adjustment (Eiden et al., 2007). Demandingness includes supervision, behavioral control, and setting expectations. When balanced with warmth, it promotes academic success and confidence and reduces risky behaviors (De Clercq et al., 2008). Together, these dimensions shape a child's emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Beyond the parent-child relationship, sibling interactions constitute a critical aspect of family functioning and individual development. Siblings often represent an enduring close relationship, exerting a profound influence on personality development throughout the lifespan. Adler's pioneering work on family constellations (Adler, 1929) highlighted the role of sibling positions and dynamics in shaping individual behavior and attitudes. Empirical studies affirm that positive sibling relationships are associated with enhanced emotional intelligence, cognitive skills, and social competence (Milevsky, 2011). Furthermore, siblings maintain a significant role in adulthood, often providing emotional and instrumental support during life transitions and later stages of life (Bigby, 1997; Cicirelli, 1977).

While sibling relationships can be a source of emotional support, they are also susceptible to conflict. According to Adlerian theory (Dreikurs, 1964), sibling rivalries frequently arise from competition for parental attention. If unaddressed, these conflicts can escalate into entrenched patterns of hostility. However, parental mediation has been shown to mitigate such tensions and promote healthier sibling interactions. Dunn and Munn (1986) emphasize the critical role of parents as mediators, guiding siblings in constructive conflict resolution. Strategies such as establishing family fairness norms (Ross et al., 1994) and actively de-escalating conflict (Valsiner & Cairns, 1992) can create an environment conducive to collaboration and empathy. Empirical evidence supports these interventions; for instance, Perlman and Ross (1997) demonstrated that parental involvement in preschool sibling conflicts significantly improves the quality of sibling interactions, fostering long-term relational benefits.

It is essential to study these variables with a theoretical framework. *Baumrind's parental theories* are critically essential because it is a guiding framework that shows how different models of parenting affect sibling interaction throughout their lives. There are four primary parenting classifications defined by Baumrind: *authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful/indifferent*. Authoritative is a type of parenting that has high demands and responses (Baumrind, 1991). This type is characterized by the attitude of parents who are disciplined and responsive to the needs and desires of children. Authoritarian is a parenting style characterized by high demands from parents but very low responses (Baumrind, 1991). Parents exert very high control over their child's desires and demands. Permissive parents are more likely to fulfill the needs of their children compared to the demanding kind (Baumrind, 1991). Children are given the freedom to regulate and determine their desires as a sign of interference from parents. Santrock (2009) states that neglect is a negligent type of parenting. In this type of parenting, parents tend to not care about the needs of their children (Lestari, 2014; Fadlillah et al., 2022). They simply do not want to be involved in the child's life.

According to the theory of Birth Order by Alfred Adler, the position in the family that a child occupies when born influences personality, behavior, and psychological development significantly. According to Adler, the unique personal experiences of the siblings that are caused by their relative place in the family lead to unique personality characteristics. For example, firstborns receive undivided attention early on in life, which results in a greater sense of responsibility and leadership than do other birth order children. Still, the firstborn may feel dethroned upon the arrival of a younger sibling, which may breed anxiety or the need to assert authority. Less-noticed middle children may end up being competitive or conciliatory by having to secure their identity. The youngest is usually more indulged and may show several dependent or social behaviors for getting attention. One of the possible consequences of not having siblings is that firstborns and only children may show some personality traits characteristic of firstborns, but they could also be shown as more egocentric, being mainly socialized with adults (Adler, 1927).

1.1. Rationale for the Study

The rationale behind conducting this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how perceived parenting styles influence sibling relationships in young adults, an area that hasn't been explored much in previous research. While much of the focus in family studies has been on parent-child relationships or the family as a whole, the important role siblings play in shaping a person's development and social behavior, particularly in young adulthood, has often been overlooked. This study aims to fill that gap by looking at how different parenting styles authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive affect the way siblings interact and form their relationships.

The study also brings birth order into the picture, recognizing that a child's position in the family (whether they're the first, second, youngest, or only) could influence how they relate to their siblings. By examining this, the study hopes to offer a clearer understanding of how both parenting styles and birth order impact sibling relationships, especially during the critical years of young adulthood. While sibling interactions have received less focus in research, the systemic perspective in family studies emphasizes that a complete understanding of family behavior requires considering the

role of siblings (McHale, 2012). This study addresses this research gap by exploring how perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships influence young adults, highlighting the importance of including siblings in the analysis of family dynamics.

1.2. The Current Study

The current study aims to understand the impact of perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships among young adults. Additionally, the research aims to explore the mediating role of birth order in this relationship. By looking at these connections, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how family relationships shape the way young adults relate to each other and grow emotionally. The study hypothesizes that perceived parenting style will not predict sibling relationships. Additionally, there is a mediating effect of birth order on the relationship between perceived parenting style and sibling relationships.

2. Methods

2.1. Problem Statement

The study aims to find the impact of perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships and the role of birth order in these relationships among young Indian adults.

2.2. Objectives

The objectives of the study are to assess the impact of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships and the mediating role of birth order on these relationships.

2.3. Hypothesis

- H₀₁: There is no significant impact of authoritarian perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships.
- H₀₂: There is no significant impact of authoritative perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships.
- H₀₃: There is no significant impact of permissive perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships.
- H₀₄: There is no mediating role of birth order on the relationship between authoritarian perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships.
- H₀₅: There is no mediating role of birth order on the relationship between authoritative perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships.
- H₀₆: There is no mediating role of birth order on the relationship between permissive perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships.

2.4. Design

This study employed a quantitative design, incorporating regression analysis to explore the influence of perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships among young adults.

2.5. Sample and Procedures

The study population consists of individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. The sample size was 250. The sample was selected through purposive sampling, where the researchers intentionally chose the sample based on the study's objectives and the sample's characteristics. A Google form was sent to the participants so they could fill in the informed consent form to ensure their voluntary participation in the study. The confidentiality and privacy of their data were assured. The participants had the right to withdraw from the study whenever they wished to.

2.6. Tools

2.6.1. *Socio-demographic Profile*

The profile was constructed to collect information about the participant, such as name, age, gender, educational status, occupation, birth order, etc.

2.6.2. *Perceived Parenting Style Scale*

Perceived parenting style was measured by the Perceived Parenting Style Scale by Divya and Manikandan (2013), which measures the child's perception of the parent's behavior. It measures the perceived parenting style of the subject in terms of three dimensions: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. It consists of 30 items, the responses of which

were elicited on a five-point Likert scale. It has good reliability and validity with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, 0.81 in authoritarian, 0.7 in authoritative, and 0.86 in permissive parenting styles (Divya, 2013).

2.6.3. *The Lifespan Sibling Relationship Scale*

The sibling relationship scale was measured using Riggio's Lifespan Sibling Relationship Scale (LSRS) (2000). It was created to measure individual attitudes towards the adult sibling relationship. The LSRS is composed of six subscales, eight items each, that assess emotions toward the sibling and the sibling relationship as a child (Child Affect; CA) and as an adult (Adult Effect; AA); beliefs about the sibling and the sibling relationship as a child (Child Cognitions; CC) and as an adult (Adult Cognitions; AC); and behavioral interactions with the sibling and the positivity of those interactions as a child and as an adult. The LSRS has adequate internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .77 to .95. Cronbach's alpha values between .70 and .90 are considered acceptable.

2.7. Data Analysis

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistics are employed using Jamovi software. Descriptive statistics will be employed to determine the mean, median, and mode of the variation in the data. Linear regression analysis will be used to predict perceived parenting on sibling relationships. Mediation analysis will be used to assess the mediating effect of birth order on the relationship between perceived parenting style and sibling relationships.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics

3.1.1. Age

Table 1 Descriptives of Age

Age in year	
N	250
Missing	0
Mean	21.1
Median	21.0
Standard deviation	1.50
Minimum	18
Maximum	25

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the age distribution in the sample. As shown in Table 1, the mean age of the participants was 21.1 years, where the Standard Deviation (SD) was 1.50.

3.1.2. Gender

Table 2 Frequencies of Gender

Gender	Counts	% of Total
Male	70	28.0 %
Female	180	72.0 %

A frequency table was generated to describe the gender distribution in the sample. According to Table 1, the majority of the participants are female (n=180, 72.0%), while the distribution of male participants is (n=70, 28.0%).

Table 3 Descriptives of gender

	Gender	mean	N	SD
Authoritative Parenting	Male	70	38.2	6.01
	Female	180	37.7	7.64
Authoritarian Parenting	Male	70	25.3	6.70
	Female	180	24.6	8.22
Permissive Parenting	Male	70	24.5	9.15
	Female	180	24.4	8.69
Sibling Relationships	Male	70	165.4	28.29
	Female	180	163.0	31.88

According to Table 3, the mean score of authoritative parenting for females is 37.3 (SD= 7.64), and for males is 38.2 (SD= 6.01). The mean score of authoritarian parenting for females is 24.6 (SD= 8.22), and for males, it is 25.3 (SD= 6.70). The mean score for permissive parenting for females is 24.4 (SD= 8.69), and for males, it is 24.5 (SD= 9.15). The mean score for sibling relationships for females is 163.0 (SD= 31.88), and for males is 165.4 (SD= 28.29).

Table 4 Correlational Matrix

		Authoritative Parenting	Authoritarian Parenting	Permissive Parenting	Sibling Relationships
Authoritative Parenting	Pearson's r	—			
	p-value	—			
Authoritarian Parenting	Pearson's r	-0.588***	—		
	p-value	<.001	—		
Permissive Parenting	Pearson's r	-0.216***	0.444***	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—	
Sibling Relationships	Pearson's r	0.518***	-0.313***	-0.062	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	0.333	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Pearson Moment Correlational Analysis was utilized to understand the relationships between the predictor and dependent variable. According to Table 4, the results show that there exists a moderate negative relationship between authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles with $r=-0.58$, $p<0.01$; there exists a weak negative relationship between permissive parenting and authoritative parenting style with $r=-0.21$, $p<0.01$; there exists a moderate positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and sibling relationships with $r= 0.51$, $p<0.01$; there exists a moderate positive relationship between authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style with $r=0.44$, $p<0.01$; there exists a weak negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and sibling relationships with $r= -0.31$, $p<0.01$; there exists no significant relationship between permissive parenting and sibling relationship style with $r=-0.06$, $p=0.33$.

Table 5 Model Fit Measures

				Overall Model Test			
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.52	0.27	0.26	30.7	3	246	<.001

Table 6 Model Coefficients- Sibling Relationships

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	80.245	15.875	5.055	<.001
Authoritative	2.167	0.288	7.516	<.001
Authoritarian	-0.179	0.290	-0.617	0.538
Permissive	0.239	0.213	1.121	0.263

A regression analysis was done to understand the predictive value of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles on sibling relationships. According to Table 5, the overall model was statistically significant, $F(3, 246)=30.7$, $p<0.01$, indicating the predictors collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in sibling relationship scores. The model has a moderate effect size ($R= 0.52$), which explains approximately 27.2% of the variance in sibling relationships where $R^2=0.27$, $Adjusted\ R^2=0.26$.

From the results, it can be interpreted that authoritative parenting is a significant predictor of sibling relationships ($SE= 0.28$, $t= 7.51$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that the authoritative parenting style is associated with favorable views of sibling relationships. However, authoritarian parenting was not a significant predictor of sibling relationships ($SE= 0.29$, $t= -0.06$, $p=0.53$). Permissive parenting style was also not a significant predictor of sibling relationships ($SE= 0.21$, $t= 1.12$, $p<0.01$). This suggests that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles do not contribute to positive and stronger views of sibling relations.

4. Discussion

Family serves as a significant socialization group that aids in shaping human personality development. The purpose of the current study was to explore the impact of perceived parenting styles on sibling relationships among young Indian adults and the mediating role of birth order on these relationships.

The study hypothesized that authoritative parenting would not predict sibling relationships. Contrary to that, the current study found a moderate positive correlation between authoritative parenting and sibling relationships. Furthermore, the results show that authoritative parenting is a significant predictor of sibling relationships. This explains that authoritative parenting aids in building positive views of sibling relationships. Previously, authoritative parenting is associated with warmth and responsiveness, which fosters sibling closeness and interactions with parents (Kodia & Baapu, 2024; Portner and Riggs, 2016). This is consistent with the previous research by Milevsky (2011), who stated that authoritative parenting styles are positively associated with sibling support and closeness. This parenting style leads to increased sibling interactions through social competence (Kamble & Prahlad, 2023). Authoritative parents and their parental involvement play a crucial role in building more positive relationships, especially in adulthood (Volkom et al., 2019). Additionally, this parenting style can reduce sibling rivalry and conflicts among them (Liu and Rahaman, 2022). Although authoritative parenting promotes positive sibling relationships, sibling conflicts and rivalry can still exist due to individual differences and unique dynamics. (McHale, 2012; Brody, 1994). The current study builds on the current research, which states that authoritative parenting leads to stronger and healthier sibling relationships and reduces negative views towards sibling relationships.

Consistent with the hypothesis that authoritarian parenting will not predict sibling relationships, the current study found that there exists a weak negative relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and sibling relationships. However, the study found that authoritarian parenting is not a significant predictor of sibling relationships among young adults. This explains that there is an association between the authoritarian parenting style and sibling relationship, but authoritarian parenting does not predict the nature of sibling relationships among young adults. This

suggests that a lack of emotional support can create tension and rivalry among siblings. Authoritarian parenting often prioritizes obedience over emotional closeness, which can affect the development of emotional relationships and can diminish to fostering of a close bond. This is consistent with other research, which states that an authoritarian parenting style is positively associated with sibling conflict and rivalry and is linked to emotionally distanced sibling relationships (Liu & Rahman, 2022; Milvesky, 2011; Portner & Riggs, 2016). A few studies contrary to the current findings state that rather than fostering rivalry, this parenting can sometimes provide structure and discipline, which can encourage siblings to unite in facing challenges together. Siblings in authoritarian parenting can still form positive relationships (McHale, 2012; Dunn, 1987). Parental involvement in conflict plays a major role in sibling relationships (Lansford et al., 2017).

The study hypothesized that permissive parenting would predict sibling relationships. Similar to the hypothesis, the current research found that there exists no significant relationship between permissive parenting style and sibling relationships. This parenting style is not a significant predictor of sibling relationships. This suggests that permissive parenting styles do not share an association with sibling relationships and do not have an impact on them. This is consistent with the finding that permissive parenting does not have a strong impact on sibling relationships (Kodia, 2024). In contrast to the current findings, Milevsky (2020) found that permissive parenting was associated with greater sibling support. Permissive parenting, which is warm but lacks rules, has positive effects on sibling relationships (Yu & Gamble, 2008). The freedom and autonomy allowed by permissive parents enable siblings to independently resolve conflicts and thus promote positive sibling relationships (Lasky, 2006). In contrast to this, earlier research found that a permissive parenting style is associated with sibling rivalry and conflicts and less favorable sibling dynamics (Liu, 2022; Volkom et al., 2019). They also have difficulty in resolving conflicts (Yu & Gamble, 2008). The lack of structure contributes to these rivalries and conflicts through jealousy, aggression, and lack of fairness (Smetana, 1995).

The study hypothesized that there is no mediating effect of birth order on the relationship between perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships. Our assumption that birth order will fail to mediate the relationship is consistent with the current findings. This means that birth order fails to explain the process of how perceived parenting styles impact sibling relationships. This area is underexplored, with limited significant research conducted on the topic. However, Volkom (2019) found that birth order does not have a significant impact on birth order. Consistent with the current findings, Paul (2024) and Giordano (2023) found that there is no significant relationship between birth order and perceived parenting styles, and there is no significant difference in emotional regulation across varied birth orders. Further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the mediating variables that clarify the process underlying the relationship between perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships.

The current study had certain limitations. The sample size of 250 participants may restrict the generalizability of the findings and can lower the external validity of the findings. Additionally, the sample consisted predominantly of females compared to males, limiting the diversity of perspectives. The sample size, limited to the 18-25 age group, restricted the systematic variance of the study, as the lack of equal representation across age groups introduced a potential extraneous variable. Furthermore, the study did not comprehensively explore the full range of parenting styles and practices, including communication and discipline methods.

Despite the limitations of the study, the implications of the study include that it promotes awareness about how parenting behaviors have an impact on sibling relationships and dynamics. This will enable young adults to gain insight into their interpersonal relationships and dynamics. The study implies the benefits of authoritative parenting, emphasizing the need for a supportive and communicative family environment, which ultimately fosters secure relationships and empowers young minds to develop emotional resilience and strong interpersonal skills.

The future direction should focus on exploring the intricate relationships between parenting styles, sibling relationships, and birth order using SEM analysis. Research on gender differences in sibling relationships and the development of intervention programs to improve sibling interactions through effective parenting strategies could also provide valuable insights into family dynamics and child development.

5. Conclusion

Family plays a pivotal role in contributing to an adult's emotional and psychological growth. Authoritative parenting is a significant predictor of sibling relationships among young adults. Authoritative parenting helps in building positive sibling relationships. Authoritarian and permissive parenting is not a significant predictor of sibling relationships. Birth order does not mediate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and sibling relationships. These findings will increase awareness about the benefits of authoritative parenting, emphasizing the need for a supportive and

communicative family environment, which ultimately fosters secure relationships and empowers young minds to develop emotional resilience and strong interpersonal skills.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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