

Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

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ABSTRACT

Young adulthood is a transitional period where one's self-esteem presents a mediating aspect and parenting style and birth order have been found to have associations with one's self-esteem. The aim of the study was to identify if there is a variation in self-esteem among the different parenting styles, to identify if there is a variation in self-esteem among the different birth order and to identify the variation on self-esteem in perceived parenting style among first and last born female young adults. The sample included 126 first and last born female young adults of Bangalore. The tools used are Perceived Parenting Style Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Mann Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Test were used along with descriptive statistics to analyse the data. Findings show that there is a significant variation in self-esteem among the different perceived parenting styles, no significant variation was found in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults and no significant variation was found in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults who perceived their parents as authoritative.

Keywords: Parenting style, Birth order, Self-esteem.

The shift from adolescence to adulthood can be a complex one as those who were dependent on their parents in childhood begin to achieve levels of economic, domestic and emotional independence. They start to take up more mature civic, spousal, parental and professional roles and take decisive steps toward achieving a more adult role as a person. (Jekielek et al., 2005).

A study conducted by Srivastava & Agarwal in 2013 aimed to assess the self-esteem in the youth population over gender. The sample consisted of 120 participants from Lucknow, a city in India. There were equal number of male and female respondents – each amounting to 60. They utilised self-guided interview programs and the “Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale” to collect data. Findings reported that males had greater self-esteem compared to females. The study also established that there was an inconsequential variation amidst sex and self-worth meaning that gender did not factor self-esteem.

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Scholars predict and show that global self-esteem has a tendency to change during emerging adulthood due to its transitional nature (Chung et al., 2014). In particular, during late adolescence through to middle age, self-esteem may escalate (Shchebetenko et al., 2022).

A study conducted found that male self-esteem was significantly higher than female self-esteem. Respondents' education, respondents' mother's education, number of siblings, caste and family income were associated with self-esteem (Nupur & Mahapatro, 2016). Studies have shown that young adult children whose parents disclosed being more caring expressed having superior implicit self-esteem than children whose parents cared less. Moreover, it was discovered that children whose parents reported being overprotective also reported lower implicit self-esteem (DeHart et al., 2006).

In 2016, Nupur & Mahapatro conducted a study which sought to ascertain the link between self-worth and gender among the young adults. They conducted an expressive cross-sectional study amongst young adults between the age of 20-25 who were proceeding with their education and living in Raipur, Uttar Pradesh, India. A sample of 203 respondents were chosen, consisting of 110 male and 93 female. To assess self-esteem, a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared, and applied along with the Rosenberg self-esteem scale constituting 25 items. The findings showed that men depicted a significantly greater self-esteem than that of women. The education and tutelage of respondents and that of their mother, the income of the family, number of siblings and caste were linked with self-esteem. Research on young adult university students reported self-esteem mediates the association between depressive symptoms and parental conflict, and depressive symptoms and care. It also stated that self-esteem might have a part in the mechanisms crucial to the association between parentage factors and depressive symptoms (Kathleen et al., 2009)

Baumrind (1991) defines parental style as a construct that describes the normal variations in a parent's attempts to socialize and control their child. Approaches vary from parent to parent, but they fit into one of four approaches. Authoritarian, authoritarian, tolerantly spoiled, tolerantly careless. Parenting style is a phrase that highlights the parental responses towards their child. This may include prospects or expectations they have, beliefs they bear and depict beliefs and ethics or values on how parents truly support, help, take care of the child and how they chastise the child (Sharma & Pandey, 2015).

The link and correlation between various parenting styles and self-esteem were explored in Lee, Yen Chiew's (2011) paper, "A Study of Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Self-Esteem: Self-Indicator-Parenting Esteem's Styles," at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The research evidenced that the most common parenting style is an authoritarian one, and that a robust association between various parenting philosophies and self-esteem existed. The degrees of self-esteem were significantly linked with both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. More students from authoritative homes than authoritarian families had self-esteem of greater levels.

Hong et al. in 2015 in their research assessed the link between approaches of parenting and self-worth among students in Public University in Malaysia. The research sample was 120 students. The results of the research stated that permissive parenting approach was the predominant parenting approach preferred by the parents of the university students'. Evidence also suggested that most of the students had a greater ranking of self-esteem. Further there was an important link between self-esteem and parenting style within the students. The results also showed a positive link with self-esteem, authoritative and

Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

permissive parenting style. Another finding of this research was that authoritarian parenting approach had a negative relationship with the students' self-esteem.

The ordinal position in which children were born. That is, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 10th, 11th, etc. Birth order relates to his five cardinal positions described by Adler. These are firstborn, second born, middle, youngest and sole (Shulman & Mossack, 1933).

According to Adler, this place often leaves a recognizable imprint in adult life and the personality of adults. Research has supported the view that birth order influences individual personality (Healey & Ellis, 2007; Jefferson et al., 1998; Nyman, 1995; Saroglou & Fiasse, 2003) and subsequent work (Fergusson et al., 2006 & Paulhus et al., 1999).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

A cross sectional research design was utilised in this study as data was gathered from two different birth orders, first born and last born.

Research questions

Depending on the need of this study and the research gaps, the following research questions have been formed.

- Is there a variation in self-esteem among the different parenting styles?
- Is there a variation in self-esteem among the different birth order?
- Is there a variation on self-esteem in perceived parenting style among first and last born female young adults?

Objectives of the study

Based on the research questions, the subsequent objectives have been formed:

- To identify if there is a variation in self-esteem among the different parenting styles
- To identify if there is a variation in self-esteem among the different birth order
- To identify the variation on self-esteem in perceived parenting style among first and last born female young adults.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study the following hypotheses have been formed:

- H01- there is no significant variation of perceived parenting styles on self-esteem among female young adults.
- H02- there is no significant variation in self-esteem of first and last born female young adults.
- H03- There is no significant variation on self-esteem in perceived parenting style among first and last born female young adults

Variables

The three variables of this study are:

- Parenting style: the three parenting styles in this study are:
 1. permissive
 2. authoritarian
 3. authoritative
- Self esteem

Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

- Birth order: the two birth orders in this study are:
 1. First born
 2. Last born

Demographic variable

The demographic variables that are used in this study are:

- Family type – which was divided into 2 types:
 1. nuclear family or
 2. joint family.
- Socio economic status – which was divided into 3 types:
 1. Upper class
 2. Upper middle class
 3. Lower middle class

Operational Definition

- **Parenting style:** Parenting approach or style refers to the manner in which parents bring up their children. This may include parents' levels of expectations, performance demands, attentiveness to rules, control etc, as well disciplinary approach that the parent's utilize to enforce their expectations. In this study, it refers to 3 styles- permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative.
- **Birth order:** refers to the chronological order in which the child is born into their family in this study we will be taking- first-born and last-born children.
- **Self-esteem-** in this study, self-esteem is a persons' own positive or negative opinion toward themselves and one's assessment of their own thoughts and emotions overall in relation to themselves.

Sample and techniques

The method of sampling utilised in this study was purposive sampling. It is where units are chosen because they have the qualities your sample needs. This study uses purposive sampling as in gender only females were taken and in birth order only first and last born were chosen.

Using purposive sampling method, a sample of 126 first and last born female young adults between the age of 18-24, from Bangalore was taken for this study. The online platform of goggle forms was used to collect data from the participants.

Research ethics followed

Each participant provided consent.

- Participation in the study was voluntary.
- Participants had the freedom to opt out at any point of the study if they felt uncomfortable.
- Participants were assured that an adequate level of confidentiality will be maintained.
- Participants were ensured of no potential harm of participating in this study.
- This study provides accurate representation of results.

Tools for the study

- **Perceived Parenting Style inventory by Divya T. V & Manikandan K (2013):**
The tool has 30 statements. It contains a five point Likert scale ranging from

Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Each item in the scale is positively framed and scored from 5 to 1. Each of the three perceived parenting styles are scored separately.

Reliability and Validity: Cronbach Alpha coefficient was computed for each style to assess the reliability of the scale. It was found that the authoritative style has Alpha coefficient of 0.79, authoritarian 0.81 and permissive 0.86. The three perceived parenting styles of the scale have an appropriate level of reliability. The scale also has face validity according to the authors.

- **The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:** This scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg, it consists of 10 statements. It presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90 (M. Rosenberg, 1965, and personal communication, April 22, 1987). Test-retest reliability for the 2-week interval was calculated at 0.85, the 7-month interval was calculated at 0.63 (Silber & Tippett, 1965, Shorkey & Whiteman, 1978).

Alternative methods to score are possible. For example, values of 1-4 rather than 0-3 can be assigned; if so, the scores will range from 10-40. Other researchers have used 5 or 7 point Likert scales, here the scores would differ due to the addition of "middle" categories of responding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 135 participants completed the online questionnaires. Those who belonged to any other gender, were middle children or a single child, and those who had two parenting styles with equally high scores were excluded from the study. 126 female participant's data was used for analysis. The data was coded and analysed using SPSS.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 Socio-demographic details of the participants

		N	Percentage
Age Range (18-24)			
Birth order	First born	72	57.1%
	Last born	54	42.9%
Family Type	Nuclear family	109	86.5%
	Joint family	17	13.5%
Socio-economic status	Lower middle class	34	27%
	Upper middle class	90	71.4%
	Upper class	2	1.6%

Table 1 portrays the socio demographic details of the participants. Among the 126 female young adult participants 57.1% were first born children and 42.9% were last born children. Majority of the population 86.5% belonged to nuclear families while 13.5% belonged to joint families. With regard to the socio-economic status, 71.4% belonged to upper middle class, 27% were from lower middle class and 1.6% belonged to upper class.

Table 2 *perceived parenting style of the participants*

		N	Percentage
Perceived parenting style	Authoritative	99	78.6%
	Authoritarian	21	16.7%
	Permissive	6	4.8%

Table 2 shows that out of the 126 participants 78.6% perceived their parents as authoritative, 16.7% perceived their parents as authoritarian and 4.8% perceived their parents as permissive. Majority of this study’s participants perceived their parents as being authoritative.

Hypothesis 1

Table 3 shows that self-esteem scored 23.759 for Kruskal Wallis Test, the p value of 0.000 indicates a substantial difference in self-esteem among the different perceived parenting styles. Thus, the null hypothesis, there is no substantial variation of perceived parenting styles on self-esteem among female young adults is rejected. The mean self-esteem of females with authoritative perceived parenting style was 34.38, authoritarian was 26 and permissive was 26.67. while considering the mean value it is clear that females who perceived their parents as authoritative tend to have higher self-esteem than those who viewed their parents as permissive or authoritarian.

Table 3 *Kruskal Wallis Test among perceived parenting style for self-esteem of female young adults*

	Perceived parenting style	N	Mean	Kruskal-Wallis H
Self esteem	Authoritative	99	34.38	23.759**
	Authoritarian	21	26.00	
	Permissive	6	26.67	

** significant at 0.01 level

Findings of this study do not endorse the findings of a previous study that authoritative parenting style was the predominant parenting style. But supports the finding that authoritative parenting style was associated with higher self-esteem (Chiew, 2011). The reasons could be because authoritative parents are considered to enable their children to express themselves and enjoy independence and free thinking, and there is a high level of warm and caring relationship between children and parents. They allow children to express their thoughts and provide a basis for future progress (Kooraneh & Amirsardari, 2015).

Hypothesis 2

Table 4 shows that self-esteem has scored 1723.500 for Mann Whitney U test. The p value is 0.277 which is greater than 0.05 and hence there is no significant variation in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults. Thus, the null hypothesis there is no significant variation in self-esteem of first and last born female young adults is accepted. While considering the mean self-esteem of first born and last born female young adults it is seen that the first born tend to have higher self-esteem than the last born female young adults.

Table 4 Mann Whitney U test between first and last born for self-esteem among female young adults

	Birth order	N	Mean	Mann Whitney U
Self esteem	First born	72	33.25	1723.500
	Last born	54	31.78	

The results of this study support the finding of previous research that Self-esteem score did not vary by sibling types (their birth order) (Fukuya et al., 2021). like stated in their research the reasons could be that, the previous studies that showed significant relation were conducted more than three decades ago. Age gap between siblings, the age between the participant and the next/previous sibling was not considered and this could have an effect on their self-esteem as it can influence the level of attention received from parents.

Hypothesis 3

Table 5 Mann Whitney U test between first and last born who perceive their parents as authoritative for self-esteem among female young adults

	Perceived parenting style	Birth order	N	Mean	Mann Whitney U
Self esteem	Authoritative	First born	58	34.86	1044.000
		Last born	41	33.71	

Table 5 shows that self-esteem scored 1044.000 for Mann Whitney U test and the p value is 0.302 which is more than 0.05 and therefore, there is no substantial variation in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults who perceived their parents as authoritative. Thus, the null hypothesis there is no substantial variation on self-esteem in perceived parenting style among first and last born female young adults is accepted. While looking at the mean self-esteem, the first born who perceived their parents as authoritative tend to have higher self-esteem than the last born who also perceived their parents as authoritative.

The reasons for the results to be non-significant could be age of the participants and their current living situation. As young adults some might not be living with parents and siblings as they may have moved away from home for studies and this could have an effect on their self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study show that there is a significant variation in self-esteem among the different perceived parenting styles. No significant variation in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults was found. Further it was also found that there is no significant variation in self-esteem among first and last born female young adults who perceived their parents as authoritative.

Implications

From the current study we found that there is a relationship between perceived parenting approach and self-esteem of female young adults. Authoritarian parenting style was associated with higher self-esteem when compared with the other two parenting approaches.

Suggestions for future studies are:

Based on the findings of this study, some suggestions for future studies are:

- This research can be extended to larger population and larger geographical area.

Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

- This study can also be extended while also including only child and middle born.
- Extending the study to include other genders so that gender comparisons can be done.

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Parenting Styles, Birth Order, and Self-esteem Among Female Young Adults of Bangalore

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Conflict of Interest

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