

**A Comparative Study on Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles
Across Birth Order Groups in Young Adults**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

By

Ajmala Sherin P J

Register No: SB22PSY044

Under the guidance of

Ms. Aleesha Moideen

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology



ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM

Nationally Re-accredited at 'A++' level (4th cycle)

Affiliated to: Mahatma Gandhi University

MARCH 2025

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “A Comparative Study on Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles Across Birth Order Groups”, is a bonafide record submitted by Ajmala Sherin P J, Reg.no. SB22PSY044, of St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Aleesha Moideen, and that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

Date:

Ms. Ann Joseph

Head of the Department

Department of Psychology

St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam

Ms. Aleesha Moideen

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology

St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam

External Examiner 1:

External Examiner 2:

Internal Examiner:

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "A Comparative Study on Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles Across Birth Order Groups", is a bonafide record submitted by Ajmala Sherin P J, Reg.no. SB22PSY044, of St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Aleesha Moideen, and that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

Date: 25-4-25

Approved
15/4/25

Ms. Ann Joseph

Head of the Department

Department of Psychology

St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam



[Signature]

Ms. Aleesha Moideen

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology

St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam

External Examiner 1: ... *[Signature]*

25/04/2025

External Examiner 2:

Internal Examiner:

DECLARATION

I, Ajmala Sherin P J, do hereby declare that the work represented in the dissertation embodies the results of the original research work done by me in St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Mrs. Aleesha Moideen, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, it has not been submitted by me to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

Place:

Ajmala Sherin P J

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to God for giving me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to complete this research. This journey has been both challenging and rewarding, and I could not have done it without His guidance.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, for giving me the opportunity and resources to carry out this study. Their support has been invaluable throughout this process.

A special thanks to my research guide, Mrs. Aleesha Moideen, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, whose guidance, insights, and constant encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this research. Her support has made a world of difference.

I am also incredibly grateful to my parents, teachers, and friends for standing by me through every phase of this journey. Their motivation, belief in me, and unwavering support have helped me stay focused and determined.

Lastly, I appreciate everyone who has contributed to this research, whether through advice, constructive feedback, or simply offering words of encouragement. Your support has meant more than I can express.

Thanking You

Ajmala Sherin P J

Abstract

This study provides insights into how birth order shapes coping strategies and perceptions of parenting, aiding in the development of support systems for young adults. It examines whether coping strategies and perceived parenting styles differ based on birth order. Data were collected from 300 young adults (150 males, 150 females) across first-born (100), middle-born (100), and last-born (100) groups, aged 18 to 30. The Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations and Perceived Parenting Style Scale were used for data collection, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied for analysis. The results found significant differences in problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, with first-born scoring highest in problem-focused coping and last-born the lowest. Avoidant coping did not differ significantly across birth order. First-born also perceived their parents as significantly more authoritative than middle- and last-born, while no significant differences were found in perceived authoritarian and permissive parenting across birth order. Understanding these differences helps parents adopt balanced parenting approaches to ensure all children receive the emotional and cognitive support needed for adaptive coping. Educators can develop stress management programs that consider birth-order differences, while mental health professionals can personalise therapy to align with individuals' coping tendencies shaped by birth order. Future research can explore cross-cultural variations and sibling dynamics for a deeper understanding.

Keywords: birth order, coping strategies, perceived parenting styles.

Table of Contents

1. Chapter I: Introduction.....	9
Background of the study.....	10
Theoretical Framework.....	14
2. Chapter II: Review of Literature	17
Rationale	24
Current Study	25
3. Chapter III: Methodology	26
Problem Statement	27
Objectives	27
Hypothesis.....	27
Operational Definition	27
Research Design.....	28
Sampling	28
Inclusion Criteria	28
Exclusion Criteria	28
Measures	28
Procedure	29
Ethical Considerations	30
Data Analysis.....	31
4. Chapter IV: Result and Discussion	33
5. Chapter V: Conclusion	44
Key Findings	45
Implications.....	45

Limitations	45
Recommendations for Future Research	46
Conclusion	46
Reference	47
6. Appendices	51
Appendix A: Consent Form	52
Appendix B: Sociodemographic Details	53
Appendix C: Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations	54
Appendix D: Perceived Parenting Styles Scale	56

List of Tables

Table No.	Table Name	Page No.
1.	<i>Reliability of the scales</i>	29
2.	<i>Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality - CISS</i>	31
3.	<i>Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality - PPSS</i>	32
4.	<i>Descriptive Statistics for coping strategies and perceived parenting styles</i>	35
5.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing avoidant coping strategies across birth order</i>	35
6.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing problem-focused coping strategies across birth order</i>	35
7.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing emotion-focused coping strategies across birth order</i>	36
8.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for authoritative perceived parenting style across birth order</i>	36
9.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for authoritarian perceived parenting style across birth order</i>	37
10.	<i>Kruskal-Wallis test for permissive perceived parenting style across birth order</i>	37

Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Birth order is defined as the position of a child among his siblings (Conely, 2004), and it is considered to be a factor that affects the role of a child among his sibling in terms of treatment and care which in turn is reflected on his activities. According to the difference in birth order and the difference between parents in terms of raising and treating their children, child can develop different behavioural traits, so, the birth order (oldest, middle, last, or lonely) will definitely have an impact on the child's behaviour. Biological birth order is defined as the placement within the family into which one is born (Adler, 1927).

Psychological birth order is defined as the way in which one perceives one's role in the family within the context of birth order (Adler, 1927; Campbell, White, & Stewart, 1991).

Birth order refers to an individual's rank or position in age among their siblings. It is typically categorised as first-born, middle child, last-born, or only child. It is often studied to understand its impact on personality traits, behaviour, and interpersonal relationships. It influences a person's environment, interactions with family members, and parental expectations, which contributes to their psychological development. Understanding birth order allows researchers to explore intra-family differences, refine developmental theories, and apply findings to counselling, education, and family dynamics. It often shapes the roles, expectations, and interactions of individuals within the family. For example: First-born may develop traits such as responsibility, leadership, and a tendency to conform due to higher parental expectations. Middle children are often thought to develop strong negotiation and coping skills to "find their place" within the family hierarchy. Youngest children may adopt more attention-seeking or dependent behaviours as they often receive more indulgence from parents.

Birth order can also affect how individuals respond to stress and challenges. For example: First-born might use structured and problem-focused coping strategies. Middle

children may develop strong social or interpersonal coping mechanisms. Youngest children might rely on others for support or adopt more passive coping styles. Parents may also adapt their parenting style based on the child's birth order. For example: First-born might experience stricter or more involved parenting. Middle children might perceive less attention or differentiated treatment. Youngest children may perceive a more relaxed or lenient parental style. These differences can affect how children perceive their parents' authority, warmth, and supportiveness. Understanding role of birth order can help to uncover patterns in psychological development and family dynamics. It provides insight into why siblings raised in the same environment may develop different coping mechanisms and perceptions of parental behaviour.

The concept of birth order gained prominence in psychology through the work of Alfred Adler, an Austrian psychoanalyst and founder of Individual Psychology. Adler proposed that a child's position in the family significantly impacts their personality and behaviour. His theories laid the foundation for birth order research, emphasising the social and psychological roles of siblings.

Coping strategy is a conscious effort to solve a personal or interpersonal problem that will help in overcoming, minimising, or tolerating stress or conflict. The three main categories of coping strategies are problem/task-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and avoidance focused coping. Problem-focused coping is about trying to deal with the stressor itself so as to avoid the stress response it is causing. It involves finding practical ways to deal with stressful situations. For example: Actively try to remove or work around the stressor, develop a plan to help you do better. Emotion-focused coping changes a person's emotional response to the stressor. These techniques are focused on reducing the negative emotional responses we might experience because of stressors. For example: Seeking encouragement, moral support, sympathy, and understanding from others, meditate to become more in tune

with your emotions, Journal to process your emotions. Avoidance-focused coping is the technique where a person avoids dealing with stressful situations by denying, minimising, or changing their behaviour. It's also known as avoidant coping, escape coping, or avoidance behaviours. For example: Procrastinating, engaging in substance use, passive-aggressive behaviours.

Coping strategies are crucial for understanding individual differences in stress management, particularly in relation to birth order and perceived parenting styles. First-born, middle children, and youngest siblings may adopt different coping styles shaped by parental expectations and sibling dynamics. For instance, first-born may rely on problem-solving, while youngest children might exhibit emotional or avoidance-based coping. Parenting styles, as perceived by the child, can significantly influence coping mechanisms. For example: Authoritative parenting may foster problem-focused coping. Neglectful or authoritarian parenting might lead to avoidance or maladaptive coping strategies.

The term "coping strategies" originated in the 1970s and 1980s with the work of theorists such as Lazarus and Folkman, Pearlin and Schooler, Billings and Moos, and Kobasa. They defined coping as the cognitive and behavioural efforts people use to manage stress. They also created the Ways of Coping scale to assess how people cope with stress.

Perceived parenting styles are defined as what a child thinks about his/her parent's behaviour, how they treat them, and all things related to the parenting style of his/her parents. Perceived parenting style is characterised as a child's or adolescent's perception of parental behaviour patterns during childhood (Stavrulaki et al., 2021). Baumrind (1966) distinguished three main parenting styles: authoritarian (demanding but not receptive), authoritative (balanced demanding and receptiveness), and permissive (low demandingness and high responsiveness). Parenting styles are the techniques parents use to discipline and socialise their children (Lightfoot et al., 2009). Furthermore, a person's subjective evaluation of their

parents' parenting style is known as perceived parenting style (Hashmi & Singh, 2023). Parenting styles are the techniques parents use to discipline and socialize their children (Lightfoot et al., 2009). Furthermore, a person's subjective evaluation of their parents' parenting style is known as perceived parenting style (Hashmi & Singh, 2023).

Perceptions of parenting styles reveal how children internalize their parents' behaviours and values. Different birth order positions often lead to varied perceptions of parenting. For example: First-born may perceive stricter or more demanding parenting. Middle children might feel neglected or less favored. Youngest children may view parenting as indulgent or lenient. Parenting styles influence how children handle stress: Authoritative parenting often fosters adaptive coping strategies (e.g., problem-solving). Permissive or neglectful parenting may lead to maladaptive coping (e.g., avoidance).

The concept of parenting styles was first introduced by Diana Baumrind in the 1960s through her research on child-rearing practices. Baumrind's classification of parenting styles was later expanded by Maccoby and Martin, who added the neglectful style to her original three categories. In the 1960s, Baumrind developed her Pillar Theory, which draws relationships between basic parenting styles and children's behaviour. Baumrind came up with three major parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, authoritative.

Authoritarian parenting is a style of child rearing that is very demanding and rigid. Authoritarian parents are extremely strict and expect their orders to be obeyed. They expect their rules to be followed unquestioningly. Abusive parents almost always fall into this category. They show low levels of warmth or responsiveness, meaning they are not very attentive to children's needs. They also tend to punish their children by withholding love and affection from them when they do wrong. Permissive parent, or a parent who is not strict at all. Contrary to the authoritarian parent, the permissive parent is extremely responsive to a child's needs and does not enforce many rules or punishments. The term spoiled is often used

to describe the children of permissive parents. Permissive parents tend not to impose guidelines or limits on their children and are very warm and loving. Nor do they expect their children to be very responsible. Permissive parents tend not to portray themselves as authority figures. Authoritative parenting style is characterised by a combination of expectations and warmth. Authoritative parents present themselves as authority figures and expect their children to behave but they are also caring, loving and responsive.

Theoretical Framework

1. *Alfred Adler's Birth-order Theory:* Adler is an Austrian psychologist, who proposed that an individual's birth order position within their family of origin influences their personality, behaviour, and life choices (Adler, 1927). According to him, the family environment and parental expectations vary depending on the child's birth order position, shaping their unique experiences and developmental outcomes. Adler identified four main birth order positions with distinct characteristics:

- **First-born:** First-born are held to high expectations by their parents, leading to the development of a strong sense of responsibility, ambition, and perfectionism (Adler, 1927). First-born often strive to maintain their privileged position and may feel threatened by the arrival of younger siblings.
- **Middle-born:** Middle-born are often characterised as diplomatic and adaptable, may develop strong social skills and a desire for peace and harmony within the family (Adler, 1927).
- **Last-born:** They are often the most pampered and protected. They may develop a more carefree and sociable nature (Adler, 1927). They may be more likely to take risks and seek attention from their parents. Alfred believed that first-born children typically have higher expectations placed upon them by parents and thus develop a greater sense of responsibility and ambition. He proposed that later-born siblings, on

the other hand, were often treated more leniently by their parents compared to first-born, leading them to become more rebellious and independent.

2. ***Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984):*** Theory is a framework which emphasizes appraisal to evaluate harm, threat and challenges, which results in the process of coping with stressful events (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The model holds that stress unfolds as follows: (1) an individual is exposed to a challenging event, (2) the person appraises the demands of the event (primary appraisal) and appraises his or her own resources for coping with those demands (secondary appraisal), and (3) the person initiates a strategy for coping. Coping is categorized into: Problem-Focused Coping: Strategies aimed at solving the stressor itself. Emotion-Focused Coping: Strategies aimed at managing emotional distress. The model evaluates how major life events and daily hassles impact on emotions with the emphasis on cognitive appraisal and coping with stress.
3. ***Pillar Theory (Baumrind, 1960s):*** The theory draws relationships between basic parenting styles and children's behaviour. Baumrind came up with three major parenting styles: Authoritarian, Permissive, and Authoritative. Authoritarian parenting is a style of child rearing that is very demanding and rigid. Authoritarian parents are extremely strict and expect their orders to be obeyed. They expect their rules to be followed unquestioningly. Abusive parents almost always fall into this category. They show low levels of warmth or responsiveness, meaning they are not very attentive to children's needs. They also tend to punish their children by withholding love and affection from them when they do wrong. In permissive parenting, the parent is not strict at all. Contrary to the authoritarian parent, the permissive parent is extremely responsive to a child's needs and does not enforce many rules or punishments. The term spoiled is often used to describe the children of permissive parents.

Permissive parents tend not to impose guidelines or limits on their children and are very warm and loving. Nor do they expect their children to be very responsible. Permissive parents tend not to portray themselves as authority figures. Authoritative parenting style is characterised by a combination of expectations and warmth. They present themselves as authority figures and expect their children to behave but they are also caring, loving and responsive.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews literature on birth order, coping strategies and perceived parenting styles. Through existing research, the study seeks to uncover how birth order differ with coping strategies and perceived parenting styles for further investigation while providing insights. Also find the gaps in the study, what contributions the study is given to the society all are addressing in this chapter.

The study ‘The Association between Parenting Style and Birth Order in Relation to Functioning in College’ (Natalie Giordano, 2023) assessed whether birth order is associated with parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful), and also included two measures of helicopter parenting (overprotective, over-involved parenting). The sample of the study consist of 121 students between 18 to 23 years. College Behaviour Variables, Parental Authority Questionnaire, Helicopter Parenting questionnaire, Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours questionnaire, Psychological Well-being Scale were used. Correlation analysis and t-test were used for the analysis. Birth order did not correlate with any of the four traditional parenting styles. Birth order negatively correlated with both helicopter parenting measures and the autonomy support measure, with first-born reporting more helicopter parenting and more autonomy support than later born. Birth order was positively correlated with the number of days students reported partying per week, such that later born reported partying on more days than first-born. Parents are perceived to be providing both to their first-born children more so than their later born children.

The study ‘The effects of birth order and family size on academic achievement, divergent thinking, and problem finding among gifted students (Aseel AlSalch et al., 2021) aimed to explore the influence of birth order and family size on academic achievement, divergent thinking (DT), and problem finding (PF). The sample of the study consist of 156 gifted male and female Arab students (aged between 11 and 15 years). Alternative Uses Test, Problem Generation test and demographic form were used as data collection tools. One -way

ANOVA, linear regression and multiple regression analysis were used for the analysis of the data. First-born had higher grade point averages (GPAs) regarding academic achievement. Participants from smaller-sized families had significantly higher GPAs compared with gifted students from middle and large sized families. Significant differences were found for birth order and the interaction between birth order and family size in the originality dimension of PF. Non-significant differences were found concerning family size. The later born gifted students scored higher than other siblings in PF originality and those who scored higher on originality were from smaller families. No significant influences for birth order and family size were found concerning fluency for both DT and PF as well as DT originality.

The study ‘Coping Strategies in Adolescent Siblings of Individuals with and without Physical Disability’ (Maria Waris Nawaz et.al, 2021) aimed to examine the affinity amongst siblings and their way of coping when one individual is physically disabled, as these siblings may carry potential triggers of disturbed emotional state. The sample of the study included 100 participants. 50 participants (aged between 18-30 years) for each of the two groups without gender specification, selected by purposive sampling from different special schools in Karachi, Pakistan. The demographic form, CSI- Coping Strategy Indicator were used as data collection tools for the study and SPSS was used for data analysis. The results revealed that the coping strategies of typically developing adolescent siblings of individuals without physical disability had no difference as compared to the coping strategies present in typically developing adolescent siblings of individuals with physical disability.

The study ‘Examination of Birth Order and Personality Effects on Coping Strategies in Light of COVID-19’ (Stephanie Vavricek, 2020) aimed to determine the connection between birth order, personality and coping strategies. The sample of the study consist of 108 participants, who were working full time. Demographic Information form, Perception of

Parents Scale (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997), Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003) and The Brief COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997) were used as data collection tools in the study. Bivariate correlations and one-way independent ANOVA were used for the analysis of the obtained data. As a result of the analysis, there were some correlations between personality and coping styles. There was no evidence for a connection between birth order and personality or birth order and coping.

The study 'An Investigation of the Connection between Parenting Styles, Birth Order, Personality, and Sibling Relationships' (Michele Van Volkom', Danielle Dirmeitis' & Samantha Cappitelli, 2019) aimed to determine the potential effects of parenting styles and birth order on personality and sibling relationships. The sample of the study consist of 247 college students aged between 18 to 30 years. Demographic questionnaire, Lifespan sibling relationship scale (ISRS), Big Five inventory (BFI) were used as data collection tools in the study. One-way ANOVA and turkey's HSD test were used for the analysis of the obtained data. As a result of the analysis, birth order had no significant effect on any of the aspects of the sibling relationship, but did show differences in conscientiousness and neuroticism.

The study 'Exploring Relationships Between Parenting Style, Perceived Stress, Coping Efficacy and Coping Strategies in Foster Parents' (Jason Coleman, 2019) aimed to investigate relationships between foster parent stress, coping efficacy, coping strategies, and parenting style to identify effective coping strategies in foster parents. The sample of the study consist of 178 foster parents/caregivers with youth (children or teenagers) currently residing in placement in their homes for at least 3 months. Demographic questionnaire, Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, The Coping Self-Efficacy Scale, Perceived Stress Scale were used as data collection tools for the study. One-way ANOVA, one-way MANOVA, simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis used for analysis of the data. Foster parents with more than three years of experience fostering showed significantly higher levels of

perceived stress than foster parents with less than three years of experience, suggesting that foster parents can still experience high amounts of stress even if they have effective coping strategies. Also foster parents who specifically implemented problem focused coping strategies with support experienced higher confidence in their coping abilities.

The study 'Effects of Social Class and Birth Order on Coping Behaviour in Adolescence' (Dr. Santosh Kumar Gupta¹, Dr. Sharda Vishwakarma, 2017) aimed to examine the effects of social class and birth order on coping behaviour in adolescents. The sample of the study consist of 140 male and female students of higher secondary schools with age range 14 to 18 years old, were recruited through random sampling. The Coping Orientation to Problem Experienced, mean, combined mean, standard deviation and ANOVA are used for the analysis of the data. As a result of the analysis, first child in birth order were found better on total coping test scores than third child in birth order. Also, subjects from general category were found better on total coping test scores than SC category.

The study 'Effects of gender difference and birth order on perceived parenting styles, measured by the EMBU scale, in Japanese two-sibling subjects' (Toshiyuki Someya et al., 2001) aimed to examine the effect of gender of subjects and siblings and birth order on the perceived parenting style. The sample of the study consist of 730 subjects grouped into the following categories: (i) male with a younger brother; (ii) male with a younger sister; (iii) male with an older brother; (iv) male with an older sister; (v) female with a younger brother; (vi) female with a younger sister; (vii) female with an older brother; and (viii) female with an older sister. The EMBU self-report inventory was used. One-way ANOVA, Post-hoc multiple comparison (Bonferroni's test) used for the analysis of the data. Scores for rejection of father and emotional warmth of father and of mother were influenced significantly by pattern of sibling. The elder male children strongly experienced parenting style as more rejecting than others and female children recognised parenting style as more caring

and showing more warmth than others. The results confirmed a significant interaction of gender of subjects and siblings and birth order of perceived parental rearing behaviour.

The study ‘The relationship between birth order, perceived parenting styles, and early maladaptive schemas’ (Gözde Nilüfer, 2016) aimed to investigate the differences in schema domains and perceived parenting styles based on birth order status of individuals. The sample of the study consist of 294 participants aged between 18 and 30, whose parents were still married. Participants whose parents had died or who had adopted siblings were excluded. Demographic form, Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form- 3 and Turkish version of Young Parenting Questionnaire were used as data collection tools for the study. MANOVA and regression analysis were used for the analysis of the data. Last-born siblings considered their mothers to be overprotective and anxious compared to first-born siblings. Father’s parenting style did not differ according to birth order. Negative parenting styles significantly predicted schema domains. Both mother’s and father’s styles predicted disconnection, impaired autonomy, and impaired limits. Mother’s parenting style predicted other directness and high standards schema domains. Males had higher disconnection schema, females had higher unrelenting standards and younger people had higher impaired autonomy, unrelenting standards and disconnection schema domain. Individuals with low education mother had higher other directness domain.

The study ‘Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the parenting styles, coping strategies and perceived stress in mothers of children who have undergone cardiac interventions’ (Naumoska Ljubica, et.al., 2011). The study aimed to explore the parenting styles, coping strategies and perceived stress in parents of children who have undergone cardiac intervention. The sample of the study consists of ten mothers of children who have undergone cardiac intervention and ten mothers of healthy children, aged 5 to 14 years. Parenting Styles Questionnaire, Cope and Perceived Stress Questionnaire were used to collect

data. The analysis was done using independent samples t-test. The result of the analysis found that both groups of mothers are similar in authoritative and permissive style, but mothers of children with cardiac interventions significantly practice the authoritarian parenting style more compared to the control group.

The study ‘The Impact of Birth Order and Parenting Style on Sibling Rivalry Among Pre-school children’ (Helmanis Suci, 2023) aimed to determine the correlation between birth order and parenting style and sibling rivalry. The sample of the study consisted of 85 respondents who were at average age of 37.2 years. Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (SRQ) by (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) were used as data collection tool. The analysis of the data was conducted using Chi-square test and as a result of the analysis found that birth order, parenting style have a significant correlation with sibling rivalry.

The study ‘Gender Differences in Coping Strategies in Children and Adolescents (Heike Eschenbeck et.al., 2007) aimed to find gender effects and interactions between gender, type of stressful situation, and age-group in coping strategies in childhood and adolescence. The sample of the study consisted total of 1990 children and adolescents (957 boys, 1033 girls under grade levels 3–8). Participants responded to a coping questionnaire named Fragebogen zur Erhebung von Stress und Stressbewältigung im Kindes- und Jugendalter, SSKJ 3–8 with the five sub-scales: seeking social support, problem solving, avoidant coping, palliative emotion regulation, and anger-related emotion regulation. Repeated measures of ANOVA was used for analysis of data. Results revealed that girls scored higher in seeking social support and problem solving, whereas boys scored higher in avoidant coping. Compared to the academic situation (homework), gender differences were more pronounced for the social situation (argument with a friend), especially in adolescence. The results are discussed with respect to a gender-specific development of coping strategies.

The study 'Perceived parenting styles, depersonalisation, anxiety and coping behaviour in adolescents' (Uwe Wolfradta, Susanne Hempel, Jeremy N.V. Miles, 2002) aimed to determine the relationship between perceived parenting styles, depersonalisation, anxiety and coping behaviour. The sample of the study consist of 276 German high school students ranging in age from 14 to 17 years. The Zurich Brief Questionnaire for the Assessment of Parental Behaviours, Questionnaire of Experiences of Dissociation, State-Trait-Anxiety-Inventory and Coping behaviour were used as data collection tools for the study. Zero-order correlation, cluster analysis and one-way ANOVA were used for analysis of the obtained data. Perceived parental psychological pressure correlated positively with depersonalisation and trait anxiety and perceived parental warmth was positively associated with active coping and negatively correlated with trait anxiety in the adolescents. The results also showed that the group with the authoritarian parenting style showed higher scores on depersonalisation and anxiety and the groups with the authoritative and permissive style of both parents showed the highest score on active problem coping.

Rationale

This study holds many practical, cultural, and societal implications. Parents can be guided to better adjust their parenting style according to the specific needs of their children, promoting better emotional and psychological development. Research can be applicable in most diverse cultures, as differences in family roles and parenting expectations provide an framework for understanding how cultural norms affect the perceptions of parenting and stress. Adolescents and young adults often face stress due to academic, social, and economic pressures. The research will help mental health practitioners develop interventions based on family influences on the way adolescents cope. It can help in strengthening emotional resilience and promoting positive family relationships, thereby improving contemporary issues such as growing mental health challenges and strained familial bonds.

Current Study

This study explores how birth order influences coping strategies and perceived parenting styles among young adults in Kerala. This study uses validated psychological scales, such as the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS-21) and the Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS). The study statistically compares different birth order groups (first-born, middle-born and last-born) using the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test. By identifying how birth order shapes coping mechanisms, valuable insights for mental health professionals to provide interventions based on sibling dynamics and parents could also understand how their perceived parenting style can influence child's coping strategies.

By addressing the limitations of previous studies and exploring birth order in new cultural setting, this study contributes new insights to psychology and opens for further research on family dynamics, coping, and parenting across different cultures.

Chapter III

Methodology

Problem Statement

While birth order, coping strategies, and parenting styles have been studied independently, research integrating these four variables is few. Research frequently focuses on parenting styles as reported by parents rather than how these styles are perceived by children. Much of the research on birth order and parenting styles focuses on early childhood, with limited exploration of young adults. Many studies on birth order and parenting styles are conducted in Western cultures, with limited research in non-Western or collectivist societies where family dynamics differ.

Research Objectives

- To find the difference in coping strategies (avoidant, problem focused and emotion focused) based on birth order groups.
- To find difference in perceived parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) based on birth order groups.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference in avoidant coping style based on birth order.

H2: There is no significant difference in problem focused coping style based on birth order.

H3: There is no significant difference in emotion focused coping style based on birth order.

H4: There is no significant difference in authoritative parenting style based on birth order.

H5: There is no significant difference in authoritarian parenting style based on birth order.

H6: There is no significant difference in permissive parenting style based on birth order.

Operational Definitions

1. Coping strategies is defined as the sum total of scores assessed in 21 items coping inventory for stressful situations developed by Endler and Parker (2003).

2. Perceived parenting style is defined as the sum total of total scores assessed in 30 items perceived parenting style scale developed by Divya and Manikandan (2023).

Research Design

The study used cross sectional, quantitative, comparative research design. Cross sectional design was used as data is collected at a single point in time which allows efficient analysis of differences among groups without using longitudinal tracking. Quantitative approach is used to ensure objective measurement of coping strategies and perceived parenting styles through standardised scales (CISS-21 and PPSS), which allows the statistical analysis and ensure validity and reliability. Comparative design was used as it focus on analysing differences between multiple groups.

Sampling

Sample consisted of 300 young adults from different birth order groups (100 first-born, 100 middle-born, and 100 last-born, with an equal gender distribution of 150 males and 150 females) aged between 18 to 30 years taken from different areas of Kerala.

Inclusion Criteria

- The participants who are 18-30 years of young adults.
- Those who are the residents of Kerala.

Exclusion Criteria

- Adults who are not between the age range of 18-30 years.
- Those who are not the residents of Kerala.

Measures

Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS -21) by Endler and Parker (2003): It includes 21 items that measure three main coping styles: Task-Oriented Coping, Emotion-Oriented Coping an Avoidant Coping. Rating ranges from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Higher scores indicate more use of coping strategies. Reliability and validity are α : 0.78-0.87 (task focused), 0.78-0.87 (emotion focused) and 0.70-0.80 (avoidant coping).

Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS) by Divya and Manikandan (2023): It includes 30 items that measures perceived parenting style of the subject with regard to three dimensions such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Rating range from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). All the three perceived parenting styles are scored separately. The items of authoritative are: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25 and 28, authoritarian: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29 and permissive type: 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27 and 30. Reliability and validity include Cronbach's α : 0.79 (authoritative), 0.81 (authoritarian) and 0.86 (permissive).

Table 3.1

Reliability of the scales

Scales	Cronbach's α
Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS)	0.816
Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS)	0.764

Table 3.1 presents reliability of the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) and Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS). The internal consistency was determined through Cronbach's alpha. The CISS scale has good reliability with Cronbach's alpha 0.816, indicating good internal consistency and a reliable measure of coping strategies. The PPSS scale has an acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha 0.764, showing that the scale is generally reliable.

Procedure

The research process began with finalising the topic and developing the research proposal, where identified the need of exploring the difference in coping strategies and perceived parenting style across birth order among young adults. After identifying the topic, a

research proposal was developed outlining the objectives, hypotheses, methodology and significance. It was then presented to the Department of Psychology for ethical approval and it was reviewed and refined by the panel of professors. Upon receiving approval, the study proceeded with the structuring of a google form to collect data from voluntary participants.

The data collection phase targeted young adults aged 18-30 years from different parts of Kerala, using convenience sampling. The Google Form included informed consent, ensuring participants were fully aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire collected socio-demographic details, followed by the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS-21) and the Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS) to assess the study variables.

A total of 300 valid responses (100 first-born, 100 middle-born, and 100 last-born, with an equal gender distribution of 150 males and 150 females) were obtained. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. After data collection, responses were organised and analysed using Jamovi, by employing the Kruskal-Wallis test for birth order differences in coping styles and perceived parenting styles.

Ethical Consideration

- The participants will be informed about the purpose of the study and provide informed consent.
- Participant will be assured that their identities will remain confidential and data will be used for research purposes only.
- Participant will complete the questionnaire in English, by ensuring honest responses and the collected data will be scored and analysed systematically.
- All information collected will be treated with strict confidentiality. Participant's identities will be anonymised to protect their privacy.

- Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using software such as Microsoft Excel, JAMOVI for statistical analysis. Non parametric tests were used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and describe the main features of a data-sheet. Kruskal-Wallis test was used for measuring difference in dependent variables (coping strategies and perceived parenting styles) with the results between independent variable (birth order).

Table 3.2

Normality of Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS)

Variables	W	p
Avoidant	0.969	<.001
Problem-Focused	0.986	0.007
Emotion-Focused	0.986	0.005

Table 3.2 shows the results of Shapiro-Wilk test of Normality. The results indicate that, in CISS, Avoidant Coping ($W = 0.969$, $p < .001$), Emotion-Focused ($W = 0.986$, $p = 0.005$) and Problem-Focused ($W = 0.986$, $p = 0.007$) Coping Strategies are normally distributed as their p values are less than 0.05.

Table 3.3*Normality of Perceived Parenting Styles Scale (PPSS)*

Variables	W	p
Authoritative	0.991	0.041
Authoritarian	0.985	0.003
Permissive	0.989	0.018

Table 3.3 shows the results of Shapiro-Wilk test of Normality. The results indicate that, in PPSS, Authoritative (W = 0.991, p = 0.071), Authoritarian (W = 0.985, p = 0.003) and Permissive (W = 0.989, p = 0.018) Parenting Styles are normally distributed as their p values are less than 0.05.

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

Table 4.1*Descriptive statistics for Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles*

Variables	Mean	Median	SD
CS			
Avoidant	24.4	24.0	5.84
Problem-focused	23.8	24.0	5.83
Emotion-focused	22.2	22.0	5.70
PPS			
Authoritative	35.0	35.0	7.05
Authoritarian	26.3	27.0	7.27
Permissive	26.8	27.5	7.34

Note: CS and PPS are the abbreviations for Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles respectively

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics for Coping Strategies and Perceived Parenting Styles.

The mean scores for coping strategies indicate that avoidant coping ($M = 24.4$, $SD = 5.84$) and problem-focused coping ($M = 23.8$, $SD = 5.83$) were almost similar, while emotion-focused coping ($M = 22.2$, $SD = 5.70$) had the lowest mean score. In perceived parenting styles, authoritative parenting style ($M = 35.0$, $SD = 7.05$) had the higher mean score, followed by permissive parenting style ($M = 26.8$, $SD = 7.34$) and authoritarian parenting style ($M = 26.3$, $SD = 7.27$) which were nearly equal.

Table 4.2

Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing Avoidant coping strategy across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
CS	Avoidant	First-born	100	24.6	5.50	0.064
		Middle-born	100	23.4		
		Last-born	100	25.1		

Note: CS is the abbreviation for Coping Strategy

Table 4.2 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for avoidant coping strategies across birth order groups. The results indicate that there is no significant difference in avoidant coping style among first-born ($M = 24.6$), middle-born ($M = 23.4$) and last-born ($M = 25.1$) as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($\chi^2 = 5.50$, $p = 0.064$).

Table 4.3

Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing Problem-focused coping strategy across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
CS	P F	First-born	100	25.7	20.36	<.001
		Middle-born	100	23.6		
		Last-born	100	22.1		

Note: CS is the abbreviation for Coping Strategy and PF is the abbreviation for Problem-Focused

Table 4.3 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for avoidant coping strategies across birth order groups. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in problem-focused

coping, with first-born ($M = 25.7$) scored higher than middle-born ($M = 23.6$) and last-born ($M = 22.1$).

Table 4.4

Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing Emotion-focused coping strategies across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
CS	E F	First-born	100	23.2	8.69	0.013
		Middle-born	100	22.6		
		Last-born	100	20.9		

Note: CS is the abbreviation for Coping Strategy and EF is the abbreviation for Emotion-Focused

Table 4.4 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for avoidant coping strategies across birth order groups. The results indicate that emotion-focused coping shows significant difference ($\chi^2 = 8.69$, $p = 0.013$) as first-born ($M = 23.2$) scored higher than middle-born ($M = 22.6$) and last born ($M = 20.9$).

Table 4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test for Authoritative perceived parenting style across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
PPS	Authoritative	First-born	100	36.9	12.61	0.002
		Middle-born	100	34.5		
		Last-born	100	33.5		

Note: PPS is the abbreviation for Perceived-Parenting-Styles

Table 4.5 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for perceived parenting styles across birth order groups. A significant difference was found in authoritative parenting ($\chi^2 = 12.61$, $p =$

0.002) with first-born ($M = 36.9$) scoring higher than middle-born ($M = 34.5$) and last-born ($M = 33.5$).

Table 4.6

Kruskal-Wallis test for Authoritarian perceived parenting style across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
PPS	Authoritarian	First-born	100	25.6	2.81	0.245
		Middle-born	100	27.2		
		Last-born	100	26.1		

Note: PPS is the abbreviation for Perceived-Parenting-Styles

Table 4.6 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for authoritarian perceived parenting styles across birth order groups. There was no significant difference in authoritarian parenting ($\chi^2 = 2.81$, $p = 0.245$), even though the mean score of middle-born ($M = 27.2$) is slightly higher than last-born (26.2) and first-born ($M = 26.1$).

Table 4.7

Kruskal-Wallis test for Permissive perceived parenting style across Birth order

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	χ^2	p
PPS	Permissive	First-born	100	25.6	3.55	0.169
		Middle-born	100	27.6		
		Last-born	100	27.3		

Note: PPS is the abbreviation for Perceived-Parenting-Styles

Table 4.7 presents the results of Kruskal-Wallis test for permissive perceived parenting styles across birth order groups. There was no significant difference found, as the middle-born ($M =$

27.6) and last-born ($M = 27.3$) scored almost similar score which is higher than first-born ($M = 25.6$), but the difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.55$, $p = 0.169$).

Discussion

The discussion outlines the interpretations of the findings from this study by comparing them with existing literature and relevant psychological theories. This chapter will examine birth order differences in coping strategies and perceived parenting styles, by understanding the significance of the differences and their theoretical implications. It also addresses conflicting findings from past research and potential explanations for the inconsistencies.

The aim of the study was to assess whether coping strategies and perceived parenting styles differ based on birth order by using the Kruskal- Wallis test. The data was collected from 300 young adults from different birth order groups (100 first-born, 100 middle-born, and 100 last-born, with an equal gender distribution of 150 males and 150 females) aged between 18 and 30 years.

For coping strategies, found there is significant differences in problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping across birth order as first-born scored higher mean score than middle and last-born in both and no significant difference found in avoidant coping strategy as the mean scores of all the birth order groups were almost similar. For perceived parenting styles, significant difference was found in authoritative parenting as first born scored higher mean scores than other two birth groups and no significant difference found in authoritarian or permissive parenting styles as the difference in mean scores were similar.

From table 4.3, we accept hypothesis H1: There is no significant difference in avoidant coping style based on birth order. Results indicated that avoidant coping is not significantly different across birth order. While last-born had the highest mean score and

middle-born had the lowest, it was not statistically significant. This indicates that all the birth order groups might be engaging in avoidant coping to the same extent during certain situations. Avoidant coping, such as avoidance or distraction, is not likely to be affected by birth order but by other characteristics such as personality or upbringing. Another study by Vavricek (2020) also revealed that there was no difference in the scores of either approach or avoidance coping based on birth order. Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) propose that coping styles are determined via dispositional factors, avoidant coping are associated with higher levels of trait anxiety and lower emotional regulation capabilities. Some studies indicate avoidant coping is contextually specific compared to other coping. Compas et al. (2001) established that problem-focused and emotion-focused coping are generally regulated by the parent style most frequently, while avoidant coping dominates when the participants feel that their setting is not what they can control. As birth order is not the sole predictor of perceived control, it may be that there were no avoidant coping differences by sibling position. Avoidant coping is often a reaction to stress, and people prefer to withdraw or avoid problems instead of confronting them actively (Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, 1984). Avoidance would be more probable due to helplessness or perceiving oneself as unable to manipulate a situation. These feelings can happen even if the person is a first-born, middle- born, or last-born, birth order may not be strong enough to create significant differences in this avoidance style.

From table 4.4, we reject hypothesis H2: There is no significant difference in problem focused coping style based on birth order. Problem-focused coping showed a clear birth order difference. First-born had the highest average, followed by middle-born and last-born with the difference being statistically significant. This supports the idea that first-born tend to be more responsible and solution-oriented. The theoretical explanation for this can be taken from Adler's birth order theory, which suggests that first-born are raised with higher

expectations and often take on a caretaker role for younger siblings, which reinforces problem-solving behaviours. First-born often live in an organised environment with greater parental expectations, which reinforces a sense of competence and control in problem-solving. Middle-born, who are second in problem-focused coping, have a tendency of maintaining a balance between independence and social support because they can bear leadership as well as follower roles in the family. But they may not get the same amount of structured parental instruction as first-born, and that could be why their scores were lower. Last-born, lowest in score, may use more affective or avoidant coping. They get more parent nurturance and pampering and may not be expected to handle responsibilities as much as older children. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that last-born will learn to do so by imitating their older siblings instead of taking an active role in learning problem-solving.

From table 4.5, we reject hypothesis H3: There is no significant difference in emotion focused coping style based on birth order. Emotion-focused coping also showed significant variation across birth order. First-born scored the highest, followed by middle-born, which was almost near to the score of first born, and last born scored the lowest. This indicates that first-born may also rely more on emotional regulation, such as reframing stressful situations or seeking emotional support. One reason could be that first-born, being older, might have had more time and experience to develop these coping mechanisms. Adler's Birth Order Theory, which posits that first-born role as caretakers leads them to become more skilled in emotion regulation since they have to regulate their own feelings as well as those of younger siblings. According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), first-born, being older children, have more opportunities to observe and learn ways of parental emotional control, and hence develop emotion-based coping. Middle-born are nearly as high-scoring as first-born can suggest that they build up powerful coping strategies of emotional regulation too,

possibly by their role of acting as mediators between siblings. Middle-born balance independence and sociability, and this can encourage the development of emotion coping behaviours such as reappraisals of stressful situations or seeking emotional support from parents and peers. Last-born, who are lowest-scoring, may have fewer stressors or fewer opportunities to learn successful emotion-coping skills. As they are more likely to get direct help and protection from their parents and siblings, they may be more externally reliant for comforting than internally in control of emotions. This is in accordance with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Coping, where individuals use emotion-focused coping if they feel a stressor is uncontrollable. Middle-born and first-born might receive greater exposure to coping with responsibility and stressors and thus might engage in more emotional regulation mechanisms.

From table 4.6, we reject the hypothesis H4: There is no significant difference in authoritative parenting style based on birth order. Significant differences were found in authoritative parenting style based on birth order. First-born reported the highest mean score, followed by middle-born, and last-born. This suggests that first-born are more likely to perceive their parents as authoritative, i.e., warm, responsive, and supportive, yet firm in setting boundaries. A possible reason for this can be that first-born often receive more direct attention and structure from parents, as they are the first child to be raised. First-born are raised with a strong emphasis on responsibility, achievement, and obedience characteristic of the authoritative parenting style. The parents are likely to concern themselves with giving clear expectations, encouragement, and strict punishments to the first-born. Middle-born, even though still getting structure and affection, are more likely to receive slightly less direct attention as there is an elder and a younger sibling. Parents can distribute their attention to multiple children, which means middle-born have lower levels of authoritative parenting than first-born. Last-born, with the lowest mean score, can be treated in a more relaxed parental

style as parents become more experienced and less authoritative. They become less demanding in setting boundaries and demanding conformity with rules with last-born.

From table 4.7, we accept hypothesis H5: There is no significant difference in authoritarian parenting style based on birth order. Result showed no significant difference in perceived authoritarian parenting across birth order. Authoritarian parenting is usually a constant characteristic of the parents, influenced more on their values, culture, and own beliefs than the birth order of their children. Parents who are authoritarian in their style have high expectations and strict rules for all of their children, instead of varying their style significantly by birth order. Parental behaviour is also influenced by outside factors like socioeconomic status, culture, and level of stress. Some middle-born discover that rules are stricter because they are being compared to both their younger and older siblings, and last-born will still feel control but feel it differently. Baumrind (1971) discovered authoritarian parents who used high control and required obedience from all the children, something that would be used to show that this type of parenting is fairly consistent across families. Authoritarian parents are interested in obedience, control, and punishment with no leeway. These traits will probably be firmly based on parental attitudes and not modified according to birth order of their children.

From table 4.8, we accept hypothesis H6: There is no significant difference in permissive style of parenting by birth order. Hypothesis is accepted because there was no statistical difference in perceived permissive parenting. The highest mean was for middle-born, then last-born, and then first-born, but the differences were not statistically different. This indicates that birth order does not play any role in whether one perceives his/her parents to be permissive i.e; indulgent, lenient, and less likely to discipline. Parents can become more indulgent with younger children, overall difference in strictness do not create considerable differences. Permissive parenting as such is itself marked by flexibility and leniency, i.e.,

parents who are generally lenient apply the same strategy to all their children irrespective of birth order. While parents might be more casual with younger children, the overall shift in strictness is not so extreme that children notice huge differences. Children's conceptions of permissiveness are more likely to be personality- and experience-oriented than birth order-oriented. Permissive parenting can be viewed as freedom and affection by some children, and by others as lack of discipline. Smetana (1995) tested teenagers' perceptions of parenting styles and found no significant birth order differences in perceived permissiveness. External variables like family atmosphere, parental burden, and life stressors have a larger impact on permissive parenting than birth order does.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Key findings

- Significant differences were found in problem-focused coping, with first-born scoring the highest and last-born scoring the lowest.
- A significant difference was found in emotion-focused coping, with first-born scoring higher and last-born scoring lowest.
- A significant difference was found in authoritative parenting style, with first-born perceiving their parents as more authoritative than middle-born and last-born.

Implications

From a practical viewpoint, understanding these differences can help mental health professionals, educators, and families develop better support systems. For example, last-born, who were found to use less problem-focused coping, might benefit from programs that teach problem-solving skills and decision-making strategies. We can align these results with social learning theories, which suggest that children develop coping styles and perceptions of parenting based on their family environment and social expectations. Moreover, the findings reinforce the idea that birth order may shape personality traits and coping mechanisms, though further research is needed to understand the full extent of these influences.

Limitations

This study can provide valuable insights but it does have some limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling in findings, as it may not fully represent the broader population. Second, since all responses were based on self-report measures, there is a possibility of bias, such as participants answering in a socially desirable way. Another limitation is the cultural

context, this study was conducted in Kerala, and parenting styles or coping mechanisms may differ in other regions or cultures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can build on these findings in several ways. Cross-cultural studies would help determine whether these patterns are unique to this particular cultural setting or if they are universal. Another interesting area to explore would be sibling dynamics, by understanding how relationships between siblings influence coping strategies and parenting perceptions could add more depth to this research. Collecting data from parents themselves would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how parenting styles are perceived and practiced.

Conclusion

Overall, this study helps to understand how birth order differs in coping mechanisms and perceptions of parenting. The results suggest that first-born tend to rely more on problem-solving strategies, while last-born may use them less frequently. Also found first-born perceive their parents as more authoritative than middle-born and last-born. These findings contribute to a growing body of research on family dynamics and stress management, offering insights that could inform both future research and practical interventions aimed at supporting young adults in developing healthy coping strategies.

References

- Adler, A. (1927). *The practice and theory of individual psychology*. Routledge
- Adler, A. (1928). Characteristics of the first, second, and third child. *Children*, 3(1), 14-52.
doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1970.26.2.387
- Adler A. Position in family constellation influences lifestyle. *International Journal of Individual Differences*. 1937; 3: 211–227.
- Alsaleh et al. (2021). The effects of birth order and family size on academic achievement, divergent thinking, and problem finding among gifted students. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, 9(1), 67–73.
<https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.864399>
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology*, 4(1, Pt.2), 1–103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372>
- Baumrind, D., & Black, A. E. (1967). Socialization practices associated with dimensions of competence in preschool boys and girls. *Child Development*, 38, 291-327.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1127295>
- Campbell, L., White, J., & Stewart, A. (1991). The relationship of psychological birth order to actual birth order. *Individual Psychology*, 47(3), 380-391.
- Coleman, Jason (2019). *Exploring Relationships Between Parenting Style, Perceived Stress, Coping Efficacy and Coping Strategies in Foster Parents*. PCOM Psychology Dissertations. 512. https://digitalcommons.pcom.edu/psychology_dissertations/512
- Endler, N. S., & Parker, J. D. A. (1990). *Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations: Manual*. Toronto: Multi-Health Systems.

- Eschenbeck, H., Kohlmann, C.-W., & Lohaus, A. (2007). Gender Differences in Coping Strategies in Children and Adolescents. *Journal of Individual Differences*, 28(1), 18–26. doi:10.1027/1614-0001.28.1.18
- Folkman, S., Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C., DeLongis, A., & Gruen, R. J. (1986). Dynamics of a stressful encounter: cognitive appraisal, coping, and encounter outcomes. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 50(5), 992.
https://nbpublish.com/library_read_article.php?id=73141
- Giordano, Natalie (2023). The Association Between Parenting Style and Birth Order in Relation to Functioning in College. Honors Theses. 2713.
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses/2713>
- Greene, R. L., & Clark, J. R. (1970). Adler's theory of birth order. *Psychological Reports*, 26(2), 387–390. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1970.26.2.387>
- Gupta S, Vishwakarma S (2017), Effects of Social Class and Birth Order on Coping Behaviour in Adolescence, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 4, (3), DIP: 18.01.089/20170403, DOI: 10.25215/0403.089
- Hashmi, S., & Singh, P. (2023). The relationship between perceived Parenting styles and learning styles amongst adolescents. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 11(6), 2320–2882. <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2306247.pdf>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, *European Journal of personality*, 1(3), 141-169.
https://nbpublish.com/library_read_article.php?id=73141
- Lightfoot, C., Cole, M., & Cole, S. (2009). The development of children. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

- Ljubica N, Ilija D, Frosina R, et al. Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Parenting Styles, Coping Strategies and Perceived Stress in Mothers of Children who have Undergone Cardiac Interventions. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2013; 84: 1809-14.
- Stavoulaki, E., Li, M., & Gupta, J. (2021). Perceived parenting styles, academic achievement, and life satisfaction of college students: the mediating role of motivation orientation. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 36(3), 693-717. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48770845>
- Someya et al. (2000). Effects of gender difference and birth order on perceived parenting styles, measured by the EMBU scale, in Japanese two-sibling subjects. *Psychiatry and clinical neurosciences*, 54(1), 77–81. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1819.2000.00640.x>
- Vavricek, Stephanie (2020). Examination of Birth Order and Personality Effects on Coping Strategies in Light of COVID-19. *McNair Summer Research Program*. 2. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/mcnair-summer/2>
- Volkom, M., Dirmeitis, D. and Cappitelli, S. (2019). An investigation of the connection between parenting styles, birth order, personality and sibling relationships. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 7(1), 55-63.
- Waris Nawaz, M., Imtiaz, S., Sadia Anwer, S., Siddiqua, S., & Bashir Ahmad, K. (2021). Coping Strategies in Adolescent Siblings of Individuals with and Without Physical Disability. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, 8(1), 23–30. <https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.500.2021.81.23.30>

Wolfradt U, Hempel S, Miles JNV (2003). Perceived parenting styles, depersonalisation, anxiety and coping behaviour in adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 34(3):521–32.12.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Hello!

I am Ajmala Sherin P J, a final year Bsc. Psychology student from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam.

The attached survey is a part of my research on "Role of birth order in coping strategies and perceived parenting styles". If your age is between 18 to 35 years, you may please participate in my research study as part of my undergraduate program. Please read all the questions and answers accordingly.

All the information given by you will be strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Your responses will be anonymised, and no identifying information will be collected. Your participation will be great help in the successful completion of my research study.

Thank you in advance :)

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me at email id:

ajmalasherin2525@gmail.com

Consent form

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

All information you provide will remain confidential and anonymised. Data will be stored and used only for the purposes of this study.

There are no significant risks associated with participation in this study.

Option 1: I Agree

Option 2: I Disagree

Appendix B: Sociodemographic Details

- Name (Initials, Example: A.S)
- Age (between 18 and 30 years)

Option 1: Yes

Option 2: No

- Gender

Option 1: Male

Option 2: Female

- Birth Order

Option 1: First-born

Option 2: Middle-born

Option 3: Last-born

Appendix C: CISS-21

The questionnaire consists of 21 statements which are related to ways people react to various difficult, stressful, or upsetting situations. The questionnaire has 5 scales ranging from 1 - Not at all to 5 - Very much.

Read each statement carefully and mark the response which you think best suits you

Item No.	Coping Mechanism	1 (Not at all)	2	3	4	5 (Very much)
1.	Take some time off and get away from the situation					
2.	Focus on the problem and see how I can solve it					
3.	Blame myself for having gotten into this situation					
4.	Treat myself to a favorite food or snack					
5.	Feel anxious about not being able to cope					
6.	Think about how I solved similar problems					
7.	Visit a friend					
8.	Determine a course of action and follow it					
9.	Buy myself something					
10.	Blame myself for being too emotional about the situation					

11. Work to understand the situation
 12. Become very upset
 13. Take corrective action immediately
 14. Blame myself for not knowing what to do
 15. Spend time with a special person
 16. Think about the event and learn from my mistakes
Think about the event and learn from my mistakes
 17. Wish that I could change what had happened or how I felt
 18. Go out for a snack or meal
 19. Analyze my problem before reacting
 20. Focus on my general inadequacies
 21. Phone a friend
-

Appendix D: PPSS

The following statements depict the way parents behave with their children. Please read the statements carefully and mark your responses which is similar to the way your parents behave to you. There are the Five (5) possible answers provided for each question:

1) Never

2) Rarely

3) Sometimes

4) Often

5) Always

1. Capable of making me to understand about "Right" and "Wrong".
2. View everything with a critical mind.
3. Never find time for me to help during difficult situations.
4. Congratulate me when I pass the exams.
5. I am compared with other friends/classmates.
6. Never help me in doing day-to-day activities on time.
7. My suggestions and ideas are considered.
8. Insult and beat me in front of others.
9. No directions are given while doing things.
10. I have freedom to discuss about anything.
11. I often feel that I am being rejected for affection.
12. No inquiries are made for the decisions taken by me.
13. During the crisis situation they inquire about it.

14. Blame me even for minor things/issues.
15. Never provide an atmosphere for my studies.
16. I get love and care from parents.
17. Behave to me in a strict manner
18. Never do anything to satisfy my needs.
19. Being pursued for taking my own decisions.
20. Being scolded for not coming up to their expectations.
21. Fail to inquire about the disturbances and suggest remedial measures.
22. My opinions are considered in all important decisions related to home
23. Blame me for not doing things properly.
24. No effort is made to know about the progress of my studies.
25. Provide guidance in studies and suggest ways for character formation.
26. Being scolded without knowing the reasons for late from the College.
27. No inquiries are made about my likes and interests.
28. At free time they spent time with me.
29. There is control over each of my activities.
30. They will not inquire about my abilities and goals.